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**URBAN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN LONDON:
THE IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION**

by

Jill Simone Gross

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York**

1999

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Abstract

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by

Jill Simone Gross

Advisor: Professor Marilyn Gittell

Local government is a central component of democratic political systems. It provides a range of social services, acts as an arena for individual and group participation in the local decision making process, and serves as a channel of communication between the local community and central government. Britain's urban local government has experienced three phases of restructuring between 1888 and 1986, and is set for a fourth set the year 2000. London's local government was made up of borough and metropolitan governmental levels until 1986, at which time the metropolitan level was abolished. Each set of reforms were justified on the grounds that local government was inefficient in providing services and representation to Londoners. However, the implications of these reforms for democratic participation in local government and the equity of service provision were not addressed. This study explores the impact of formal and informal institutional transformation in local government on individual and group level participation. It is hypothesized that a federated local governance system, with multiple sites for civic engagement offers the greatest opportunity for enhancing urban political participation.

Preface and Acknowledgments

This is a study which explores the impact of institutional transformation on urban political participation in London. My personal interest stems from my experiences working and living in London at the time of the abolition of the Greater London Council (1983-1987). At the time I was struck by the vitality of local political action, as Londoners joined together in an attempt to save metropolitan government. When I left in 1987, I was concerned with what the future would hold for this world city. London had lost an institution which had appeared to unify the many voices which characterized the London region.

My academic interest in this particular project stems from three sources. First, I received my MSc degree from the London School of Economics in the Politics and Government of the United Kingdom, thus my continuing interest in the British political system. Second, during my five year stint in the U.K. I was engaged in research for a London based member of Parliament, I worked for the last Chair of the Greater London Council prior to abolition, and I briefly worked at Labor Party Headquarters. The contacts developed during this time proved invaluable for the current project. Lastly, my interest in democratic theory has been a continual theme throughout my graduate training. Data for this study was drawn over several years and through the following sources.

In the fall of 1983, I traveled to London on an exchange program for my undergraduate degree. As part of this program, I began an internship at Labor Party Headquarters on Walworth Road in London. For the next six months I worked

predominantly in the "information office", with brief stints in "membership" and the "archives". Although, at the time graduate study and dissertations seemed quite remote, I did carry out research on local Labor policy. I maintained records of this research and copies of these documents. My library includes Labor, Conservative and Liberal-SDP party membership data and party manifestos. More importantly I maintained a range of contacts which I have been able to call upon subsequently to provide additional data on local party policies and membership.

The woman who I worked for at the Labor party offices was heavily involved in Greater London Council activities within her borough of Tooting, and was kind enough to obtain permission for me to attend local government meetings. This enabled me to become a "participant observer" of local government in action. I maintained records of all of the meetings that I attended. At one of these meetings I was introduced to a new member of Parliament, Tony Banks M.P. for Newham North West (an East London Constituency).

T. Banks M.P. was in desperate need of someone to help set up his constituency office, and so I left Walworth road in January of 1984 and traveled to the East of London to begin working in a local party branch office, and the Constituency office of the Rt. Hon. Tony Banks M.P. During this time period I regularly attended weekly constituency "surgeries". Surgeries were those days in which Mr. Banks met with his constituents and heard their problems. Most of the work which we engaged in at other times revolved around the resolution of the many constituency complaints which came through these surgeries. At these meetings, in

addition to Mr. Banks, there was always at least one representative from the local labour party and the local Borough council. I worked with Mr. Banks for the next 3 years. In the constituency office we had close contact with the local borough councils, councilors, London based members of Parliament and a range of community organizations.

After working with Mr. Banks for six months I realized that the experience I was gaining could be fruitfully applied to graduate study. Also, my visa was about to expire and so I needed to convince the British Home Office to let me remain in the country. I applied and was accepted to the London School of Economics and Political Science. After a short academic hiatus, during which time I continued my work in British government, I began a part time MSc in "The Politics and Government of the United Kingdom."

In 1985 Mr. Banks became the last Chair of the Greater London Council, and brought me with him to the GLC to assist in the phasing out of the Council, which was to be abolished by the Conservative central government. Working in the office of the Chair provided me with many contacts with both sitting Councilors and former Councilors (across parties), as well as many staffers in the GLC.

Between 1985 and 1986 I attended local Borough council meetings, Greater London Council Meetings, as well as visiting the offices of many community organizations. More than anything else I was very much immersed in the British local government scene. Being a part of the dismantling team at the GLC also allowed me to gain many insights into the process of institutional reorganization.

After receiving my Master of Science Degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science in 1987, I returned to the United States. However I maintained close contact with the various individuals I had met during my period in the United Kingdom.

I subsequently found that the Labor Party had a branch office in New York City, and have been kept abreast of Labor party politics and the British political scene more broadly ever since. In New York, I was able to interview London planners, members of the press, and a number London residents who spent some time in New York. In addition the Labor Party in New York has hosted meetings with a multitude of British Members of Parliament (many of whom are currently Ministers in the Blair government), whom I have had the opportunity to interview in a more informal way. These include: Neil Kinnock, Peter Kilfoyle, Gordon Brown, Robin Cook, Joan Lester, John Prescott, Tony Blair, Glenda Jackson and Tony Benn to name a few (Tony Banks is currently the Minister for Sport and Recreation).

Now, leaping ahead to 1994, and the beginning of my more focused dissertation data collection. In June of 1994 I went back to U.K. for one month. Local elections had occurred in May 1994, and so my arrival proved to be quite timely. Many of the local government coalition groups were in the process of meeting to elect officers following the local government elections. At this time I attended meetings of the London Borough Association (LBA) and the Association of London Authorities (ALA). In both cases, I attended meetings and collected information on membership and internal structure. I also gathered a multitude of reports that each

had published (these are noted in the Bibliography). The ALA's transportation committee was kind enough to provide me with an extensive collection of press clippings from London's newspapers on transportation planning in London. I was also able to collect information from London Pride, London First and the London Forum, three new coalition groups that have become quite prominent in recent years.

In an effort to become more familiar with the growth of Quangos in Britain, and the developments in planning policy, I attended several London Planning and Advisory Committee (LPAC) meetings. LPAC staff were kind enough to provide me with minutes of their meetings for all of 1994, a list of their members, a copy of their annual reviews going back to the first such report in 1989, and their recent report entitled "London World Cities". At this meeting I met several London borough councilors and city planners, several of whom I was able to interview prior to returning to New York. I also interviewed two city planners from the South West of London.

During this visit I also returned to London School of Economics, where I received invaluable assistance from Helen Margetts, a Research Officer working with Patrick Dunleavy on the Metropolitan Governance and Community Study project. She provided me with electoral turnout data from 1964 through to 1990, not to mention a most informative discussion on local government in London. My former tutor in British Political Theory, Rodney Barker was also kind enough to meet with me to discuss issues of local democracy, and more importantly he provided me with access to the British Museum Library. There I was able to collect a majority of census data

and other demographic data for my analysis.

There were many others that provided very useful information. Mr. David Clark, former Director of the Commission for Local Democracy, and prior to that Director of the London Research Group, and Andy Charles of the Information Unit of the GLC, currently heading up Local Government in the City of York, must be mentioned. In addition to introducing me to the nuances of British soccer (the only available time to meet with them was at the pub during a World Cup match), they were kind enough to put me on the mailing list, allowing me to receive all of the Commission's many reports on all aspects of British Local Government. Also, Professor Robin Hambleton, the Dean of Research at the University of the Built Environment in Bristol, provided a range of data which helped fill in several data holes.

Finally, my dear friend Felicity Green, who was the assistant to several of the Chairs of the GLC, and was kind enough to provide a very comfortable couch in her home during this visit. Moreover, she helped to reconnect me with a range of important and useful individuals. This included several former staffers from the Minority Unit and the London Information Center of the GLC.

My closest friend Gallya Lahav who I met while living in London, and shared an apartment with for seven years in New York was truly motivating. She blazed the dissertation path before me, and was a model of incite into the doctoral process throughout. Jennifer Holdaway, who "tried" to teach me to write more concisely, and more importantly listened to my endless dissertation ravings. Prof. George Julnes, a

contact from the ICPSR whose statistical brilliance is immeasurable.

My mentors at the Graduate center must of course be mentioned. Professor Marilyn Gittell, who taught me how to do research, helped me find my own voice, and helped me to become a scholar. Professor Brown for finally convincing me to just sit down and write it. Professor Zweibach whose knowledge of British democratic theory and Fabian Socialism was both illuminating and insightful. And of course Professor Rogowsky, my colleague and friend, who gave me a job that allowed me to finally write this dissertation and was always there to discuss my latest findings, and to calm me down when I felt as though I had hit another wall.

I must of course acknowledge the support of my mother Diane and adopted father Don who have always provided good cheer and encouragement. My father Jack, step mother Debbie and brother Ari who have accepted my absence for too long. My brother Andrew and sister-in-law Elizabeth who both understood what this was all about. My cousin and closest friend Julie who was there for me in so many ways at all hours. Finally, to all my friends who believed, thank you all!

The perennial support of my partner in life Michael Marks, who stood by me through it all. Michael distracted me from my dissertation just long enough to get married. He fed me, made sure I got enough sleep, and has kept me smiling through it all. His enthusiastic support throughout this endless process of writing has keep me whole.

Last but not least to my godson Daniel---Yes Daniel the book is done!

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Introduction

Why do some local government reforms succeed in generating community participation and others fail? This is a question which has pre-occupied democratic political theorists for centuries. My research is designed to provide empirical evidence regarding the relationship between democratic governing institutions and citizens, and the degree to which the creation of more democratic institutions can affect political participation.¹

The question of how much citizen participation is appropriate has been shaped by the dominant values of differing historical moments. It has been dealt with by governments in light of differing perceptions of the proper balance between stability and change in the process of democratic governance. In the 1830s, de Tocqueville made the following observation regarding America:

It is evident to all alike that a great democratic revolution is going on among us, but all do not look at it in the same light. To some it appears to be novel but accidental, and as such, they hope it may still be checked; to others it seems irresistible, because it is the most uniform, the most ancient, and the most permanent tendency that is to be found in history.²

The tensions that de Tocqueville described between the forces of tradition and change,

¹I draw my definition of political participation from a participatory democratic framework. Participation takes a range of forms ranging from voting to riots. Participation has an educative function in creating a more participatory society; an integrative function in facilitating the incorporation of diverse groups into a political system; and a stabilizing function in that it can lead to individual perceptions of legitimacy in their local government and the decisions it takes. Participation refers to all activities which involve citizens in the process of governance. Thus participatory activities ranges from elections to direct citizen involvement in policy formulation.

²Alexis de Tocqueville (1835), Democracy in America (New York: Vintage, 1945), p. 3.

between those seeking to sustain old patterns of authority and those pursuing the path of increased democracy, are as fresh today as they were in the 1830s.

Today, in both the United States and the United Kingdom, governments pursue paths of decentralization and devolution. The concept of "community owned government" proposed in models to reinvent government has gained vogue on both sides of the Atlantic.³ The United States' government explores routes to administrative decentralization in service provision characterized by greater local discretion and the injection of competition and private contracting into its local arenas. In Britain, government presents referendums to the citizens of London, Scotland and Wales for the devolution of power and the creation of new forms of elected local government. Surrounding these paths one can note the age old tensions which characterize the clash between old and new values. The current developments are the outcome of a long and evolutionary process of local government reform.

London's local government has historically been the ground upon which the most contentious political battles have been fought. London has undergone three radical periods of transformation in its century long development, and today sits upon the precipice of yet another monumental restructuring. It is the political battles between the old power holders and the new that have tended to draw the attention of scholarly debate; however, in the process much important analysis is lost sight of, specifically the actual impact of these reforms upon citizens. This is not to deny the

³D. Osborne and T. Gaebler (1992), Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit Is Transforming the Public Sector from School House to State House, City Hall to Pentagon (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley).

importance of the political. The political must be integrated into a more comprehensive analysis of local government reform, which includes attention to both the formal and informal institutions and the changing values they encompass, and recognizes the ways in which old ideas regarding local governance have evolved into new models.

What better time than now, as governments prepare to engage in a new phase of local government reform, to step back for a moment to evaluate the impact of previous reforms in London upon the relationship between citizens and local government? Through an understanding of the historical development of institutions, ideas, and values we can better understand the current proposals and consider their potential impacts.

Today in London, government advances a local government model based upon a devolution of power to the locality. Following the patterns of many of America's old industrial cities, they consider a mayor-council form of government with power divided between an elected mayor and an elected council. Yet unlike American systems, London proposes to maintain a separate lower tier of local government, created one century ago: the borough councils. The values of greater local representation have been coupled with the conceptions both of increased efficiency through local control and increased responsiveness to individual and metropolitan needs through a federated metropolitan governance system.

The reforms of the 1990s represent a compromise between ideals of centralized and decentralized local governance and the notion of finding an adequate

mechanism to represent both individual and group interests in a large and diverse metropolitan arena. The Greater London Authority proposal can also be viewed as an attempt at historical compromise designed to unite ancient and modern local government institutions together in the task of governance in the 1990s.

In 1986 the call was for efficiency through privatization, engendered in reforms which totally removed elected metropolitan governance structures. As a result London is currently governed by a single tier of 32 separate borough councils. It was then asserted that local government could be most efficiently and effectively run through market mechanisms that allowed for greater local and individual choice. The ideas of this period were reminiscent of the reform movement in urban America that sought to make government more efficient through the use of business techniques.

The reforms of the 1980s were a response to developments over the previous 22 years when London's government was based upon a two-tier system of elected metropolitan and borough governments serving metropolitan and local needs. The two-tier system was criticized as being inefficient and overly responsive to minority interests to the detriment of the London region as a whole.

Each of these reforms was carried out in the hopes of creating better local governance, though the concept of local governance was defined differently at different historical moments. In 1963, the reforms in London represented what was later considered a great experiment in metropolitan governance, a vast two tier local government system premised upon the notion of "improving the health of local democracy." These reforms were, at the time, the most comprehensive reorganization

of local government ever carried out in England. They were designed to resolve the complex and fragmented arrangements that had evolved over the previous sixty five years.

Between 1899 and 1964, the entire nature of life in the London region had changed; the expansion of the franchise, technological innovations, industrialization, urbanization and suburbanization had all left their mark. At the same time the structures of government in the locality were for the most part untouched. Things reached a critical stage in 1964, and it was only then that comprehensive reform was carried out. How and why this came to pass must be the starting point, and through this unfolding we can better appreciate the impact of old institutional developments upon the future of local government in the London region and its relationship to the London people.

The institutional configuration of each phase of London governance was characterized by differences in the formal governing structures (number of local government authorities and types, size, territory, and organizational form); the informal governing structures (political parties, interest groups, voluntary sector and community organizations); relationships between and within formal and informal governing institutions (borough, metropolitan and central); differing principal actors; and changes in the dominant values and goals. These differences provided both opportunities and constraints for political action by individuals and groups within the London governmental arena and thus shaped patterns of political participation.

This research explores the hypothesis that a two-tier system of local

government, with metropolitan and local levels, offers the greatest potential for expanded political participation for *all* of London's populations. The two-tier system is more porous and can offer multiple points of access.

In London, each level of local government was assigned differing responsibilities: metropolitan and local. Though the US, with the exception of Metropolitan Miami, does not for the most part have this type of system, there is an interesting comparison to be made more broadly. In a recent study by Paul Peterson, the point was raised that in the American federal system there is a distinct division of policy roles between federal government and state and local governments.

Peterson reasons that economic competition among states and localities tends to make them efficient providers of developmental programs. Yet this is not true in the case of redistributive activities, because the economic pressures discourage, even punish (through the flight of tax payers and businesses) generosity to the down-and-out. In contrast, the federal government is far less affected by these kinds of economic pressures, which enables national officials to bear the costs of these programs more easily.⁴

I would suggest that a similar argument can be made with regard to London's two tier system.

The metropolitan level has a history of redistributive policy initiatives, while the boroughs tend to be more involved in development and infrastructure projects. As a result, having two tiers is important in terms of the creation of policies and programs affecting all of London's populations. It is my assertion that in abolishing the metropolitan tier of government, it is specifically London's needier populations

⁴Dennis Judd & Paul Kantor (1998), The Politics of Urban America: A Reader, (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon), p. 353.

that suffer. There is no longer a local authority dealing specifically with their needs. As a result, I hypothesize that participation in the boroughs at the low end of the socio-economic scale are likely to evidence declines in citizen participation since 1986, when the GLC was abolished, while the boroughs at the higher end of the scale are likely to show increased levels of citizen participation.

The two-tier system, I hypothesize, offers the possibility of representation of a broader set of interests. A more responsive system is likely to encourage citizen participation across the London boroughs. The elimination of the upper tier removes access for certain groups and in turn also limits the degree to which policy is able to truly reflect the entire of the London population.

The structure of access constitutes a linking mechanism between the logics of inclusion and control....The potential of 'included' individuals or groups for exercising leverage is therefore constrained not only by the social and economic resources which they may bring to the access process, but also by the structural constraints built into that process.⁵

A. Questions to be Explored

In this study I explore the relationships between the formal and informal structures of London's government and consider the degree to which these structures provide advantages or constraints for political participation. I examine the extent to which these different institutional configurations created different patterns of participation in segments of the London population (explored through race and class).

The following broad questions are explored: Do differences in the structures of

⁵Philip Cerny, The Changing Architecture of Politics (Sage, London: 1990) p. 39.

local government affect popular political participation? What type of institutional incentives and constraints influence group participation? What types of incentives and constraints lead to increases in participation in poor and minority communities? Does it matter if local government is more or less centralized?

My research questions the assumptions that centralized power structures lead to decreases in the level of political participation, while decentralized power structures lead to increases in participation⁶. However, such arguments are too simplistic because they fail to recognize that institutions are more than structures: they also encompass actors, values and goals. As Michael Sandel has argued, in the American case, institutions encapsulate practices and people. He asserts that the shift in institutional values towards liberalism, with its stress upon the individual rather than the community, coupled with an emphasis on "procedures" has created localities made up of "strangers." This in turn accounts for the decline in citizen participation. Thus, it is not simply where governments are located physically in relationship to citizens, but what the key values of that institution are.

A more nuanced approach to the study of the impact of centralized and decentralized power structures on patterns of urban political participation is taken in this research. By mapping not only where local authority power rests, but also in uncovering the underlying values and goals within the institutional structures, and the changing actors utilizing local authority power, a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between citizens and political institutions is developed.

⁶The centralization decentralization debate is more fully explored in chapter 1.

At its broadest, decentralization represents a process in which government is brought closer to citizens. However, this can be achieved in a range of ways, contingent upon the desired goals. Political decentralization, for example, represents the movement of decision-making powers downward to the locality. In contrast, administrative decentralization reflects the movement of local government offices, but not necessarily decision-making powers, closer to citizens. Within each broad category, of course, there are degrees of decentralization. At the extreme of political decentralization, local governing institutions are directly controlled by citizens, *community owned government*. Conversely, political centralization would represent a system in which all decisions are controlled from above, and the locality has no say over local decision making processes.

The form of decentralization pursued is contingent upon the outcomes sought. For example, in some cases the goals are greater efficiency in local service provision, while in other cases the goals are to generate greater citizen participation. In London, each phase of local government reflected a different balance between political and administrative centralization and decentralization, and represented different values and goals.

In regard to the actual study of political participation itself, it is contended that patterns of participation are not uniform across all segments of the population. Different groups (ethnic and socioeconomic) respond differently to these three institutional configurations of local government. In order to maximize participation across groups with differing interests, I hypothesized that the most equitable structure

for local government was the two tier variety - a metropolitan tier which was more centralized in the locality, and a borough level which was more decentralized. The hybrid model offers a wider range of access points and a more diverse set of participatory opportunities to the London population.

Though my research focuses specifically on the London case, the lessons learned are applicable to other post-industrial global cities. As many theorists have pointed out, cities like New York, London, Paris, and Tokyo have all undergone common changes in their economic bases (industrial to service based economies), spatial organization (urban/suburban divisions), and social structure (growing concentration of minorities and the poor in the inner city).⁷ Experiments in decentralization in both New York and London occurred during the late 1960s. In both cases, reforms though legislated by higher government authorities were facilitated by an increasingly active local community. The socio-economic characteristics of these cities are remarkably similar, as are the strains on local service delivery systems. In both cities, service delivery and coordination are primary concerns.

Though stark differences exist in terms of powers and structures, the

⁷see for example S. Fainstein (1994), The City Builders: Property, Politics and Planning in London and New York (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell); Brian Jacobs (1992), Fractured Cities: Capitalism, Community and Empowerment in Britain and America (London: Routledge); Fainstein, Gordon & Harloe (1992), Divided Cities: New York and London in the Contemporary World (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers); Saskia Sassen (1991), The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press); H. V. Savitch (1988), Post-Industrial Cities: Politics and Planning in New York, Paris and London (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

environments and goals prove to be quite similar. Indeed, there has been an ideological affinity between the US and the UK dating back to the early 1960s. In turn, the lessons of the London case for other post industrial cities, such as New York, are important, relevant and useful. The study of the London case, I believe, offers generalizable information.

I had originally hypothesized that structure would play the more dominant role than other institutional variables in influencing patterns of citizen participation. However, as the research unfolded it became clear that structure *alone* was a weak predictor of citizen participation. Structures may embody the opportunity for participation; however, it is the actors and their strategies, values, and ideology that can turn the opportunity structure into popular action or inaction.

Institutions encompass formal structure, rules, and operating practices. Thus, it was hypothesized that the degree to which local institutions shape individual and group participation varies in relationship to the degree to which institutional goals and political ideology emphasize increased participation. Arnstein's work of citizen participation provides a clear example. She suggests that governments can offer a range of mechanisms for citizen involvement ranging from "informing" citizens of policy, after a decision has already been reached—which in reality represents a form of governmental manipulation of citizens. Alternatively, citizens can be granted access to decision making through consultation—which might represent only token involvement (if citizens' views are not actually incorporated). Real influence upon decision making processes comes through citizen control of decisions. The goals of

the exercise can vary from placation to empowerment. The differences in these goals will affect the type and degree of citizen participation (see chapter 6).

In London, each phase of local government encompassed different democratic goals (see chapters 3,4 & 5). For example, the LCC phase was dominated by goals stressing representative democracy with limited forms of participation (voting). The GLC phase, in contrast, represented the emergence of participatory democratic values, with a broader range of participatory mechanisms--such as consultation and community governance experiments. The Quango phase was characterized by neo-liberal values stressing economic individualism, with market mechanisms for participation. The three phases were characterized by differences in structure, values, and goals.

B. Theoretical Approach

In this study I use a *new institutional framework*. Institutions are both formal structures (i.e. local government and party system) and informal structures (parties, interest groups, and coalition groups). I explore both the formal constitutional or legal basis of these institutions as well as their goals and strategies. Thus, I look upon institutions as being both dependent and independent variables (i.e. they shape and are shaped).

Let me elaborate upon this point. In the context of political parties, I will in the first instance be exploring party from within the formal institutional arrangements. Accordingly, I will consider party in terms of the two party system, and discuss the

impact of this formal electoral arrangement upon patterns of participation both in terms of voting, but also in terms of coalition formation, interest group activities, and the voluntary sector. The two party system itself provides incentives for different types of group activity, and particular alliances. Studies have shown that a more competitive party system can facilitate a more active party system and in turn enhance formal participation. It also can provide disincentives for popular political participation. For example, when an area becomes dominated by a single party, over a long time period, less party activity and less activity in the locality occurs.⁸

Parties will also be discussed in the informal institutional context. Party ideology is very often the basis for specific goals or strategies adopted by governments. In both the formal and informal capacity I am discussing party as an independent variable. Local government reorganization also generated changes in party structure and at times party strategy. Enlarging the geographic territory of London required parties, coalitions and interest groups to restructure their own organization in order to capitalise upon the changes. Restructuring was necessary not only to sustain or enhance their support bases, but also to capitalise upon the new power bases in the reformed locality. Thus, political participation is in some cases dependent upon party structure, strategy and goals. However, party can also be viewed as a form of group participation itself, and as such must also be explored as a

⁸G. Parry, G. Moyser and N. Day (1992), Political Participation and Democracy in Britain, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press); Redcliffe-Maud (1969), Royal Commission on Local Government in England 1966-1969, Cmnd. 4040 (London, UK: HMSO); The Widdicombe Committee (1986), The Conduct of Local Authority Business, Cmnd. 9798, (London, UK: HMSO).

dependent variable.

New institutionalism takes two forms: the rational choice variety and the historical institutionalist variety. It is the latter that I place emphasis upon. The core difference in these approaches concerns the way each deals with preference formation. The rational choice school views preference formation as an exogenous phenomenon, and argues that individuals behave as rational self maximizers. Historical institutionalism views preference formation itself as problematic and considers it endogenous⁹.

By taking the goals, strategies, and preferences as something to be explained, historical institutionalists show us that, unless something is known about the context, broad assumptions about 'self interested behavior' are empty.¹⁰

Thus, interpretation of institutional impacts requires analysis not simply of institutions at a single point in time, but comparatively across time.

The historical context surrounding these local government structures provides a basis for interpretation of their goals, strategies and preferences. For example, the GLC phase and its institutions developed out of the post-war period of welfare state growth. As will be illustrated, this background helps us to interpret the form, function and goals created (see chapter 5). By comparison, the Quango phase derives from a different historical frame. The 1980s represented a period of "minimal" statism, economic stress and smaller government. In turn, the reforms of the eighties created a

⁹ New Institutionalism as a methodology will be fully elaborated upon in Chapter 1.

¹⁰ Thelen, Kathleen and Sven Steinmo (1992), "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Perspective" in S. Steinmo, K. Thelen & F. Longstreth, (eds.) Structuring Politics, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), p.9.

very different local institutional configuration. The goals and strategies of each time period differ, and the differences can be understood by reference to that historical moment. Through the rhetoric of these phases, efficiency and representation were similar; their strategies and goals were not. History helps us to interpret these differences.

Institutions are also key in understanding political behavior. Structures condition behavior. Institutional barriers or access can result in distinct political activities and behaviors.

Institutions may be more or less formal but invariably serve to regularize the behavior of the individuals who operate within them.¹¹

For example, during the early years of the GLC phase, groups lacking access engaged in "conflict" based political behavior (outside of local authorities) designed to challenge local government institutions. Once channels were opened up, many of these groups began working within local government institutions and adopted a consensus-based approach.

C. Data

Participation takes a range of forms. In chapter six I explore the relationships between the formal structures of government and formal patterns of *individual* political participation as evidenced in voter turnout, voter registration and party membership. In order to evaluate the formal impact of institutions upon formal

¹¹P. Hall (1992), "The Movement From Keynesianism to Monetarism: Institutional Analysis and British Economic Policy in the 1970s." in Steinmo et. al., p. 96.

patterns of political participation, I created three complementary databases.

The first is an electoral database composed of voter turnout figures, percent share of the vote by political party, percent control of seats by political party, and overall party control for borough level elections, metropolitan level elections and parliamentary elections from 1955 through 1998.

The second database is demographic. This data is used first to identify the socio-economic characteristics of each of the London boroughs and, second, to enable consideration of the impact of institutional configuration upon poor and minority communities. There is no existing database on the demographic characteristics of the actual voters. Therefore, census data became a mechanism to broadly characterize the socio-economic characteristics of the boroughs across time. Demographic data enabled me to capture geographic areas according to socio-economic character. Using information drawn predominately from the British Census (1951, 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991), labour force statistics, and employment department statistics I compiled data on ethnicity, unemployment, home ownership, public and private home rental statistics, and population movements in each of the London boroughs across time periods. This data was used to categorize boroughs, and then compare patterns of participation between boroughs based upon race and class during each phase of governance studied.

The third database is composed of public finance and local authority expenditure data on services provided by the borough and metropolitan levels of government. During each phase of government, powers over service provision were

shifted. I used this data to explore the degree to which differences in expenditure affected citizen participation. This became a way to consider whether changes in the powers of local authorities affected patterns of participation.

All data prior to 1964 was reconfigured to accommodate for boundary changes in London's boroughs. This earlier data was re-grouped to conform to the current boundaries of London's inner boroughs. In addition, as is pointed out in subsequent sections of this analysis, certain data, particularly on race and ethnicity, has not been consistently collected by any one institution in London. This is noted when relevant. Similar problems exist with electoral turnout data. For a fuller description of the data collection problems and the ways in which they have been addressed, see appendix 1.

I evaluate individual political participation in the first instance through voter turnout. While recognizing that turnout alone is a weak measure of political participation, it is nonetheless an important place to begin. Analysis of this data is important as a broad indicator of formal participation patterns over time. By overlaying data on the socio-economic status of London boroughs, I was able to explore turnout in boroughs dominated by minorities and the poor, as compared to more homogenous white and wealthy boroughs during each phase of London governance.

Other measures of individual participation are explored through voter registration and membership in political parties. Data on political parties is derived from local party membership statistics, percent of the vote that each party drew, the number of seats that each party controlled on the borough and metropolitan levels of

government, and minutes of local party meetings and party groups within local government.

I have also looked at citizen involvement in local council activity. Here I have relied upon existing case study material and various surveys carried out in the London region over time. Finally, analysis of individual participation during the GLC and Quango phases is also based upon participant observation of council meetings, party meetings, and various coalition group meetings. Combined, this information shows how the impact of the changes in the formal and informal structures resulted in changes in the patterns of individual political participation.

Group participation is analyzed through the study of the interest group and voluntary sector environments (i.e. the size of the sector, types of groups developing during each phase, and linkages to governing institutions). The complexity of group participation over time meant that a full analysis across all London boroughs was beyond my capacity for the current study. Comparisons of group participation were examined through analysis of consultation processes. The evidence was presented by groups to local and national authorities concerning key urban policy initiatives. In addition, in-field research data was collected on current partnerships in London, including details of the internal organization of the groups involved. Finally, I relied upon a range of case studies, official reports, and existing survey data.

Overall then, this study is a multi-level analysis that explores participation along the following levels: overarching formal national institutional configuration, formal local government institutional configuration, informal local government

institutional configuration, and local socio-economic factors. This analysis incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods. Using legislation, newspapers, parliamentary and local government debate, and party manifestos I present a map of the formal and informal institutional arrangements characterizing each phase of local government in London.

The following quantitative and qualitative methods were used to explore the impact of local government upon urban political participation within each phase. I use an interrupted time series method, whereby data is categorized according to three time periods: the LCC period (from 1955 through 1963), the GLC period (from 1964 through 1985), and the Current period (from 1986 through to 1990). In addition to interrupted time series, the data has been analyzed through both bivariate analysis in the form of basic crosstabulations, frequency distributions, t tests, chi square, and ANOVA analysis. Data is also explored using multivariate techniques including correlation analysis and multiple linear regression. Significant results are reported in the body of the research.

D. Population Studied

In seeking to identify the impact of institutions upon participation I limit my universe to the study of participation in only in those boroughs that have been governed by all three institutional forms: the LCC, the GLC and the current form. The administrative area of the London County Council was much smaller than the Greater London Council, and included only 12 of the 32 boroughs which currently

make up the London conurbation. I therefore restrict my analysis, in the first instance, specifically to these 12 boroughs.¹² These 12 boroughs represent what we now refer to as inner-London. Not only have the number of boroughs changed, but so too did the size of each of these boroughs. In table 1.1 below I list the names of the current boroughs, as well as the names of the former boroughs.

As mentioned previously, in creating comparable databases between the LCC, GLC and current period, I used the current borough boundaries and re-categorized and re-calculated the data on LCC boroughs to facilitate comparisons across time periods of the impact of structural reform on patterns of participation.

Table 1.1 Configuration of the Inner London Boroughs: From LCC to GLC

<u>Current Borough</u>	<u>Pre-1964 Boroughs</u>
Camden	Hampstead, Holborn and St. Pancras
Greenwich	Greenwich and Woolwich
Hackney	Hackney, Shoreditch and Stoke Newington
Hammersmith	Fulham and Hammersmith
Islington	Islington and Finsbury
Kensington Chelsea	Kensington and Chelsea
Lambeth	Lambeth
Lewisham	Deptford & Lewisham
Southwark	Bermondsey, Camberwell and Southwark
Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green, Poplar and Stepney
Wandsworth	Battersea and Wandsworth
Westminster	Westminster, Paddington and St. Marylebone

¹²Other studies which looked at the outer boroughs are discussed where relevant for comparative purposes.

E. Layout of Remaining Chapters

Chapter one provides some discussion of the broad theoretical debates that informed my research. This is followed in chapter two by a discussion of the overarching national institutional structures and the relationship between central and local government. Chapter three provides a look back to the historic origins of London government. In chapters four and five, I describe the key institutional features which developed during each of the three phases of local government in London. These chapters are essentially the institutional maps of London's government over time. With these descriptions in place, in chapter six I explore the impact of each institutional design upon patterns of political participation in London. The final chapter draws conclusions concerning the ways in which local government can be structured to enhance political participation, and considers the impact of past lessons for future development. In exploring this relationship the goal is to provide concrete data which might not only add to our understanding of the relationship between citizens and government, but moreover consider the ways in which we might enhance local democratic processes through the vehicle of local government itself.

Chapter I

Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I explore the theoretical problems generated by structural change in local government. My analysis is informed by three lines of research: "participatory democratic theory" which focuses on the significance of participation in democratic societies¹; "social capital theory," which suggests that the infrastructure of civil society itself can aid in our understanding of vitality of local politics²; and "new institutionalism," which provides a framework through which to analyze better the dynamic relationship between democratic institutions and citizen participation.³

Through an institutional analysis of political participation we can draw lessons

¹ See for example B. Barber (1995). Strong Democracy (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press); C. Pateman (1970). Participation and Democratic Theory (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press); C. Gould (1988). Rethinking Democracy (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press); J. Mansbridge (1983). Beyond Adversary Democracy (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press); and C. B. Macpherson (1977). The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press).

² See for example J. S. Coleman (1988), "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 94, p. 95-119; R. Putnam (1995), "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," Journal of Democracy, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 65-78; T. Skocpol (March-April 1996), "Unravelling from Above," The American Prospect, No. 25, pp. 20-25; B. Edwards and M. Foley (eds.) (March/April 1997), American Behavioral Scientists Special Edition: Social Capital, Civil Society and Contemporary Democracy, Vol. 40, No. 5; W. Mahoney, G. Smith and G. Stoker (September 1998), "Civic Engagement, Social Capital and Cities," a paper presented at the 1998 APSA Convention (Boston, MA).

³ See for example W. Powell and P. Dimaggio (1990), The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); J. March and J. Olsen (1989), Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics, (New York: Free Press); and T. Skocpol (1985), "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in P. Evans, D. Rueschmeyer, and T. Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State Back In, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).

regarding how institutions can best be structured to facilitate higher levels of social capital and political participation in local government.

1.1 Political Participation, Social Capital, Democracy and Local Government

Political participation represents a complex phenomenon. As a practice, participation encompasses a broad range of actions, from voting to rioting. Citizens engage in participation for a range of purposes, from influencing government decisions to altering governing structures. Furthermore, governments themselves make participatory mechanisms available for purposes ranging from placation to citizen empowerment. In each case, the act of participation is influenced by the structures, goals, purposes and strategies of citizens and government.

Participation is a central component of democratic political systems, providing benefits to government, citizens and society as a whole. It is a mechanism through which popular interests can be translated into policy. It is a vehicle through which governments can build legitimacy for their behaviors and actions. For citizens, the act of participating can have an educative function.⁴ Through participation citizens learn more about themselves and their fellow citizens. Accordingly, participation breeds more active and involved citizens. The act of participating in politics enables individuals to develop civic awareness. Citizens engaged in participation become

⁴J.J Rousseau, The Social Contract, (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1968); J.S. Mill, Considerations on Representative Government. In H. B. Acton (ed.), Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government, (London, UK: Dent and Co., 1951); J. Dewey (1927), The Public and Its Problems, (Henry Holt & Co.); C. Pateman (1970); and C.B. Macpherson (1977).

central for sustaining the health and well being of the larger community. Thus, participation offers benefits to the system, citizens and the community as a whole.

Although it is generally accepted that participation is an essential part of the democratic process, scholars disagree about its form and function. One group focuses on interest representation.⁵ Rejecting the notion that classical ideas of direct democracy are applicable to the modern nation state, these theorists assert that the role of the citizen should be restricted to the choice of leaders in competitive elections. Minimum participation through elections provides legitimacy while maintaining order and stability.

The other major stream of democratic theory focuses on the role of participation in promoting community solidarity. Aristotle believed that man only realizes his full humanity through participation in a political community.⁶ Later theorists like Rousseau and John Stuart Mill continue this theme, emphasizing the educative function of participation in democratic society and the ways in which it can enable individuals to move beyond self interest toward recognition of community needs.⁷ These works provide a basis for much contemporary participatory democratic

⁵ J. Madison, "Federalist No. 10" and "Federalist No. 51" in J. Cooke (1961), The Federalist (Middletown); J. Schumpeter (1943), Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy (London, UK: Allen & Unwin); G. Sartori (1963), Democratic Theory, (Chicago: Wayne State University Press); R. Dahl (1956), A Preface to Democratic Theory (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); R. Dahl (1961), Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City, (New Haven: Yale University Press).

⁶Aristotle (1946), Politics, Translation by Ernest Barker (London, UK: Oxford University Press).

⁷I include Mill here with caution here due to the underlying elitism which infused his theories. Though Mill saw education as a key value for society, he also suggested that the educated be accorded greater voice in governance through mechanisms such as multiple votes for university fellows. At the time that he was writing, the educated

theory.⁸ The basic positions of these two groups of theorists have had implications for the amount of participation they consider desirable and the form it should take.

Mainstream theorists are ambivalent about participation, fearing that too much may lead to instability.⁹ This has led them to focus on ways in which government can be structured to retain democratic procedures while preventing democratic excess. In Federalist No. 10, Madison expresses a concern that direct democracy may lead to the tyranny of majority factions and argues that representative government, federalism and the separation of powers are necessary constraints on majority rule. Schumpeter argues that voting is the only appropriate channel of participation for the masses because self-interest makes them incapable of communal decision making.

Participatory democratic theorists take the opposite line, tending to support maximum participation and regard it as a good worth preserving even at the cost of other values such as efficiency. Interestingly, their focus has been on channels of participation which lie outside formal political structures, including the workplace and

represented only a small minority of the British population. At the same time Mill does see the educative value of participation for the masses in the future.

⁸ J.J. Rousseau (1976); J. S. Mill (1962); L.T. Hobhouse (1911), Liberalism (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1979); S. Webb and B. Webb (1920), A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press); G.D.H. Cole, "The Social Theory" in P. Q. Hirst (ed.) The Pluralist Theory of the State (London, UK: Routledge, 1989); C. B. Macpherson (1977); C. Pateman (1970); and R. Putnam (1993), Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

⁹ S. M. Lipset, Political Man (Heinemann, 1960); and, S. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (Yale University Press, 1968).

community, and on the developmental effects of participation.¹⁰

This external perspective is due in part to what Sandel suggests is a failure of contemporary democratic practices and institutions to promote self-government. In the American case, Sandel points out that governing institutions are dominated by liberal values that foster communities without shared values.

The procedural republic...cannot secure the liberty it promises because it cannot inspire the moral and civic engagement self-government requires.¹¹

Sandel suggests that broad based citizen participation may offer a remedy to contemporary democratic ills.

Democratic self-government requires an expansion of the arenas in which participation occurs. Political participation offers a route through which society can rebuild civic life.

Self-government today...requires a politics that plays itself out in a multiplicity of settings, from neighborhoods to nations to the world as a whole. Such a politics requires citizens who can think and act as multiply-situated selves.¹²

In turn, Sandel suggests that research must incorporate attention to both the formal and informal routes of citizen participation. Participation then can be linked to the degree to which societies are able to overcome the liberal individual features of the contemporary industrial city, and to build its stock of social capital. As Putnam comments,

¹⁰C. Pateman (1970); C. Gould (1988); B. Barber (1984); R. Bellah et al. (1985). Habits of the Heart (Berkeley: University of California Press); J. Mansbridge (1983); D. Putnam (1993).

¹¹M. Sandel (1996), Democracy's Discontent: America in Search of a Public Philosophy, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press), p. 323.

¹²Sandel (1996), p. 350.

By social capital, I mean features of social life--networks, norms, and trust--that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives...the term 'civic engagement' refers to people's connections with the life of their communities, not only with politics.¹³

However, to move beyond Putnam, the growth or decline in social capital is not simply a feature of non-political realms. Political factors can stimulate the growth of social capital.

The British Fabian and pluralist traditions have given more consideration to the relationship between political institutions and democratic behavior. Sidney and Beatrice Webb pondered the problem of how to modify local government structure in order to strengthen the civic bond of the community.

The fundamental problem of any democratic reorganization of British Local Government...is how to provide for the administration of a single environmental complex, of diverse services, retaining and even intensifying the bond of neighborhood and the consciousness of common life, under one and the same body of directly elected representatives immediately responsible to their constituents...¹⁴

Participation for the Fabians was essentially a combination of voting and increased activity in the work place and the community, which would lead ultimately to a more educated population able to govern themselves. The Webbs argued for more centralized local government structure, believing that this would engender a more

¹³Robert Putnam (Winter 1996), "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America," in The American Prospect, (Cambridge, MA: New Prospect Inc.), p. 1.

¹⁴ S. & B. Webb (1920), pp.223-224.

cohesive local community.¹⁵ G.D.H.Cole, who began as a supporter of the Fabian program, conceptualized society as a "complex of organized associations and institutions within the community."¹⁶ His analysis of guilds pointed to the workplace as the forum for the development of democracy.

These theories do not adequately consider the impact of the 'rules of the game' on participation. Structures determine who participates and the arenas in which participation takes place.¹⁷ As Hill has argued in her work on democracy and local government, structures and behavior operate in a mutually reinforcing way which can either promote or discourage participation;

If people see that the political structure does not respond to their demands then they are realistic to be apathetic and not take part in it.¹⁸

I contend, however, that participation in local government can provide a bridge between the apparently contending positions of mainstream and participatory theory. Participatory democrats, while considering local democracy in the form of town meetings and the like, tend to focus more heavily on non-political arenas such as the work place. At the same time, although mainstream theorists argue against direct mass participation in national level decision making, they recognize that decisions that

¹⁵Like Mill, the Fabian perspective included elite undertones. The Fabian perspective was a paternalistic one, with centralized municipal governments taking responsibility for building and educating communities.

¹⁶ G.D.H. Cole, (1920), p.54.

¹⁷M. Gittell (1980), Limits to Citizen Participation: the decline of community organizations (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage).

¹⁸D. Hill (1997), Citizens and Cities (Hemel Hempstead, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf), p. 150.

affect smaller communities need to be made by sub-central governments which reflect the interests of the local population. Madison's argument for federalism is based not only on a desire to check majority rule through the creation of a large republic with divided power, but also on an awareness that too large-scale a political community would be insensitive to the needs of local communities.

Framed in this way, the question becomes not one of whether participation is good or bad in itself, but rather of the level of government at which different kinds of decisions should be made, who participates, and how these factors influence the process. It is a more holistic perspective, such as that promoted by Sandel, that participation must occur across multiple sites in both political and non-political realms. These questions have been taken up in the literature on centralized versus decentralized power.

De Tocqueville, for example, argued that one explanation for the outcomes of the French Revolution ("The Terror") related to the lack of a centralized decision making body. When power is concentrated into fewer hands, governments can achieve greater efficiency. Efficiency is theoretically heightened because policy making is simplified by fewer participants.¹⁹

¹⁹ A. V. Dicey (1885), Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution. (Indianapolis, IA: Liberty Classics, 1982); E. Burke (1790), Reflections on the Revolution in France, (Indianapolis, IA: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1977); M. Weber, "On Bureaucracy" in H. Gerth and C. Mills, eds (1958), (New York: Oxford University Press); A. De Tocqueville (1858), The Old Regime and the French Revolution, translated by Stuart Gilbert (New York: Anchor Books, 1955); W. Bagehot (1963), The English Constitution (London, UK: Fontana); F. Aftalion (1990), The French Revolution an Economic Interpretation, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press); J. M. Burns (1979), Leadership, (New York: Harper and Row); H. Wolman and M. Goldsmith (1990), "Local Autonomy As A Meaningful Concept: Comparing Local Government in

According to the literature on decentralization, when power is decentralized there are multiple power bases closer to the community. Studies on both the left and right supporting decentralized power structures argue that policy making processes are more sensitive to community needs, and subsequently are more fluid and effective.²⁰

As conservative theorist R. Nisbet comments,

Conservatives have stressed nothing if not the bounden necessity of the political state holding back as far as possible from meddling in economic, social and moral affairs....And in practical politics over the last two centuries...the hallmark of conservative politics has been its greater affection for the private sector, for family and local community, for economy and private property, and for a substantial measure of decentralization in government, one that would respect the corporate rights of the smaller unities of state and society.²¹

On the left, according to Arendt, for a system to be truly democratic power must be dispersed.²² America, she argues, was powerful because of the dispersal of power to multiple levels, and the freedom provided to citizens to check that power.

Decentralized local government, therefore, has the capacity for greater responsiveness to the unique needs of the local populations, leading to increased individual participation. Group participation will increase due to increased points of

the United States and the United Kingdom," in Urban Affairs Quarterly, Vol. 26, No. 1.

²⁰M. Crozier (1964), The Bureaucratic Phenomenon (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press); H. Wolman (1990), "Decentralization: What Is It and Why We Should Care," in Robert Bennett (ed.), Decentralization Local Governments and Markets (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press); M Goldsmith and K. Newton (1986), "Local Government Abroad," in The Conduct of Local Authority Business, Vol. 4, Aspects of Local Democracy, Cmnd. 9801, (London, UK: HMSO).

²¹R. Nisbet (1986), Conservatism: Dream and Reality, (Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press), p. 38.

²²H. Arendt (1963), On Revolution (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1988).

access to local government.

These centralization/decentralization debates, however, fail to appreciate that the location of power and decision making within the local political system may impact differently upon different urban populations. As Harold Wolman aptly comments:

Decentralization is desirable, it is argued, because by devolving real decision making power to local levels, higher levels of interest and participation in local government result, thus anchoring citizens to the political system and enhancing democratic values....[However,] Local level politics may be more elite-based, dominated by special interests, and closed to meaningful participation...Thus, changes in the extent of centralization/decentralization bring with them changes in the patterns of winner and losers.²³

The history of local government in London can be seen as a series of experiments with different levels of sub-central decision making, each of which had implications for participation and representation. This dissertation examines the ways in which changes in the institutional structure of local government affected levels of participation and the ability of the city's diverse groups to organize and influence local decision making processes. Accordingly, it explores the implications of the changing balance between centralized and decentralized decision making structures in local government for political participation.²⁴

²³Wolman in Bennett (1990), pp. 34-36.

²⁴ The distinction between centralized and decentralized structures, while useful for analytic purposes is an extrapolation from reality. At no point has decision making in Britain been confined to one or the other model. I will demonstrate in subsequent chapters that British urban policy making is formulated in a range of decision making arenas, some which might be viewed as more centralized, others as decentralized, and still others integrate aspects of both centralized and decentralized decision making.

Clearly, political participation does not take place in a vacuum; it is structured by institutions. Analysis of institutional arrangements in local government therefore facilitates a greater understanding of participation, and enables us to consider how government can best be structured to enhance and increase levels of citizen participation.

1.2 "New Institutionalism" versus "Old Institutionalism": Providing the Analytic Framework

The analysis of democratic political processes through the framework of institutions has a long history. Traditional studies narrowly defined institutions as the formal structures of government. Institutions were conceptualized as static elements which defined and determined political outcomes. Contemporary institutional analysis provides an expanded definition and understanding of the function and dynamics of institutions in the political world. Accordingly, institutions are viewed as structures that embody changing cultural, historical and contextual attributes. This more expansive view allows for a more nuanced analysis of political processes, and counteracts the weaknesses of more traditional institutional models.

A. The history of institutional analysis

New institutionalism finds its roots in a diverse range of comparative methodological frameworks. It draws upon formal structural analyses, behavioral and state centered approaches, as well as some of the more recent rational decision making frameworks. New institutionalism provides a bridge between these apparently

contending theories.

"Old institutionalists" argued that citizens' preferences are shaped by the formal rules of government. Formal institutions, however, were considered to be the structure of government as defined by some form of constitution (be it written or unwritten as in the case of the United Kingdom), or to be more precise that formal rules of government. In this older version of institutional analysis institutions were defined by their static and stable nature. They left no room for the analysis of institutional change. Thus, studies of popular participation would focus on the rules regarding access, voting regulations, distribution of power. etc. Analyses of these formal rules, it was argued, could help us understand the similarities and differences in citizen participation in differing political systems. As Steinmo and Thelen point out:

This work was often deeply normative, and the little comparative analysis then existing largely juxtaposed descriptions of different institutional configurations in different countries, comparing and contrasting. This approach did not encourage the development of intermediate level categories and concepts that would facilitate truly comparative research and advance explanatory theory.²⁵

What was left out of these earlier institutional analyses was some discussion of the informal institutions: a recognition that political behavior was also influenced by the history and context of a multitude of informal institutional factors, such as political parties, activist organizations, and community organization.

The "behavioral" approaches to politics, in many ways, moved the research

²⁵Steinmo, Thelen, and Longstreth (1992), p.3.

agenda to the alternative pole. In this framework, politics is the study of the behavior of actors operating within and surrounding institutions.²⁶ Behavior in essence defines the institutions themselves. The study of political processes then became focused on the attitudes, personalities and actions of individual actors to the neglect of structure, environment and history. While behavioralism represented an important movement forward, particularly its focus on the scientific study of observable behavior, its approach was narrow.

The narrow behavioral approach was followed by a different methodological school, most commonly referred to as "pluralists." These theorists argued that decisions are more the outcome of competition outside the political system rather than the result of the formal political system itself. "Pluralist" analysis was also associated with behavior, in which attention was placed predominately on the behavior of individuals and interest groups in competition for limited resources, seeking to influence policy outcome through open channels of communication between these interests and the political system.

The traditional pluralist perspective views institutions primarily as arenas for competition among contending political interests. According to Cigler and Loomis:

Competition among interests in and out of government will produce policies roughly responsive to public desires, and no single set of interests will dominate.²⁷

²⁶Robert Dahl (1961), "The Behavioral Approach," American Political Science Review, 55, pp. 763-772; David Easton (1965), A Framework for Political Analysis, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall).

²⁷A. Cigler and B. Loomis, eds (1986), Interest Group Politics (2nd Edition) (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc.), pp.4-5.

This type of analysis, however, went to the opposite extreme of the "old institutionalist." Pluralists tended to focus their attention on behavioral factors while disregarding the roles of institutions. Thus, they failed to recognize that political institutions define the framework within which political activity occurs. The formal rules of local government determine who participates, the form of participation, and avenues of access for individuals, groups and political parties.

Pluralism was criticized for its assumption that access in industrialized democratic systems existed for any individual or group seeking to have an impact. During the 1960s we begin to see yet again the reemergence of institutional thinking in the works of theorists such as C. Wright Mills, who argued that pluralist thinking overlooked the fact that even in democratic political systems, access is often limited. We therefore must focus on who holds power in a nation to help us better understand the actions or apathy of the population. While Mills was addressing the question of national power distribution, his questions are reflective of a new shift in the institutional school known more commonly as "state centered theory".

State-centered approaches to politics have placed greater stress on the role of institutions.²⁸ Politics, they argue, is not solely the outcome of group competition. Nor are governments simply neutral arbitrators. Government institutions and previous policy trends shape the direction of subsequent policy. As Gurr and King point out,

²⁸M. Weir, A. Orloff and T. Skocpol (1988), The Politics of Social Policy in the United States (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press); G. Clark and M. Dear (1984), State Apparatus: Structures and Language of Legitimacy (London, UK: George, Allen and Unwin); T. Gurr and D. King (1987), The State and the City (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press).

modern states and public officials have their own interests, institutional momentum and the capacity to act with relative autonomy.²⁹

These theorists took issue with the domination of comparative analyses by the so-called pluralists and behavioralists, and argued that in essence we must bring the state back into our analysis. Rather than assuming that the state simply exists as an inanimate object arbitrating between competing political interests, we must instead recognize that it is itself made up of people, each of whom has interests. The "state centered" school asserted that we can only understand policy if we look at past policy, and the historical framework.

However, by focusing almost exclusively on state institutions, these interpretations may underestimate the importance of behavior and fail to explore the interrelationship between institutions and actors. As Friedland and Alford argue:

State-centered theories tend to reduce the meaning of governance and participation...to interests in power or resources used by elites to elicit obedience and assent....popular opinion is never referred to as a causal factor.³⁰

The framework utilized in this research is designed to bridge the gap between society and state centered approaches. Accordingly, my analysis draws upon the belief that behavior and institutions are inextricably linked and must be considered in

²⁹Gurr and King (1987), p.1.

³⁰Roger Friedland and Robert R. Alford "Bringing Society Back In: Symbols, Practices, and Institutional Contradictions" in The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio (eds.) (Chicago: The University Press of Chicago, 1991) pp. 236-237.

relation to one another.³¹ I have built on the work of researchers such as March and Olsen who argue that institutions shape and are shaped by society. Decisions are not created in a vacuum but reflect institutional and historical constraints.

Political institutions create an interpretive order within which political behavior can be understood...the character of political institutions as systems of rules and structures of meaning frames our discussion of institutional change and the role of political institutions in democracy.³²

Institutions here are viewed as sets of both formal and informal rules and regulations that structure the way individuals interact in society.

By rules we mean the routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies, organizational forms and technologies around which political activity is constructed. We also mean the beliefs paradigms, codes, cultures and knowledge that surround support, elaborate and contradict these roles and routines.³³

Although societies are composed of a diverse range of institutions, from family to church, each acting as a mechanism of social organization, my focus is specifically on those institutions that can be related to citizen participation.³⁴ I do not look at singular variables in search of causal factors, but rather illuminate linkages, patterns

³¹ March & Olson (1989); M. Weir and T. Skocpol (1985); P. Hall (1986), Governing the Economy, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press); W. Powell and P. DiMaggio (1991); R. Putnam (1993).

³² March and Olsen (1989), p. 52.

³³ March & Olsen (1989), p.22.

³⁴ I concentrate on local and national government, political parties, and interest groups. These institutions have been selected because research suggests that they influence and are influenced by political participation at the local level. Political participation is of course also influenced by institutions operating outside the political terrain, however, my interest is specifically in the institutional dynamics of the political terrain. Reference is also made to the influence of corporate and civic institutions within the political environment.

and relations between institutional variables. Politics is a process of dynamic interaction. As Thelen and Steinmo point out;

One feature typifying this new institutional perspective is its emphasis on...the 'relational character' of institutions. More important than the formal characteristics of the state or societal institutions per se is how a given institutional configuration shapes political interactions.³⁵

1.3 New Institutionalism and the Local Political Arena

Most new institutionalist analysis has concentrated on national government structures.³⁶ The local arena has for the most part been neglected. Local government lacks an independent institutional logic because it operates within the broader frameworks of national government and the global economy. However, as Gittell points out in her study of community organizations in America, local participation must be understood from within its particular institutional setting.

The interface between citizen and institution is fundamental to an appreciation of how the system works....This can be demonstrated in the role of the individual citizen in direct participation...or in the role of organized groups of citizens and the influence which they exercise.³⁷

Thus, the structure of local government can have an impact on who participates and how they participate. The patterns of political participation in London can only be understood within the context of the changing institutional dynamics. Moreover, the interests generated at the local level are distinct from those at the national level.

³⁵ S. Steinmo, K. Thelen, and F. Longstreth (1992), Structuring Politics (Cambridge, UK:Cambridge University Press), p.6.

³⁶ D. Ashford (1978), Democracy, Decentralization and Decisions in Subnational Politics, (London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.); P. Hall (1986).

³⁷M. Gittell (1980), p.20.

Local government in England has traditionally been regarded as subordinate to central government³⁸. The unitary structure of government is such that local government receives its mandate from central government--a mandate contingent on central government's definition of local government's role. As George Jones points out:

Local government has no guaranteed constitutional status....Acts of Parliament create and can destroy local government.³⁹

The ease with which reorganization of British local government has been carried out is an indication of this lack of autonomy.

Most analysts of local government elections in Britain have assumed that local government election results are the largely accidental by-product of central government's popularity at election time. So attention has focused on the implications and consequences of local elections rather than their causes.⁴⁰

My research suggests that despite the unitary system, local government in Britain does have some degree of independence. Local authorities in England are separate levels of government with distinct powers and functions apart from central government, though influenced by it.⁴¹

The 1980s saw an increase in academic interest in sub-central government,

³⁸ D. Foley (1972), Governing the London Region: Reorganization and Planning in the 1960s (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press); March and Olsen (1989).

³⁹G. Jones (1991), "Local Government in Great Britain, 1988/89," in J. Hesse (ed), Local Government and Urban Affairs in International Perspective, (Baden-Baden, GDR: Nomos Verlags Esellschaft), p. 167.

⁴⁰W. Miller (1986), Local Electoral Behavior, in The Conduct of Local Authority Business. Research Vol. III: The Local Government Elector, Cmnd. 9800, (London, UK: HMSO), p.108.

⁴¹L. Sharpe and K. Newton (1984), Does Politics Matter? The Determinants of Public Policy (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press).

largely because it began to account for a growing share of public expenditure (nearly 14% of GNP).⁴² In addition, "renegade" authorities began to assert independent policy stances on a range of issues. The central government was unsuccessful in its attempts to control local authorities through its policy of rate capping, whereby those authorities which overspent were denied central government funding (roughly 40% of expenditure by local authorities is met by central government grants).⁴³ The outcome was increased conflict between central and local levels of government, which some have argued led to the subsequent abolition of metropolitan authorities in 1986.⁴⁴ Despite the renewed interest in sub-central government, the focus has been primarily on the relationship between local and central government. Little attention has been given to the institutions of local government and how they shape local participation.⁴⁵

Local government plays an important role in unifying the distinct and diverse interests that characterize cities, converting them into policies responsive to local needs, and voicing those interests to national government. This is particularly

⁴²L. Sharpe (1985).

⁴³ibid.

⁴⁴J. Urry (1988), Contemporary British Society, (London, UK: Macmillan); C. Pickvance (1990), "The Institutional Context of Local Economic Development: central controls, spacial policies and local government policies," in M. Harloe, C. Pickvance and J. Urry (eds), Place, Policy and Politics: Do Localities Matter?, (London, UK: Unwin Hyman Ltd.).

⁴⁵ N. Boaden (1971), Urban Policy-Making: Influences on County Boroughs in England and Wales, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press); J. Dearlove (1973), The Politics of Policy in Local Government, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press); J. Stanyer (1976), Understanding Local Government, (London, UK: Fontana); R. Rhodes (1981), Beyond Westminster and Whitehall, (London, UK: Unwin Hyman Ltd.); G. Jones (1991); L. Sharpe and K. Newton (1984).

important in the case of Britain because local government is the only sphere outside Parliament (National and European) which is popularly elected.

The organization of the local political arena plays a critical role in determining which interests will be effectively articulated.

If local government is strongly controlled centrally then the possible impact of political parties, council officers, pressure groups...is limited. Conversely evidence of the strength of these forces is evidence of the weakness of central controls.⁴⁶

Changes in the rules and norms of institutions in the local political arena have affected outcomes in popular political participation. Understanding current trends requires an understanding of the past. As Putnam states;

History matters because it is *path dependent*: what comes first (even if it was in some sense *accidental*) conditions what comes later. Individuals may *choose* their institutions, but they do not choose them under circumstances of their own making, and their choices in turn influence the rules within which their successors choose.⁴⁷

Institutionalism, therefore, is a useful methodology through which to compare urban political systems. This analysis does not deny the importance of exogenous forces upon local institutions; rather, it demonstrates that in light of these exogenous forces, local institutions warrant closer inspection. Thus, while participation may be influenced by national and global forces, my focus is more specifically on the nature of the local. Local governments have their own unique institutional logic, which can help us to better understand patterns of local political participation.

⁴⁶Pickvance (1990), pp. 2-3.

⁴⁷ R. Putnam (1993), p. 8.

1.4 What's new about "new institutionalism"?

At first glance it might be argued that there is nothing new about "new institutionalism," as this movement simply marks a return to earlier times in the discipline when comparative politics was based primarily on a comparison of the formal institutions of differing political systems.

This research looks at the historical development of institutions over time. The project was designed to acknowledge the dynamism inherent in institutions. As Cerny argues,

we take structures not as static edifices, but as processes of structuration. Structuration implies a process of continuing interaction between agent and structure, in which structures which are generally constraining can also change and be changed in certain conditions." ⁴⁸

By accepting the notion of institutional change, I was able to look at institutional structures as both shapers of and shaped by contextual changes.

Changes in the socioeconomic or political context [for example], can produce a situation in which previously latent institutions suddenly become salient, with implications for political outcomes.⁴⁹

In the case of London, for example, socio-economic changes in the locality led to changes in the roles of political parties and interest groups. Parties during the early years of modern local governance were salient institutions for urban political participation. In more recent years, parties receded in importance, while interest groups have become much more salient.

The dynamics of institutional change have been addressed in a variety of ways

⁴⁸P. Cerny (1990), The Changing Architecture of Politics, (London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.), p. xi.

⁴⁹S. Steinmo, K. Thelen and F. Longstreth (1992), p. 17.

in the literature. Stephen Krasner, for example, points to a model that he terms, "punctuated equilibrium." In this he argues that:

A basic analytic distinction must be made between periods of institutional creation and periods of institutional stasis. The kinds of causal factors that explain why a set of state structures is created in the first place may be quite distinct from those that explain persistence over time.⁵⁰

While change often occurs in a dramatic fashion, so that the period following institutional change appears radically different from the period before, this overlooks the continuous change that often characterizes local political institutions. Krasner's model obscures the persistent dynamism inherent in political institutions.

In addition, Krasner's model views these institutional crisis transitions as emanating from external forces. While I do not deny the impact of exogenous forces, it is important to recognize that institutional change is also shaped by strategic maneuvering within the institutions themselves. Kathleen Thelen proposes a more organic model of "dynamic constraints."⁵¹

Dynamism can occur when political actors adjust their strategies to accommodate changes in the institutions themselves...This can be the result of dramatic change, but it can also be the result of more piecemeal change resulting from specific political battles or ongoing strategic maneuvers within institutional constraints.⁵²

This model focuses on the maneuvering that occurs within institutions. Individual and group political participation fluctuates and changes over time in response to changes in the structures of opportunities and constraints generated internally as well as

⁵⁰Stephen Krasner (January 1984), "Approaches to the State Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamism" in Comparative Politics, p. 240.

⁵¹K. Thelen (1991), Union of Parts, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press).

⁵² S. Steinmo, K. Thelen, and F. Longstreth (1992), p. 17.

externally.

Participation is mediated by local government institutions, or what some have referred to as intermediate level institutions, such as the structure of local government, party systems, and coalition groups that mediate the behavior of individual actors and political outcomes. But I have looked further at the degree to which these intermediate institutions affect the behavior of key ethnic and socio-economic groups. As Peter Hall argues in his analysis of economic policy in Britain;

First, policy is generally formed in response to pressures from various groups according to the interests those groups have in the outcomes of policy-making. But the facility with which specific interests can be articulated and the force with which they can be pressed on policy makers is dependent upon the organization of the structures within which they are expressed. Secondly, the very interests of the actors themselves are critically affected by the organization of the economic and political structures in which they operate....Thirdly...policy-making is invariably a collective endeavor...policy is the output...of organizations that aggregate the endeavor of many individuals in particular ways ⁵³

Thus, informal group attachments based upon race, gender, class and ethnicity impact on political participation not simply by virtue of group membership, but such membership in concert with organizational structure. As Hall comments,

The degree to which the interests of any one social group will be influential within the policy process does not seem to depend entirely on the concerted representations of that group or on the political give and take that most pluralists associate with political power. Instead, some interests will be privileged as a result of the overall organization of interlocking institutional frameworks, while others will receive less attention no matter how loud their spokesmen scream or how many members their formal interest associations mobilize behind them.⁵⁴

⁵³Peter Hall (1986), p.232-233.

⁵⁴ P. Hall (1986), p. 264.

What follows is a detailed exploration of the institutional configuration of the local arena in London, coupled with an analysis of how changes in this configuration impact upon patterns of political participation. While recognizing that politics is historically contingent, I also consider the degree to which these historically contingent patterns are subject to institutional change.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 map out the institutional arrangements of local government in London, beginning with ancient routes and ending with the contemporary period. Chapter 2 focuses upon the "overarching" constitutional framework of local government. Though national government represents a distinct institutional arena, it has at different historical moments influenced aspects of local democratic processes.

Chapter 2

Central-Local Relations

One of the features typifying the British urban system is the formal relationship that exists between central and local institutions. Though each operates in separate spheres, covering distinct policy areas within different population parameters, there is no question that Parliament has at different historical moments impacted upon patterns of local citizen participation. Transitions in central-local relations represent one of the basic institutional features shaping the London political environment. Although the weight of the impact of central institutions on the local institutional terrain has shifted and changed over time, its presence cannot be denied.

Central government, therefore, represents a component of local institutional dynamics. In Britain, it is the central level of government that determines the broad structure of local government. The British constitution can be viewed as an overarching formal institution that broadly defines central local relations. As Cerny argues:

The formal structure of political institutions constitutes a crucial set of constraints and opportunities. Of course, not all institutional rules are equally significant....The structures of access to elective office will vary greatly, and this variety will be directly related to the formal rules governing elections....the formal rules governing the control of the decision making process will vary widely, and will directly constrain the way that control is gained and exercised in practice. Access and control, then are the necessary means to the achieving of goals within the system, and the structures of access and control fix crucial sets of parameters for strategic action.¹

¹P. Cerny (1990), p. 132.

Therefore, these structures of access and control represent an overarching institutional construct that influences patterns of local political participation.

London's local government can be viewed as having had three distinctly different institutional frameworks during the past 97 years; from 1899-1963 London's modern two tier form of local government was in operation, with the London County Council (LCC) and the Metropolitan Borough Councils (MBC); in 1965 the LCC was replaced by the Greater London Council (GLC); and finally in 1986 the GLC was abolished creating a single tier of metropolitan borough government coupled with a range of new quasi non-governmental organizations (Quangos) dangling above.²

While local government in Britain has to a large degree been the product of continuous incremental legislative revision, these three points mark what might be regarded as the culmination of reform movements, resulting in substantial structural reorganization.³ During the LCC phase, central government exerted a great deal of influence upon the local terrain, while during the GLC phase the distance slowly grew. In the Quango phase, central government returned with a vengeance, such that local institutions became embedded in a nationally defined context. These changing relationships can be understood as shifts in the degree of local autonomy over time.

²see chapters four and five for a more detailed description of the local institutional terrain of the GLC, LCC and Quango phases of London governance.

³ For clarification purposes, throughout this dissertation I will refer to each period in the following ways, the "LCC period", the "GLC period", and the "Quango period". I have adopted this terminology to reflect the fundamental change in each period at the metropolitan level. These titles, however, are used to represent the entire institutional configuration during the particular time frame, not simply the Lcc, GLC or Quango. When I am referring to the specific institutions as opposed to the time frames I will omit both the quotation marks and the word "period".

London's local authorities operate in an environment characterized by shifts in the degree of constraint posed by national institutions. These variations relate to changes in the powers of local authorities to determine the mix of local goods, services and tax bases. Changes in the level of autonomy also impact upon local democratic processes. When localities have enhanced decision making capacities, they can be more responsive to local communities and in turn are better equipped to foster local citizen participation. As Goldsmith states,

The level of local autonomy is important both because of its possible impact on the level of political interest and citizen education at the local level and because it may help protect and foster democracy by assuring a system of countervailing power.⁴

2.1 Central-Local Balance of Power: Confluence and Divergence

The Parliamentary system can be viewed as an overarching institutional construct. Members of Parliament, through legislative channels, define the formal parameters of the local political arena.⁵ As A.V. Dicey stated,

The principle of Parliamentary sovereignty means neither more nor less than this, namely, that Parliament thus defined has, under the English constitution, the right to make or unmake any law whatever; and further that no person or body is recognized by the law of England as having a right to override or set

⁴M. Goldsmith (1995), "Urban Politics, The State and Capitalist Society" in D. Judge, G. Stoker & H. Wolman (eds.), Theories of Urban Politics, (London, UK: Sage Publications), p. 230.

⁵This section provides a broad discussion of the influence of national factors on the local institutional terrain and considers the broad influence of the national factors of patterns of citizen participation. Examples from London's historical development are utilized for illustrative purposes. Detailed discussion of each phase of London governance, however, is provided in chapters three, four and five. Detailed discussion of patterns of citizen participation are presented in chapter 6.

aside the legislation of Parliament.⁶

It is the doctrine of Parliamentary sovereignty that has led many researchers to overlook the local arena due to its lack of independent legislative authority.

However, while parliamentary sovereignty grants final authority to Parliament, it does not mitigate against parliament granting auxiliary powers to local government, nor does it mean that local governments confer with Parliament on all their activities. In fact, local governments in London have historically engaged in a range of independent activities, some with the support of parliament, others without.

During the LCC phase, for example, the relationship between local and national institutions was a complementary one. This was particularly the case during and after the two world wars. During the second world war, the necessities of mass population movements out of areas under threat of bombing resulted in the growth of partnerships between local and national institutions. These relations were sustained after the war, first in the efforts to rebuild the bombed out areas of the inner London region, and subsequently in the building of the British welfare state. The confluence of interest created a supportive central-local environment. As Goss comments,

Direct central government control was probably less significant than the powerful consensus which existed between local authorities and central government...therefore the points where [local] policy options were constrained by central government became very blurred.⁷

Because most London local authorities broadly accepted nationally defined priorities, central government allowed a considerable degree of latitude locally concerning local

⁶A.V. Dicey (1915), pp. 3-4.

⁷S. Goss (1988), Local Labour and Local Government, (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press), p. 52.

determination of the precise mix of services provided (see chapter 4).

When the GLC phase began, local powers were enhanced and London's elected authorities were given greater autonomy. The historical evidence would suggest that increased autonomy was the outcome of the previous period of consensus. Central government did not perceive enhanced local authority power as a threat to national institutions. However, as the period unfolded central-local paths began to diverge, due in large part to national economic decline and fewer available resources. Consensus was replaced by conflict. Local authorities pushed the limits, pursuing goals that at times conflicted with national priorities (see chapter 5). The outcome was that national government over time clamped down on local authority independence, both in service provision and in local government finance. During the Quango phase, central government operated within a heavy hand in certain areas, severely constraining the political actions of local authorities, while relaxing central control of local market mechanisms (see chapter 5).

Decreased levels of local autonomy have been most common during periods of central-local conflict, and increased autonomy during periods of consensus. Changes in central control in turn can impact upon patterns of citizen participation. The harmonious political environment was mirrored in local patterns of political participation (see chapter 6). To illustrate this point, during the LCC phase the dominant form of political participation occurred through formal electoral channels. There was very little pressure-group activity and minimal informal participation through protest and riot. During the GLC phase, in contrast, citizen participation

grew outside formal channels, with a more vibrant interest group environment and much more extensive participation in protest and riot in local communities.

The salience of London's local authorities increased when central government granted them greater autonomy at the start of the GLC phase. However, during the 1960s and 1970s economic decline placed pressure on local authority service provision. In an environment of limited resources, local authorities became sites of political contestation and increased informal citizen participation. While a range of institutional forces were at play during this period (see chapters four and five), central institutions, by granting London's elected local authorities greater autonomy, were instrumental in affecting these patterns of citizen participation. During the Quango phase, political autonomy has decreased while individual economic autonomy has been enhanced. These movements altered the sites of political action and the nature of participatory acts during the current phase (see chapters five and six).

Individuals are most likely to participate in those political contests that are perceived as having the highest stakes. Thus, one might interpret the emergence of a more active citizenry during the 1960s and 1970s as representing a situation in which the stakes were raised, and citizens chose to become involved. Cerny, for example, comments, that state structures are characterized by 'nodal points.'

Certain [levels of government] may play a disproportionate role in determining, for example the rules, stakes, and distributions of resources in other [political realms]....In effect, then, it can be argued that some institutional structures possess more decisional capacity than others ⁸.

⁸ Philip Cerny (1990), p. 5

Nodes are those political contests perceived by actors as important mechanisms of power, influence and control. Perceptions of individuals making choices concerning their own political involvement are filtered through the lens of these nodes.

Parliament therefore can be considered a nodal point in the institutional structure of British politics. Comparatively, parliamentary elections then can be viewed as 'critical' locations. In contrast to all other state structures, it alone is sovereign. As Donald Foley aptly stated, "central government in Britain is very strong, so strong that it is generally referred to as "the Government."⁹ While, at different historical moments, London's local institutions have generated increased levels of civic engagement, they have never surpassed Parliament in areas such as voter turnout.

Looking at voter turnout data throughout England, and the impact of Parliamentary structure on voter turnout in British elections, it should not be at all surprising to find that Parliamentary elections since the 1950s garner an average turnout of between 70 and 80%, in contrast to the 40-50% turnouts achieved in local elections ¹⁰. We can interpret these differences in voter turnout as the outcome of greater incentives to participate in parliamentary elections. Individuals perceive Parliamentary elections as more important or valuable. Thus, one can begin to see

⁹Donald Foley (1972), p. 20.

¹⁰Sources for Parliamentary election figures: T. Mackie and R. Rose (1994), The International Almanac of Electoral History (New York, NY: The Free Press), pp. 381-407. Also, W. Miller (1986), "Local Electoral Behavior" in Committee of Inquiry Into the Conduct of Local Authority Business, Research Volume III: The Local Elector, Cmnd. 9800 (London, UK: HMSO), p. 113.

how these structural arguments facilitate a dialogue regarding differences in patterns of participation between national and local elections.

2.2 The Impact of the Center on Local Elections

Many researchers have regarded central government as deterministic of local government. In particular, it has been common to argue that the strength of Parliament is such that Parliamentary popularity determines the outcome of local elections. People vote locally, but are not voting on local issues; rather, they are voting in response to national issues.¹¹ As a New York Times editorial describes it,

Local elections are a kind of large but primitive public opinion poll on the popularity of central government of the day.¹²

This has led scholars studying political participation to focus on the influence of the Parliamentary structure rather than on local government structures. Or what Miller aptly refers to as a *nationalized* view of local government, which Miller argues makes many of these studies impressionistic and imprecise.¹³

In fact, as illustrated in section 2.1, the evidence tends to suggest that the relationship is not static. As a result, at some points national factors would appear to have a greater impact on local patterns of citizen participation, while at other points

¹¹See for example, K. Newton (1976) Second City Politics (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press); and John Gyford (1978), Local Politics in Britain (London, UK: Croom Helm).

¹²Times, editorial, May 5, 1980.

¹³William L. Miller (1986), "Local Electoral Behavior" in D. Widdicombe The Conduct of Local Authority Business, Research Volume III-The Local Government Elector, Cmnd. 9800 (London, UK: HMSO), pp. 146-155.

local forces emerge as dominant. The divisions in these patterns relate to a range of factors, such as the degree of local autonomy and the timing of elections.

Other studies have sought to probe this question in more depth by exploring the relationships between specifically local factors and local elections. During the late 1970s, when local authority autonomy was at its peak, Ferry found in analyzing the 1978 London borough elections in Labor constituencies, that there was a correlation between property tax changes and the number of seats won or lost by the party.¹⁴ Specifically, Ferry found that Labor lost seats in boroughs where taxes had been raised, and gained seats in boroughs where taxes were lowered.¹⁵

During the Quango phase, characterized by divisions in autonomy between economic and political spheres, local factors are noted in relationship to economic decisions. For example, researchers in Strathclyde found that local factors influence local patterns of participation in relationship to taxation. In their study of the poll tax they show how the poll tax rate affected Conservative as compared to Labor

¹⁴Local government had what might be best described as the powers of local budgeting within central controls. Property taxes were set by local authorities. Between 1985 and 1990, central government instituted local government finance policies in which central government limited the taxation and spending levels of authorities which in their view were excessive spenders, known as 'rate capping' (this is discussed more fully in chapter 5). However, local governments for most of their modern history do have a fair degree of latitude within this cap, and thus the impact of rates upon local electorate becomes a useful gauge of the impact of local issues on local elections.

¹⁵J. Ferry (1979), "Rates and Elections", Centre for Environmental Studies Review 5, p. 5-7.

controlled local authorities during the Quango phase (see table 2.1 below).¹⁶

Table 2.1 Percent change in Conservative Vote 1986-1990

Ave. Household Poll Tax (pounds)	Con. Councils		Lab. Councils	
	London	Rest of Eng.	London	Rest of Eng.
Less than 610	+5.1	- 2.4	+1.3	-5.6
610-685	+0.1	- 6.7	-5.7	-2.8
685-775	N.A.	- 8.6	+9.0	-3.0
Over 775	N.A.	-10.1	+3.0	+2.2

Table 2.1 shows that Londoners vote differently from voters in the rest of England. These results provide further evidence of a local impact in areas characterized by increased autonomy. In the case of London, the Conservative vote increased in Conservative councils with low poll tax rates and in Labor controlled councils with high poll tax rates. As the Economist comments,

Judged by the first outing in England and Wales the poll tax could yet achieve the principal aim for which it was described....It does look likely that the poll tax was taken by a sizeable number of voters as a reliable guide to the efficacy and competence of the local council.¹⁷

National factors can also play a role when local and national elections coincide. Local elections occur every three years; national elections can occur at any point within a five year term. At points when national and local elections coincide, the influence of national institutions grows. For example, in 1964, London's local

¹⁶The poll tax or community charge as it is also known represents a tax on the individual, a flat tax payable by adults 18 and over. The poll tax legislation passed the House of Lords in 1988 and was instituted in 1989, then abolished in 1991 (see chapter 5).

¹⁷The Economist, May 12, 1990.

elections occurred less than one year prior to the national elections. The national elections were left till the last possible moment, because the Conservative party then in power nationally was having difficulty controlling a declining economy. Popular opinion was not in their favor, and so they waited with the hopes that circumstances might improve. The local elections were viewed as a mini-national election. This was facilitated both by political parties and the media, who stressed that these local elections would be a popular statement regarding national circumstances. The 1964 London elections were also the first local elections of the GLC phase. By all expectations, the Conservatives should have gained control in London. The newly enlarged GLC territory was largely made up of Conservative party supporters and constituencies. However, Labor scored a resounding victory. Labor's success can be explained as a vote against the Conservatives in parliament, rather than a vote for Labor in the locality (also see chapter 5).

Thus, both national and local factors will have an impact upon patterns of local political participation at different historical moments. According to Jones and Stewart, national government popularity does have a dominant effect on local elections, but local factors have additional effects overlaid on national trends.¹⁸

2.3 Central Structures and the Local Party System

Within the overarching institutional arrangement of central government,

¹⁸See G. Jones and J. Stewart (1983), The Case for Local Government (London, UK: Allen & Unwin) and J. Stewart (1983), Local Government: The Conditions of Local Choice (London, UK: Allen & Unwin).

we must also make note of the impact of the electoral system itself on patterns of political participation. In particular, one must recognize the ways in which Britain's, "first past the post" electoral system structures party competition. In all elections, be they at the local or national level, the candidate receiving the largest number of votes wins the election, regardless of whether it amounts to an absolute majority of all votes cast. In cases where there are three or more candidates standing for a constituency it is thus possible to be elected with well under 50% of the vote.

One outcome of this is that the number of seats won by the party is never in exact proportion to the number of votes won. As table 2.2 below demonstrates, the percentage share of the vote received differs significantly from the percentage of seats won. Moreover, third parties, such as the Liberals and Independent candidates are constantly under-represented. The main effect of the electoral system,

Is to exaggerate majorities rather than create them, ensuring that a...majority sufficient for purposes of government be given to that one party which gains the largest share of votes.¹⁹

A second outcome is that individual participation is more likely to be shaped by the two dominant parties, Conservative and Labor, than by third parties. According to Game and Leach, referring to party politicization of the local arena since 1955:

In London, apart from the City of London Corporation, there was complete two party domination: with the sole exception of an Independent councillor in

¹⁹Graeme C. Moodie (1964), The Government of Great Britain (New York, NY: Thomas Crowell Company), p. 51.

Stepney, every single seat was held by a Labor or Conservative member. The cities and all the towns of any size were entirely party political - as indeed many of them had been since their first municipal elections in the 1840s and 1840s.²⁰

Individuals are less likely to vote for those parties that they perceive incapable of garnering sufficient seats to ensure a majority. Again, the incentives to vote for a third party are weak, while the incentives to vote for the major party are strong. Accordingly, one can also note in table 2.2 how the two main parties historically have not only garnered a larger number of seats, but further have reaped a much higher percentage share of the vote than the third parties.

The advantages of this electoral structure are that it produces, for the most part, a clear winner, which makes the actual job of governing that much easier. The system, therefore, does in general, provide a large enough majority to enable one party to govern. However, it also limits the possible impact of third parties. As table 2.2 demonstrates, it is the Liberal Alliance and the Independent Candidates who suffer as a result of this system. Despite the fact that third parties such as the L/A (Liberal Alliance) and Independents have in more recent years enjoyed an increased support at local elections, they have failed to generate a large

²⁰Chris Game & Steve Leach (February 1995), "The Role of Political Parties in Local Democracy" *CLD Research Report No. 11*, (London, UK: CLD Limited), p.10. Note, regarding the City of London. I have excluded the City of London from this analysis in that it has maintained a unique local government structure throughout its history. From an institutional perspective the City would require a separate analysis. As Game and Leach point out, the City remains the only non-partisan principal council in England. Governed by its Common Council, was given a charter in 1070, and has to a large degree maintained a separate identity throughout all of London's government reorganizations.

enough proportion of the vote to secure a commensurate proportion of council seats.

Thus, they fail to break through the threshold dictated by the 'first past the post' electoral system.

The electoral system also discriminates against third parties whose support is evenly distributed across a large geographic area.²¹ As Vernon Bogdanor points out,

The advent of a strong third formation in Britain would expose the Achilles heel of the plurality system of election. It would emphasize the fact that under this system, the number of seats which a party wins depends not only upon the number of votes which it gains, but upon their geographical distribution upon where these votes are cast.²²

²¹The internal legislative structure of local authorities tends to mirror the Parliamentary system. Thus party affiliation is key at this level as it is in Parliament. This aspect receives greater attention in chapters three, four and five. Internal party structure can be viewed an informal institutional construct in that at the local level there is no constitutional convention requiring that local government be organized in this way; thus, the fact that the majority of the London boroughs have chosen to do so is illustrative of the forces of informal institutional construct.

²²Vernon Bogdanor (1983), Multi-Party Politics and the Constitution (Cambridge U.K: Cambridge University Press), p. 49.

Table 2.2 Party Politics in London Elections 1964-1990 (% Share of Vote/% seats won)

Year	Election Type	Party	% Share of Vote	% Seats Won
1964	GLC	Con	39.8	36.0
		Lab	44.6	64.0
		L/A	10.4	0.0
		Ind	.7	0.0
1964	MBC	Con	38.8	36.4
		Lab	44.5	59.8
		L/A	11.7	0.9
		Ind	.8	0.2
1967	GLC	Con	51.9	82.0
		Lab	34.0	18.0
		L/A	9.5	0.0
		Ind	.4	0.0
1968	MBC	Con	58.5	77.1
		Lab	28.0	18.8
		L/A	7.7	0.5
		Ind	.8	0.2
1970	GLC	Con	50.8	65.0
		Lab	38.8	35.0
		L/A	6.2	0.0
		Ind	.3	0.0
1971	MBC	Con	38.5	32.0
		Lab	52.2	65.5
		L/A	4.7	0.5
		Ind	0.5	0.0
1973	GLC	Con	37.9	33.7
		Lab	47.4	63.0
		L/A	12.5	2.2
		Ind	.1	0.0

Table 2.2 continued

Year	Election Type	Party	% Share of Vote	% Seats Won
1974	MBC	Con	40.7	38.2
		Lab	41.8	58.4
		L/A	13.1	1.4
		Ind	.2	0.0
1977	GLC	Con	52.5	69.6
		Lab	32.4	30.4
		L/A	7.8	0.0
		Ind	0.0	0.0
1978	MBC	Con	48.5	50.3
		Lab	39.0	46.2
		L/A	7.0	1.6
		Ind	.3	.1
1981	GLC	Con	39.7	44.6
		Lab	41.8	52.2
		L/A	14.4	1.1
		Ind	0.0	0.0
1982	MBC	Con	41.5	51.1
		Lab	31.0	40.5
		L/A	24.2	6.6
		Ind	0.5	0.3
1986	MBC	Con	35.2	35.7
		Lab	37.3	49.8
		L/A	23.4	13.1
		Ind	.3	0.1
1990	MBC	Con	37.2	38.0
		Lab	39.1	48.4
		L/A	14.2	12.0
		Ind	.5	0.0

Sources: Rallings and Thrasher, Local Elections a Statistical Digest, Tables 3 and 4, pp. ix-x.

2.4 Legislative Impacts: Some Conclusions on Center-Local Relations

The argument being developed in this analysis is that different institutional configurations provide very different incentives and constraints for political action: voting, participation and membership in local political parties, participation in councils, and participation in policy making). At the broadest level, participation in local government is defined by the British constitution. This overarching institution generates a series of avenues for participation by individuals, political parties, and interest groups.

The powers of local government in Great Britain are fixed by Acts of Parliament. Parliament defines and limits the work of local bodies through general legislation, Private Acts or by Ministerial Order. British local government is constrained by central government checks, and is dependent upon specific authority delegated by central government. Furthermore, central government has veto power over local government.

Most of the duties that Parliament imposes are obligatory, though some are permissive. In the case of permissive powers, local councils determine whether or not they will take advantage of these powers.²³ However, in all cases, be they permissive or obligatory, no function can be carried out without it being properly conferred by Parliament. Any activity or expenditure not so

²³As I will point out in chapters three, four and five, the informal institutional aspects of local government such as party identity often determine both the degree to which a local government chooses to utilize these permissive powers, and the policy areas in which they will act.

authorized is *ultra vires* and may be restrained by the courts²⁴. Thus, one cannot ignore the fact that central government in Britain holds sovereignty. Central government has the capacity to abolish, create or alter the structures and function of local government at will.

Indeed, in many ways the relationship between central and local governments in Britain has been a key element in shaping the formal structures of decision making. Central governments in Britain have used the legislative arena to both expand and limit the range of activities in which local political institutions participate.

Centrally defined legislation has been used to expand or contract the number of access and control points in local decision making arenas. Thus, the overarching institutions become a key variable in understanding the 'institutional topography' of British local government,

which isolates the relevant rules...which shapes the parameters of strategic action by increasing the possible payoffs for certain forms of strategic behavior and penalizing other forms.²⁵

Table 2.3 below shows some of the major legislation enacted since 1888. This legislation has defined the structure of local government in London.

²⁴The concept of 'ultra virus' is a component of Parliamentary sovereignty; any activity which lacks parliamentary approval, can be declared null and void in the courts. For a fuller description of Parliamentary Sovereignty see A.V. Dicey (1915), and J. Harvey & L. Bather (1968), The British Constitution (London, UK: Macmillan).

²⁵Cerny (1990), p. 133.

Table 2.3. Chronology of Central Government's Major Urban Legislation: From Inception to Abolition

Date Legislation & Description

- 1888 Local Government Act - Established the London County Council, an all purpose elected local authority in London.**

- 1899 London Government Act - Completion of the modern two tier form of local government. Established the 28 metropolitan borough councils, and the Common Council of the City of London.**

- 1929 Local Government Act - abolished the Boards of Poor Law Guardians and transferred their responsibilities to local authorities.**

- 1963 London Government Act - Established the current 32 London Boroughs and the Greater London Council. This came into force in 1965.**

- 1980 Local Government, Planning & Land Act -Block grant distributed on the basis of central government's expenditure assessment, calculated according to central government's determination of local needs. This was reinforced by penalties placed on authorities which overspent, rate capping. This also required the local authorities but a range of works out to competitive tender.**

- 1980 Housing Act - Vesting of rights in council tenants to purchase the freehold of their homes on favorable terms, determined by central government. Tenants were given formal legal rights, including security of tenure and certain rights in relation to housing management. this act also introduced a new housing subsidy system which provided incentives to authorities to raise rents to commercial levels and made it very difficult for them to provide for the general housing needs of their areas.**

- 1984 Housing and Building Control Act - Council housing sales procedures streamlined, residential qualifications reduced, maximum discount increased.**

- 1984 London Regional Transport Bill - Took away the GLC's financial and policy control over London Transport and curtailed investment in British rail and other transport organizations.**

- 1985 Local Government Act - Abolition of GLC and the 6 metropolitan county councils with effect from March 31st 1986.**

Table 2.3 - continued

- 1985 Transport Act - Bus licensing deregulated, reorganization of public transport companies required to keep a distance from local authority and run on commercial lines, local authorities required to not inhibit competition in the provision of transport services. Local authorities limited in ability to provide transport subsidies and only in accordance with tendering regime.
- 1988 Local Government Act - Extended the range of competitive tendering in local government in seven areas; refuse collection, catering services, building and street cleaning, vehicle and grounds maintenance. Secretary of state given power to extend competitive tendering to other local government activities. Also tightens tendering process through imposition of detailed procedures by central government over local authorities. This Act also prohibits local authorities from taking into account 'non-commercial considerations' in relation to the supply of goods, materials and services.
- 1988 Housing Act - Compulsory disposal to the private sector of entire council estates through either change of landlord or Housing Action Trust.
- 1988 Education Reform Act - Abolition of Inner London Education Authority, in effect from April 1990.
- 1989 Local Government And Housing Act - Disqualification of elected members from being senior members of a local authority, required all appointments to be based upon merit, restricted the principle of co-option to council committees, and imposed a duty on the authority to allocate membership of council committees amongst relevant political groups in proportion to their representation on the council. Provided for the separation of political and managerial tasks of officers.

Sources: Wilson & Game (1985); Hebbert & Travers (1988); Flynn, Leach & Vielba (1985).

What table 2.3 above illustrates are the ways in which Parliament has used its power to influence activities and to alter power relations within and between local governments. In 1888, local government at the metropolitan level was formed. This created a range of access points to local decision making processes that previously had not existed. The same can be said of the legislation which followed in 1899. In these first two instances, we find a broadening of the avenues available for strategic action within the local political system.

This legislation represented not only an expansion of the participatory arena, but also a devolution of powers to local institutional arenas. Most significantly, it created a secondary level of power, which has been used by local actors as an informal check upon the powers of central government ever since. This initial legislation represented perhaps the most significant change in the structure of British government in the 19th century. This decentralization of powers and functions, once coupled with the expansion of the franchise in the early 20th century, created an entirely new local institutional terrain with a much expanded set of participants.

Up until the early 1960s, there was consensus between central and local governments concerning the role, powers and functions of local institutions. However, throughout the 20th century, as local actors became more assertive, we find the pattern of central-local relations to be increasingly acrimonious. The outcome is the attempt by central government to reassert itself, by retraction of many of these powers, and closure of many of these access points.

The degree of central control over local government has increased substantially

since 1979. According to one account, Parliament enacted 143 pieces of local legislation between 1979 and 1992, a clear illustration of the utilization by central government of local government legislation to control local governments in Britain. This was a marked contrast to the period prior to 1979 in which central government made minimal use of legislation as a form of local control.²⁶ As Wilson and Game point out,

The centre may seek to control the system but its influence is limited by the scale and fragmented character of the governmental system it oversees. In the early 1990s and more particularly during the 1980s the inherent complexity was compounded by overt ideological tensions which produced a good deal of conflict, instability and lack of trust in central-local relations. Working relationships, then, are far from simple; they vary over time, from authority to authority.²⁷

This urban legislation since 1979 can be categorized as falling into two broad areas. The first are structural changes designed to remove power from local governments (placing it in the majority of cases in central government control). The second reflects the promotion of a set of market oriented goals based upon the movement of certain functions to borough governments with an emphasis on privatization and contracting out.²⁸ Central controls over local government have increased since 1979, due in large part to the conservative dominance of central government and the labour dominance of local government.²⁹

²⁶Wilson and Game (1994).

²⁷Wilson and Game (1994), p. 100.

²⁸I will discuss these two perspectives in more detail in chapters 3 and 4 on the formal and informal institutional aspects of local government in London.

²⁹M. Goldsmith (1990).

The overarching institutional framework might best be interpreted as a loosely structured arrangement within which we find further opportunities and constraints within local government institutions themselves. Thus, while recognizing the importance of the national framework, this is only one piece of the puzzle of urban political participation. One must also look closely at the local institutions themselves in order to fully understand patterns of urban political participation.

Chapter 3

From Ancient to Modern Local Government Structures: Institutional Transformation (1300-1888)

To appreciate the present it is essential that we understand where we came from. Contemporary British urban institutions have deep roots stretching back to the 13th century. Many of the structures, processes and practices that we associate with London governance today were derived from ancient tradition and custom.

The British constitution itself is based on precedent, and its system of local governance is the outcome of a long fitful evolutionary process dating back to the 13th century. Its democratic form is the outcome of struggle and conflict between hereditary power holders and the middle classes. The evolution of London government occurred through incremental and piecemeal reforms.

There were experiments and reforms [in British local government], but they took the shape of additional machinery and new institutions... Hence there are successive layers of institutions as one age after another took in hands the problems of local government¹

London's local institutional development can best be described as haphazard. Its modern form took over half a century to emerge and adapt to a changing urban environment. The outcome was a complex institutional environment, derived not from comprehensive reform but successive layering. Old institutions existed alongside new. Its development was the outcome of compromises between hereditary power holders

¹Theodore Plucknett (1960), Taswell-Langmead's English Constitutional History, (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co.), p. 60.

and the middle classes. Old institutions were put in the service of new actors. It was shaped by the anxiety of traditional leaders, who sought to prevent the development of power bases that might rival Parliament. Finally, its democratic form was conditioned by fear of mass democracy itself.

3.1 The Traditional Structures of British Local Government

The origins of London's local government can be found in the first instance in the geographic divisions developed during Anglo-Saxon time, and partly in units formed haphazardly to meet the needs demanded by urbanization and industrialization. The growth and development of British local government during this traditional period (prior to 1888), was marked by significant changes in popular access to local government.

Between 1300 and 1800, British society experienced significant changes in class structure. The rise of middle and working classes between the late 1700s and the early 1800s was followed by Parliament's increasing acknowledgement of property as a legitimate base of power beyond heredity. Institutionally, these societal transformations were reflected in formal local governance structures as local crown institutions began to recede in both political and administrative importance. Accordingly, a range of more democratic structures gained salience as local governing institutions. The progressive expansion of the franchise from the mid-1800s brought with it a range of new actors, who brought innovative agendas to the local arena,

which further modified the local institutional environment.

Local government reforms were made in a piecemeal way to respond to the growing needs of urban and rural poor populations, and to provide funds for crown and national needs (i.e. war). However, during this early period, the changes in the structure of local government were reactive, not proactive or planned. Transitions occurred by degree over time. In its traditional form, the institutional environment of British local government included a series of separate structures; counties, parishes, boroughs, corporations and ad-hoc authorities.

A. County Government -

The county was the largest geographic division of local government. The county was defined by the Crown and managed by agents of the Crown. Counties were units of royal land, upon which the crown would allow usage and provide protection in exchange for rent. Before 1834, there was little uniformity or consistency in this form of payment; it was determined by the needs of the crown, and varied over time and place. The county was part of the manorial system. There were 40 counties by 1300, and they remained virtually unchanged until the mid-1800s.

Officers of the county were appointed by the Crown; they included one sheriff and one chief revenue officer per county. The officers were responsible for the protection of Crown interests: they were keepers of the peace. In practice they were

overseers of the land. They provided maintenance of a shire hall and a county prison and were responsible for overseeing Parliamentary elections.

Until the late 1800s there were no county elections. All county appointments were made centrally. Commission was based upon ownership of land or a home valued at 40 shillings per year. These criteria were established as early as 1430, and remained unchanged throughout the Victorian period.²

B. Justices of the Peace -

In 1327 the King created the "Justices of the Peace" (JP), who had both administrative and judicial functions. JPs represented the central government and the crown. They worked in cooperation with the parishes and the counties in maintaining transportation routes, bridges and highways. Essentially, they were members of the nobility, appointed by the crown.

Hitherto such government as our counties have had, has been government by justices of the peace--government, that is by country gentleman, appointed by the Lord Chancellor in the Queen's name, on the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant of the county, legally dismissible at a moments notice; but practically holding their offices for life.³

JPs were overseers of the parishes and were instruments of central government.

Unlike County officers who were local residents of distinction, the JPs were centrally

²L. Courtney (1905), The Working Constitution of the United Kingdom and its Outgrowths, (London, UK: Dent and Company), pp. 236-237.

³F. W. Maitland (February 1888), "Government of the County and *The Great Unpaid*, The Reflector, in W. Guttman (ed), The English Ruling Class (London, UK: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), p 181.

appointed and centrally based. J.P.s would visit the county but did not reside in it.

They were crown overseers.

C. The Parish -

Parishes were first created by the crown in the 1300s under the feudal system. By the mid 1800s there were roughly 14,000 parishes throughout Britain. 99 in London alone.⁴ Parish population varied widely, with the smallest parishes having as few as 300 residents, and the largest parishes having as many as 300,000 residents.⁵ The parish was basically an administrative unit. It differed from the county both in terms of its more local focus and more democratic and inclusive local decision making structure.

It was the custom of parish inhabitants to meet in the church "vestry" for local business. In the vestry, all property tax payers had a voice in the administration of local services.⁶ However, taxpayers were those with a hereditary property holding. They represented only a small minority of the actual parish population. The earliest units of local government were designed for an agrarian society and, as such, the business of the parish government was predominately focused on agriculture and

⁴D. Foley (1972), Governing the London Region, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press).

⁵Courtney (1905), p, 233.

⁶I have adopted the term "tax payer" to represent the British "ratepayer."

fortification concerns.⁷

As the population of the parishes grew, the number involved in decision making became too large to enable an effective administration, and so decision making was frequently, by agreement of the tax payers, turned over to a 'select vestry' composed of the wealthiest and largest tax paying residents. It is important to recognize that the number of individuals actually paying taxes at this time was small, and the group was relatively homogenous. The choice to turn decision making over to a smaller number was rarely if ever opposed, reflecting the homogenous composition of parish taxpayers at the time. Taxpayers shared either a hereditary base of power or, in some instances, were able to purchase their positions. As Sir Francis Palgrave wrote in 1833,

This mode of keeping up the succession of the governing classes [existed] by consent and custom long before it obtained legal sanction.⁸

One outcome of this elite power structure was that parish governments were rarely representative of parish inhabitants. Indeed, the democratic deficiencies of vestries were significant.

The vestries of parishes became closed bodies permanently controlled by a local oligarchy, filled with vacancies by co-optation.⁹

Co-optation was a mechanism used by select vestries to appoint members to

⁷The term "vestry" was adopted as the title for the local government decision making body structure of the parish.

⁸Quoted in S. & B. Webb (1908), English Local Government, (London, UK: Frank Cass and Company, 1963), p. 696.

⁹Harvey and Bather (1968), p. 418.

local committees and designated service authorities. During this period, parish responsibilities expanded to cover a range of services. The supervisory boards for each service included a specified number of co-opted places, or slots, for local authority appointees. These positions were granted by parishes as "patronage" and often resulted in the representation of the interests of property holders exclusively.¹⁰

As the Webbs commented,

It was, in fact, a self-perpetuating device for ensuring...in uninterrupted succession, the necessary group of governing personages and placing authority beyond dispute.¹¹

One of the most significant changes in the British local government system came with the passage of the Poor Laws in 1601. Under these laws, parishes were made formally responsible for the upkeep of the poor residing within the parish boundaries. In conferring this responsibility, parishes were also empowered to collect taxes for parish residents, and to appoint an 'overseer' of the poor. The power to tax, in turn, enhanced the power of the parishes, by providing them with an independent revenue source. The Poor Laws marked the beginning of an increase in the formal role assigned to local government by central government in the provision of services.

Throughout the period, local parish responsibilities grew. These changes in the role assigned to local government could best be viewed as central government's

¹⁰Interestingly, co-optation has become a common practice of British local governance. It is used by some local authorities currently as a mechanisms for inclusion of community based interests. See chapter 6 for a full discussion.

¹¹S. and B. Webb (1908), p. 408.

response to the outcomes of rural land enclosure, urbanization, industrialization and, in turn, the need for better infrastructure services. However, while central government was legislating an increasing number of responsibilities on the localities, this was also coupled with the view that these locally provided services should be compulsory and locally funded. Thus, the growth of local government during this time could be viewed as developing in response to centrally legislated unfunded mandates.

Parishes were mandated to maintain highways, local infrastructure improvements, and elementary education. The cost for these mandates was met primarily by service specific local taxation. Thus while parishes were not given grants from central government of the crown, they were given greater local taxing powers. With these added responsibilities came the power to tax property owners for services rendered. Prior to 1835 there was no central government funding to local authorities. Indeed, as late as 1879, less than 10% of local authority expenditure was met by central government grants.¹²

D. Boroughs -

Larger parishes could apply to the King for a charter granting borough status. Boroughs tended to develop in wealthier areas, particularly mercantile centers.

¹²Department of Environment, Financing Local Government, Cmnd. 9714 (London, UK: HMSO), p. 1, para. 1.6.

Borough status was in reality, "for a price, purchased...from the King."¹³ Boroughs were governed by small groups such as merchants guilds or local property owners. The guilds represented monopolistic organizations of elite power holders. They were accepted as governing entities, due to the financial standing of its members. Guilds represented a guaranteed source of finance for the King. What is interesting about these organizations is that they linked revenue with civic rights. Some guilds would bestow civic rights upon their members. In London, for example, the members of the guild were empowered to elect their own sheriffs. Accordingly, boroughs developed and functioned as economic entities. As M. Weber comments:

purely economic and financial interests were decisive for the constitution of the English city.¹⁴

These organizations of entrepreneurs represented one of the earliest, albeit limited forms of urban democracy in the United Kingdom.

The local governing body in the borough was the 'corporation', whose role was to manage local affairs and services. The structure and the composition of the corporation varied by borough. The borough charter included the names of the first members of the corporation. These members were granted the power to co-opt additional members to fill vacancies. Some corporations had an elected Mayor, though the mayors' powers were for the most part ceremonial.

¹³S. & B. Webb (1908), p. 728.

¹⁴M. Weber (1921), The City, translated by D. Martindale and G. Neuwirth (New York, NY: Collier Books), p. 144.

The borough franchise was irregular and often depended on local custom derived from the parish vestry. Some boroughs were quite democratic; others were not. There was no uniform legislation governing boroughs at the time, so boroughs were left under the control of the corporation.

Thus, in 'scot and lot' boroughs, a liability to pay the poor law rate was accepted as the qualification to vote, while in the 'potwalloper' boroughs, all persons having a single room with a hearth in it were deemed to be able to 'boil their own pot' and so were enfranchised.¹⁵

The majority of the boroughs had some form of limitation on who could vote locally. In some cases the franchise was based upon hereditary privilege; in others it was restricted by charter to those in the corporation.

Most significantly, boroughs had Parliamentary representation. It was the corporation that selected Parliamentary members. In the long run, this Parliamentary power resulted in great corruption in the boroughs.

As seats in Parliament became desirable, much harm was done by the fact that the borough government was often a Parliamentary constituency, with the result that the borough constitution was completely atrophied for all purposes save that of returning members to the House of Commons. Thus, the boroughs which became 'rotten' in the Parliamentary sense, were equally rotten as organs of local government.¹⁶

There were two consequences of the lack of centrally determined, uniform local voting practices. First, representation of local interests was highly uneven. Some boroughs were open and accessible, while others were completely closed. In the case of London, the combination of both accessible and *rotten* boroughs existing under

¹⁵Harvey and Bather (1968), pp. 50-52.

¹⁶Plucknett (1960), p. 683.

separate charters with independent powers made any attempt to create one uniform local government system a very difficult task indeed. The second consequence was that often they came under the control of powerful patrons (the original purchasers of charter status from the Crown), who either owned the borough or were in a position to bribe or intimidate electors. Boroughs, therefore, like parishes were far from democratic,

The corporation of the boroughs were no better than [the parishes]. They too were often closed bodies....Jobbery was rife, and membership was regarded solely as a source of illegal gain. Not surprisingly, the system broke down under the stresses of the industrial revolution. Apart from its corrupt nature it had been designed solely for agrarian society.¹⁷

The fact that boroughs had greater autonomy and power made this democratic deficit a more dangerous feature. Boroughs used their autonomy to amass greater authority for the select few, while also limiting representation for the wider community.

Boroughs, by virtue of their linkages to national decision making structures, ultimately became central institutional focal points of reform movement activity. The boroughs in essence became formal access points not simply to the local decision-makers, but to national decision making as well.

E. Ad-Hoc Authorities

The fourth structural component of British local governance was the "ad-hoc" authority. These authorities were created by central government to deal with service

¹⁷Harvey and Bather (1968), p. 418.

needs that extended over areas wider than the parish or borough. Central government would appoint commissioners to deal with problems such as water supply and sewerage. During this period,

The method was for the central authority to undertake some function of local government and carry out the work through its agents, appointed centrally or working locally. The sheriff is the oldest example of this, but soon we find numerous bodies of commissioners appointed by the crown to work locally and independent to a large extent of older institutions.¹⁸

Commissioners would preside over semi-private bodies with powers to levy rates and make charges. In general, they included some locally appointed or locally elected representatives from relevant parishes and boroughs within their service area. Central government avoided the need to organize a more comprehensive local governance system through these ad-hoc bodies.

The creation and use of ad-hocs became increasingly common throughout the 1800s. This principle grouped together parishes and boroughs not on the basis of historical boundaries or pre-existing charters, but rather according to the requirements of the specific problem. As Wilson and Game point out:

The ad hoc principle sees different boundaries appropriate for the provision of different services, rather than a standard geographical area being universally applicable.¹⁹

And so, the emerging local government system remained highly disorganized.

Boundaries often overlapped and had little relationship to the populations being

¹⁸F. Plucknett (1960), pp. 682-683.

¹⁹D. Wilson & C. Game (1994), Local Government in the United Kingdom. (London, UK: Macmillan, p. 44.

served.

The service areas were not represented by a borough or a parish, though each of these units might fall within the geographic region of a designated service area.

Ad-hocs provided no direct democratic representation, nor was there any democratic access. Popular access was purely contingent on whether the service was provided by the borough, parish or ad-hoc authority.

The emerging principle of local governance in the view of central government and the crown was local government as service provider. However, for the population, local government became the ground upon which they fought for greater representation, access and participation in decision making.

3.2 Traditional Local Government Structures and Political Participation

The formal structural arrangements of British local government resulted in a particular pattern of popular pressure, culminating in the reform movements of the 19th century, which ultimately paved the way for the creation of the modern system of local government that emerged in the mid-1800s. Popular pressures for reform came through the existing, albeit limited, formal channels of access provided by some units of local government, and through the more informal routes of protest and riot.

The 18th and 19th centuries are marked by the growth of a middle class population of property owners who had the financial resources, yet lacked political

power.

In the 18th and early part of the 19th century the call for reform had come from various quarters, from those attacking corruption to those attacking its undemocratic nature, but it was not until the 1820s that the propertied classes began to attack the system as excluding the new classes of manufacturers and industrialists.²⁰

It was this group in particular that put pressure on Parliament for reform. The outlet for this pressure was most potent in municipal boroughs or cities. As Hobsbawm points out, by 1801 there were already eight cities in England with populations over 100,000, and by 1851 almost one third of all Britons were living in cities.²¹

Industrialization created large urban populations with economic wealth but no political power. Cities such as London continued to operate on the basis of the closed "corporation," a system of patronage and privilege. Merchant guilds were the route through which participation was made possible. As Weber illustrates,

With characteristic irony...as the guilds became the sole avenue to civic power forces formerly outside the guilds penetrated them from within. Theoretically membership in the guild was acquired only through apprenticeship and initiation. Actually membership was increasingly obtained through inheritance and purchase....The relationship of the guilds to their nominal business was reduced to fragments. Economic and social tensions split the guilds apart as the guild was transformed into a purely electoral association of gentlemen with access to communal offices.²²

Urbanization resulted in large concentrations of people and subsequent pressures on municipal governments for basic services. However, new populations

²⁰R. Pearson and G. Williams (1984), Political Thought and Public Policy in the 19th Century, (London, UK: Longman Group), p. 28.

²¹E. Hobsbawm (1968), Industry and Empire, (London, UK: Penguin), p. 86.

²²M. Weber (1921), pp. 165-166.

were for the most part excluded from formal decision making channels at the national level, and had inconsistent access at the local level (certain groups in certain parishes and boroughs). The 1800s proved to be a period in which popular pressure would grow. Reforms ultimately followed in a piecemeal fashion.

The economic distress and social conflict of the 1820s and 1830s ...were the result of an inappropriate balance of political institutions and poor legislation rather than the product of some inevitable process of industrialization.²³

It should not be surprising, therefore, that the municipal boroughs became the site of the most vocal and persistent popular pressure for electoral reform. The borough provided access (though not uniform or inclusive) to national decision making. As mentioned above, the boroughs had the privilege of sending members to Parliament. The corporation of the borough was the body that elected or appointed these members. As such, the corporations of the boroughs were viewed by central government as the only 'legitimate outlets' for political participation.

Many corporations were corrupt. In *rotten* or *pocket* boroughs the populations tended to be so small that electoral results could easily be manipulated by patrons. In addition, there were many *closed* boroughs that while having larger populations, had charters which limited popular participation by creating large property qualifications on local voting rights. The outcome according to one estimate was that (prior to 1832), out of 532 parliamentary seats (in the United Kingdom), 51 English and Welsh

²³V. Hatten in S. Steinmo, K. Thelen and F. Longstreth (1992), p. 173.

boroughs with a total of 1500 electors controlled 100 of these seats.²⁴ These disparities led to growing popular pressure to reform not simply the national structure of government, but the local structures as well. However, attention tended to focus on the larger reform of the system of representation in Parliament.

As mentioned above, voting in counties was restricted to local landed families with hereditary privileges. In parishes, voting was restricted to property owners. Neither counties nor parishes, however, had parliamentary representation. Boroughs, in contrast, were much more diversified places. Boroughs such as the "City of London" and the "city of Westminster" had the most expansive franchises of the period, while the *rotten* boroughs had highly restrictive voting rights. Overall, for the boroughs:

most were very small in terms of eligible voters, and most were controlled by peers of the government, only in large boroughs were elections genuine contests. In all, [prior to 1832], only three adult males in every 100 could vote, while many large towns were unrepresented in Parliament...This system was dominated by the nobility, gentry, rural interests, and the church, and naturally enough, the pressure for reform came from industry, commerce and the towns.²⁵

Despite the inconsistencies in relationship to the formation of the corporation and composition therein, all boroughs had Parliamentary representation and provided some degree of access to national decision making. As such, boroughs became the focus for reform movement efforts. As Samuel Beer points out:

²⁴K. Lowenstein (1967), British Cabinet Government, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), p. 102.

²⁵Pearson & Williams (1984), p. 29.

Groups interested in influencing legislation were inhibited from forming voluntary associations to put pressure on Parliament and were obliged to proceed through... 'official outlets.' This meant that the petitions and other expressions of public opinion outside parliament were normally expected to come from such bodies as municipal corporation.²⁶

The first reform bill, proposed in 1831, was designed to allow the middle classes into the political system as junior partners. It passed in the House of Commons, but it was rejected in the House of Lords because it took away the control they had over elections. In response, the middle class led massive demonstrations and riots throughout England. In 1831 riots broke out in Bristol, Nottingham, Derby, Worcester and other cities. The outbreak of riots led many in Parliament to criticize municipal government for its inability to control the unrest. A new bill was introduced in Parliament in 1832 that, under the threat of further popular revolt, was pushed through the House of Lords by the King. The King threatened to create enough new peers to overcome the dissenters.

The reform act of 1832 contained three main provisions. In the first place, it redistributed Parliamentary seats. Prior to the reform there were towns in the north of the country that lacked representation, despite large and growing populations. At the same time there were many very small boroughs that had in some cases become "rotten," and others simply had greater representation than their size warranted. The 1832 reforms disenfranchised 56 rotten boroughs, and 31 small boroughs lost one member. This allowed for the transfer of 142 seats to the largest towns in England.

²⁶S. Beer (1982), Modern British Politics, (London, UK: Faber & Faber), p. 17.

The bill had also widened the franchise. In the boroughs the customary rights to vote were abolished and replaced by a uniform requirement--the occupation of any premise of an actual value of ten pounds.

Although this qualification enfranchised the wealthier members of the middle classes, in practice it sometimes took the vote away from the artisans who had enjoyed the vote in some boroughs by virtue of older qualifications. This reform also introduced the electoral register. Only those whose names were placed on the register could vote, thus formalizing voting rights. This requirement forced political parties, who up until this point had been organized only within Parliament, to extend their organizations out into the municipalities in order to capitalize upon the newly enfranchised and register them as party affiliates.

Constitutionally, the effects of the Reform Act were fundamental and far reaching. The system of nomination was replaced by the principle of election. Members of Parliament remained aristocratic, with land and trade interests predominating, but they were no longer independent of the views of their constituents. Since ultimate sovereignty now rested with the electorate, parties were extended from Parliament to the country...Lastly, the vesting of political power in the electorate increased the importance of the representative body, the Commons, at the expense of the Lords.²⁷

While the Reform Bill of 1832 was in reality a mild and moderate reform, its passage had involved many groups and ushered in a period of further reform. Between 1832 and 1884, as a result of continuing popular pressure, the number of voters nationally

²⁷Harvey and Bather (1968), p. 54.

increased from 500,000 in 1830 to roughly 5,000,000 by 1884.²⁸

Table 3.1 Extension of the Franchise 1832-1928²⁹

Date of Reform	Enfranchised Group	Total # New Voters	Total # Voters	Population (million)
1832	Middle Class	500,000	1,000,000	20
1867	Artisans	1,000,000	2,500,000	27
1884	Agric. Labor	2,000,000	5,000,000	31

Thus, in 1884 roughly 16% of the population was accorded voting rights. However, women did not receive full and equal voting rights until 1928.

The 1832 reform had brought into the electoral system the middle classes, made up primarily of merchants and industrialists. These groups tended to be located in larger towns, and felt the pressures of concentrated populations and the need for reforms to the municipal system of administration.

In 1833, the first 'reformed' Parliament came together, and with it came many members in favor of local government reform. As a result, old institutions (Parliament) were put in the service of differing ends, particularly the democratization of local government structures. Popular grievances against municipal corporations suddenly became prominent both inside and outside the House of Commons. In particular, the misappropriation of funds by corporations became a hot topic. As the

²⁸A. Allen (1964), The English Voter, (London, UK: English Universities Press), p. 10.

²⁹ibid.

Webbs pointed out:

petitions reached the Members of Parliament, praying for the substitution of a 'Magistracy chosen by the people' for the 'self elect,' and demanding complete publicity and control of corporate funds.³⁰

The outcome was the appointment of a Parliamentary Commission to study the problem and recommend changes. Over an 18-month period, 20 commissioners inquired into the affairs of 285 towns. Their report was issued in April 1835, and resulted in the passage of the Municipal Corporations Act in 1835. The Act created a uniform system of elected councils throughout England. In these councils, all male taxpayers with three years residence in the town were entitled to vote.

Boroughs were divided into wards, represented by three councilors. Each was elected for three-year terms, with aldermen being designated by councilors to serve terms of six years. The notable exception to the reform was the case of London, which, it was officially argued, posed problems different from those of other towns in the country. The Commission did, however, study the London case, and that report was published two years later in 1837. The suggestion at the time was that the existing Corporation of the City of London should be expanded to cover the entirety of the London region (see below).³¹

Pressure group activity also began to develop during the 1800s. These groups

³⁰S. & B. Webb (1920), p. 709.

³¹The Herbert Commission Report (1957), Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London 1957-1960, Cmnd. 1162, (London, UK: HMSO), para. 48.

tended to be single issue oriented.

Very commonly, however, their aims embraced only a single major piece of legislation, and when they achieved this end the association might well disband.³²

The single issue and temporary feature of interest group activity at the time could be interpreted to be an outcome of the institutional configuration. As discussed above, national government tended to be reactive rather than proactive in its policy-making activities. Policy was handled by separate legislation and separate governing bodies.

Tangentially, we find that public opinion is increasingly voiced through single-issue voluntary associations. As Samuel Beer argues, this period was one of growing 'public opinion', evidenced by a proliferation of voluntary associations: the London Workingmens Association (1820), the Anti-Corn Law League (1839), the Chartists (1840), the Committee for the 10 Hour Bill (1840), the Liberation Society (1860), the National Reform League (1865) the Municipal Reform Association (1866), the National Education League (1853), and the London Municipal Reform League (1881). Each one became prominent and influential, each with specific goals and purposes, emerging for a short time period, and then receding as their issues either were dealt with legislatively, or receded in importance.

Political party activities also began to take form in a more formal and organized way than ever before. The development of party organization was a direct outcome of the expansion of the franchise, and the growing recognition that party

³²S. Beer (1965), p. 44.

organization was essential to maintain local and national power. The first national extra-parliamentary party was formed in 1869.

The industrial revolution had brought with it a range of social problems, most notably in large cities. However, municipal reform came in the first instance in response to corrupt practices of municipal corporation. The corporations often used funds to support favored candidates, thus perpetuating property privilege. Promotion of privilege clearly flew in the face of the growing pressures for democratic reform, and the growing presence of a vocal and active middle class. The electorate grew throughout the 1800s as a result of the reforms, but with each opening came pressure for more. Clearly, once the door was partially open, it was impossible to close it again. The Parliamentary reforms of 1832 ultimately resulted in the beginning of a revolution in municipal governance, yet it took another fifty years for the system to be totally overhauled and restructured.

3.3 Traditional Local Government in the Metropolis: London

Until 1855, London was governed by a series of separate municipalities. The City of London and Westminster were both designated as boroughs, each with its own administrative machinery.³³ The "City of London" had the most fully developed

³³The City of London reflected one square mile of what we now refer to as London. It was, and continues to be, the financial center of the whole of England. When referring to the "city" it is important to recognize that this was simply one section of Greater London, and not the entity of what we now refer to as London.

local governance system, including a Lord Mayor, Alderman, and a Common Council. Outside of these two cities were 49 parishes each controlled by a vestry system.

All told, municipal functions in Victorian London were carried out by over 170 separate single purpose entities, 41 parishes and two boroughs.³⁴ Between 1800 and 1900, the population of London grew by roughly six million.³⁵ The massive population growth created a range of problems in the urban environment, health, road, transportation, sanitation, housing, education and so on. Victorian London, however, lacked the physical infrastructure, the administrative capacity, and a local governance system capable of responding in a coordinated or unified way.

Reform of the structures of London government was slow. The institutional stasis could be explained by both the unwillingness of Parliament to alter its power base, and division in interest among the various municipalities that made up the London region. These delays distinguish the London experience from the rest of the English municipalities.

First, the seat of national government, Parliament, resided in the London borough of Westminster. Historically, Parliament viewed the creation of any

³⁴Perhaps the most thorough presentation on London local government during the 1800s can be found in A.S.A. Briggs (1993), Victorian Cities (Berkeley: University of California Press). Also S. & B. Webb (1908), The Manor and the Borough (Edinburgh, UK: Thomas Nelson).

³⁵A. Forrester, S. Lansley, & R. Pauley (1985), Beyond Our Ken (London, UK: Fourth Estate), p. 12.

organized political power base in the geographic region surrounding the government to be potentially dangerous to the constitutional principle of parliamentary sovereignty. Parliament resisted reform. The basis for this fear could be explained in part by prior experiences with the City of London. The "City" had been the most autonomous and vocal municipality in the whole of England. As the Webbs commented,

From 1689 right down to 1835, the Corporation of the City of London stands forth as a sort of unofficial mouth piece of the people of England, as against their national government.³⁶

The wealth of the "City" had allowed it to purchase a great deal of autonomy and privilege from the Crown over time. It was in many ways more democratically advanced than the surrounding areas making up the London region. As Dr. Johnson recalls,

The contrast between the City and the rest of the metropolis is striking: on the one hand a fully organized and integrated administration with its apex of power concentrated in the Lord Mayor; on the other, a series of loosely knit communities.³⁷

In addition to the City's more developed local governance structure, it had a legal monopoly of markets within a seven mile radius of its one square mile territory. It levied coal duties over a 12 mile radius, and it regulated, controlled and taxed the entire port of London. The City interests put up a great deal of resistance to any reforms that might alter their power base.

³⁶S. & B. Webb (1908), p. 574.

³⁷D. Marshall (1968), Dr. Johnson's London (New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons), p. 92.

Institutional fragmentation posed a range of problems for the London region. Groups inside Parliament, in local government, and vested interests in the localities put up stubborn resistance to attempts to create a more uniform and comprehensive local governance system. Furthermore, the City of London itself resisted because it had over the years amassed a great deal of wealth and status, which it was unprepared to give up. In addition, boroughs such as Westminster, Southwark, Hackney and Chelsea all had ancient roots and varying degrees of independence in local decision making. However, the City put up the greatest resistance. With its own elected council and privileges, the notion of incorporation into a larger London-wide municipality meant a loss of both power and wealth.

In 1837 the power of its lobby at Westminster was enough to kill off the first attempt to create a London wide council.³⁸

Similar resistance came from the more affluent parts of the London region, such as Paddington and Saint James. It was an alliance of the affluent that was responsible for the fact that London lagged behind the rest of England in municipal reform.

In 1848 and 1849 a cholera epidemic swept through the poorer parishes in the London region. In the summer of 1849 13,000 people died.³⁹ The epidemic was blamed on the inadequacy of the sewer system. This was one factor leading to the appointment of a Royal Commission to study the London case.

The Commission explored the possibility of a centralization of services in the

³⁸A. Forester, S. Lansley and R. Pauley (1985), p. 13.

³⁹A. Briggs (1993), p. 375.

London region. They argued that the creation of a single elected council for the whole of London would be unwise, because London was fundamentally divided. These divisions, they asserted, mitigated against the creation of an elected London-wide government for two reasons. The differences in interest between the various geographic areas were extensive, and the Commission argued that no one body could effectively represent this diversity of interest. In addition, they argued that if such a body was created, the number of interests would make it unwieldy and incapable of acting. The Commission also considered an extension of the powers of the "City" London-wide. They found this to be unacceptable because the City lacked knowledge of the problems of the surrounding areas. The "City" would be unable to adequately represent all of London. The result was a compromise.

In 1855, the Metropolitan Board of Works (MBW) was created. The first London-wide government authority. In response to the strong pressures from the wealthier boroughs and the "City", the MBW was made a weak administrative unit, covering a limited range of policy areas. Its income came from property taxes derived from the London vestries and duties on coal and wine within the administrative area.

The MBW was an indirectly elected authority in control of sewers and drainage. Its administrative territory was determined by the networks of sewers and drains that linked the various London boroughs and parishes. It was governed by a body of 45 delegates with three-year terms: 23 from the vestries of London's largest parishes, and 15 delegates representing district boards (groups of small London

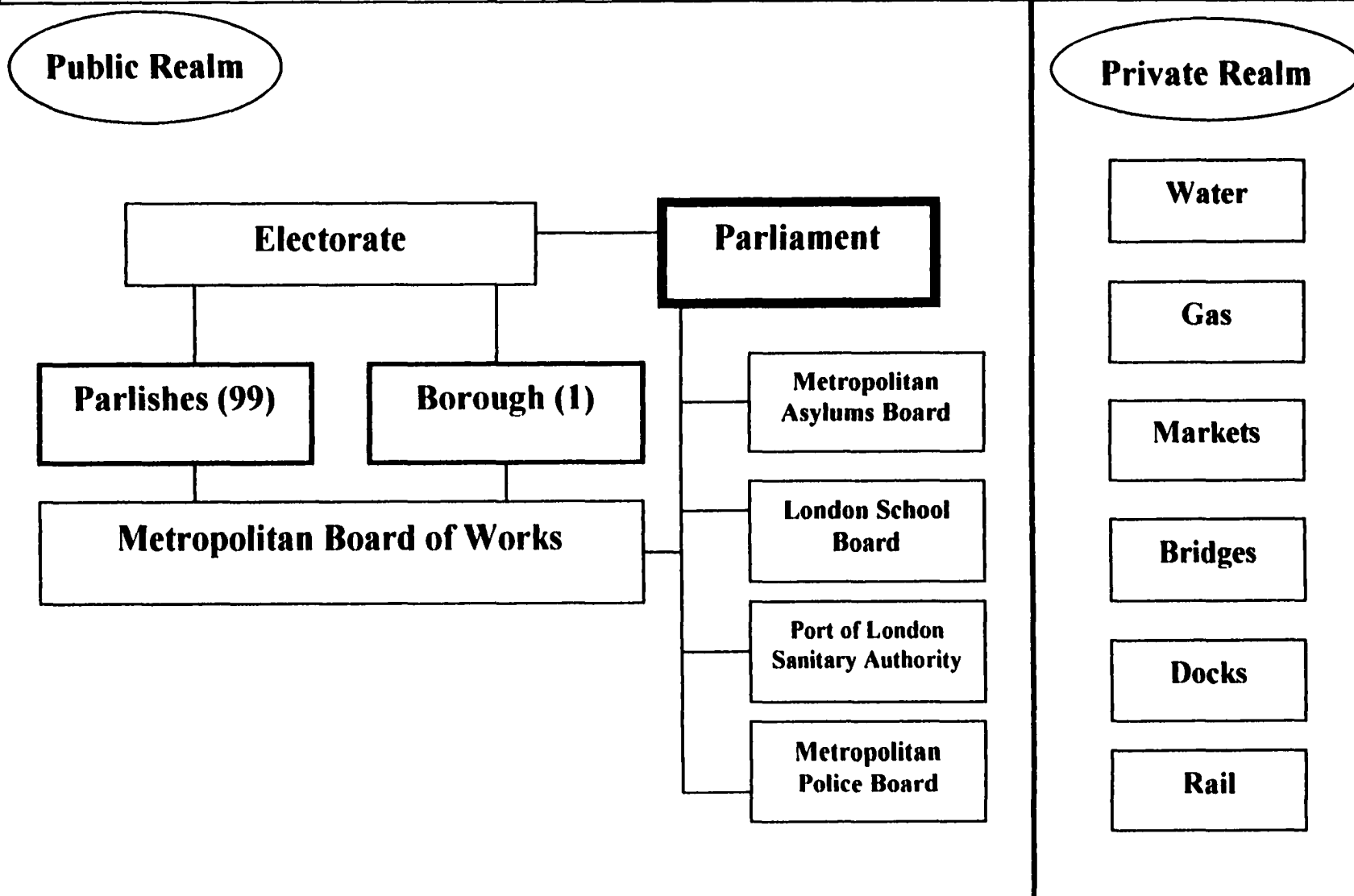
parishes).⁴⁰ It had a paid chairman. Its administrative area covered roughly 2.8 million residents, over a 116 square mile area. The MBW was remote from the ordinary elector. Moreover, although it had representatives from the locality, its authority was not derived from this popular base. Rather, its authority came indirectly from the local governments, and its power came directly from central government.

London as compared with the rest of England was a laggard in democratic local government reform. Until the end of the 19th century, the system remained one in which popular governance was divided amongst each of the parishes and boroughs in the London region, while the more centralized body, the MBW, remained an appointed administrative unit rather than an elected representative body. Service in London remained under the control of a series of centrally appointed ad-hoc bodies. Water, gas, markets, bridges, parks, docks and rails were all privately controlled (see figure 3.1 below).

⁴⁰T. Byrne (1984), Local Government in Britain, 4th Edition. (Middlesex, UK: Penguin), p. 78.

Figure 3.1

London's Local Government 1855-1888 Institutional Environment



3.4 The Emergence of Modern Local Government in London

Between 1855 and 1888 three significant factors set the stage for the final transition to a modern form of elected local government. First, the MBW, as an administrative institution providing London-wide services, helped to stimulate the idea of "metropolitanism" for the London region. During its 33 years, the MBW had carried out significant improvements in London's roadways. The MBW introduced building codes for the London region and established many public parks and open spaces. The MBW, by promoting new visions of what was possible for the broader municipality of London in turn created a more favorable climate for the development of an improved metropolitan authority. As A. Briggs points out, "its horizons were far wider than the vestries or the Corporation of the City."⁴¹ Thus, while the MBW had emerged in 1855 amidst much division and contention, it ultimately paved the way for the development of a modern form of metropolitan local government.

Secondly, the expansion of the franchise in 1867, following popular pressures voiced informally through protest and riot,⁴² brought the middle and working classes into the political arena. They were a large and vocal population, supportive of democratic local government reform in London. The reform Act of 1884 had also extended the Parliamentary franchise to agricultural workers. However, most rural

⁴¹A. Briggs (1993), p. 323.

⁴²The Hyde Park riots occurred in 1884. In 1866 and 1867, there were massive protests and riots in Trafalgar Square, culminating in further demonstration in Hyde Park.

areas were still governed by JPs under the ancient county system. Pressure for reform grew both inside and outside London.

The period was one in which new actors emerged, utilizing existing formal institutions to press for local government reforms. Interest groups presented petitions to Parliament. Proposals were advanced by municipal interest groups in Parliament in 1858, 1863, 1870 and 1875. Each of these proposals, however, failed due to the fragmentation of London interests. The diversity of opinion in each case was too great. Compromise was not feasible, and so each attempt failed. However, the pressure for change remained a constant throughout this period.

Lastly, London by this time had become the only municipality in the entirety of the United Kingdom without an elected municipal government.

London was the seat of the Government, the home of the sovereign, the center of the legal system and the learned profession, the hub of literacy and the scientific world, a world metropolis, but it could not speak in its own name.⁴³

As one East London member of Parliament commented in March 1888,

To the fact that whereas every other borough in the country possesses a body directly representing the ratepayers, no such body exists in London. There is no one elected or responsible to the ratepayers.⁴⁴

Clearly, the institutional environment was ripe for change. The catalyst came in the form of a scandal in the MBW.

Several members of the MBW were accused of corruption and malpractice.

⁴³A. Briggs (1993), p. 324.

⁴⁴A. Briggs (1993), pp. 332-333.

The outcome of this scandal was a recognition by both central and local governing authorities that, because the MBW was indirectly elected, it was unaccountable and therefore prone to corruption. A Royal Commission was appointed in 1888 to investigate the allegations of corruption at the MBW, and to examine the possibilities for rationalization of the local government system more broadly. This led to the passage of the Local government Act of 1888.

3.5 Modern Local Government: The Development of the London County Council

The 1888 Act, set up a system of elected county councils throughout England and Wales. A total of 58 county councils were created across England and Wales, including the London County Council. County councils were initially given responsibility for highways, asylums, weights and measures, and police. Boroughs with populations of 50,000 or more could apply for county borough status. County boroughs were all-purpose authorities independent of the County. Eighty-two county boroughs were created. This marked the beginning of the modern period of local governance in the United Kingdom. All local authorities were now constitutionally defined and based on democratic principles.

The London County Council (LCC) was the first directly elected London-wide local authority in the administrative county of London. While the replacement of the MBW by the LCC was significant, it was by no means comprehensive. The mandate of the Royal Commission studying the problem in 1888 had been simply to explore

the potential options and investigate the scandals. Considerations of broad based or comprehensive reorganization for London were beyond its purview.

The 1888 reform addressed the metropolitan service requirements of the London region, and the need to make such a body accountable through elections. However, it did not deal with the institutional divisions and fragmentation that had plagued London throughout its history. This legislation was a reactive and piecemeal attempt to resolve the most pressing of London concerns: the replacement of the MBW (while still trying to satisfy the multiple and competing interests).

While the Local Government Act of 1888 was not comprehensive, it was distinctive in that it was the first piece of legislation to formally define the London areas, politically and administratively. The geographic areas were the same as the MBW's. No boundary revision was made to compensate for population growth since 1855; this would prove very problematic for the LCC. The population was already spilling over the defined boundaries, into separate counties and boroughs (which had separate governing authorities). This added to the fragmentation and confusion that characterized London's urban development.

The LCC was made up of 126 councilors, elected for three-year terms, with half retiring every three years. Staggered terms, it was felt, would allow the LCC to continue functioning through electoral cycles. In addition to elected councilors, the LCC also had 20 aldermen (chosen by councilors) with six-year terms.

The aldermanic system was introduced mainly to secure a measure of stability and continuity....In addition it was justified on the grounds that it could bring

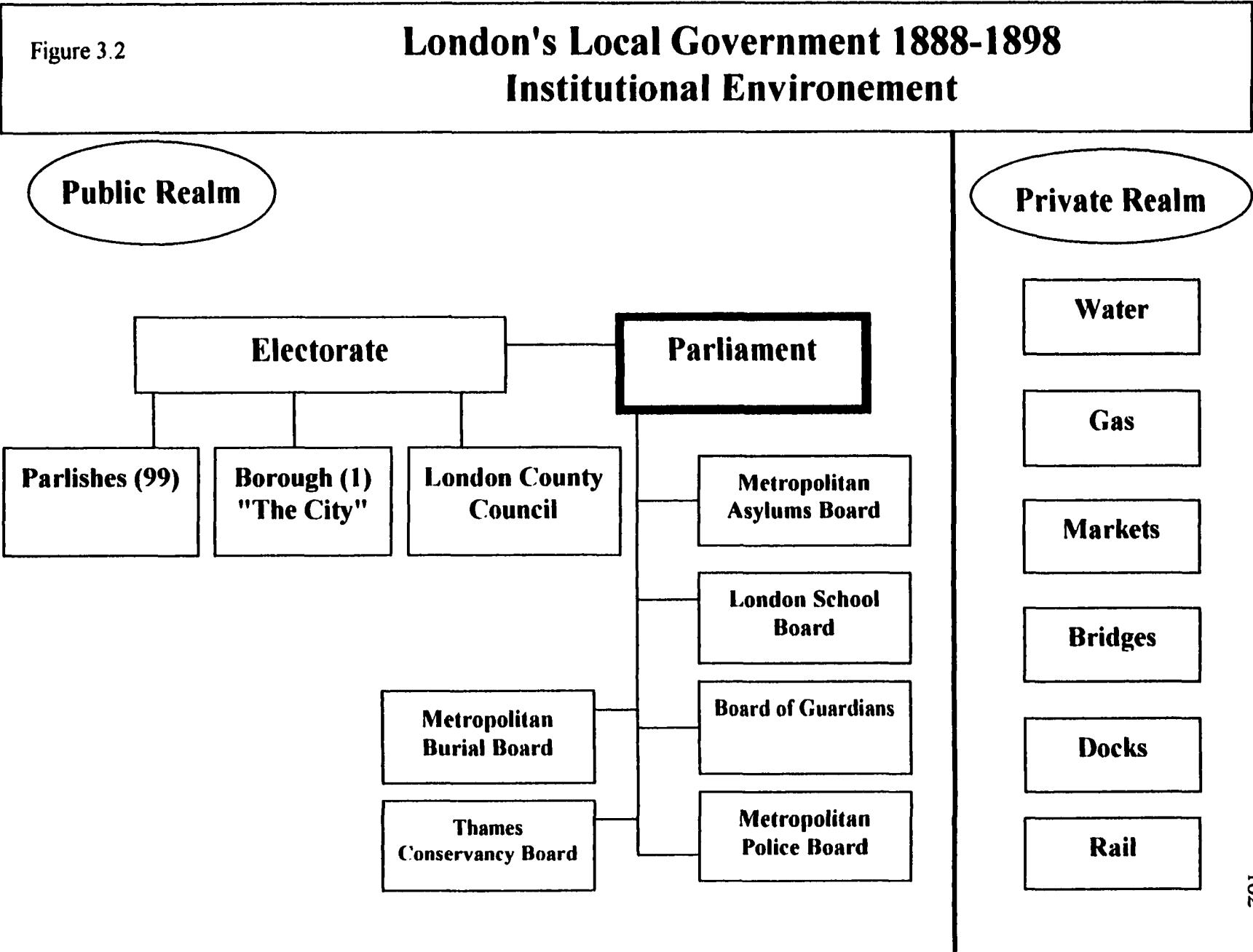
on to the council persons of ability and experience who might have been unwilling to gain a place through open election.⁴⁵

The area represented by each councilor was the same as the parliamentary constituency. There were a total of 42 electoral divisions, with an average of 53,000 electors within each district. Three councilors were elected for each of the districts. On average the ratio of representatives to constituents was 1:17,666. The highest number of electors could be found in the "City" and Westminster (1:26,000) and the lowest in Bermondsey (1:12,285).⁴⁶

Administratively, the 1888 Act was one of centralization. The LCC was given limited powers and function over the entire region, while the parishes and boroughs continued to exist. The LCC in its original form was one amongst several governing institutions in the London region (see figure 3.2 below).

⁴⁵Byrne (1986), p. 52.

⁴⁶The Greater London Council (1968), London Statistics Volume VII (London, UK: GLC).



The fragmentation between metropolitan and local levels of government led quickly to the emergence of partisan political organizations. The Conservatives represented the localist interests of the boroughs, while the Progressives represented metropolitan interests. The LCC became a highly contentious political arena, divided from the start along rigid party lines (see chapter 4).

3.6 Some Concluding Thoughts: The London Institutional Terrain

The complexity of the institutional environment in London reflected the tradition of piecemeal local government reform. At no time was reform approached from a comprehensive perspective. Rather, local government was characterized by successive institutional layering. There are three explanations for this lack of comprehensiveness. Locally, strong pressures from the "City" and the wealthier parishes to prevent the creation of too strong a metropolitan government resulted in the LCC being made relatively weak at its inception. For this reason, Sidney Webb argued that the LCC had been born in chains. The second explanation had to do with central government's desire to avoid the creation of another political opposition in London. Third, strong fears of the dangers of mass democracy and mob rule persisted in Parliament. The memories of the French revolution were still strong.

Tories were haunted by the nightmare of a politically controlled police force standing aside as the 'mob' stormed parliament.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Forrester, Lansley and Pauley (1984), p. 19.

And so, the LCC worked alongside the parishes, the City, the School board, the Poor Law Unions, the Commissioners of police, and the Metropolitan Asylums Board. Although the LCC was intended to be a "metropolitan" local authority, at its inception there were many competing local authorities. As Wilson and Game comment,

The single purpose ad-hoc authority is not something of an afterthought...It has a long pedigree which was at least in part, the product of the delay in any general reform of subnational government.⁴⁸

The first ten years of the LCC were characterized by battles between the various tiers of local government.

In February 1898 twenty of the largest vestries presented a petition to the government urging that they should have conferred upon them 'greater civic dignity, at least commensurate with that possessed by numerous municipal boroughs of far less importance.'⁴⁹

In response to the growing conflict between local levels of government, in 1899, a second local government reform was carried out to bring order to the lower tier of London's government: the parishes.

The Local Government Act of 1899 was based upon a compromise among the pre-existing parishes, which sought to maintain their power base, municipal government, and ad-hoc central authorities. The intention of this reform was to provide a counter weight to the LCC. Creating an informal check upon the power of the LCC, it was argued, would avoid the possibility of the development of an overly radical and strong power in London. The government made no linkage between the

⁴⁸D. Wilson & C. Game (1994), p. 44.

⁴⁹A. Briggs (1993), p. 342.

local levels arguing that such a connection would "inevitably drag these councils into the political vortex in which the LCC appeared to flourish."⁵⁰

Therefore, central government, under the Conservative leadership of Lord Balfour therefore decided to keep the upper tier authority of London government (the LCC) relatively weak. The parishes were consolidated into 28 new metropolitan boroughs, each with an elected Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC). The MBCs were given responsibility for public health, housing, libraries, recreation, and taxation.

Although this legislation was seen as a rationalization of London, it was in fact a solidification of institutional fragmentation. The powers of the LCC were severely limited both legislatively from above, and geopolitically from below by the London boroughs themselves. Overall, London remained fragmented. Three tiers of government operated simultaneously in the London region.

In turn, rather than unifying the London region, these reforms restricted the development patterns of cooperation within and between London local governance authorities. The haphazard geographic and functional development of local government in London helps to explain the difficulties the LCC encountered in garnering popular support for itself throughout its 65 year reign.

The transition from ancient to modern form was the outcome of historical development, compromise and continuous adjustment. The formal movement forward

⁵⁰Lord Balfour, quoted in A. Briggs (1993), p. 342.

came in the first instance with the expansions of the franchise, then the formation of the LCC, and finally the rationalization of borough governments ten years later.

The LCC was a unifying agent for some interests in the London region, while the MBCs perpetuated the continued fragmentation in the wealthier segments of the area. Divisions of powers between levels of government resulted in haphazard functional developments and confusion with regard to issues of accountability.

Thus, although the creation of elected authorities was intended to create a more accountable form of metropolitan government; in fact, it ultimately made things much more confusing for the electorate. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, these divisions resulted in very distinct patterns of participation across the London boroughs. While the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1899 created a range of democratic local governing institutions, they provided greater access to decision making for the masses than had existed to that point. However, the reforms failed to unify the London population.

Ch. 4
 Modern Local Government: Formal Institutional Design
Local Government Reform: From LCC to GLC

From 1899 through 1964 (the LCC phase), London was governed by the institutions that had been established during the late Victorian era.

The pre-1965 system reflected more than anything else the culmination of historic, pragmatic and incremental adjustments to numerous organizations which had performed functions in the pre-democratic era. The system was latterly criticized by planners, administrators, and academics as being anomalous, incomprehensible and in need of fundamental reorganizations.¹

After the collectively comprehensive reorganizations of the late 1800s, local government reform again took the form of reactive, small and incremental structural change.² The problem with the incremental approach was that, alongside the 63 year period (1835-1898) of local government modernization, there occurred population movements, urbanization, suburbanization and industrialization which rapidly altered local governments' environmental context. As a result, by many accounts, the previous period of local government modernization was too little too late.

The system [was] obsolescent from the outset, since many of the county boroughs had boundaries too tightly drawn to allow for suburbanization and many towns just below the population threshold immediately aspired to the status of county borough.³

¹M. Hebbert & T. Travers (1988), The London Government Handbook, (London, UK: Cassell Publishers Ltd.), p. 174.

²I refer to this as "collectively comprehensive" by virtue of the fact that the reforms (1835, 1855, 1888, 1894 and 1898, respectively) only in combination, can be viewed as comprehensive, cumulatively as a total transformation of the local arena. Thus, while the outcome was comprehensive, the process by which these reforms were made was piecemeal.

³A. Alexander (1982), Local Government in Britain Since Reorganization, (London, UK: Allen & Unwin), p.4.

The subsequent LCC phase (1899-1964) was a period of formal institutional adjustment, fine-tuning and tinkering with the newly created local government institutions, and adaptation of these institutions to a range of new actors and participants in the local political environment.

The relationship between institutions and participation during this phase of local governance can best be described as undergoing a slow yet dynamic transformation. This is characterized by the age old conflict between the old guard seeking to sustain the status quo through the maintenance of traditional institutions and authority relationships in the locality, and the emerging vanguard of the newly enfranchised seeking to restructure local institutions and power relationships. The LCC phase reflected the clash between old and new, catalyzed by crises brought about by war, which ultimately produced transformation in the institutions, values and structures of local government in London.

Taken as a whole, there were five key formal institutional processes that characterized the LCC phase. First, there was limited territorial reorganization of county and borough boundaries based on population growth and redistricting to adjust to the changing socioeconomic contexts. Second, there was a functional reorganization of services in part, or in some cases in whole, between different levels of local government. Third, the phase marked an increasing national centralization of powers and functions previously under the control of local authorities. Fourth, there developed a new genre of authorities to deal with "regional" (outside London) and "metropolitan" (inside London) service needs. Finally, this was a period in which the

dominant local governance values were efficiency and cost effectiveness. Though innovative ideas regarding equity and equality in local governance emerge, they fail to become entrenched as values.

The LCC phase was in many ways a period of institutional transition. The period began with the boroughs as the salient local governance institutions, but ended with boroughs as latent local institutions. Crises in local governance brought about by the evacuation, bombing and rebuilding of London during WWII, and the recognition that rebuilding required a coordinated response across borough boundaries (metropolitan rather than local solutions), led to the growing salience of the LCC as a vehicle to respond to metropolitan service needs. Central government also took on a more active role in the locality throughout this period. Their approach was to create new forms of quasi-independent regional and central institutions, operating in some cases, alongside, and in others replacing existing institutions in the locality. By the end of this period in local governance, boroughs receded in institutional significance, while metropolitan and central government grew in importance.

The expansion of the franchise coupled with industrialization and population movements resulted in changes in the political and socio-economic climate of London. By 1884 London's population had grown to three times that of most major European cities, surpassing New York, Berlin and the entire Irish population.⁴ However, three-quarters of London's population remained working class. In 1899 30.7 percent

⁴S. Pennybacker (1995), A Vision for London 1889-1914 (London, UK: Routledge), p. 16.

of Londoners were living in poverty.⁵ And while the reforms of 1884 had increased the London electorate by 30 percent, prior to 1918, "a vision articulated for all could only be affirmed or rejected electorally by some."⁶ Local elites initially perceived that mass popular participation could be a potentially destabilizing force in the political system. The introduction of working class agendas coupled with the perceived lack of political experience by the newly enfranchised led decision makers to endorse popular participation by election only. As Dicey wrote in 1885:

The sole legal right of electors under the English constitution is to elect....Electors have no legal means of initiating, sanctioning, or of repealing the legislation.... No court will consider for a moment the argument that a law is invalid as being opposed to the opinion of the electorate; their opinion can be legally expressed through Parliament, and through Parliament alone.⁷

Underlying these legal limitations were a concrete set of values regarding the qualifications for effective political participation.

As John Stuart Mill argued, the newly enfranchised lacked the educational qualifications and political experience to enable them to effectively assume positions of power. The rhetoric of these arguments tended to be grounded in values stressing managerial efficiency and paternalism. As Bagehot asserted:

Our statesmen...have to guide the new voters in the exercise of the franchise: to guide them quietly, and without saying what they are doing, but still to guide them....The common ordinary mind is quite unfit to fix for itself what political questions it shall attend to; it is as much as it can do to judge decently of the questions which drift down to it, and are brought before it; it almost never settles its topics; it can only decide upon the issues of these topics. And

⁵ibid, p. 24.

⁶ibid, pp. 26-27.

⁷A.V. Dicey (1885), Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution. Eighth Edition (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1982), part 1, p. 19.

in settling what these questions shall be, statesmen have now especially a great responsibility....⁸

Competent governance could only be achieved through qualified and experienced leadership.

During the LCC phase the franchise continued to grow. New groups gaining access electorally brought pressure to bear upon government institutions and the values upon which they were predicated. During this phase in local government a distinct change in values occurred. Elites gradually accepted in the first instance the inevitable expansion of the franchise, and over time to recognize both the necessity and subsequently the virtue of greater local involvement (more than elections) in local political processes and policy making. New institutional avenues of political access shaped patterns of political participation. Over time political participation ultimately led to the total restructuring of the institutions themselves. This was the dynamism of institutional development. Towards the close of the LCC period, values of equity and equality in governance gain salience (see section E, *The Herbert Commission*). The institutional transformations that created the LCC ultimately led to its destruction.

An enlarged and more diverse set of local government actors, was slowly empowered during the LCC phase. Concomitantly, these new actors brought with them a range of values, which grew in prominence during the LCC phase and ultimately resulted in a total transformation in the form and function of local

⁸Bagehot, The English Constitution (2nd ed.), quoted in A.V. Dicey (1914) "Preface to the Eighth Edition" in Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution, (Indianapolis, IA: Liberty Classics, 1982), pp. cxix-cxx.

government in London (see section E). The process of change, however, was slow and reflective of the resistance posed by traditional power holders with a firm grasp on local institutions and decision-making processes.

4.1 The County and Borough Boundary Reshuffle

Locally, the LCC phase was a period of minor territorial adjustments within existing formal institutions. The areal process of institution building was driven by two distinct and often opposing forces: local governments seeking greater power over other local governments institutions, and national government attempting to exert greater control over urban governance institutions. Both were shaped by the rivalry between political parties and newly enfranchised populations. As John Bebout comments, local areas in London are the outcome of two distinct processes.

One is the process by which municipal corporations...or boroughs, have been established at the request of their inhabitants and have been given specific governing powers over a delineated, usually more or less urban area....The other process, which has a longer history is one by which....the realm was divided [nationally and regionally] for various governmental purposes.⁹

Locally motivated formal institution building was facilitated by the Local Government Act of 1888. The Act included a codicil whereby local authorities could apply for county borough status if their population was in excess of 50,000. To achieve this, constituency boundaries were altered or parishes merged based on the approval of all affected local authority councils and central government. Between

⁹John E. Bebout (1966), "An Ancient Partnership: Local Government, Magna Carta, and the National Interest" Published for the Magna Carta Commission (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press), pp. 56-57.

1899 and 1964 most lower tier (MBC and parish) local government change in Britain was the outcome of these minor areal adjustments: redistricting to account for population shifts, the creation of new boroughs out of parishes which had grown in population (over 50,000), and agreements of parishes to merge with adjacent parishes to increase their population size and enable them to jointly benefit from the greater powers ascribed to borough and county governments.

With borough designation came a range of symbolic or ceremonial rewards. These symbols encouraged the development of a sense of distinctiveness among the boroughs. Subsequent research has pointed to these emoluments as factors that facilitated parochialism within the London boroughs during the LCC phase. As Robson points out:

No attempt was made to make them [boroughs] partners in the common task of governing London....Each of the 28 metropolitan borough councils was to have its own mayor and aldermen, with their robes of office, gilt chains, a mace, and all the other insignia calculated to encourage feelings of their separate civic consciousness.¹⁰

Resistance to the creation of new boroughs came from members of pre-existing local and national institutions. Institution building based on limited space required modifying territorial boundaries. Members of Parliament tended to oppose the creation of new boroughs, because with borough creation came new members of parliament, whose constituencies were formed at the expense of existing

¹⁰W.A. Robson (1961), *The Greater London Boroughs*, Greater London Papers, No. 3 (London, UK: LSE), pp. 6-7. Note: Mayors at the time were purely ceremonial positions. They held no formal power.

constituencies.¹¹ In addition, each new borough or county meant the creation of new power bases, always perceived as potentially threatening to sitting members and the majority in Parliament.

The rhetoric of Parliamentary debate over areal institutional formation concerned the optimal size of local authorities necessary to facilitate more efficient local service delivery. It was believed that, through research on existing boroughs and counties, an optimal population size could be identified. What is perhaps most telling about these debates is that no empirical research was ever carried out (see sections B and E below). Determinations were made based upon the more subjective arguments raised by existing boroughs seeking to sustain the status quo, and those areas seeking change. Indeed, despite continuous discussion throughout the phase (see section E below), it was only at the end of the LCC period that a more empirical attempt at analysis was considered. As the Herbert Commission commented in 1958,

These policies were always stated by Government spokesmen to be applicable *pending a general review of local government in the London area*. Our inquiry seems to be the general review which has been contemplated for many years.¹²

The rhetoric of *economies of scale* tended to be the critical factor in defining borough size, while the underlying reality was clearly much more about politics and maintaining power. Throughout the LCC phase, national governments used population

¹¹See T. Byrne (1986), Local Government in Britain, Fourth Edition, (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books Ltd.), p. 14.

¹²Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London 1957-1960, (October 1960), Report Presented to Parliament CMND. 1164, (London, UK: HMSO), para. 675.

size to limit the growth of new local authorities by increasing the size requirements for securing borough status. Parishes, not surprisingly, sought to enhance their position by advocating decreases in population requirements for borough status. National government won the battle, and as a result the population qualification size was raised incrementally throughout this period, moving from 50,000 to 100,000 in population by the close of this period. In reading the Parliamentary debates of the period, it is clear that a range of attempts were made to raise this figure even further (see section E *The Onslow Commission* below).¹³

Nowhere was Parliamentary and local opposition so vociferous as it was in London, the seat of national government. Not only were there fears of new formal institutional power bases in London, but also at the time there were clearly suspicions of popular participation. Specifically, members feared the introduction of new political agendas by the working classes and the poor. As Bagehot commented in the early 1900s:

If the first work of the poor voter is to create a "poor man's paradise," as poor men are apt to fancy that Paradise, and as they are apt to think they can create it, the great political trial now beginning will fail. The wide gift of the elective franchise will be a great calamity to the whole nation, and to those who gain it as great a calamity as to any.¹⁴

In London the apprehension was heightened by virtue of the geographic concentration of the newly enfranchised. Government feared that a powerful working class

¹³Initially Members of Parliament in the London region sought to raise this number to 150,000, to avoid the creation of too many boroughs and the loss of power which would result in such a change. This figure later changed several times; after WWI it was raised first to 75,000 in 1926, and then to 100,000 between 1945 and 1949.

¹⁴W. Bagehot quoted in A. Dicey (1914), pp. cxx.

opposition might develop within the newly created local government institutions. And, as mentioned in the previous chapter, national government in London was suspicious of the creation of power bases in the geographic region surrounding Parliament.¹⁵ According to the Herbert Commission (1957), throughout the LCC phase an informal policy of 'no county boroughs' in the Greater London area was articulated by central government spokespeople, along with the promise of a review of the problem in the future. Furthermore, as mentioned above, rarely did any of these reviews result in substantial structural reform within London (see section E. below).¹⁶ As Smallwood comments,

Like the Crown, Parliament feared the power of London and, like the Crown, Parliament did not want to add to the strength of an already powerful urban rival....The result was the development of a fragmented and weak governmental system for the emerging Greater London metropolis.¹⁷

The creation of new boroughs and counties was opposed by existing counties and boroughs, because these modifications resulted in a decrease of power and wealth for the surrounding boroughs and counties. These authorities advocated maintaining the status quo in order to sustain their position.

[Counties claim] that it impoverishes them, destroys the proper balance between urban and rural parts...looses the advantages of large scale administration....The boroughs, on the other hand, wish to control their own civic affairs, and do not see why they should have financial obligations to

¹⁵As discussed in chapter 3, this attitude was in part a reflection of the historically adversarial relationship between national government and the powerful "City of London," which materialized in the form of jurisdictional conflicts between Parliament and the City going back to 1689.

¹⁶Cmnd. 1164 (October 1960), paras. 137, 675, 676, 750 & 751.

¹⁷Frank Smallwood (1965) Greater London: The Politics of Metropolitan Reform (New York, NY: The Bobbs-Merrill Co.) p.58.

other areas.¹⁸

Such tension characterized London's metropolitan government institutions and the surrounding Counties (also see section J).¹⁹ As the Herbert Commission argued:

That the success of the complicated division of functions [among local authorities] counties] is...good or bad according to the extent to which the county council feels itself threatened; and that this feeling in turn depends on the number and importance of authorities within the county aspiring to county borough status.²⁰

These battles for formal power were an important characteristic of the institutional dynamics of the LCC phase. Fragmentation existed both within the local government environment and between local and central government authorities (see section C below).

Thus, the creation of counties and boroughs, while technically feasible, was often met with resistance and conflict amongst the various competing local and national government interests. The result was that very few new boroughs or counties were actually created during this time. During the LCC phase, 21 new county boroughs were created in Britain, representing roughly 100 boundary changes. As Byrne points out, in real terms:

The changes cost the [existing] county councils an estimated three million loss of population and some 14.5 million of rateable revenue. It thus caused heightened enmity between town and county authorities.²¹

Of these new county boroughs, only one was created on the eastern border of the

¹⁸Harvey & Bather (1968), p.435.

¹⁹see Frank Smallwood (1965).

²⁰Cmnd. 1164, para 697.

²¹Byrne (1984), pp. 30-31.

London region, carved from the County of Essex: East Ham²² by Private Act of Parliament in 1915.²³ Interestingly, East Ham was granted this status in Parliament under the condition that, should London undergo reorganization at a later point, it would be prepared to give up this status.²⁴ The two other county boroughs, Croydon (on the southeast border of London in the County of Surrey) and West Ham (on the east border of London in the County of Essex), were created by population qualification in 1888.²⁵

The aspiration to achieve borough status or protect existing borough turf from the intrusion of new power bases led to divisions between the many local government institutions. Local authorities tended to look upon one another as adversaries for power rather than seek common solutions and cooperation in resolving common local issues. This fragmentation was a characteristic of the entire LCC phase. As the Herbert Commission reported,

With...few exceptions no local authority seemed prepared to recognize that there was a case for the exercise of wide powers over the Review area as a whole [London administrative Area], or indeed the existence of any pressing

²²Cmnd. 1164, para. 675, p. 176.

²³A Private Bill is one promoted by a single sitting member of Parliament, without party backing. The procedure for promoting a Private Bill in Parliament is complex and costly. It includes a special meeting of the local council, compulsory public advertisement announcing the intending action, and the use of legal counsel during Parliamentary proceedings.

²⁴CMND. 1164, para.140, p. 38.

²⁵According to the Herbert Commission Report, the policy promoted by national government had been one of "no county boroughs in the Greater London Area". The application for borough status by other boroughs such as Ealing and Ilford failed, not because their population was too low, but rather "because they were considered at a moment when the gate was shut"(Cmnd. 1164, para. 675). All of the county boroughs in the London region later lost this status when the GLC was formed in 1964.

problems which needed common consideration.²⁶

Not surprisingly, in all the reorganization debate during this phase, all of the London boroughs as well as the surrounding counties and county boroughs opposed any moves to strengthen metropolitan government (LCC) in London. The counties surrounding London presented evidence to support the maintenance of their status as county boroughs separate from London at all local government commissions during this period (see section E).²⁷ These turf battles created a perpetual opposition to major local government reorganization and comprehensive change, and might explain in part the piecemeal approach to local government reform adopted by central government throughout the LCC phase.

It must be noted that the creation of the 28 boroughs in London in 1898 was itself a major institutional reform, promoted by political forces seeking to limit the powers of local government in London as a whole. In creating this lower level of government, a competitive relationship developed within the local arena. The underlying agenda was clearly an attempt to check the power of metropolitan governing institutions, and to prevent the formation of a unified power structure that might rival Parliament (see section B below).

4.2 Functional Change Alongside Structural Maintenance: Local Battles for Power

In addition to these minor geographic alterations, most local reforms that took

²⁶Cmnd. 1164, para. 171, p. 45.

²⁷See Cmnd. 1164, "Chapter V: Evidence" paras. 157-217, pp. 42-58.

place during the LCC phase could best be grouped within the category of functional shifts. These adjustments represented both the development and transfer of powers over service provision between pre-existing local government institutions (see chart 4.1 below).

From 1906 through 1914 a Liberal government was in power nationally. The reforms that they brought forward included an increase in government-provided social services. Initially, these services were placed under the control of local authorities. As the period unfolded, these services moved up towards central control as part of the solidification of the British welfare state.

By the beginning of the 20th century social reforms were being proposed by parties across the political spectrum (Liberal, Fabians and Conservatives). There was a national consensus emerging regarding the need for greater government-provided services as a means to improve the condition of the nation as a whole. The catalyst for legislation by many accounts was the Boer War (1899-1902). According to T.O. Lloyd, both the difficulty that the British had in fighting the Boers and the conditions of the men when they returned home, led to the view that the security of the nation depended upon a healthy population.²⁸ The connection between health and national welfare was given further impetus with the publication of Heart of the Empire by Booth and Rowntree in 1901, which provided the first statistical analysis of poverty in England. Slowly, the concepts of efficiency were being united with social welfare,

²⁸T.O. Lloyd (1986), Empire to Welfare State: English History from 1906-1985 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 1-25.

which led to a range of service developments throughout the LCC phase. The explanations for these developments are complex, and this dissertation is not intended as a history of the development of the welfare state. However,

The growing awareness of the extent of poverty revealed by popular journalism and the statistical investigations of Charles Booth and Seebohm Rowntree, the extension of the franchise, the growth of organized labor and public disturbances by the unemployed, led to the desire for *national efficiency*, whether expressed in terms of racial improvement, military efficiency to meet the demands of the empire, or both.²⁹

Social service recognition developed 1906 with the introduction of pensions to the needy. As Richard Rose comments,

Social programs were carried forward...expanding gradually as demand rose and the nation grew wealthier. The country's national product more than doubled between 1913 and 1938, and public spending on social programs increased from 2.6 percent of the national product in 1900 to 11.3 percent of a much larger national product in 1938.³⁰

Local governments were initially given control over the provision of these services. The explanation for this has to do with the history of the Poor Laws, whereby localities were given responsibility for the care of its poor population (see chapter 3). As cities grew and became industrialized they were faced with the added pressures of concentrated poor and working populations. Local authorities slowly took on the added responsibilities and were viewed as the logical providers of social

²⁹R. Pearson & G. Williams (1984), Political Thought and Public Policy in the Nineteenth Century (London, UK: Longman), p. 161. Also see G.R. Searle (1971), The Quest for National Efficiency (Oxford, UK: Blackwell).

³⁰Richard Rose (1989), Politics in England, 5th edition, (London, UK: Scott, Foresman and Company), pp. 19-20. See also Alan Peacock & Jack Wiseman (1961), The Growth of Public Expenditure in the United Kingdom (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), p. 190.

services.

The initial division of powers between LCC and MBCs in London was made along both strategic and functional lines. Strategically, when the boroughs were created in 1899, there had been great debate in Parliament regarding how much power the boroughs should be given. Needless to say, few existing power holders approached the sharing of power with enthusiasm.

Lord Salisbury (Conservative Prime Minister from 1886-1902) initially supported the idea of a large and powerful LCC for strategic as opposed to ideological political reasons. In 1886, the Liberal party (then in power nationally) split over the question of Irish Home Rule. Those who opposed walked across the floor of Parliament and joined the ranks of the Conservative party, ensuring a Conservative majority. A new government was formed under the Conservative leadership of Salisbury.

At the time, the Conservative party ideology on local government was one of the "glorification of the small community--the stronghold of self reliance, self-discipline, and all other proper Conservative virtues."³¹ However, the Conservatives were reticent to introduce legislation, having previously lacked adequate support in Parliament. The conservative-liberal coalition however altered the situation, for the Liberal group now within the Conservative fold strongly supported local government reform. Joseph Chamberlain, the leader of the dissident Liberal group, had risen through the ranks of local government in Birmingham and had advocated a system of

³¹F. Smallwood (1965), p. 139.

elected local government. Salisbury, in order to solidify the Conservative-Liberal alliance, agreed to introduce local government reforms. Initially the suggestion was for a two-tier system, with both metropolitan and local authorities.

When debate on the bill in Parliament began, there was bitter fighting concerning the exact makeup of the new local institutions. According to Helen Jones, over 1,000 amendments were proposed during the committee stages of the bill.³² Despite the Conservative support for the more localized view, it was the metropolitan solution alone that was adopted.

In the end [Salisbury] was persuaded to drop these provisions [to create a second local tier of more localized governments] for reasons of short term expediency: it was agreed that they made the Bill so long and complicated that they could threaten its safe passage through parliament.³³

Salisbury, a supporter of small local units, had ultimately agreed to create a large metropolitan government. He did this to pacify the liberal supporters who demanded some form of local government reform. Apparently, Salisbury saw the strategic necessity of supporting this bill, despite its failure to provide a local solution.

During its first years (prior to the creation of the MBCs), the LCC was taken over by the "progressives" (representing radical liberals, laborers, and socialists) who attempted to use the power and wealth of the LCC to tackle the social problems of the London region. Notably, they launched an attack on the City of London that had

³²H. Jones (1989), "Conservatives and the London County Council after 1934" in Andrew Saint (ed.) The Politics and the People of London (London, UK: Hambledon Press), p. 250.

³³A. Forrester, S. Lansley & R. Pauley (1985), Beyond Our Ken (London, UK: Fourth Estate), p. 17.

retained its powerful position in London alongside the LCC. The LCC attempted a municipal takeover of many of the services over which the City had a monopoly, such as the docks. The Conservatives were strongly supported by, and were supporters of, the wealthy City interests. And so Lord Salisbury resurrected the localist component of local government reform, arguing that London needed stronger boroughs and that the LCC had become too large. Salisbury attacked the LCC,

as being obsessed with "megalomania" - a passion for big things simply because they were big. Salisbury then called upon the county councilors to take the "suicidal" (but)...wise, patriotic and enlightened" course of turning over some of the LCC powers to smaller boroughs operating in a more limited jurisdictional areas.³⁴

The 1899 legislation was based upon the desire to create a stronger lower tier level of government in London.³⁵ Strategically, the MBCs were designed to provide a counterweight, or a check on the powers of the upper tier of London's local government. Politically, the move was designed to prevent the more ideologically radical metropolitan government from building a "socialist" power block in the capital city.

Beyond these strategic and ideological considerations, there were also functional divisions of power. Following passage of the 1899 legislation, subsequent consideration of the powers of the boroughs was based almost exclusively upon functional rather than strategic considerations. It was presumed that different levels of government were situated and suited to efficiently provide specific services, or

³⁴F. Smallwood (1965), p. 139.

³⁵For a full account of this event see Forrester et. al. (1985), ch. 2.

portions of services. Much in keeping with the ideas being developed in the United States by the reform movement during the progressive era, the goal was the creation of a more businesslike local government system based upon economy and efficiency.

The MBCs were given control of those aspects of services defined as local in nature, and the LCC was given the common or metropolitan wide aspects. The distribution was based upon ideas of efficient service provision.

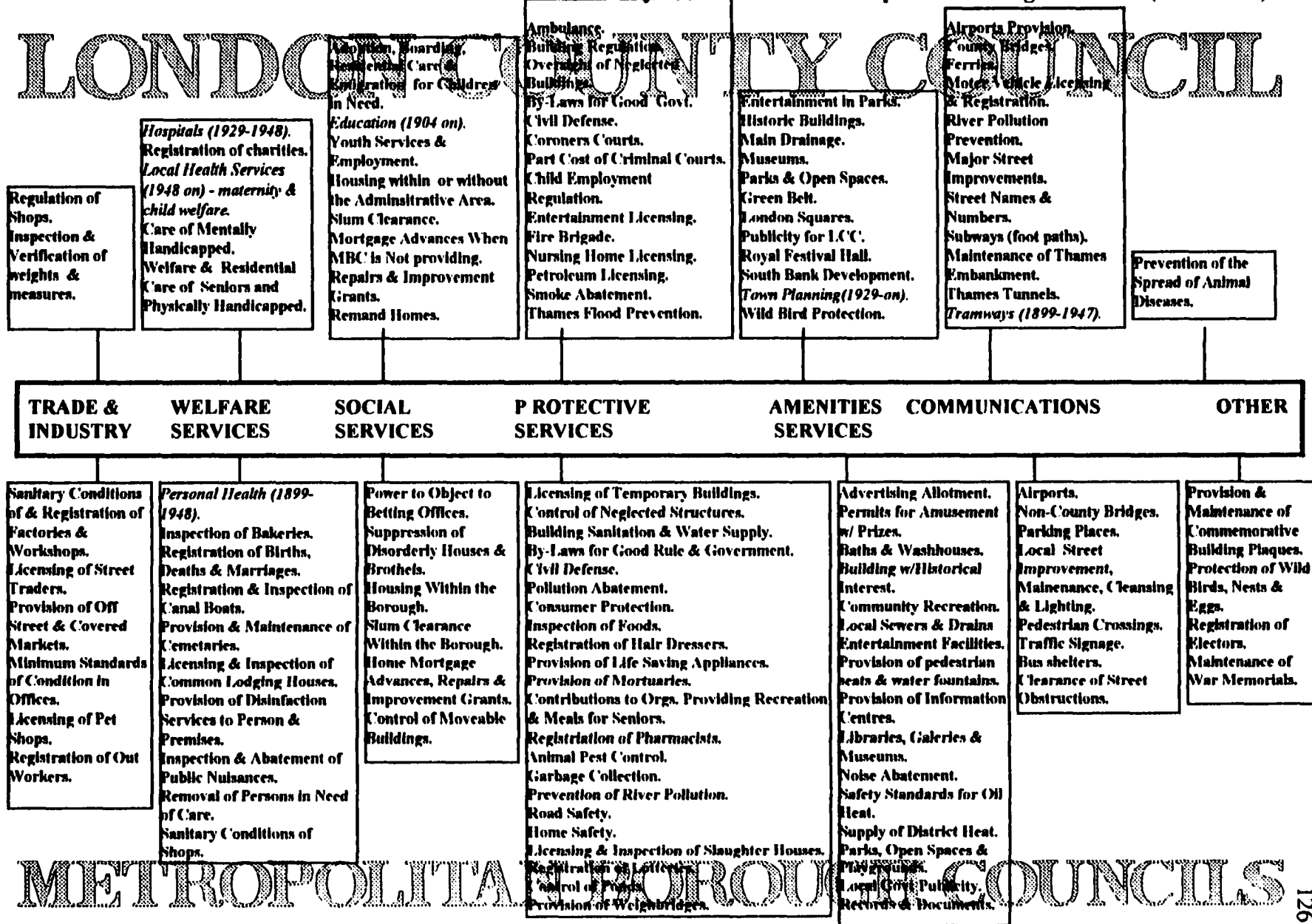
The *bigger* services are administered by the *bigger* authorities. Broadly, the functions are allocated between the two main tiers on the basis of operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness.³⁶

The MBCs were responsible for local services, which included: street lighting and cleaning, garbage collection, libraries, parks, bath houses, parks, child welfare, maternity, social and public health services, with the exception of hospitals (see chart 4.1 below).

The LCC (as mentioned in the chapter 3) initially took on the powers of the MBW, which included main sewers, flood prevention, fire services, public housing, building controls and street improvements. It also had a supervisory role over MBC public health, and later was given responsibility for ambulance services. Over time, LCC service responsibilities were expanded to include land use planning, education and social services (see chart 4.1 below).

³⁶T. Byrne (1986), p. 57.

Chart 4.1. Powers and Functions of the London County Council & The Metropolitan Borough Councils (1899-1963)



Note: Items listed above in *italics* are those controlled by the relevant level of government for a limited time period within the LCC phase, but not for the entirety of the LCC phase.
Sources: CMND, 1164, paras. 128-155; London Statistics 1951-1960, Vol. 5 (London: LCC, 1963); London Statistics 1955-1964, Volume VII New Series (London: GLC, 1968).

The initial attempt at a rational division of power based on level of government proved untenable. There was rarely political agreement concerning what constituted a local or a metropolitan need, and definitions tended to fluctuate. Often it was a case of ideological clash between the "municipal socialists" who tended to view services as almost purely metropolitan in focus and conservatives who stressed a "localist" perspective on service provision. Thus, the rhetoric of efficiency, through a rational division of services by government level, was often mired in the realities of ideological division.

During the LCC phase there was no comprehensive review of services: rather, as service needs emerged, compromise was reached by dividing aspects of services between local government levels. For example, the MBCs were given initial responsibility for personal health (1899-1948), then viewed as a local need; the LCC was given broad oversight powers over the MBCs in public health.³⁷ In an attempt to rationalize health services and provide a more uniform system of public health, the LCC was later given responsibility for ambulances and hospitals (1929). Ultimately, under the National Health Act of 1946, control was moved up to central government. While the MBCs were responsible for garbage collections, the LCC was responsible for garbage disposal (considered a public health concern). In each case, the primary functional consideration of the appropriate service authority was based upon the idea

³⁷Public health (according to the Local Government Act of 1888) referred to London wide health concerns such as epidemics, inspections of food and water supplies, and control over aspects which might broadly threaten the health and well being of the metropolis. Private health referred to the provision of direct health services to individuals.

of efficiency. Not surprisingly, by the end of the LCC phase, MBCs almost uniformly sought:

A better division of functions between themselves and the LCC, asking not merely that certain functions should be delegated to them but that there should be direct conferment of those functions.³⁸

As with other types of local reforms, the expansion and movement of services occurred on a piecemeal basis, or as the Herbert Commission referred to it, "papering over the cracks":

At no time was there any opportunity of giving thought to what would be the collective effect of all these transfers on local government institutions. In instance after instance...critics were told that they must not use this particular occasion for the purpose of reorganizing local government.³⁹

Local government finance came from three main sources--rates, charges for services, and grants from central government. Rates were the primary source of local government finance.⁴⁰ Because the LCC had no direct taxing power, LCC finance came from a percentage of the taxes collected by boroughs and the central government (see chart 4.2 below for distribution). And because boroughs were therefore able to exert substantial power in relationship to funding, they were the

³⁸For a full account of MBC's service redistribution requests see Cmnd. 1164, para. 169, p. 44.

³⁹Cmnd. 1164, para. 686, p. 179.

⁴⁰Rates are local property taxes levied on property according to its value. As mentioned in chapter 3, rates originated during the middle ages as separate rates established to pay for specific services. Over time, separate rates were collapsed into one rate utilized to finance local services broadly. Rates were a form of local taxation. For the remainder of this research I will utilize the term taxation rather than rates for continuity purposes.

local taxing authority.⁴¹

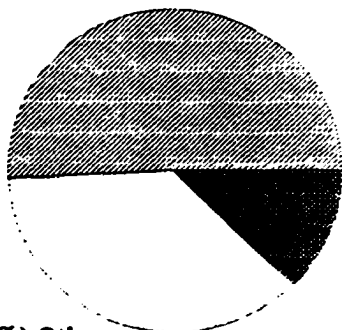
Tied to the MBC's power to tax was some latitude in relationship to the expansion of borough-provided services. Boroughs could utilize their rating powers to pay for expanded services, provided the local taxpayers were prepared to accept the additional financial burden. Boroughs could expand services within centrally designated areas. Mandated services were for the most part unfunded by central government. In 1913, for example, roughly 15 percent of local authority income came from central government in the form of service specific grants, and according to 1922 census data roughly four fifths of MBC expenditure in London was met by local taxation.⁴²

⁴¹Technically the rate is a tax only on "occupied" property. Owners of unused property were not liable to pay rates. In addition, certain types of property were exempt from rates, such as crown, church and government property. Agricultural land became exempt in 1929 during the depression years, except farmhouses. For more extensive discussion see Ian Sanderson (1995), "Current Issues in Local Government Finance", Commission on Local Democracy Research Report No. 12 (London, UK: CLD Limited); Department of Environment (1976), The Report of the Committee on Local Government Finance, Cmnd. 6453 (London, UK: HMSO); Department of Environment (1977), Local Government Finance, Cmnd. 6813, (London, UK: HMSO) and Department of Environment (1986), Paying For Local Government, Cmnd. 9714 (London, UK: HMSO).

⁴²S. Goss (1988), Local Labour and Local Government, (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press) p. 24.

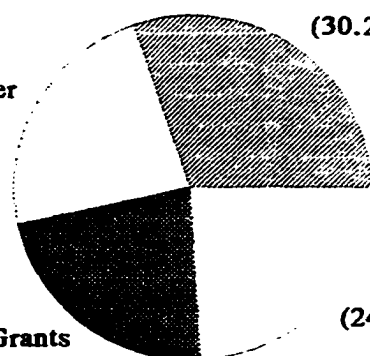
Chart 4.2 Local Authority Income Distribution (LCC and MBCs)

Metropolitan Borough Authority Income
1960-61

(50.9%) Local Rates**(12.3%) Central Govt. Grants****(36.8%) Other**

Source: London Statistics 1951-1960 Volume 5 (London: LCC, 1963), p. 240.

London County Council Income
1960-61

(30.2%) Rates From Boroughs**(24.1%) Loans****(22.4%) Central Govt. Grants****(23.3%) Other**

Source: London Statistics 1955-1964, Volume VII New Series (London, UK: GLC, 1963),

MBCs often utilized taxing powers to expand their authority, not through application to central or metropolitan government, but rather by extension of local services paid for by local taxation or by loans. Boroughs viewed their position locally as adversarial to central and upper tier authorities. Not surprisingly, attempts to expand borough powers were most often met with resistance from central and metropolitan levels of government as opposed to local taxpayers.

One of the earliest struggles in London between local, metropolitan and central governments came in 1921. The council of the London borough of Poplar sought to protest the inequity in taxes between rich and poor London boroughs. Poplar was a poor borough with heavy social welfare demands. Poplar council utilized its powers in the areas of social welfare to give a very generous level of benefits to the local unemployed.⁴³ As a result, however, borough finances were severely drained and the borough faced bankruptcy. To compensate for the lost finance, the Poplar MBC raised its taxes and refused to pay its share of the LCC expenses. In response, Central government ordered the MBC councilors to pay the debt out of their own pockets. When the MBC refused to comply, 30 of its councilors were put in prison and a central government committee was temporarily put in charge of the borough.⁴⁴

The Poplar story illustrates a more extreme case of conflict between local and central levels of government. The LCC and Central government were often able to

⁴³Local authorities, as mentioned in chapter 3, had been responsible for poor relief functions since the Poor Law Act of 1834 (initially provided by locally controlled Board of Guardians). In 1929 they these functions were returned to direct borough control and later taken over by an ad hoc central government body in 1934.

⁴⁴T.O. Lloyd (1986), p.106.

indirectly influence MBC activities throughout this period by less radical measures.

In some cases MBCs sought additional funding through loans from central government and outside bodies. Loans of any sort, however, required government approval.

Central government could exert control over boroughs by withholding its support.

Limits could also be applied to MBCs by the LCC, through control of MBC planning applications. The LCC was the planning authority, not the boroughs. Thus, if a borough was able to raise enough revenue to build a public health facility, it still needed planning approval of the LCC to actually build it. While many MBCs attempted to utilize services and taxation in order to expand their power bases (like Poplar), there were still very real limits on what they could do. Much depended on the strategies, ideology and actors involved.

The disparities in taxes across the London area were problematic from an equity perspective. The wealthiest MBCs provided fewer services because there were fewer service needs; therefore, they had significantly lower taxes. As a result, the chasm between the wealthy and poor boroughs of London grew, which further fragmented the London region. This fragmentation was particularly damaging for the LCC, whose role was to deal with London-wide concerns.

The case of Poplar provides an example of the impact of conflicting local-metropolitan-national identities upon relations between MBCs and other levels of government. The localism found in Poplar could also be found in other London boroughs. As one analyst illustrates, in regard to another London borough during the LCC phase:

Most Battersea workers were aware that their real enemy lay across the river among Chelsea's rentiers or among the tight fisted and hard nosed Wandsworth bourgeoisie....⁴⁵

Boroughs maintained a strong sense of locality, viewing those residing within borough borders as "insiders" and others as "outsiders."⁴⁶ As a result, the LCC was often blocked in its attempts to create broader London-wide services. The result was that the LCC tended to turn its focus upwards toward central government as the mechanism to empower the LCC to deal with these issues.

Block grants were instituted by central government in the Local Government Act of 1929, representing yet another piecemeal attempt to remedy the growing complexity of a local government system which Sidney Webb had described as "a chaos which practically no one understands."⁴⁷

Greater centralization of power over service provision began in 1934, in response to the problems generated by the depression, and the incapacity of local governments to respond to heightened need. During the war years this fragmentation led to a breakdown in the efficiency of local government. As Goss points out,

During the hostilities, the pre-war system of local government finance had broken down under the combined pressures of growing demands on local authorities, and the decimation of the [tax] base through bombing damage and evacuation. Central government had bailed out local councils with a series of loans, which by the end of the war, had to be translated into grants and interest-free loans.⁴⁸

⁴⁵B. Kosmin (1982), "Political Identity in Battersea" in S. Wallman and associates (eds.) Living in South London (Aldershot, UK: Gower Publishing) p. 30.

⁴⁶See S. Goss (1988).

⁴⁷S. Webb quoted in I. Sanderson (1995), p.7.

⁴⁸Sue Goss (1988), p. 49.

The Local Government Act of 1947 created a system of grant equalization, based upon a centrally defined minimum level of service performance and provision. The period was marked by greater national government involvement in local service provision and a shift in responsibility from the locality to the national government. The first service moved to central control was poor relief, followed by hospital administration in 1946 under the National Health Care Act, and unemployment benefits came with the National Insurance Act of 1946.

The policies did not resolve the difficulties London government faced in service provision: rather, they bypassed local government altogether. The fragmentation of London remained. As a result of both the divisions, as well as the continued power struggles between all levels of government, central government ultimately enacted legislation, claiming it would provide greater equity in taxes across the London region. However, many argued this was simply a case of increasing central power over local authority activity. An examination of the debates and legislation enacted during the LCC phase clearly shows that central government, in response to the emboldened local authorities, enacted more restrictive legislation to curb MBC activities. Most significantly, by the end of this phase of local government, central government had taken over the powers of local taxation and rating (1948).

Conflicts over service jurisdiction continued to divide the London arena. MBCs were frequently accused of parochialism, eschewing a London-wide identity.

There seemed to us to be genuine lack of understanding of the needs of London as a whole, due not to purely selfish reasons but to the concentration by each authority on local problems within the area for which it is

responsible.⁴⁹

Researchers consistently point to this problem in London during the LCC phase.

It is not easy within Greater London to find larger social and economic units than those of the great service centers. There is no strong social or geographical unity within the counties of London.⁵⁰

The same criticism was raised with regard to central government departmental control. As the Herbert Commission later argued,

The concern of each central government department is limited to the particular functions for which it is responsible, and in consequence;

- (a) each department is concerned with function rather than organization,
- (b) no one department is concerned with a local authority in the full range of its activities, and
- (c) each local authority has to deal with a multiplicity of departments.⁵¹

In fact, it was not until the bombing of London, and the needs to rebuild following WWII, that London's local governments were able to rise temporarily above these divisions to find some degree of unity and cooperation. This was only achieved under central government direction. There were few exceptions to this rule. Cooperation between London boroughs tended to occur only at periods of intense need. As mentioned in chapter 3, the MBW was only formed after over 30,000 perished from cholera due to contaminated water supplies. Likewise during World War II, London was evacuated, bombed and required rebuilding.

In many ways, the period was one of pushing the limits of local authority power. The LCC phase was one of gradual redistribution of local powers, between

⁴⁹Cmnd. 1164, para. 176, p. 46.

⁵⁰Cmnd. 1164, para. 109, p. 29.

⁵¹Cmnd. 1164, para. 227, p. 60.

the LCC, MBC and central government. By the end of the LCC phase, the MBCs began to fade. The LCC grew in importance relative to the MBCs, but it shrunk relative to central government authority.

4.3 Centralization: Regional and Metropolitan Developments?

In addition to central government's use of mechanisms, such as resource allocation and expenditure controls over local authorities, central government asserted its authority locally. They did this by shifting certain policy areas to a range of formal institutions: ad-hoc authorities, regional boards and advisory committees. Accordingly, these shifts provided less popular access than existing local government institutions.

Many of the executive bodies were set up in the cause of managerial efficiency; it was felt that this could be achieved only if responsibility for the functions concerned was entrusted to specially nominated (rather than elected) individuals who must be able to operate without being subjected to the detailed control of local or central government.⁵²

At this point, little thought was given to the comprehensive effect of all these transfers; instead, government dealt with problems as they arrived with little thought to the broader picture.

The social revolution which ha[d] been carried through ha[d] taken many functions away from local government....Government control over local authorities [was] intensified...in a variety of directions without an opportunity occurring to consider as a whole the consequent changes in the relationship

⁵²Lord Crowther-Hunt & Professor A.T. Peacock (October 1973), Royal Commission on the Constitution 1969-1973, Vol. 2 Memorandum of Dissent, Cmd. 5460-I, (London, UK: HMSO), para. 19.

between government and local authorities.⁵³

These transfers had two key effects. Obviously, transfers in policy control meant fewer resources and less power for existing local government institutions. This led to more jurisdictional conflict both within the local arena as well as between local and national government institutions. A second related outcome of these transfers of power and functions from local authorities was the closure of channels of popular access to local governance. Formal institutional avenues for direct and indirect local political participation in specific policy areas were removed from local control. Thus, even local elections could not alter decision making in these areas. Representation of local interests in local government diminished.

Ad hoc authorities dealt with specific and strictly limited areas of policy area (also see chapter 3). The geographic area that ad-hocs covered varied according to the centrally defined policy need. In most instances, the policy making body took a national focus, though for administrative implementation purposes they were broken into smaller units. Their jurisdiction was problem specific: "different boundaries appropriate for the provision of different services, rather than a standard geographical area being universally applicable."⁵⁴ Ad hocs can be compared to "local special districts," common in the United States, as mechanisms that provide single specific services. These bodies were semi-independent in that ad-hoc membership generally included representatives from local authorities and local councils. However, the

⁵³Cmnd. 1164, para 710, p. 184.

⁵⁴D. Wilson & C. Game (1994), Local Government in the United Kingdom. (London, UK: MacMillan) p. 44.

inclusion of local representatives was neither mandated nor guaranteed. During the LCC phase, the number of indirectly appointed and elected local representatives decreased, while central appointments increased.⁵⁵ Thus, local representation and participation on ad-hocs was minimal.

In addition to the creation of ad-hoc authorities, central government created a series of 'appointed' regional bodies to deal specifically with the 'metropolitan/regional' problems of London and its surrounding Home Counties.⁵⁶ What differentiated regional from ad-hoc bodies was the size of their service area. Ad-hocs were central agencies that formulated national service policies and provided them locally. Regional bodies focused on the service needs of geographically narrower areas, region specific. Regional boards also had a higher percentage of their representatives drawn from localities within the region. These were quasi-independent boards dealing with services only within a defined geographic region, larger than parishes, counties and boroughs. Although these boards were empowered and appointed centrally, they did include local representatives. As the Herbert Commission pointed out:

The needs of services have forced the creation of special 'metropolitan' bodies for police, water, the Port of London, traffic, public passenger transport, gas, electricity, hospitals and advanced technical education.... The requirements of these services have led to the creation of specialized 'regional' authorities...associated in various indirect ways with local government but they

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶I group these titles together because London metropolitan problems were increasingly viewed as regional problem. Or more specifically, London was coming to be known not simply as an urban area but rather as a region in Britain as its population and problems spilled into the surrounding counties.

do not form part of it, and are, indeed, in some respects a substitute for it.⁵⁷

The number of centrally controlled ad-hocs and regional boards grew during the LCC phase. While the rhetoric for the creation of the bodies was one of efficiency, one cannot ignore the political motivations as well. These moves represented increased centralization and greater power being exerted by central government. As Goss points out, "it was the Labor government, committed to national planning, that on several occasions insisted that national proposals should prevail over local plans."⁵⁸

A classic example of the underlying politics behind Board creation could be found in origins of the Electricity Board. Up to 1920, electricity in London was controlled by 16 MBCs and 15 private companies.⁵⁹ The result was an erratic supply of electricity to London residents at a uniform price. Attempts to alter this arrangement were met with great resistance by the various players involved. As Gillespie points out,

The division between supply by private companies and local authority control followed the political geography of London. Private companies had flourished in the [Conservative controlled] West End, exploiting the lucrative home and street lighting market, a domestic market which was marginal in working-class areas until after the second world war. Municipally owned undertakings dominated the [Labor controlled] East End, outer suburban area and the areas south of the Thames. Their markets were more industrial, and in the 1920s became strongly linked to the political priority of encouraging local employment.⁶⁰

⁵⁷Cmnd. 1164, para. 155. p.41.

⁵⁸S. Goss (1988), p. 51.

⁵⁹James Gillespie (1989), "Municipalism, Monopoly and Management" in Andrew Saint (ed.) Politics and the People of London (London, UK: Hambledon Press), p. 112-116.

⁶⁰J. Gillespie (1989), p. 112.

The first attempt to municipalize electricity came in the early 1900s. Intense opposition raised by private business interests and the MBCs prevented the move. Borough control of electricity gave labor councils a mechanism to influence employment practices in their localities. In 1922, the manager of electricity in the London Borough of Stepney placed a notice in the local newspapers as follows;

Intending consumers, before placing orders for the wiring of premises, should take steps to see that the contractor employs only Trade Union labor.⁶¹

During the mid-1920s the borough of Stepney cut power supplies to local factories that employed strike breakers. Neither the private contractors nor the municipal owners were prepared to relinquish power over electricity. The problem was only resolved in 1926 by central government's creation of an ad-hoc Electricity board. These developments must be understood therefore as encompassing both rational and political motivations.

The creation of these centralized service boards paved the way for nationalization during the later half of the LCC phase. As Alan Sked and Chris Cook point out,

The model...provided government with a practical basis for its socialist plan [nationalization]. Eventually a pattern of government action merged whereby national boards were appointed to manage each concern.⁶²

During the post war period of the LCC phase, local authorities throughout Britain lost control over public assistance (1934), water (1945), hospitals (1946), gas (1947), electricity (1948), and waterways (1948) to a series of ad-hoc authorities characterized

⁶¹*Eastern Post*, November 4 1922.

⁶²A. Sked and C. Cook (1979), Post-War Britain (Middlesex, UK: Penguin), p. 30.

as semi-independent boards.

The problem with these boards was that they included few local representatives, and were rarely open to public participation. The majority of these authorities was dominated by central government appointees. The remaining board members were for the most part locally appointed rather than elected. Appendix two depicts the composition of the key boards and Committees in London during the LCC phase. There is no question that these were institutions under central government control. As appendix 2 shows, in all but two cases the majority of representatives on these boards were central government appointees. The two exceptions to this were the Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee and the Port of London Authority. Not surprisingly, both of these bodies were purely advisory. In contrast, the more powerful Utility Boards and Transportation Board, which had significant policy input and resource control, were between 86 and 100 percent centrally appointed.

The only board to have any form of popular participation was the Port of London Authority (PLA), founded in 1908, for the purpose of coordinating business activity in and out of London. The PLA included 18 members of the public (appendix 2). It was the only board to include private representation. However, it must be noted that the PLA was predominately involved with control of business in London's dockland area. The public members of the board were exclusively private businessmen with an interest in local patterns of trade.

The PLA was the outcome of a strong business community that allied itself with the Conservative central government in opposition to LCC control. Between

1902 and 1905, this coalition blocked the LCC's attempts to gain control of the Ports. It was only after the LCC agreed to drop their demands for financial control of the Port in 1908 that the PLA was created. The board included only 4 places for LCC membership out of 30, while the business community was provided with 18 spots (see appendix 2). The Board had no broad policy input whatsoever. Thus, despite having some representation from the private sector, they were by no means representative of the broader London population.

The Metropolitan Water Board was the only board to have no central government appointees. It was composed of representatives from all of London's local government institutions and the surrounding counties. This Board was the sole authority for water supply over an area of roughly 600 square miles. The local composition of this board, in contrast with the others, can be explained by two factors. Water supply was one of the earliest of local governments' functions. The formal institution of local government in London began in response to an outburst of cholera caused by tainted water in the London region. Localities had been intimately involved with maintaining water standards. Local authorities had developed cooperative relations over water both by necessity, as it was a shared resource and by central design. As a result, local representation was viewed as key to maintaining the water supply. This service was considered by central government to be a local concern. Furthermore, central government had confidence in the localities' capacity to manage this area, and the localities already had the machinery in place to ensure effective control.

Overall, the boards represented a centralization of power. The insularity on the boards meant that local participation in regional/metropolitan policy was a rarity during this period. As one account of the history of the London Transport Board illustrates,

During its heyday, in the 1920s and 1930s, The London Passenger Transport Board was under the control of a board chosen by trustees and thus well clear of any democratic involvement. Indeed, the domination of the Board by the autocratic Lord Ashfield appears to have made it difficult to maintain close links [even] with the LCC.⁶³

While the seeds of regional/metropolitan government were planted in London as early as 1855, with the creation of the Metropolitan Board of Works, the utilization of these institutions grew slowly during the LCC phase. This growth can be explained in part by the impact of two world wars and the depression, which placed greater strains on local institutions as a result of greater local service needs. In many ways, the crisis of local necessity resulted in the acceptance of regional and metropolitan authorities. In preparation for war, regional commissioners were appointed in 1939. These commissioners were to be wartime leaders with executive powers should the Germans invade. What is significant here, is that while discussions of regionalism had been going on throughout the LCC phase, they were only acted upon in response to the growing threat of war. War socialism as the regional plan came to be known, represented the first concrete regional plan developed in the UK (see section E

⁶³T. Ridley and T. Travers (1991), "London Government and a Voice for Transport" in S. Glaister (ed.), Transport Options for London, (London, UK: The Greater London Group), pp. 164-165.

below).⁶⁴ Therefore, during the war, central government had instituted a new system of local administration.

According to scholars, regionalism has historically met with resistance because it involve requires sharing power. In London, during the LCC phase, competition for power amongst local authorities, metropolitan authorities and central governments was intense. Resistance to regional solutions, therefore, came from a range of local and national government institutions and actors. Local authorities competed for power and wealth within London, between London and the surrounding counties, and between local and national government authorities. As the Herbert Commission argued in 1957,

Notwithstanding the many virtues of local government today the parochial outlook that has been one of the great obstacles to any serious reform of London government is still very much alive today.⁶⁵

Local acceptance of these metropolitan/regional institutions was much slower than central government's adoption of these mechanisms. Regional scholars point out that successful regional experiments tend to be the outcome of crises.⁶⁶ The regional experiments in London were pursued on grounds of post war necessity. The regional institutions that were created, however, mitigated against citizen empowerment because they were centrally created and controlled, with only limited local

⁶⁴A.J.P. Taylor (1965), English History 1914-1945, (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books), pp.690-691.

⁶⁵Cmnd. 1164, para. 160, p. 43.

⁶⁶W. R. Dodge (1996), Regional Excellence: Governing Together to Compete Globally and Flourish Locally, (Washington, DC: National League of Cities), pp. 14-16.

representation and no direct popular input. As Putnam argues, "government hierarchies, cannot develop social trust and cooperation."⁶⁷

As appendix 2 illustrates, the regional boards were rarely open or inclusive; thus, rather than facilitating norms of reciprocity, they tended to sustain the fragmentation of the London region. Further, the system was clientalistic, with citizens' roles entrenched in the position of service recipient, rather than as policy implementors or formulators.

The regional experimentation of the LCC phase, while unpopular with many local authorities and not representative of local interests, did produce debate, dialogue and research. Jane Jacobs, writing about American cities, argued that "workable metropolitan administration has to be learned and used."⁶⁸ This perhaps best explains the history of regional/metropolitan solutions emerging during the LCC phase. With practice came a growing dialogue regarding the form and function of such institutions in relationship to efficient and equitable service provision. Finally, towards the end of the LCC period came a discussion of linkages between the functional needs and democratic requirements of these institutions and the communities they were serving. The early debate during this phase focused on issues of efficiency with regard to service provision. Following WWII, attention began to turn towards the consideration of equity. Towards the end of this period, the focus turned to issues of

⁶⁷R. Putnam (1993), Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press) pp. 174-175.

⁶⁸J. Jacobs (1961), The Death and Life of Great American Cities, (New York, NY: Vintage), p. 427.

responsiveness.

4.4 Local Government Reorganization: The Conflict Between Local government Values and Innovative Ideas

This phase of local government in London could be characterized as one of ideas but limited action. New ideas were discussed and developed, and in that process the groundwork was laid for subsequent reforms. However, actions during this phase tended to be limited by the intense rivalries amongst local governance institutions and the dominance of local governance values that stressed efficiency and cost effectiveness.

The driving force behind local government reform during the LCC phase came through local government authorities (the LCC, MBCs, and County Boroughs outside the administrative region of London). Authorities sought to rectify what in their view were inappropriate geographic and functional boundaries given the changing socio-economic bases, increasingly mobile population, and the growing recognition by local and national government actors of the interdependency between localities and the broader national political system.

One critical aspect of the process of institutional change during the LCC phase, was a transition in the dominant local governance values. The period was marked by the clash between competing values, resulting at the end of the LCC phase in the transmission of these values into concrete institutional reform. Crises of necessity led to the adoption of new ideas and models of integration, centralization and regionalism (see the Barlow Commission below). With these changes also came a

growing awareness of the importance of local community and the beginnings of a trend towards greater access through consultation as an aspect of both stronger local communities and a more responsive local governance system.

Evidence of the value shifts is clearly displayed in the dialogue that occurred in the Royal Commissions (RCs) of the period. RCs are centrally appointed research bodies empowered to review broad policy questions. RCs were composed of selected individuals who were believed to represent a variety of viewpoints and interests on the issues being explored. Although the number of members varied, it averaged fewer than 20. In an attempt to create somewhat neutral and unbiased groups, members were selected for their expertise, and efforts were made to ensure that they had no direct personal interest. So, for example, most of the RCs created to study the problems of London included local government experts from areas outside the London region. RCs were empowered to solicit views from as broad a range of perspectives as possible, and to incorporate such perspectives into their final reports, though there was no guidance as to who specifically should be included. This was left to the discretion of the RC itself. The recommendations, when the RC members are able to reach a consensus or majority agreement, were intended to form the basis for subsequent legislation in centrally defined policy areas.

Some have argued that, while RCs certainly provided governments with important information in a range of areas, governments also used RCs tactically to avoid having to deal with controversial issues. In essence, they could be used as a legislative delay tactic. The underlying goals of RC formation coupled with their

outcomes provide important evidence of the conflicts and ultimate transitions in local governance values during the LCC phase.

1. The Ullswater Commission (1921-1923)

The first major discussion of local government reform in London came after World War I. In 1921, the LCC made a proposal to central government to enlarge its boundaries to encompass the entirety of the growing Greater London region so as to administer transportation, utilities and housing more effectively (see section E above).

The idea of expanding the LCC's jurisdiction was strongly opposed by the outer county boroughs, which at that point were not under the jurisdiction of the LCC, and were unprepared to cede any of their authority to a stronger and larger London metropolitan authority. Business interests in the London region also mounted a strong opposition to LCC expansion, believing that the interests of the City of London would be threatened by such a move. Conservatives in London argued that the proposal was politically motivated by the London labor authorities who sought both to expand their influence and create a stronger power base in the London region.

In response, the central government instituted the Royal Commission on London Government. The Ullswater Commission's mandate was to explore the degree to which the expansion of the LCC's jurisdiction would lead to 'greater efficiency and economy.'⁶⁹ The Commission included members from a range of perspectives, but

⁶⁹Viscount Ullswater (1923). What I refer to now as the "outer London Boroughs" were, at this time, not in fact a part of London at all; rather, they were parts of the surrounding counties of Middlesex, Essex, Surrey and Hertfordshire.

decisions ultimately became deadlocked between the support and opposition of expanded LCC jurisdiction.

The Ullswater Commission study demonstrated a key weakness of the Commission approach. The objective of the RCs was to pull together diverse perspectives, in the joint task of problem resolution. However, in the case of Ullswater, the commission was so divided politically that it was unable to produce a single opinion. In the end, three separate and contradictory recommendations were made. The Commission reported in 1923.

The Conservative majority, who sought to avoid the creation of a new and enlarged labor stronghold, opposed the expansion of the LCC. At the same time, in recognition of the complexity and needs of the London region, it recommended the creation of a permanent advisory committee to counsel government on transportation and planning issues in the London region. A second report was produced by the Labor minority, who promoted the creation of an enlarged, centralized metropolitan, authority responsible for London-wide services. Yet another group, supported by the authorities outside the London region, suggested the removal of the metropolitan authority altogether, and the division of London into separate county borough governments.

The politics surrounding the Commission were clear; expansion of the LCC boundaries represented the removal of powers from the county councils outside London and the growth in power of the LCC itself. Creating the Commission to review enabled the government to avoid dealing with the London problem. At the

same time, government recognized that London's government was growing very complex and needed attention. The creation of an RC provided the perfect answer: government could appear to be acting to resolve the issues, while at the same time it could avoid taking concrete action through the vehicle of study. The expansion of the LCC was opposed by the Conservative majority in Parliament, who feared the growth of a strong opposition power base in London. The LCC at this time was controlled by the Municipal Reformers (as mentioned a more radical group composed of Labor, radical liberals and progressives).

While the Ullswater Commission failed to generate any significant structural reform, it did result in the creation of a permanent advisory committee to provide policy advice to government ministers on questions of planning, transportation, town planning, and drainage: The London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee. It covered an area of 1,800 square miles including London and parts of the surrounding counties. Though it lacked executive powers, it did have a statutory right to be involved in consultation in any of the above mentioned areas. The creation of the advisory board was important from the perspective of participation, for it represented a new point of access in local decision making processes. As the Royal Commission on the Constitution later commented:

The advisory committees are a device to associate a wide range of interested individuals and organizations with government and public authority decision-making processes-to provide a link between those who make decisions and those affected by them. But, like the executive ad-hoc authorities they are nominated and not elected. Thus they enable the executive to have a decisive voice in determining who should give it advice. And that advice is usually

given in secret.⁷⁰

The Commission paved the way for future considerations of a wider statutory authority for London. The Commission, therefore, set the groundwork for consideration of issues that were broader than the London administrative area itself. It provided an outlet for the consideration of stronger metropolitanism, or regionalism.

Public transport...extended for many miles outside the LCC area, covering an area which, broadly, became known as 'Greater London'....Traffic became a problem, leading to the creation of a London Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee. This Committee had no executive powers, but existed to attempt to reconcile the differences or conflicts of interest of the various authorities and others involved in road policy and use.⁷¹

And so, this Commission was, in the end, important both institutionally and conceptually. It created an institutional avenue for discussion, which would prove useful in future reorganization debates, and it began the dialogue about the London region more broadly.⁷² At the same time, the Ullswater Commission did not resolve any of the tensions that existed between the fragmented local authorities in the London region.

⁷⁰Cmnd. 5460-I, para. 20, p. 6.

⁷¹T. Ridley and T. Travers (1991), p. 163.

⁷²Outside London the Commission also spurred regional thinking, evidenced by the passage of the Local Government Act of 1929, which enabled county councils outside London to work together in the preparation of planning schemes. As the Herbert Commission later commented, "The period from 1925-1932 saw also the percolation of regional ideas not only into the purposes of planning but also into the organization (Cmnd. 1164, para. 301, p. 76)."

2. The Onslow Commission (1923-1929)

The Ullswater Commission had, in some regards, highlighted a growing division between the county of London, the boroughs, and the counties surrounding London. Each sought an expansion of their powers, though clearly the expansion of one would be at the expense of the other. By the early 1920s, the population of many areas outside the London region had grown. These areas began to pressuring Parliament to grant them borough status. Parliament appointed a special commission to inquire into local government reform, chaired by the Earl of Onslow. This Commission's area of inquiry was limited to the study of local government boundaries.

The legislation of the 1880s and 1890s had created boundaries based on population figures from the mid-1880s. However, as the population became increasingly mobile, the boundaries became problematic. The local government arena was becoming a battleground, as local authorities competed for borough designation. During the Commission's tenure, the problems were becoming particularly clear in neighboring Middlesex County. Population growth had led to some of the smaller units in Middlesex growing substantially in population. One such unit, Ealing, had a population approaching 75,000 by the late 1920s. Ealing had begun to apply pressure to Parliament to grant it borough status during the early 1920s.⁷³ Parliament sat on their request, because of the counter pressures of the County of Middlesex that sought to prevent Ealing's borough designation. Ealing was a symptom of a larger problem

⁷³Cmnd. 1164, para. 163, p. 43.

for Middlesex. If all the borough claims of second tier units were granted, then the county of Middlesex itself would no longer exist. Parliament, in support of Middlesex, did not grant any units borough status. Middlesex County had a long history and an extensive network of support that it was able to pull together to block Ealing's attempts in Parliament.⁷⁴

The Royal Commission on Local Government was in operation from 1923-1929, and it published three reports in 1925, 1928 and 1929. However, like the Ullswater Commission, due to lack of consensus, its reports resulted in only one local government reform. In 1926, as a result of the 1925 Commission report, the minimum population for attaining county borough status was raised to 75,000 (from 50,000). In effect, this legislation slowed down the process for creating and extending county boroughs, thus preventing the further territorial fragmentation. However, this legislation did little by way of mending the existing competitive relationships between local authorities, and clearly did nothing to redress the impact of an increasingly mobile population.

The continuing growth of urban areas was reflected both in terms of population as well as industry. In the Greater London area,⁷⁵ the average radius of the built up area of London increased from seven miles in 1914 to over twelve miles

⁷⁴F. Smallwood (1965), pp. 69-73.

⁷⁵In referring to the Greater London region, I am drawing a distinction between the administrative area, which was defined in the 1899 legislation, and the London we know today that now incorporates parts of the surrounding counties. Greater London, therefore, refers to the region rather than the designated administrative area.

in 1939.⁷⁶ In addition, Greater London had become the industrial capital of the nation by the 1930s. By one account, between 1932 and 1938, 44 percent of all factory openings occurred in the Greater London region,⁷⁷ and 42% of all new jobs between 1923 and 1937 were in the London region.⁷⁸

Technological advances during the interwar years had resulted in an increasingly mobile population. As one London Councillor illustrated,

In the pre-war days, if you married a girl more than five streets away from you, you were marrying a foreigner-you got married and got rooms within a street or two - you only got a room 'cos your mother knew, or your father knew, someone with rooms to let...the war began to change all that.⁷⁹

It was in response to the continuing growth of London, there was further review concerning the control of local government:

The LCC, as a London-wide authority, controlled..services for only a minority of the built up area. Dozens of local authorities took responsibility for local government in the urban area beyond the LCC boundary. The LCC could not, therefore, be considered as a possible authority to oversee London..because so much of the operating area was outside the LCC's jurisdiction.⁸⁰

3. The Barlow Commission (1937-1940)

In 1937 the Royal Commission on the Geographic Distribution of the Industrial Population was created, chaired by Sir Anderson Montague Barlow. In contrast to the locally focused Ullswater and Onslow Commissions, the Barlow

⁷⁶N. Buck and N. Fainstein (1992), "A Comparative history, 1880-1973," in S. Fainstein, I. Gordon and M. Harloe (eds.), Divided Cities, (Oxford, UK: Blackwell), p.46.

⁷⁷Ibid, p. 45.

⁷⁸P. Hall (1989), London 2001, (London, UK: Unwin Hyman Ltd.), p. 34.

⁷⁹Interview with a Southwark Councillor quoted in S. Goss (1988), p. 40.

⁸⁰T. Ridley and T. Travers (1991), p. 164.

Commission was created to explore the unequal patterns of national industrial development following the depression and the causes for uneven development.⁸¹

Barlow's findings, though geared toward the areas of England that were in industrial decline, had significant and lasting ramifications for London. According to the Commission:

The concentration in one area of such a large and growing proportion of the national population as contained in Greater London, and the attraction to the Metropolis of the best industrial, financial, commercial, and general ability constitute a serious drain on the rest of the country.⁸²

London's economic dominance was particularly problematic in light of the looming war. It was asserted that should London be bombed, then the entire country would plummet economically and industrially.

The disadvantages in many, if not most, of the great urban concentrations far outweighed and advantages and demanded specific governmental remedies. London, they thought, represented a particularly urgent problem which needed special attention.⁸³

Barlow argued that the growth of London needed to be stemmed through government regulation of industry and land use.

Government did not act on the Barlow report immediately, due to the outbreak of war in 1939. Although the plans had to be put on hold, its report was quite significant in the promotion of innovative ideas, specifically "planning" and

⁸¹The North of England was experiencing a much slower economic revival than was the South, and London's growth was outpacing all other cities in the United Kingdom.

⁸²Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population (1940), CMND. 6153 (London, UK: HMSO), para. 171.

⁸³Peter Hall (1992), Urban and Regional Planning, 3rd Edition, (London, UK: Routledge) p. 70.

"regionalism".

The importance of the Barlow report was that it showed how physical planning could make more effective the regional economic policies then being pursued by central government.⁸⁴

The Commission proposed the idea of comprehensive "planning" in local government rather than the previous piecemeal pattern of local government reform. Comprehensive planning represented an attempt to explore industrial, residential, economic and social needs in the urban regions, and to create one 'comprehensive plan' to address these diverse needs. Comprehensive planning was a more integrated approach to urban governance and development than had been considered previously.

Why comprehensive planning? Barlow asserted that change on the scale proposed could only be achieved through comprehensive regional planning. The Barlow Commission recognized that in a democratic society government could not force people to move from large cities. Instead, the Commission suggested that through land use planning by local government, one could control industrial development and shape work and residential settlement patterns. It was a broad policy of dispersal carried out through industrial land use and economic controls. Because population would shift to areas outside London, there needed to be some form of regional coordination and cooperation in order to integrate the plans between local authorities. As Peter Hall comments,

The Barlow Commission did not merely propose controls on employment. It

⁸⁴J. W. Shepard, "London: Metropolitan Evolution and Planning Responses" in H. Wentworth Eldredge (ed.) World Capitals: Toward Guided Urbanization (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975), p. 98.

called for effective limits on London's growth, through a more efficient town and country planning system.⁸⁵

Institutionally, the Barlow Report did not lead to the creation of new local governance structures. However, it was in many ways an agenda setter. In particular, the Barlow Commission pointed to the need for a local planning authority with executive powers rather than simple advisory powers (as had been the case with the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee).

Before World War II, when planning in its modern sense may be thought to have been in its infancy, the need for co-operation between local planning authorities and between them and the Minister was dimly discerned....During and since WWII the need for some better machinery has been recognized....The Barlow Commission drew attention to the need in London for an authority with executive rather than advisory powers.⁸⁶

4. The Abercrombie Plans (1943-1944)

One of the chief players on the Barlow Commission was Patrick Abercrombie, who subsequently was commissioned by the LCC to prepare the *County of London Plan* in 1943, and the *Greater London Development Plan* of 1944 (also known as the Abercrombie Plans). Significant in Abercrombie's plans was the connection he drew between planning and people. Abercrombie emphasized the need for planners to work within the confines of existing neighborhoods. His report pointed to the fragmentation of London's boroughs and their populations. He asserted that:

London had not developed by the growing together of numerous distinct, sizeable towns but by the gradual envelopment of numerous villages in the

⁸⁵P. Hall (1989) p. 35.

⁸⁶Cmnd. 1164, paras. 313-316, pp. 78-79.

outward spread from the center.⁸⁷

The problem, he argued, was that this evolution was often at the expense of the history of ancient villages and neighborhoods. Abercrombie further maintained that the London spread was causing a more mottled and identity-less London arena. Abercrombie proposed a redefinition of London neighborhoods in terms both of territory and the ancient villages of London. He was proposing a move to stem the uncontrolled growth of London, and to protect a sense of community for Londoners. Community, however, was described in essentially spatial terms, with little thought given to the identities engendered by that sharing.

At the same time, though Abercrombie was concerned with the protection and perpetuation of neighborhoods, he also saw the need for some form of unity between communities. Recognizing the need to build a sense of London as a whole, Abercrombie pointed to the problem of unplanned development in terms of the creation of isolated, closed and homogenous communities. Wealthier populations in their movements away from the center often built communities that were closed to outsiders. In turn, the inner London area became overly congested and dominated by the working classes. To remedy this, he suggested, in addition to spatial neighborhoods based upon history, the introduction of mixed income residential arrangements in these outer areas with schools, industry and business. This would enable the development of more heterogenous neighborhoods, while averting uneven development patterns in the metropolis. Abercrombie's plan expressed an underlying

⁸⁷J. W. Shepherd (1975), p. 100.

notion of planning a more equitable London region.

Abercrombie argued that in the past planners were simply concerned with physical improvements in housing or roads, with no regard to the neighborhood as community with a "life and character of its own."⁸⁸ The result was a chaotic and fragmented urban/suburban arena. The neighborhood for Abercrombie included homes, open spaces, schools, shops and public buildings and local service industries.⁸⁹ He pointed to the importance of open spaces for the health, morale and general well being of the people.⁹⁰ Abercrombie also suggested the creation of a series of "new towns" of mixed income and use on the periphery of London to accommodate new populations and to attract jobs to areas outside of London. Accordingly, he proposed the creation of a green belt surrounding London to prevent the further sprawl of London into the countryside and to provide a large open space for the enjoyment of Londoners.

Abercrombie also recognized the need for greater local control; however, this control was attached to local officials and experts, not citizens. Working from ideas developed by the Barlow Commission⁹¹, he proposed the creation of a regional planning board. As one commentator on the Abercrombie plan stated,

⁸⁸Patrick Abercrombie (1945), Greater London Plan 1944 (London, UK: HMSO) p. 113, section 280.

⁸⁹Ibid, p. 114, section 283.

⁹⁰Ibid, p. 116, section. 284.

⁹¹Abercrombie accepted three key propositions of Barlow: first, congested urban areas required further redevelopment; second, decentralization and dispersal of industrial populations from the London area; and third, the development of a balance of industry throughout the country, coupled with greater industrial diversification in existing industrial areas (Cmnd. 1164, para. 306).

Nothing in the report is more important than its recognition of the complete futility of hoping there will be planning...whilst the [existing] administrative jungle is not cleared up.⁹²

The Abercrombie plans for the most part gained wide spread political support. There are two main factors in the consensus over this dispersal policy. First, the extensive bombing of London during the war had added weight to Barlow's prediction that too much industrial and population concentration placed England in a vulnerable position during war times.

During WW2, London's inner core suffered enormous damage....The City alone saw 104 of its 393 built up acres destroyed.⁹³

At the heart of the capital, the county of London, itself, only one house in ten escaped damage of some kind. Nearer the center still, in the sector of Bermonsdey for instance, only 4 houses in every hundred came through the war unscathed. Schools, hospitals, and other public buildings were also extensively damaged.⁹⁴

A second theme that added to support for Abercrombie was a broader "puritan distaste for cities and urban life."⁹⁵ Abercrombie was strongly influenced by the concept of "garden cities." The meant emphasizing neighborhoods with open spaces and the green belt around London to prevent further growth. Each of these ideas was based upon the so-called virtues of rural communities, and offered some of these virtues to inner cities, while simultaneously preventing the urban spread to outer

⁹²Quoted in S. Leach and C. Vielba (1985), Abolition or Reform? The GLC and the Metropolitan County Councils, (London, UK:George, Allen and Unwin), p. 25.

⁹³F. Smallwood (1965), pp. 48-49.

⁹⁴D. Foley (1963), Controlling London's Growth: Planning the Great Wren 1940-1960, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), p. 23.

⁹⁵A. Saint (1989), "Spread the People: The LCC's Dispersal Policy, 1899-1965", in Andrew Saint (ed.), Politics and the People of London (London, UK: Hambledon Press), p.228.

areas.

Opposition to this plan did emerge from areas that were targeted to receive the dispersed populations such as Stevenage in Hertfordshire--an area designated to be a "new town." Opponents could be found amongst farmers^{1/2}that is, conservationists who were concerned about the impact of industrial deconcentration upon the environment. Property owners opposed based on their fear that it would lead to higher taxes. Middle class suburbanites, of course, did not relish the movement of working class populations into their suburban communities.⁹⁶ Despite community opposition, the plan was eventually adopted by central government, a reflection of the weakness of popular political pressure (see section 5, The Advisory Committee for London Regional Planning below).

The values expressed in the Abercrombie plans represented the beginning of a transition in thinking about community, but still lacked any concrete proposals regarding greater citizen involvement in local governance. The report reflected the continuing dominance of the values of efficiency and cost effectiveness. The plan itself was very technical, utilizing surveys of population trends, industrial development, and transportation patterns as a guideline for the planning of an effective local governance system. Abercrombie described how he thought things ought to be based upon spatial arrangements and land-use patterns. It was the project of experts, not of citizens. In many ways it was also a reflection of the paternalism

⁹⁶John Gyford (1994), "Politics and Planning in London" in James Simmie (ed.) Planning in London (London: University College London Press), p. 79.

that perpetuated local government values. Indeed, in the preamble to the Greater London Plan, Abercrombie thanks the "informed public"--a subsection of experts--for their assistance. In 1946 a planning committee was set up to explore the plan in greater detail.

5. The Advisory Committee for London Regional Planning (1946)

The role of this committee was to identify solutions to London's fragmentation, so as to enable local government to implement the regional plan for the entire London region. This committee, chaired by Clement Davies, was the first to deal directly with the problems of the divisions in London and to suggest that concerted action by local as opposed to central authorities was necessary to resolve London's problems.

The Committee was faced with several problems from the outset. The most significant problem for the committee came with the passage of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1947*, which was designed to provide more coordination of planning nationally. The Act gave the Minister of Housing and Local Government national responsibility for administration of planning. Counties were assigned the task of preparing local development plans, with a 20 year framework. Approval of the local development plans resided with the Minister, who had the power if he chose to hold public hearings and to consider any objections. This Act centralized planning controls nationally. As Healy and Underwood point out,

Government viewed planning as an expression of national economic, social and

strategic objectives.⁹⁷

The result for the Davies Committee was that they had to abandon previous deliberations and adopt new mechanisms to deal with the new centralized planning system. It also meant that in considering planning for the London region as a whole, that each of the Home Counties could be creating their own development plans, making some of the recommendations in the Greater London Plan out of the range of consideration.

The first major stumbling block related to the fact that three plans were being explored. Two plans had been created prior to the passage of the 1947 act. The dominant plan was the plan created by Abercrombie for Greater London (the London administrative county and its surrounding suburbs). However, Abercrombie had also been commissioned to prepare a plan for the County of London. The *County of London Plan*, approved in 1945, was a plan for redevelopment of the administrative county of London alone. It was based upon similar principles to the *Greater London Plan*, but for a smaller geographical region. The third plan, created by the City of London following the 1947 Act, dealt specifically with rebuilding in the City alone. The two Abercrombie plans were very complementary, while the City plan reflected their specific internal needs. The committee found difficulty in meshing these plans together into one overall plan for the region.

The Committee argued that it was further constrained by the divisions between

⁹⁷P. Healy and J. Underwood (1978), "Professional Ideals and Planning Practice" in D. Diamond & J.B. McLoughlin *Progress and Planning, Vol. 9 Part 2* (Exeter, UK: Pergamon Press), p. 80.

London and the Home Counties, each of which was preparing its own plans. As a result, the Committee was incapable of providing an adequate review.

The Davies Committee report in 1949, as with previous commissions, displayed division: two reports were presented. The majority report recommended the creation of an independent regional advisory committee, with a chair appointed by central government empowered to review governing arrangements in the London region as a whole. The minority recommended creating a joint planning board to act as the local planning authority for the region with executive powers. The minority report rejected the creation of an advisory committee, arguing that such bodies were ineffectual.⁹⁸

Their recommendations were a reflection of their frustrations with the fragmentation of governance in the London region. However, they did not explore ways to unify the London community; rather, this committee simply proposed the creation of some form of centralized authority with broad oversight powers over local finance, and supervisory powers over implementation of a London wide plan. However, they also argued that for this to happen government needed to empower yet another royal Commission to at last engage in a comprehensive review of the London situation.

While the plan once again failed to consider the relationship between local government structure and political participation in the London region, they did create new structures through which citizens were in turn provided greater access to decision

⁹⁸See D. Foley (1963), pp. 76-78.

making. Indeed, when the Committee came into being, citizens were invited to present evidence either supporting or opposing the plans. Thus, for example, when the LCC plan was ultimately submitted in December of 1951, it was subjected to three years of inquiry, during which 7,000 objections were raised.⁹⁹ The LCC plan did not receive approval till 1955 (see section 4.7).

6. The Boundary Commissions (1945-1947)

In 1945 a five-man local government Boundary Commission was appointed. The impact of Abercrombie's ideas on community were reflected in its mission. Their objective was to identify the most convenient and efficient size for local government units. These Commissions also adopted the Davies technique of public hearings. In exploring these questions, the Commission was advised to consider physical, economic and social characteristics of local communities and local opinion. However, central government chose to treat London as a separate case.

By this point, it had become clear to central government that the relationships between London and the surrounding counties were highly complex. The problems that the Davies Committee had experienced demonstrated to central government that London required special attention. To include London in the considerations of the national boundary commission they felt would have hindered reforms elsewhere.

The Boundary Commission's review area included all areas except the London Administrative Area, which was being reviewed by a separate committee chaired by

⁹⁹D. Foley (1963), p. 77.

Lord Reading (see below). The boundary commissioners reported in 1947 that they had not been given enough power to carry out the required task. They recommended comprehensive reorganization, not simply of territorial boundaries, but of powers and functions. Local authorities in the review area came out in support of the recommendation to review local governance structures. However, battles between local authorities began to emerge as each vied either to protect their existing status or pursue greater power. To quell the discord that the commission report unleashed, the government rejected the report of the Boundary commission and indicated that it had faith in the existing structure. Government rejected the report on the grounds that the time was not right for reorganization. As the Maud Committee argued:

At the end of the war it was recognized that there had to be a comprehensive review of local government boundaries but it was assumed that the structure was sound enough. The attempt to get this done, however, proved abortive. The Boundary Commission established by the government to review the boundaries concluded that there must be some re-arrangement of functions between counties and boroughs, but the government was not prepared for this, and nothing was done. So for a further ten years local government was left much as it was, while the population of the towns-continued growing.¹⁰⁰

In London a special committee chaired by Lord Reading was empowered by central government to enquire and advise on local government within the London region. According to the Herbert Commission, the reasoning behind this was as follows:

The Boundary Commission was not an appropriate body, nor was the moment propitious to deal with two...issues...whether the boundaries of the County

¹⁰⁰Lord Redcliffe-Maud (June 1969), Royal Commission on Local Government in England 1966-1969, Cmnd. 4040 (London, UK: HMSO), para. 82, pp. 24-25.

should be extended...and the allocation of functions was satisfactory.¹⁰¹

Historically, London, as the capital city, was viewed as a separate case when any discussion of power or boundary was involved. The Reading Committee was empowered to investigate all governing authorities within the London County Council Administrative region (MBCs, the City, and the LCC). However, they were not authorized to look at the surrounding counties of Middlesex, Essex, Surrey or Hertfordshire, now virtual suburbs to London.

The Reading Committee was short lived--18 months. Like the Boundary Commission, it argued that it lacked the necessary powers to get the job done. It also argued that the centrally defined scope of its review was too narrow, and any consideration of the distribution of local government functions must include the surrounding counties. As with the majority of previous central government inquiries, the Boundary Commissions broke up leaving the question of local government reform unresolved.

4.5 From LCC to GLC The Changing Environmental Context: Setting the Stage for Innovation

The need to reform local government in London grew more acute as the period unfolded. Overall population growth in the LCC administrative region had slowed as a result both of the war and of planning efforts, while the surrounding County suburbs had experienced population growth.

¹⁰¹Cmnd. 1164, para. 62, p. 16.

London's residential population was changing due to an influx of poor and working class immigrants during the 1950s, coupled with the movement of the middle classes out of London to the surrounding counties.¹⁰² From 1952 London's population steadily declined, largely because the net outward migration was greater than the net increases in the population.¹⁰³ Between 1955 and 1964, average population declined annually by 11,000 people, or 34% annually.¹⁰⁴ In 1961, for example, the estimated daytime population in London was 4,083,397; of this number, fully 1,047,060 resided in the counties surrounding London.¹⁰⁵ Thus 26 percent of London's daily population used the services and amenities of both the LCC and the MBC, yet the population did not directly contribute taxes to the financing of these services. The wealthy were moving out, leaving the poor, who used more services but had less income to pay for these services, within the London boundaries. This led to an economic and subsequently political polarization between the wealthier Home counties surrounding London and the poor London boroughs.

Local governments were becoming financially overburdened. By 1955, the total net debt for the MBC was 118,472,761, which by 1964 had risen to 316,799,664 (over a 30% increase in debt); for the LCC comparable figures were 219,046,147 in

¹⁰²See for example W.A. Robson (1959), Oral Evidence to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London, Minutes of Evidence, November 5, 1959, para. 13 018 (London, UK: HMSO). The surrounding counties included Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex.

¹⁰³The Registrar General (1961), Statistical Review of England and Wales (London, UK: HMSO).

¹⁰⁴Greater London Council (1968).

¹⁰⁵Greater London Council (1968), "Table 36, Population and Employment by Areas of Residence and Workplace - 1961 Census."

1956 and 448,703,459 (almost a 50% increase). Central government was forced to take on the added financial responsibilities in the localities. In 1960, 57% of Local authorities' net expenditure was met from local taxes. By 1964 this had dropped to 44%.¹⁰⁶

During the LCC phase, government utilized the vehicles of land use and development planning policy as a tool to prevent industrial development and population growth in the London region. The creation of the Green Belt in 1938, the publication of the Barlow Commission report, and the Greater London Plan in the 1940s illustrate the case.¹⁰⁷ However, while industrial growth was limited, commercial development was not. Between 1948 and 1959 planning permission was given for 44.4 million square feet of office space in central London.¹⁰⁸ The result was that London experienced an explosion in office development, followed by growth in service and professional jobs.

Between 1951 and 1961 the LCC area accounted for 51 percent of the employment increase for the whole of England and Wales.¹⁰⁹ London's work force grew, but the land-use controls prevented residential growth. As one analyst asserted, "London [became] centrifugal at night and centripetal during the day."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶For the 1960 figures see London County Council (1963), "Table 204, London Authorities-Expenditure and Income 1960-1961," and for the 1964 statistics see Greater London Council (1968), "Table 196, London Authorities-Expenditure and Income 1964-1965".

¹⁰⁷For a fuller description see chapter 4.

¹⁰⁸Cmnd. 1164, para. 83, p. 22.

¹⁰⁹D. Foley (1972), p. 9.

¹¹⁰W.A. Robson (1939), The Government and Misgovernment of London (London, UK: Allen & Unwin).

According to the 1961 census, the estimated daytime population in the whole of the London administrative area was 4,083,397, of this 1,047,060 resided in the Home counties area.¹¹¹

A larger proportion of citizens was living outside the London borders, in the suburbs. However, suburban communities existed outside the authority of London government in the Home Counties.

Table 4.5 Population Growth in London and the Home Counties

	<u>1931</u>	<u>1941</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1961</u>
London	4,397,003	4,031,400	3,347,982	3,195,114
Counties	3,818,670	4,714,600	5,000,041	4,976,788

Source: Census 1961, England and Wales (London: HMSO).

Local governance in the London region was rapidly reaching a crisis. Pressure from all sides grew, and there was consensus that the fragmented structure of London's local government had resulted in inefficient decision making and policy implementation¹¹² As Flynn, Leach and Vielba comment:

For several decades prior to 1957, the sprawling mass of metropolitan London had been governed locally by one 'inner metropolitan' county, covering a fairly arbitrary chunk of its inner area; 28 second tier metropolitan boroughs within this inner area; five county councils [outside London] responsible for sectors of the outer area containing around seventy second tier municipal boroughs and urban districts, with assorted responsibilities; and finally three all purpose county boroughs. The inability of this motley collection of around a hundred local government units to cope with the interrelated problems of a

¹¹¹The Greater London Council (1968), table 36, p. 42.

¹¹²See for example, Cmnd. 1164; Cmnd. 4040; and The London Government Act of 1963.

large metropolis has been underlined by a number of writers."¹¹³

1. The Herbert Commission (1957-1960) and The London Government Act 1963

In 1957 a Royal Commission was set up to explore local government in London and to consider reform. At the time there were three broad perspectives on the London situation. Conservative Members of Parliament representing the outer London areas argued that any new local government structure required the creation of a series of nearly autonomous bodies. This was the localist solution. The Government perspective presented by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government argued that local government simply needed to be made more organized and logical through a minor modification of existing local institutions--the "status quo" perspective. Labor members of Parliament and the inner London Boroughs supported the strengthening and expansion of the London County Council--the "centrist" perspective.

The Herbert Commission came together in order to reconcile these conflicting perspectives and to find an acceptable solution for governing the London region. The Commission saw itself as having to respond to five broad issues of fragmentation. First, the spread of London across existing boundaries had created administrative problems. Second, great differences in the size and resources of the MBCs led to parochialism that negatively impacted LCC's capacity to govern the whole of London. Third, the distribution of powers and functions within London was different from that

¹¹³N. Flynn, S. Leach, and C. Vielba (1985), p. 24-25.

in the surrounding areas making regional activities difficult. Fourth, the large boroughs surrounding London were seeking greater power and separation, despite the common problems they shared with the inner area. Finally, this highly contentious local environment made problem resolution impossible.

Unlike previous Commissions, the Herbert Commission invited evidence from a wide range of sources. Roughly 200 local government authorities and local government organizations presented evidence. One hundred and seventy four written communications from the public were read. The commission held over seventy sessions, where it took oral evidence from the public, interest groups and local authorities. They made eighty-eight site visits to local authorities and held forty-four other meetings with civil servants, academics, and central agencies. Evidence was also submitted by central government departments, political parties, professional associations, and individual local authorities both within and outside the review area. The Herbert Commission conducted the most participatory investigation of local government ever engaged in the United Kingdom.

Published in 1960, the report pointed out that London suffered from a range of problems. Structurally, the division of powers between the upper and lower tiers of government was unclear causing in some cases in the duplication of work. In addition, there was also an overlap of powers in other areas resulting in a highly complex and confusing local governance system, and a battle between levels of government for resources and power.

The Commission advocated maintaining the two-tiered local government

system, but they felt that each level must have a clearly defined role and function. As

Foley comments:

the rationale for a two tiered structure was embedded in the idea that each specific governmental function should be analyzed and allocated accordingly. It would be assigned to a metropolitan wide upper tier, if the preferred emphasis were to be on overall coordination, or on a single metropolitan service system. It would go to a more localized tier, if the emphasis were to be on distinctively local responsiveness, with a greater degree of local self-determination.¹¹⁴

Ultimately, as a result of the Herbert Commission report, the LCC and the MBCs were abolished. They were replaced by the Greater London Council (GLC) and the London Borough Councils (LBCs).

The Commission's findings formed the basis for the Local Government Act of 1963 (implemented in 1964). The LCC was replaced by the Greater London Council, and the MBCs were replaced by the London Borough Councils (LBCs). The most conspicuous structural differences between the GLC and LCC phases were physical boundary changes. The LCC covered an administrative area of 117 square miles and a population of 3,195,114. The GLC encompassed an administrative area of 620 square miles and a population of roughly 8,000,000.¹¹⁵

Both borough and metropolitan local government units were enlarged, and London itself was formally extended outward by incorporating parts of the surrounding counties. The London Government Act, by expanding the overall boundaries of the London region into the surrounding counties, created an entirely

¹¹⁴D. Foley (1972), p.30.

¹¹⁵London County Council (1963), and Greater London Council (1968).

new residential mix in the London region as a whole. London during the LCC phase had been predominately urban. The London Government Act of 1963 expanded the London administrative area and created a broad "metropolitan" tier authority (the GLC) that governed a mixed *urban/suburban* region.

The new administrative area included, in addition to the former London conurbations, the entirety of the county of Middlesex and parts of four other counties - Essex, Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire. With these changes in the London constituency came transitions in both the socio-economic and political composition of the London region as a whole. And in the process the divisions between the older inner-London areas and the newer outer London areas solidified. These differences would have a lasting affect on the patterns of political participation in both geographic sections of London (see chapter 6).

The outer London area, in common with suburban trends in the United States, had a higher proportion of homeowners, was ethnically homogenous (white), and had a larger percentage of professionals. Different demographic profiles, not surprisingly, led to differences in the policies and goals pursued in inner and outer borough (see chapter 5). And, more broadly, with the creation of a new range of governing institutions came a permanent solidification of a division within the new London metropolitan region. As Rhodes commented,

The position may be summed up by saying that there is a sharp contrast, socially and politically....Inner London (the former county of London) has in many ways different characteristics from Outer London. The former tends to contain the boroughs with relatively unfavorable social conditions and the latter

have a higher proportion of boroughs with relatively favorable conditions.¹¹⁶

The difference in political outlook between the urban and suburban community was already clear prior to reorganization. The former London County area was controlled by Labor from 1934 to the end of the LCC period. However, as table 4.6 below illustrates, the political control of the Home counties was predominately Conservative Controlled.

Table 4.6 Political Control of County Councils 1955-1961

(total councilors by political party, including aldermen)

		<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labor</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
London County Council					
	1955	57	90*	0	147
	1958	32	115*	0	147
	1961	49	98*	0	147
Middlesex County Council					
	1955	78*	38	0	116
	1958	54	61*	1	116
	1961	71*	46	0	116
Surrey County Council					
	1955	88*	8	14	110
	1958	83*	21	6	110
	1961	97*	10	3	110
Kent County Council					
	1955	82*	20	4	106
	1958	67*	36	3	106
	1961	88*	18	0	106
Essex County Council					
	1955	68*	58	0	126
	1958	71	74*	0	145
	1961	84*	61	0	145

* Majority Party

Source: F. Smallwood (1965), Greater London: The Politics of Metropolitan Reform (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc.), p. 89.

¹¹⁶R. Rhodes (1981), Beyond Westminster and Whitehall, (London, UK: Unwin Hyman Ltd.), p. 434.

Political control of the boroughs mirrored the county results. In 1961 all of the home county boroughs had a conservative majority.

These political divisions are important in understanding the politics of the Herbert Commission and the 1963 Local Government Act. The Herbert Commission itself included two Labor members and five Conservatives and mandated explicitly that the members be non-partisan. Clearly, this argument is a weak one, considering the unequal political representation. The outcomes of the Commission findings had clear political repercussions. As one London newspaper argued at the time:

Bringing the affluent parts of the Home Counties into London gives the Tories an automatic majority in the capital....It does look suspicious that a Labor enclave is to be sabotaged after an unsuccessful siege of twenty-eight years.¹¹⁷

The reforms were instituted by the Conservative Government. By incorporating the Conservative controlled counties into the London region, Labor would lose its dominance. According to Goss, the reorganization was a political strategy more than anything else. The Herbert Commission was organized by the Conservative government, and it was composed of Conservative representatives. So, not surprisingly its goals were largely of a partisan nature.

According to Goss, the Local Government Act 1963, reflected an attempt to remove power from working class and Labor controlled constituencies within the London region, where they had dominated since 1934.

While local government was reorganized because of an orthodoxy about the need for streamlined, larger units, these arguments were unsupported and un-

¹¹⁷*South London Press* (December 5, 1961), p. 4. Quoted in S. Goss (1988), p. 66.

tested...nor was it ever demonstrated that larger authorities would increase councillor calibre...replacing local amateurs with businessman and professionals.¹¹⁸

Dearlove argues similarly that these arguments had a hidden agenda, an overt strategy to place the control of government in particular hands.¹¹⁹

All together, the transformation from LCC to GLC phase represented an institutional transformation in which 92 small governments were replaced by 34 large governments (the GLC, 32 MBCs, and the City of London).¹²⁰ The arguments raised regarding appropriate authority size for representation where empirically untested and based upon subjective or qualitative data.¹²¹ The Commission based its decisions upon secondary data provided by local authorities, other public bodies, the academic world, professional associations, and members of the public and political parties. Each group provided its arguments for how London should be reorganized. But none of this data reflected an empirical attempt to evaluate scientifically the strengths and weaknesses of the various proposals. As the Herbert Commission reported:

We have come to the conclusion that *none* of the various criteria of size expressed in terms of population which have been presented to us *can be regarded as scientific*, and all are subject to variation according to circumstances. There is no special virtue in any one figure...a population of 200,000

¹¹⁸S. Goss (1988), p. 65.

¹¹⁹J. Dearlove (1973), The Politics of Policy in Local Government, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).

¹²⁰The ninety-two governments that existed during the LCC phase included the County governments that before 1964 were completely separate administrative entities.

¹²¹S. Goss (1988), p. 64.

has probably been mentioned more frequently than any other.¹²²

Herbert believed that the local authority responsiveness could be meshed with goals of efficiency.

We emphasize the organic relationship between efficiency of administration and effectiveness of representative government, drawing the conclusion that neither can be expected to exist healthily for long without the other.¹²³

However, the problem that was later taken up by the Maud Commission (see chapter 5) was that while larger units were viewed as more efficient, they were not necessarily responsive to the service needs of the community. In an urban area with a very large population and extensive service needs, an authority might suffer overload and breakdown, which could breed disenchantment and apathy among the population, leading in turn to a system that was unable to accurately represent the locality.

London's government was created on this two-tier model with both efficiency and democracy as its underlying goals:

It is clear that the bigger the main local authorities, the more an effective system of democracy will require local representative institutions capable of both rallying and giving expression to local opinion.¹²⁴

It is important to recognize that, up until the late 1960s, the concept of participation in Britain was interpreted exclusively within a framework of "representative" democracy (see section E below).¹²⁵ This understanding had a long history that

¹²²Cmnd. 1164, para. 927, pp. 231-232.

¹²³Cmnd. 1164, para. 673, p. 175.

¹²⁴CMND. 4040, para. 371, p. 98.

¹²⁵N. Boaden, M. Goldsmith, W. Hampton & P. Stringer (1980), "Planning and Participation in Practice: A Study of Public Participation in Structure Planning," in D. Diamond, J.B. McLoughlin (eds.) Progress in Planning Vol. 13, Part 1/2 (Exeter, UK: Pergamon Press).

developed prior to the LCC phase (mid- 19th century on). John Stuart Mill's conception of representative democracy was the accepted paradigm in Britain:

The only government which can fully satisfy all the exigencies of the social state is one in which the whole people participate (but) since all cannot, in a community exceeding a single small town, participate personally in any but some very minor portions of the public business, it follows that the ideal type of a perfect government must be representative.¹²⁶

Though Mill was referring to national government, the concept was also incorporated into the British understanding of local government, particularly in larger urban areas. The Herbert Commission saw its role as dealing with "the health of *representative government*."¹²⁷

Representative democracy in urban areas was equated with effective local governance. Creating government units that encompassed larger constituencies would, it was believed, enhance the electoral process of local government by expanding the choice of candidates for local electors. The notion was similar to that articulated by Madison in Federalist No. 10:

...as each representative will be chosen by a greater number of citizens in the large...republic....And the suffrages of the people being more free, will be more likely to center on men who possess the most attractive merit and the most diffusive and established characters.¹²⁸

It was also expected that larger units would enhance the status of local

¹²⁶J.S. Mill, Considerations on Representative Government, In H. B. Acton (ed.), Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government, (London, UK: Dent and Co., 1951), p.217.

¹²⁷Cmnd. 1164, para. 221, p. 59.

¹²⁸J. Madison, "Federalist No. 10" in J. Cooke (1961), The Federalist (Middletown).

government itself, which would result in more qualified candidates seeking office.

The assumptions regarding a relationship between the size of an electoral district and expertise was not new. As Foley points out: "The British system rest[ed] on an elitist tradition of 'representative' and responsible leadership."¹²⁹ Representative democracy "combined accountability with professionalism and expertise."¹³⁰ Larger districts were justified in the first instance by relationship to an enlarged electorate.

Accordingly, the assumption was that this would result in a broader representation of community interest, as well as a more diverse body of potential representatives from which the electorate could choose.

Within these arguments for enlarged districts came the added liberal notion concerning the impact of self interest on representation. The Herbert Commission had argued that London's local government had suffered from a decline in morale. Specifically, they had argued that the weakening of the boroughs over time had created the perception of borough government having lower status, which failed to attract "the right kind of councillor."¹³¹ It was asserted that not only would larger boroughs create a larger number of individuals seeking office, but also that larger boroughs would have greater resource bases and taxable land value. Greater wealth was equated with greater potential local power, making the position of the councillor more desirable and ultimately lead to a higher calibre of local government councillor.

¹²⁹D. Foley (1972), p. 20.

¹³⁰D. Held (1987), Models of Democracy (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), p. 95.

¹³¹Cmnd. 1164, para. 688, pp. 179-180.

The scale of operations must be big enough to attract first rate people to the service of the Borough, both as councillor and officials.¹³²

Size in this case was related to both effective governance and representative democracy. This was essentially an attempt to enhance the status of local government and draw more individuals to the call of local government. Self-interest would be a motivating factor for representatives.

Finally, reorganization into larger local governance units it was hoped would cultivate a body of governors who would represent the population as a whole. Therefore, increasing the size of constituency would bring councilors from a broader socio-economic segment of the population. Diversity was perceived in terms of mirroring the personal characteristics of the population, assuming that governors who broadly reflected the race, class, gender, and economic characteristics of the population would have similar values and reflect these values in the way they governed.

The 28 boroughs that made up the former London administrative area of the LCC were redistricted into 12 larger boroughs now known as the inner London boroughs. Outside of this area, 20 new boroughs were created out of parts of the surrounding counties (together known as the LBCs). Borough population size ranged from 170,000 to 340,000. And the Greater London Council was created as a broad organization tier encompassing all the London boroughs.

Viewed comparatively, the new London boroughs were larger than most

¹³²Cmnd. 1164, para 746, subsection (1), p. 194.

British cities. The largest LBC, Lambeth, had a population of 320,000. At the time only six cities in England were larger (Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Bristol). Of the 32 London boroughs only 5 had populations below 200,000.

The structure of membership and representation on the GLC and the LBCs, from an institutional perspective, could be viewed as more remote from the elector as compared with the LCC phase. The total number of elected councilors was cut from 300 county councilors and 4,000 borough councilors to 100 county councilors and 1,920 borough councilors.¹³³ Thus, GLC councilors would represent larger territories and larger constituencies.¹³⁴

LBC and GLC membership was made up of directly elected councilors serving three- year terms and indirectly elected aldermen serving six-year terms. Aldermen functioned as council members with full members' rights (i.e. voting rights).

Normally, the aldermen were ex-councilors or retired persons, who were elected to the council by sitting council members. As Smallwood comments,

This practice was a hangover from the early 19th century reform bill days, when the House of Lords insisted that local councilors of 'experience' should be permitted to name some distinguished colleagues of 'experience' to prevent the untutored populace from swamping the councils with unqualified personnel....This aldermanic process could be used to swing close elections in favor of one party or another.¹³⁵

¹³³D. Foley (1972), p. 36.

¹³⁴G. Rhodes and S. Hastings (1972), "The Greater London Council" in The New Government of London: The First Five Years (ed.) G. Rhodes (London: London School of Economics), p. 399.

¹³⁵F. Smallwood (1965), p. 86.

Aldermen, it was felt, would bring consistency and continuity to local governance through both their prior experience and longer terms of office. However, their inclusion also represented a dilution of direct democratic process in the locality. In practice, during the GLC years (see chapter 5) the aldermanic positions would be used by political parties to bolster weak council majorities.¹³⁶

The maximum number of councilors per LBC was set at 60 (70 including aldermen). The smallest LBC, Waltham Forest, had 48 councilors, while the majority of the remaining LBCs had 60 councilors (all of the inner LBCs had 60 councilors and 10 aldermen). The total number of GLC councilors for the London area was reduced to 100 (elected to three-year terms). The GLC would also have 16 aldermen elected by GLC councilors for six-year terms. They felt that this would be the appropriate size to enable local authorities to be "effective instruments for the control of policy."¹³⁷ Herbert argued that excessively large membership on authorities would be unwieldy and would force councilors to be mired in excessive local detail, thereby limiting their ability to act as representatives of the broader needs of their constituencies and London as a whole.

On this, we believe that since the functions of local councils will be limited it would be best to keep the number fairly small; otherwise people will not find the local councillor's job worthwhile. But since these councilors must be sensitive to opinion in their constituencies and able to deal with individual queries or complaints, the numbers must not be too small.¹³⁸

¹³⁶Byrne (1984), p. 134-135. In 1977 the position was abolished in the GLC and then in the LBCs in 1978 (see ¹³⁶ chapter 5).

¹³⁷Cmnd. 1164, para. 853, p. 217; and CMND. 4040, para. 458.

¹³⁸Cmnd. 4040, para.405.

The number of GLC councilors representing each borough varied according to population size, with the minimum number of councilors for each borough being 2 and the maximum being 4. Councilors were popularly elected by borough constituencies in April. GLC elections would precede borough elections by one year.

At both levels of local government, councils operated as miniature parliaments. The majority party governed, and the minority party played the role of opposition. Formal council meetings included debate and discussion of policy proposals and reports produced by council committees and subcommittees, and voting by council members and aldermen. Most of the work of the councils took place in committees and subcommittees.

Internally, the GLC and the MBCs were to be arranged on a committee basis, with council members serving on between 6 and 10 committees or subcommittees. The committee system was designed for managerial effectiveness. By delegating work to committees and subcommittee, the tasks of local governance could be more effectively carried out. The councils provided oversight for the work of the policy committees. Thus, committees were responsible to the Council. Formal Council activities would revolve around debate, discussion, amendment or about approval of committee reports and recommendations.

The GLC would have 10 key committees: finance, personnel, arts and recreation, housing, new towns, planning and transportation, public services, strategic planning, intelligence, and a general purpose committee to cover overall GLC policy. Committee chairs would be distributed on the basis of majority party seniority, while

the remaining membership would be distributed according to party distribution in the broader council.

LBCs were given latitude in their internal organization. Once formed, the number of committees on LBCs varied, with between 10 and 18 committees per council, and roughly 12-40 subcommittees. For example, Camden council initially had 12 committees; each committee had a three member executive (2 from the majority party one from the minority opposition).

Committees were also allowed to appoint what government referred to as "coopted" members (with the exception of finance). Cooptees were non-elected members of the public and private sectors who served on committees in their capacity as experts. As Selznick, in his study of the TVA in the United States aptly defines it,

Co-optation is the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence.¹³⁹

It is interesting to note that cooptation was a formal mechanism of inclusion of community groups and voluntary organizations into local policy-making process (see chapter 6). Coopted members were not considered to be members of the council in the way that Aldermen were, as Coopted members could speak and vote in committee but not in council. Legally, committees could have as many as 1/3 of their membership as cooptees, while subcommittees could be 100% coopted.

Cooptation was at the discretion of the council. Through this process the councils could make use of experts in policy formulation, which provided a link

¹³⁹P. Selznick (1966), T.V.A and the Grass Roots (New York, NY: Harper), p. 13.

between councils and voluntary and community organizations. The problems however were also clear. Such members represented very specific points of view, so they did not necessarily represent the broader community. And perhaps more importantly, members were often coopted on party grounds not on merit.

4.5 Conclusions: Institutions, Values and the Prospect for Participation

The LCC phase of local government can be understood as one of incremental changes designed to manage the provision of services in an increasingly complex urban arena. The period was one of conflict between those seeking to sustain old power structures and those seeking change. In many ways, the forces of change won because the governing system began to buckle under the pressures of modernity. The broad character of the LCC phase, has most succinctly been described by John Mason in the following statement,

The character of London government is corporate and oligarchic rather than local and democratic...Whatever the achievements...[of the time]...there has been no push towards popular representation. Indeed, several organizations were established precisely to prevent such an occurrence.¹⁴⁰

The creation of the LCC and the MBCs represented a centralizing trend. The internal organization of the institutions remained closed throughout the period. Access to both institutions was provided through elections, while all other forms of participation in policy formulation and implementation were at the discretion of the

¹⁴⁰John Mason (1989), "Partnership Denied: The London Labor Party on the LCC and the Decline of London Government, 1940-1965" in Andrew Saint (ed.), Politics and the People of London (London: Hambledon Press) p. 251.

local authorities. Only general meetings of both the LCC and MBCs were open to the public. The institutional functions were determined according to standards of efficiency. New institutional developments during the period tended towards greater central control of local institutions. The following table provides a broad summary of five formal institutional characteristics of the LCC phase.

Table 4.7 Key Institutional Features of the LCC Phase

1. Territorial	two tier local government system	
	LCC	1 Metropolitan tier of medium size
	MBC	28 Localized borough governments
2. Functional		
	LCC	Coordination and Oversight, city-wide needs
	MBC	Personal service providers, local needs
3. Central/Local Relations		
	Ad-hocs	
	Regional Boards	
	Central Control though Nationalization of key services	
4. Citizen Access		
	Elections as only formal institutional avenue	
	LBC/MBC	full council meetings open to public
		committee meetings closed to public
	Ad-Hocs & Regional	
	discretionary consultation with population,	
	no mandated requirements to consult or utilize	
	evidence from consultation in policy formulation or	
	implementation	
5. Dominant Values		
	Efficiency	
	Expertise	
	Equity	

The LCC phase incorporated a *minimal participatory capacity* for citizens in local governance.¹⁴¹ The broad population had only one mandated political resource-

¹⁴¹I use the phrase "participatory capacity" to reflect the creation of more accessible government structures. Capacity, however is meant to represent the degree to which the institutional changes create the "potential" for individuals and groups to participate

-the vote. All other access was at the discretion of the local authority. As the dominant local government value throughout was efficiency, local authorities tended to use their discretion to solicit the views of "experts." Mass participation in policy was considered to create inefficiency.

In evaluating the institutional developments of the LCC phase as a whole, one can note the emergence of several ideas that would later prove meaningful in relationship to participation. Most significant is the growth of ideas of regionalism and its gradual movement from idea to incorporation in the creation of formal regional structures.

Furthermore, with regionalism came the awareness of the importance of dialogue between localities and national government and among the localities themselves. Though the regional institutions created during this phase were purely consultative bodies, and lacked statutory authority, they did provide new forums for debate, dialogue and discussion. They provided avenues of access into policy making for individuals and groups.

Consultation was also increasingly utilized in policy formulation by government--local and national. Though consultation between local authorities and citizens remained a discretionary element (as with the Davies Committee), its inclusion represents the opening up of local government processes and policy making. As mentioned previously, institutional change is often derived from the process of experimentation.

in policy making and implementation, not simply through elections, but rather through the creation of new routes. The discussion of how this capacity is acted on, and by whom will be taken up in chapter 6 on participation.

With the discretionary practice of consultation came a growing awareness of the importance of the process, not simply in creating policy, but in generating popular support for government actions. This would ultimately lead (see chapter 5) to the creation of more formal mechanisms for consultation, and the later growth of "mandatory" consultation. Although during the LCC phase participation in these venues tended to be extended only to individuals and groups with expertise, these consultative bodies would take on a much broader role during the GLC phase (see chapter 5).

At the end of the LCC phase, one can even note the beginnings of a change in the way government viewed citizens more broadly. The paternalism of the early LCC years, in which citizens were viewed as uneducated and lacking the political knowledge to participate in anything more than elections, began to change. Indeed, in the Preface to the Greater London Plan, Abercrombie thanked the "informed public" for its help. This might be interpreted as the start of a transition in thinking about the public itself. Perhaps this transition marked an actual awareness that the public could, when informed, play a more formal role in governance. Clearly, this conception was not new. Theorists and leaders had paid lip service to the concept of an informed public from the earliest of times. However, concretely connecting theory to reality in a formal policy document might be interpreted as the beginning of a move forward, which would find fruition in the GLC phase of local governance.

Ch. 5
Contemporary Local Government: Formal Institutional Design
GLC to Current Phase

The institutional transformation of London government in the 1960s was comprehensive, including changes to all metropolitan and local authorities. The underlying rhetoric of the reforms was a call to heal the fragmentation of local government, to create greater efficiency and equity in local service provision, and to improve the *health of local democracy*.

A mere 20 years later the great experiment in comprehensive metropolitan governance in the London region was deemed a failure by central government, and the Greater London Council was abolished. London's new government was composed of one and a half tiers, including 32 boroughs at the bottom and a constellation of central and local joint boards and committees above. Both reforms were brought about by Conservative governments with vocal opposition by the Labor minority.

The language used to describe the problems facing local government in the 1980s had an uncanny similarity to that of the 1960s; efficiency and the call for a more representative government. The 1980s reformers suggested that their model was based upon new ideas and changing realities. As the Secretary of State for the Environment asserted,

The reorganizations of the 1960s...were typical of their time...structural reform was approached with little regard for economy....Times have changed. Priorities are now more practical....Government's prime objective has been to...improve efficiency...[and] meet the need for an authority to be

accessible.¹

However, as illustrated in chapter 4, these "new objectives" appeared to be the same as the objectives underlying the reorganization of London government in the 1960s.

As the Herbert Commission stated in 1957:

It is essential..that the system of [local] government should be one that promotes efficiency and economy in the use of both financial and human resources. There is a need for a continuous search for methods which will yield the best results at the lowest cost....In examining [the] problem we have tried always to keep simultaneously in mind these two twin matters, administrative efficiency and the health of representative government.²

Despite the seemingly analogous rhetoric employed, the content of the 1957 and 1986 reforms were radically different from one another. The variations can be understood within the context of significant formal and informal institutional, environmental and ideological changes during the GLC phase.

The GLC phase was a volatile period in institutional development. The reforms of 1964 were catalysts for subsequent changes throughout the informal institutional networks in London (political parties, community organizations and voluntary associations). Subsequent pressures from these informal institutions spurred further formal structural changes in local governance institutions. Institutional developments during the LCC phase were incremental and tended to build upon one

¹Secretary of State for the Environment (October 1983), "Streamlining the Cities: Government Proposals for Reorganizing Local Government in Greater London and the Metropolitan Counties", Cmnd. 9063, Volume 53 (London: HMSO), paras. 1.4 - 1.9, pp. 1-3.

²Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London 1957-1960 (October 1960), Report Presented to Parliament, Cmnd. 1164, (London, UK: HMSO), paras. 219 - 221, p. 59.

another in an evolutionary pattern. In contrast, the institutional developments of the GLC phase were abrupt and variable (particularly during the late 1970s – the Thatcher years – when actors operating within local institutions articulated a set of values which conflicted with the values of actors operating within central governing institutions).

The 1964 reforms produced a larger, wealthier and more powerful set of local government institutions, resulting in a more highly politicized and contentious local institutional arena. Altered and enlarged territorial units created new divisions in power in local authority politics both at the borough and metropolitan levels. During the LCC phase political control of local authorities changed hands intermittently (20 year cycles on average). In contrast, during the GLC phase political control changed at virtually every election, often with different political parties dominating different local levels. In London every local election was contested.

During this phase two sets of actors gained prominence; one group situated within London's local government institutions; the other within central government. Both groups had distinct and often clashing urban agendas, ideologies, strategies, goals and values concerning local democracy and political participation. At different points during the GLC phase each group attempted to recast formal institutional arrangements in the locality with greater or lesser success.

During the early years of the GLC phase, popular pressure coupled with the election of more activist bodies of local representatives, led central government to institute a range of local government reforms (institutional change as a bottom-up

process). Between 1967 and 1979 reforms in the local arena included political decentralization in certain service areas, and the building of a more participatory model of local governance premised upon values of greater citizen participation in policy formulation and implementation (also see section 5.7).³

In 1979 a new set of actors gained power nationally. Conflicts between levels of government led to a series of centrally imposed reforms (institutional change as a top-down process) which altered local decision making processes again. Local government was being politically centralized through the movement of policy making powers away from citizens and local government towards central government. The participatory models of the 1970s were eclipsed by the market based models of the 1980s. The economic model was premised upon the idea that participation should take the form of economic choices rather than political voices. As David Held aptly describes it:

[The Thatcher program was] a strategy for simultaneously increasing aspects of the state's power while restricting the scope of the state's actions....At root [it was] concerned to advance the cause of liberalism against democracy by limiting the democratic use of state power.⁴

The GLC phase therefore, began with a transition from representative to participatory models of local governance and ended with a shift towards a market based model.

³The participatory model here refers to a local government system in which citizens are given greater control over local decision making processes. A more detailed discussion of the theoretical aspects of this model was provided in chapter 1. For a discussion of the impact of this model upon citizen participation see chapter 6.

⁴David Held (1987), Models of Democracy (Stanford: Stanford University Press) p. 244.

By some accounts these changes were viewed as central government's attempt to control local unrest, while sustaining existing power relations. In this view, earlier participatory changes did not reflect a value shift, rather the temporal government manipulation designed to achieve stability and quell unrest (see section 5.1). As Piven and Cloward proposed in the American case:

Historical evidence suggests that [these] arrangements are initiated or expanded during the occasional outbreaks of civil disorder produced by mass unemployment, and are then abolished or contracted when political stability is restored.... Expansive relief policies are designed to mute civil disorder.⁵

The above analysis is problematic in fully explaining the London case. The historical data on London indicates that shifts in policy were caused by two distinct sets of ideologies and conditioned by institutional arrangements.

The urban policy shifts of the 1970s were instigated by new actors gaining power locally with differing visions of local governance, and based upon values stressing the creation of a more participatory, responsive, responsible and accessible local government. The rightward policy shifts of the early 1980s also represented changes brought about by new actors at the central level, with ideologies and values that emphasized a laissez-faire model of local governance (see section 5.8).

This chapter examines the changes in local governance values and ideology in the context of formal structural reforms, new actors, and the changing environment. This 20 year interval, though brief by local government history standards in the United Kingdom, proved to be a volatile political period shaped by the environmental

⁵F. F. Piven and R. Cloward (1971), Regulating the Poor (New York, NY: Vintage Books) p. xiii.

pressures of economic decline, population movements, a more politically active community placing pressure upon local government, and new actors gaining formal control over local government. While the rhetoric of local government reform in the 1980s appeared the same as that of the 1960s, in fact much changed, particularly the dominant actors and values underlying local governance itself.

The GLC phase was characterized by four key institutional features. First, territorial restructuring created a solid division between urban and suburban areas in the London region. Second, this period was marked by significant reorganization of local powers and services between the new local governance institutions (the Greater London Council and the London Borough Councils). Third, during this period there were fluctuations in central/local power relations characterized by earlier periods of decentralization in decision making powers over service provision and policy formulation to the locality, and later periods of *hyper centralization* of powers and functions back to central government. Within this period of hyper-centralization, central government increasingly utilized quasi-independent local government institutions as mechanisms for policy formulation and service distribution. Finally, each of these formal institutional changes were shaped by ideological shifts which altered the dominant values surrounding local governance.

5.1. Setting the Stage: London and the Broader Environmental Context

The implementation of the 1964 local government reforms in London coincided with socio-economic changes in London's demographic and economic base.

As a result, the GLC phase became a period in which groups and coalitions of actors struggled both within and over new local government structures. The socio-economic divisions of the LCC phase were solidified and accentuated by the 1964 reforms.

In London, as in many central cities in the United States, the period was marked by the growth of new urban immigrant populations, suburban population shifts, and post-industrial restructuring of the urban economic base. Demographic change within London had begun at the end of the LCC phase with the growth of immigrant populations from the commonwealth countries (Caribbean, Asian, African and the Mediterranean). Between 1955 and 1962 421,000 people of color arrived in the Britain.⁶ According to the 1971 census roughly 54% of this group moved to the inner London region. The mass influx over a relatively short period of time led to friction locally. White populations argued that immigrants took lower wages and undercut the market rate.

The hostility came largely from a simple feeling that black men were undesirable...because they were different. The shortage of housing in [the inner city] made matters worse.⁷

The issues of race and discrimination had largely been ignored by governments

⁶W.W. Daniels (1968), Racial Discrimination in England (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books), p. 9. Immigration in the UK during the 1950s was due in large part to two main factors; a very liberal immigration policy in the Britain allowed immigration from commonwealth nations on an unrestricted basis; and, immigration to the US was restricted in 1952 with the passage of the McCarran Act and not surprisingly many such immigrants shifted their focus to the Britain. The 1962 Immigration Act placed the first restrictions on immigration from the Commonwealth.

⁷T. O. Lloyd (1986), Empire to Welfare State: English History 1906-1985 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), p. 377.

(local and national) during the LCC phase. Politicians of both the left and right perceived these issues to be a political liability, potentially alienating the majority of white voters. According to one group of researchers, "there seemed to be an undeclared agreement...to avoid political debate on the question."⁸ Analysis of Parliamentary debate reveals that there was only one Labor member, Fenner Brockway, who annually sought to get legislation on the Parliamentary agenda to ban public discrimination. It took nine years before any formal governmental action was taken (see the Race Relation Act of 1965, below).

Governmental neglect of race went unchallenged in part because the immigrant population tended not to be politically active.

During these initial years, black people did not actively pursue redress for their experiences of racism through formal political means. On the contrary, most people, unconsciously if not consciously, adopted a 'bear with it' attitude towards the blatant discrimination they encountered. Perseverance was considered the greatest virtue. Since few intended to stay in Britain more than a couple of years, most did not seek change through participation in the system. They were prepared tacitly to accept their abhorrent and unequal condition as only temporary. Most black people felt they had little stake in a system that they would only be a part of for a relatively short time.⁹

Issues of race began to boil over in London at the end of the LCC phase.

The first blatant sign of native British reaction came in 1957 with white riots against black immigrants in London's Notting Hill section. The Notting Hill riots

⁸J. Lenton, N. Budgen & K. Clarke (1966), "Immigration Race and Politics: A Bow Group Pamphlet" (London, UK: Bow Publication Limited), p. 1. Also see N. Deakin (1965), Colour and The British Electorate 1964 (London, UK: Frederick A. Praeger) pp. 1-12.

⁹Terri Sewell (1993), Black Tribunes: Black Political Participation in Britain, p. 20.

were described as,

the culmination of scattered incidents throughout the country in which small groups of bored young "teddy" boys and frustrated aging fascists had expressed their feelings by breaking the windows of dwellings occupied by immigrants and beating up the occasional colored pedestrian who crossed their path on a Saturday night.¹⁰

The Notting Hill riots were brief and quickly dealt with in the courts rather than in Parliament. Nine white men were sentenced to four years in prison, and the incident was treated by the government as the aberrant behavior of a small group of individuals rather than a symptom of a larger social problem.

During the early 1960s discrimination became common practice by white Londoners, and was quietly endured by black immigrants.

Outside any news agent's shop in London advertisements for flats could be found which openly specified 'no colored'. Similarly...employers would often quite openly turn down Asian or West Indian job applicants because of their race.¹¹

The issue of racial discrimination grew in salience both for urban immigrant populations and for local authorities just as the GLC phase began.

At the same time, national economic decline was taking its toll on the London economy. As Gurr and King point out:

During the decade of the 1960s, London lost 243,000 jobs....During the 1970s the loss accelerated: London lost 350,000 jobs between 1971 and 1979.¹²

¹⁰Ibid, p. 10.

¹¹D. Smith (1977), Racial Disadvantage in Britain (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books) p. 141.

¹²T. Gurr and D. King (1987), The State and the City (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), p. 155.

Manufacturing suffered the greatest loss (though, as mentioned in chapter 4, this was the intentional outcome of post-war planning efforts). In 1964 there was a *sterling crisis*, leading to a decrease in confidence and international investment in the Britain broadly. In 1966 the Labor government introduced a freeze on wages and prices. Rising inflation led government to institute a policy of devaluation in 1967 and a full blown monetary crisis hit in 1968. Not surprisingly London as the capital felt the impact in concentrated form. Sue Goss draws a vivid picture of the economic impacts on one community in inner London, and this pattern was repeated across inner London.

In 1966, Cross and Blackwell, employing 1200 people, had moved its plant to Scotland. Other firms such as Beach and Sons the jam manufacturers left in the same year. Dewrance, employing 400 people moved to Skelnersdale in March 1968, and in August 1968 Sainsbury's closed their food factory employing 1700-2000 workers. IPC closed their printing works in 1970, making 758 workers redundant. Shuttleworths closed the chocolate factory in Gallway Road, making 1100 workers, mainly women redundant. Other factories began to leave, including Pierce and Duff, Oxoid, Briant Colour, Burrup Matheson, Pye, Rocola, Brooke Bond, Oxo's Hayward factory and numerous other small concerns....In 1978 there were only eight manufacturing forms which employed more than 500 people. By 1986 there was one: Peak Freans.¹³

London was also undergoing post-industrial economic restructuring, characterized by the transition from an economic base dominated by manufacturing to one based upon an enlarged service sector. While service sector jobs in certain geographic areas of London grew (consistent with planned post industrial change), the impact was geographically differential. Some areas of London did better overall than

¹³S. Goss (1988), Local Labour and Local Government (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press), p. 82.

others.

What was happening was a combination of two processes. The general secular decline of manufacturing and the rise of service employment was overlain by a relative decentralization of jobs from the region's core to its outer rings.¹⁴

Rising unemployment, fewer local resources and increased demand for services became key features of the phase. Local governments, as the predominant service providers felt the brunt of the pressures.¹⁵

The deconcentration of jobs and the growth of minority populations in inner London sparked white flight to the suburbs. The white outward population movement eclipsed inward minority movement into the central city. As a result the GLC phase was marked by steady white demographic decentralization and an inner city area increasingly dominated by poor, unskilled, and minority populations. The urban-suburban divide in the London region was therefore marked by its distinct racial and economic character.

In London, particularly in the inner region dominated by minorities and the poor, needs grew while resources declined. The centralized institutions which had developed out of the post war period were increasingly perceived as inaccessible, and lacking in capacity to respond quickly to the needs of the population. These trends coupled with national economic downturn placed heavy pressure on existing governance institutions.

¹⁴Peter Hall (1989), London 2001 (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd.), p. 52.

¹⁵What follows is a brief synopsis of the national economic situation during the GLC phase. This data is important in situating the specifics of institutional change in the London region.

Demographic and social trends...placed greater demands on welfare systems, the collapse of stable economic growth and high levels of unemployment undermined the tax base....Squeezed between growing demands and constrained resources, welfare systems have simultaneously undergone a turbulent period of restructuring....in some places the crises in public provision has been an important factor in community breakdown, expressed most clearly in periodic outbreaks of riot and disorder.¹⁶

Popular unrest was articulated by a range of groups during this phase; trade union members, minority populations, women, young white collar professionals and the new left. Formal and informal strikes broke out throughout the period. During the late 1960s trade unions were joined by a more militant left emerging within the London Labor party. The militant forces, who came to be known as the *new left* represented a set of actors within Labor, who were prepared to take extra-parliamentary action in order to achieve change.

It included not only councilors but also party activists, community workers and local government workers....They [sought] a new local road to socialism free from what they regarded as the centralized deformations...they [were] the local government wing of the extra-parliamentary new left.¹⁷

The *new left* began to grow during the late 1960s in many of England's central cities, particularly in London. They emerged as an informal opposition group, utilizing the tools of protest to influence local decision makers. The *new left* was a diverse group of younger Labor councilors and activists. It is difficult to categorize them because they represented a wide range of strategies, though shared a *left of center* perspective

¹⁶M. Geddes (January 1995), "Poverty, Excluded Communities and Local Democracy" in Commission for Local Democracy Report No. 9 (London, UK: CLD Limited), pp. 6-7.

¹⁷J. Gyford (1978), Local Politics in Britain (London, UK: Croom Helm) p. 18.

which promoted local autonomy and collective consumption.¹⁸

The existing power holders were unresponsive to the *new left*'s demands, and as a result the movement turned its focus towards capturing power rather than pressuring existing power holders. During the GLC phase the *new left* began to gain formal power within the London Labor Party (LLP), and through the party gained control of many local governing institutions. By the middle of the GLC phase, the values and goals of London's *new left* became synonymous with London government (see section 5.6).

The third group of activists that emerged during this phase were working and middle class groups protesting urban renewal, housing and infrastructure projects. Tenants associations formed across London to protest LBC housing policies. A range of single issue campaigns sprouted up throughout the London area, drawing support from across the local political spectrum. Successful campaigns to oppose demolition of homes were led by both Conservative and Labor councilors. In other areas campaigns to prevent office development grew. Suburban homeowners organized to prevent the re-housing of homeless families in their areas, and battled against plans to situate a new London airport on the border of London and Essex.

The GLC phase began its life at a tumultuous historical moment. The environmental transitions in population makeup, in residential settlement patterns and in London's economic base were defining features of the period. Growing frustrations

¹⁸ The *new left* represented a division in the labor party. They grew to dominate the urban labor movement, and must be considered at this point distinct from the group currently in power known as *new labor*.

over local institutions which appeared unresponsive to local demands, led to the emergence of a range of more active social and political movements. As Gyford points out,

British political culture with its assumptions of respect for and trust in public bodies and of deference towards established authority, was now displaying much more questioning, skeptical and assertive attitudes. The onset of economic decline...meant that questions of resource allocations became much more hotly contested....The growth of further education provided for a more articulate and self confident population. The development of mass media...raised self awareness of how government decisions were made and how they might be challenged.¹⁹

The socio-economic and political culture shifts were solidified and accentuated by the formal structural reforms of 1964. The result was a growing socio-economic polarization between inner and outer areas of the London region marked by both racial and economic divisions. These new lines of fragmentation, coupled with a more politically active and vocal populous, help to explain the conflictual and contentious nature of the GLC phase.

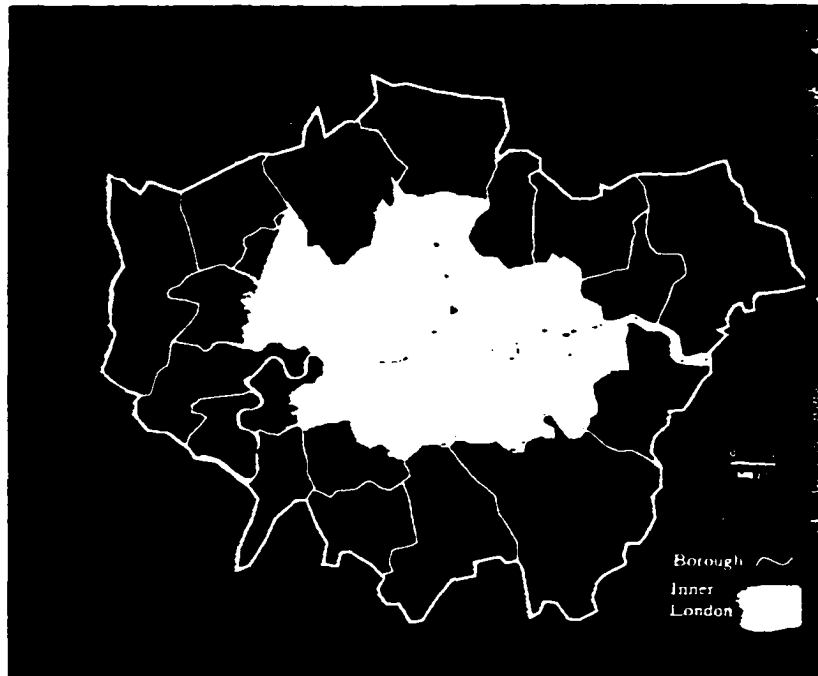
5.2 Local Government Reorganization: Boundary Changes and New Divisions -- London's Internal Urban-Suburban Divide

The period opened with a total redrawing of the territorial map. The London region and each of its local authorities were enlarged -- the metropolitan level of government now called the Greater London Council (GLC) and the London Boroughs Councils (LBCs). Old local governance institutions were replaced by new ones. The

¹⁹J. Gyford (1994), "Politics and Planning in London" in James Simmie (ed.) *Planning in London* (London: University College London Press), p. 82.

surrounding regions were incorporated into the London area. The enlarged region was redistricted. By all accounts the 1964 reforms represented the most comprehensive local institutional reorganization process ever carried out in the London region (for that matter in the whole of England). The subsequent GLC phase represented a period of internal structural adjustment to new boundaries rather than alteration of these boundaries or the creation of new boroughs.

Map 5.1 London During the GLC Phase



While the 1964 reforms were intended to heal London's fragmentation, the outcome was quite different. The boundaries set in 1964 generated new sub-divisions within London. The regional conflicts between urban London and the suburban counties that marked the LCC phase, were incorporated into the London region politically, socially and economically. These territorial divisions shaped the local political dynamics of the entire period.

The 1964 Act divided London up into "inner" and "outer" geographic areas (see map 5.1). The inner area encompassed the old LCC administrative area. The outer area was made up of the newly incorporated boroughs that had formerly been a part of the surrounding counties (county boroughs). The inner area was urban and the

outer was suburban.²⁰ Not only were each of these areas different demographically, but further each also had very different political histories and cultures. The inner and outer territories of London represented two distinct communities. As Sue Goss comments:

[Community] represented a contested point of intersection of institutions, practices, ideas and shared meanings, a language through which people have defined themselves and their interests.²¹

The suburban areas had a provincial history. According to Pahl, the suburban system was structured upon an established middle and upper-middle class set of residents with a common set of life styles, expectations and unique patterns of political activity.²² The newer suburban populations, those moving to the suburbs from inner London, were of a common economic background and quickly adopted the patterns of the more traditional suburban communities.

In provincial England there is a traditional middle class which centers round commerce and the professions at a local level. Most local grammar schools produce a small local elite who settle in the area, marry amongst themselves and continue a social life with a fairly tight-knit network....A close knit network is an important means of social control and hence the pattern of middle-class life in provincial England is reinforced.²³

The outer boroughs formed a distinct community within the London region dominated by business and professional interests, and Conservative party supporters. These

²⁰I distinguish urban and suburban in terms of differences in residential concentration, economic base, and political culture (see below).

²¹S. Goss (1988), p. 113.

²²see R.E. Pahl (1970), Patterns of Urban Life (London, UK: Longman); and (1970) Whose City? (London, UK: Longman).

²³R. E. Pahl (1970a), p. 75.

groups tended to clashed with inner London constituents (also see section 5.4).

Inner London boroughs formed a separate block dominated by working class, poor and minority groups.

Evidence...suggests that [in the inner London boroughs] there was a fiercely self-protective community sticking together and looking for collective strategies to protect them from the outside world. The enemies were clearly identifiable: the landlords, the bosses, the rich, the government--all outsiders.²⁴

The inner London boroughs tended to vote Labor, and to support working class political agendas. Minorities, in common with the working class and poor populations tended to view the left as natural allies.

Because most black people are working class, they have associated themselves (actively and passively) with the Labor party.²⁵

These socio-economic and cultural similarities within urban and suburban communities produced differences between the inner and outer areas in voting patterns, party identification and policy directions (see section 5.4). These divisions in the political identity of urban and suburban communities were solidified by the 1964 reforms. As mentioned in chapter 4, the former county boroughs almost universally had supported conservative administrations during the LCC years, while inner Londoners had supported Labor (the LCC had been under Labor control for the previous 34 years).

The 1964 reforms represented the institutionalization of a London based urban-

²⁴S. Goss (1988), p. 114.

²⁵T. Sewell (1993), Black Tribunes: Black Political Participation in Britain (London, UK: Lawrence Wishart), p. 25.

suburban divide. The differences between urban and suburban communities were not in and of themselves unique (suburban population movement was a feature of urban communities in both the United States and Britain at the time). However bringing these divisions into the formerly urban entity of London had significant impacts upon the internal political dynamics of London local governance.

Table 5.2 below presents data on borough voting patterns. The first past-the-post electoral system meant that a simple majority was all that was required for a party to gain control of that localities government. As the table indicates, the conservative party consistently garnered a majority of the vote in the outer boroughs and Labor tended to gain control in the inner London boroughs. These differences provide support for the contention that attitudes and preferences of voters in outer London boroughs differed from those of the inner London boroughs (also see chapter 6). As Rhodes remarked when reviewing London 5 years into the GLC phase:

There is a sharp contrast, socially and politically, between the group of boroughs formed from the eastern and south eastern parts of the old County of London and its fringes, and the outer ring of suburban boroughs....Inner London has in many ways different characteristics from Outer London. The former tends to contain the boroughs with relatively unfavorable social conditions and the latter have a higher proportion of boroughs with relatively favorable conditions.²⁶

²⁶G. Rhodes (1972), "The London Boroughs", in G. Rhodes (ed.) The New Government of London (London, UK: LSE) p. 434.

Table 5.2. GLC Phase: Party Share Percentage of the Vote in the Inner and Outer London Boroughs By Local Election

		GLC Elections					
		<u>1964</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1981</u>
<u>Inner London</u>		%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative		17	58	25	17	67	25
Labor		83	42	75	83	33	75
 <u>Outer London</u>							
Conservative		50	90	90	50	90	65
Labor		50	10	10	50	10	35
		Borough Elections					
		<u>1964</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1982</u>
<u>Inner London</u>		%	%	%	%	%	%
Conservative		17	83	17	17	33	42
Labor		83	17	83	83	67	58
 <u>Outer London</u>							
Conservative		50	90	45	70	75	85
Labor		50	10	55	30	25	15

5.3 Local Government Reorganization: Amalgamation and its Impacts within the London Boroughs

Geographic reorganization resulted not only in tension between inner and outer boroughs, but also within the new borough councils. Each new LBC embodied the merging together of two or three of the former MBCs and/or county boroughs. Amalgamation was viewed by central government as a means to enhance local authority responsiveness to services needs within the London administrative area. However most MBCs saw reorganization as a threat to their independence, a removal of their powers, and an attack upon their capacities to represent local community interests.

The 1964 reform was based upon notions of optimum size for maximum representation of local interests. Reformers believed that a balance could be found such that boroughs were large enough to overcome borough parochialism, but not so large as to result in councilors losing touch with the interests of their constituents. The Herbert Commission had argued that the existence of multiple small MBCs, the LCC and the range of appointed local authorities during the LCC phase, led to confusion amongst the electorate as to who was responsible for what. Administrative fragmentation led to the additional problem of popular disillusion with local authorities and disinterest in local politics.

Reorganization was intended to remedy administrative fragmentation by creating a larger and more consolidated local governance system. Larger authorities would be able to capitalize upon the benefits of economies of scale, in turn facilitating more efficient local service provision. There was clearly an underlying assumption that well-defined lines of authority and an enhanced capacity to provide services

would have the added benefit of improving popular attitudes towards local authorities.

If people respected their local government and believed that it had the power to enhance their individual circumstances, then it was assumed they would be more likely to show their support of local authority activities through elections.

LBCs were significantly larger than MBCs, and while amalgamation certainly enhanced their powers it did not produce the anticipated clarity of mission. Amalgamation was rarely greeted with enthusiasm by former MBCs. There are countless stories within the London boroughs concerning the difficulties surrounding amalgamation. In Southwark:

Initially reorganization led to a series of struggles between the Councilors of the three old authorities, over the name of the new Borough, the leadership of the new borough, and the chief officers. Maneuvering was conducted on the basis of parochialism....In the years following reorganization these divisions continued. Councilors and activists continued to identify themselves with the old metropolitan areas..rather than with the borough as a whole, and there has been little love lost, between the different groups.²⁷

Similar stories are told in boroughs throughout London.

Battersea was joined with the rest of Wandsworth to make a new and totally artificial unit with no ties or traditions in common and few natural geographic boundaries; Battersea had no more to do with its new partners of Putney or Tooting than with [its neighbor] Hammersmith.²⁸

Writing in 1983 about the London borough of Hackney, Harrison comments:

It is a patchwork. It exists as a unit only as a local-government entity... Hackney is a place curiously without a heart, an uneasy amalgam...of three

²⁷S. Goss (1988), p. 70.

²⁸ Barry Kosmin (1982), "Political Identity in Battersea" in Sandra Wallman and Associates (eds.), Living in South London (London, UK: Gower Publishing) pp. 42-43.

older boroughs--Shoreditch, Hackney and Stoke Newington...Hackney is an archipelago of islands, each with its own distinctive geomorphology and ecology.²⁹

Not only were there difficulties in merging traditional neighborhood units, but equally there were technical difficulties in amalgamation. Foley recounts the story of the new outer borough of Hillingdon,

The most westerly of the London boroughs. Hillingdon's 43 square miles are an amalgam of the former Uxbridge metropolitan borough and three separate urban districts of Hayes and Harlington, Ruislip-Northwood, and Yewsey and West Drayton. An entirely new borough government had to be formed, by consolidating diverse operating systems and records, shuffling or locating new office staff, and making the best possible use of office space. The result has been the physical separation of various operating departments in different government buildings [spread throughout the 43 square mile territory].³⁰

LBC administrative capacity was often internally divided amongst former MBCs, and as a result less than effectual.

Evidence does not support the contention that there is an optimum size for local authorities. As Maud argued,

It is not possible to derive from the research statistical proof about the best size for any particular service....We came to the conclusion that there is no such thing as a single "right" size for any local government service....³¹

Researchers have tended to point out that the size of local authorities in reality has more to do with subjective political considerations than with objective scientific

²⁹P. Harrison (1983), Inside the Inner City (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books), p. 29.

³⁰D. Foley (1972), Governing the London Region: Reorganization and Planning in the 1960s (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), p. 50.

³¹Royal Commission on Local Government in England 1966-1969 (June 1969), Vol. 1 Report, Cmnd. 4040 (London, UK: HMSO), paras. 256-257, pp. 68-69.

standards. The enlarged London boundaries created new problems and pressures. As will be illustrated in chapter 6, size was more closely correlated with issues of democracy and representation than with efficiency.

Amalgamation also required organizational changes within the LBCs. Local authorities needed to develop mechanisms to cope with local service provision on a larger scale. To achieve easier communications and efficiency many local authorities adopted a *corporate* style approach. This strategy, similar to that of the reform movement in America, represented an attempt to make local service provision more businesslike.

LBCs though geographically larger, developed more compact organizational structures with fewer committees and departments, and introduced new mechanisms to coordinate their activities. The 1964 reforms therefore, amongst other things, represented the start of management reform in local government.

The corporate trend involved...centralization, grouping of functions. It meant that gradually many little departments were consolidated into domains that had more responsibilities and were consequently stronger....As in business the message was: integration, control from the top, the efficient use of money and labor, forward planning.³²

The enlarged local authority, by Herbert's calculation, would bring more *expertise* to local government because greater LBC resources and power would enhance their status, in turn making the job of local representative a more attractive one. Herbert argued that such a body would be more *representative*, simply because

³²C. Cockburn (1978), The Local State: Management of Cities and People (London, UK: Pluto Press), p. 13.

representatives would be drawn from a larger cross section of society, based upon the idea that more men would pursue this calling. Larger authorities with greater powers would also be able to protect themselves from the incursion of other local authorities, allowing representatives to protect their constituents from outside pressures. The combined effect would be a more locally *responsive* local government system.

It seems likely that an authority which is strong but not too big has the best chance both of appointing good officers and at the same time attracting good councilors who can keep in touch with their constituents.³³

Enlarged authorities with internal managerial changes for the purposes of efficiency and effectiveness, however, resulted in a more remote and less responsive local governance system.

Four studies of the GLC phase were carried out to ascertain the degree to which the 1964 reforms led to the creation of a body of local representatives which were more reflective of the London population (also see section 5.7).³⁴ These studies pointed out that while more individuals ran for office, they still remained highly unrepresentative in terms of personal characteristics of their communities. The majority of councilors were between 45-65 years of age, male, better educated and

³³Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London 1957-1960 (October 1960), Report Presented to Parliament, Cmnd. 1164 (London, UK: HMSO), para. 283. p. 72.

³⁴See Committee on the Management of Local Government (1967), Vol. 1: Report (London, UK: HMSO); Remuneration of Councilors: Vol II: The surveys of Councilors and Local Authorities (1977), Cmnd. 7010 (London, UK: HMSO); The Conduct of Local Authority Business, Cmnd. 9797 (London, UK: HMSO); and, A. Malibeu et. al. (1989), Local Politics and Participation in Britain and France (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).

from higher socio-economic groups than the broader population. According to national and local surveys during the early years of the GLC, few ordinary people were interested in taking an active role in local affairs. Only 8% of the population in the Maud Committee survey were interested in becoming councilors and only 7% had ever been to a council meeting.³⁵

Data from the period demonstrates that not only were citizens at this stage not interested in participating formally in London's local government, they were in many ways hostile to its actions. As mentioned in section 5.1, during the late 1960s there were working class protests to council housing and economic policies, middle class protest to development and renewal policies, and the emergence of a more active and organized minority population (also see chapter 6).

These outcomes highlight a central underlying contradiction between the reorganization goals for the creation of a system which would perpetuate "healthy local democracy" and one which would enhance "efficient local service provision." The desire for attracting experts to the call of local governance proved fruitful. However, this conflicted with the creation of a governing body with personal characteristics which mirrored the population.

Though local government became more administratively efficient, it also became very remote and impersonal. As one LBC councilor commented:

In the new borough[s] officers became so difficult to get at, they were always busy off out. The new borough[s] were much too large...it was set up to

³⁵ Report of the Committee on the Management of Local Government (1967), The Local Government Elector (London, UK: HMSO), pp. 57 and 162.

achieve easier communication and more efficient and economic services. The opposite happened.³⁶

In retrospect, based upon elite views of the public in 1964, it seems questionable that a more *representative* local governing body was actually the desired outcome. The desire for efficiency and expertise clearly prevailed. An efficient local government was one with a more expert body of representatives, rather than one which reflected the local population. The broad population then as now were, for the most part, less educated, less expert and therefore were considered to be less efficient.

5.4 Functional Reorganization: The Changing Division in Powers Over Services

Attempts to rationally divide local authority powers were stymied by conflict between local institutions and actors. As John Stewart points out,

A [local authority] boundary is not merely a line. Its significance lies in what it contains and what it does not contain. A boundary defines an area. That which is contained within the boundary influences and is influenced by the authority available to the governing institutions.³⁷

The reforms of 1964 included elements of administrative and political decentralization of power to the locality. Though within the local arena itself powers were consolidated in larger authorities.

The institutional design of the GLC phase was premised upon the idea that each level of government would control those services which were appropriate to their

³⁶Interview with Southwark Councillor quoted in S. Goss (1988), p. 77.

³⁷John Stewart (1983), Local Government: The Conditions of Local Choice (London, UK: George Allen & Unwin), p. 34.

territorial position in the London arena. The borough as the most local unit was assigned responsibility for services with a decidedly local focus. The GLC as the metropolitan tier was assigned those services considered to require London-wide coordination. The relationship between the two local tiers was also intended to be complimentary, with the GLC dependent upon the boroughs for successful implementation of its local government policies and programs.

The problem with the model was that little agreement existed regarding what constituted a "local" as compared to a "metropolitan" need. Boroughs, the GLC, political parties, and professional associations each fought for their piece of the pie. The outcome of the competition was a compromise that was quite different from the model proposed by Herbert (see chapter 4). As a result, the division was never as straightforward as planners had hoped, resulting in frequent power struggles between the two tiers (GLC and LBCs).

Table 5.3 Functions of the London Boroughs Following the London Government Act of 1963

Functions Carried out wholly by the London Boroughs:

Tax collection	Registration of births deaths and electoral rolls
Cemeteries & crematoria	Allotments
Caravan & gypsy sites	Environmental health
Personal social services	Libraries
Trading standards & consumer protection	Refuse collection

Functions Held Concurrently or Divided between the boroughs and the GLC:

Education: provision by boroughs in outer London, by ILEA in Inner London

Housing: boroughs had main responsibility for provision but the GLC had its own housing stock and strategic powers in the case of large projects, housing outside Greater London, aid for slum clearance, and in establishing London-wide mobility schemes.

Planning: the strategic land use plan - GLDP - was drawn up by the GLC, local plans by the boroughs, while development control was exercised by the London Boroughs with GLC intervention in major schemes.

Parks and Open Space: boroughs were responsible for local parks, while the GLC maintained several large 'strategic' parks and Green Belt holdings, and had a major role within the regional Park.

Highways and Traffic Management: the GLC was the overall strategic transport planning authority, the highway authority for the construction on 895 miles of metropolitan roads, and the traffic management authority for non-trunk roads; the London boroughs were highway authorities for 7,000 miles of local roads, and could put forward local traffic management schemes and parking regulations for GLC approval; the Department of Transport controlled 143 miles of trunk roads in outer London.

Licensing: mainly carried out by Boroughs, but the GLC carried out licensing of entertainment, betting tracks, petroleum storage, as well as building control in Inner London.

Emergency Planning & Civil Defense: major GLC role with some Borough input.

Table 5.3 Continued

Functions Held Concurrently or Divided between the boroughs and the GLC:

Museums, Art Galleries and Support for the Arts: concurrent.

Grants to Voluntary Organizations: concurrent.

Sports and Recreation: concurrent.

Economic Development: concurrent.

Historic Buildings and Monuments: concurrent, but the GLC has special powers regarding listed buildings.

Promotion of Tourism: concurrent.

Source: M. Hebbert & T. Travers, The London Government Handbook (London, UK: Cassell Publishers Ltd.), p. 111.

Though disagreement existed at all levels of government concerning the details of service distribution, there was at the start of the phase a consensus concerning the role of local government. As Stoker points out:

A particular "solution-set" dominated thinking in Britain about local government for much of the [GLC phase]...The problem [wa]s seen as how to deliver with efficiency a range of public services and the solution define[d] the role of local government as service provider. There [were] disputes about how that role [was] to be undertaken. But for many...local government [was] essentially about providing services.³⁸

The Herbert Commission argued that the history of local government in London, in which services were moved from borough to metropolitan, regional or

³⁸G. Stoker (August 1994), "The Role and Purpose of Local Government" Commission for Local Democracy Report No. 4 (London: CLD Limited), p. 5.

central tiers of government had to be reversed.³⁹ The division was carefully analyzed:

Where a system is working or being made to work our predilection has been in favor of leaving it alone....We have approached our task from the point of view of examining each function of local government separately, deciding whether it is being adequately performed, considering whether the inadequacies are due to the machinery of government, and then concluding whether for the proper performance of functions the machinery should be altered.⁴⁰

The boroughs retained services which were felt to need more localized control. These services included health, welfare, refuse collection, sewer service, library service, and consumer protection. They were responsible for non-metropolitan roads, and often acted as an agents of the GLC and central government in highway provision. The boroughs were the predominant service providers responsible for the day-to-day aspects of local governance.

Borough political power was enhanced in the key area of finance. The power to tax was returned to borough control. Boroughs set the local property tax, while the GLC levied a percentage of those taxes for its own purposes. The allocation of central government grants to the localities was determined by borough needs and tax base, thus the needier boroughs received larger central grants. Grants to localities were given in a block form with latitude in determining how that money would be spent.

The powers to tax along with the broad services controlled by the borough facilitated some degree of LBC autonomy. Popular demands could be brought to the

³⁹Cmnd. 1164, para. 745, p. 194.

⁴⁰Cmnd. 1164, para. 288, p. 73.

local council through elections. Representatives had the capacity to enact local legislation and re-distribute local resources to meet these demands. With these enhanced powers LBCs became the centers of political struggles. As Donnison argues, this was a period of the "micro politics of the city."⁴¹

During the late 1960s LBCs came under attack for a lack of responsiveness to community demands.

A kind of insurrection took place in London between 1969 and 1973. Thousands of citizens not normally involved in politics were so incensed with the way their elected governing bodies were attempting to improve their city that they went to unusual lengths to oppose and eventually overcome the will of the established authority.⁴²

The corporate managerial system that had been adopted in the early 1960s was criticized as being closed and inaccessible. As Goss comments,

those groups that went unrepresented were no longer silent....unable to be heard within the old rules, they decided the rules must be changed.... White collar professionals and voluntary-sector workers...put forward demands on behalf of the homeless, squatters, single people, women, blacks, gays and lesbians....Attempts [were made] to wrest control away from a closed group of councilors.⁴³

By the early 1970s, these new groups established links and/or gained control of many of the LBCs in London and were able to utilize the enhanced powers of local government structures to bring a new set of values to London governance (see section 5.8).

The capacity to form linkages with local government proved to be key for groups

⁴¹D. V. Donnison and D.E. Eversly (1973), Urban Patterns, Problems and Policies (London, UK: Heineman), p. 384.

⁴²J.M. Thompson (1979), "The London Motorway Plan" in W.R. Sewell and J.J. Coppock (eds.), Public Participation in Planning (Exeter, UK: Pergamon Press).

⁴³S. Goss (1988), pp. 151-152.

seeking to influence local decision making processes.⁴⁴

The GLC was given oversight powers over services requiring a city-wide application but few purely independent powers. The most innovative aspect of the reorganization of services could be found in the assignment of a strategic planning role to the GLC. Self aptly defines strategic planning.

The new approach...predicates that physical plans should be drawn up not as ends in themselves but as the instruments for achieving politically agreed aims and priorities. Planning, it is urged, should also occur over areas broad enough to facilitate solutions for such social problems as urban obsolescence and overcrowding, inadequacies of transportation, and conflicts between mobility and environment.⁴⁵

The strategic role was a loosely defined one, which the GLC used to justify the implementation of a diverse range of policy actions (social, economic, development and environment). Interestingly strategic planning became the GLC's bane and bounty.

The GLC put forward its first strategic plan in 1965, the Greater London Development Plan (GLDP). The GLDP was a broad sweeping plan covering the areas of transportation, housing and development. It included proposals to clear land, construct council housing, and to begin building a massive roadway system across the London region. The plan was quickly consumed in political controversy amongst the LBCs (also see section 5.6).

⁴⁴See H. V. Savitch (1988) Post-Industrial Cities: Politics and Planning in New York, Paris and London (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

⁴⁵Peter Self (1971), Metropolitan Planning: The Planning System of Greater London (London, UK: London School of Economics and Political Science), p. 3.

The GLDP identified six suburban centers as growth targets which would receive development resources and funding from the GLC. Those areas not earmarked for funding opposed the plan; mounting extensive community protest and lobbying efforts directed at the GLC and national government. The opposition forced the GLC to rethink the plan. In the end 28 centers were designated, each with less funding individually, but all with a piece of the pie. It took eight years for the strategic plan to be passed. What became clear was that strategic powers meant nothing if one lacked the capacity to mobilize local authority support.

The GLC suffered due to its incapacity to unify London based interests. Urban-Suburban divisions proved to be particularly problematic for the GLC. The GLC suffered because of its lack of power. As Norton Long eloquently stated:

There is no more forlorn spectacle in the administrative world than an agency...possessed of statutory life, armed with executive orders, sustained in the courts, yet stricken with paralysis and deprived of power.⁴⁶

During the 1970s the GLC began to institute a range of controversial but narrow policies in the areas of race, gender, housing, and development. The GLC utilized its strategic planning powers "strategically" to advocate for deprived populations. This new advocacy role was a defining feature of the GLC. The GLC began to operate not simply as an administrator but at times as an interest or lobby group in opposition to central government policy.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Norton Long (1949), "Power and Administration" in Public Administration Review (Washington, DC: Public Administration Review).

⁴⁷One noteworthy example of the GLC's advocacy role could be seen in its 1983 designation of London as a nuclear-free. The GLC declared London a nuclear-free

The GLC was also given responsibility for the creation of an "intelligence" department designed to collect and disseminate information on local government to citizens, local authorities and national government. Herbert had argued, that in the past there was no one responsible for continuous research into the problems and needs of the greater London region.

Policy cannot be formulated properly without accurate knowledge of present facts and a clear..assessment of probable trends...Democratic local government is impossible without an informed public opinion.⁴⁸

In reality most of the GLC's powers were either overlapping or complimentary to the boroughs. Successful implementation required either mandatory or voluntary cooperation according to policy area. In the case of planning the GLC created broad guidelines within which local authority land use plans needed to conform.

The most common areas of conflict between the boroughs and the GLC related to the overlapping areas of strategic, housing and development policy. In housing, the GLC was responsible for "overspill," the LBCs were responsible for housing local populations within their geographic areas. The GLC as a strategic authority attempted to create a London-wide housing policy. However to implement this policy they required approval of all the LBCs. In 1966 residential densities ranged from 7.7 persons per acre in the outer borough of Bromley to 71.4 in the inner London

zone on the grounds that this fell within the GLC's strategic rubric of control of civil defense in the metropolitan region. While clearly a symbolic move, it demonstrated the GLC's intent to make an opposition statement concerning central governments nuclear defense policy.

⁴⁸Cmnd. 1164, para. 762, pp. 198-200.

borough of Kensington and Chelsea.⁴⁹ Outer boroughs sought to utilize land use controls to maintain these housing densities. The GLC as the strategic authority in London, stressed the need to create more housing in the outer areas to reduce the concentration of housing in inner city areas. This led to a series of conflicts between the GLC and the outer boroughs, often pitting GLC housing policy against outer borough land use policies. As one commentator points out, "there is no doubt that the outer boroughs were reluctant to have *Londoners* foisted on them."⁵⁰

Examples of these types of conflict occurred throughout the GLC phase. In the outer London borough of Croydon for example there was a local housing policy which strictly limited residential density, so as to sustain its suburban residential patterns. At the same time the borough sought to increase office development space in order to stabilize its economic base (dominated by services). These goals directly conflicted with the GLC goals of rehousing inner city residents in the outer areas.

Planning the...[GLC] housing program depended crucially on finding suitable sites and in the sprawling suburbs of outer London, this was no easy task....Faced with a general refusal on the part of the boroughs to produce details on where land was available...[the GLC] virtually gave up the attempt to establish a GLC building program in the suburbs.⁵¹

As Saunders points out,

Croydon council has consistently allied itself with developers and with the

⁴⁹Peter Self (1982), Planning the Urban Region: A Comparative Study of Policies and Organizations (Alabama: University of Alabama Press), p. 74

⁵⁰D.A. Nevitt and G. Rhodes (1972), "Housing" in G. Rhodes (ed.) The New London Government (London, UK: London School of Economics), p.232.

⁵¹A. Forrester, S. Lansley, R. Pauley (1985), Beyond Our Ken (London, UK: Fourth Estate) pp. 109-110.

interests of those companies which occupy the offices they build....They have done so at the cost of alienating higher governmental authorities.⁵²

Conflicts over housing policy also occurred between the GLC and inner London boroughs. Peter Self points out in his study of planning in London that:

A number of boroughs, particularly in inner London..argued that the population figures for their areas were too low and proposed higher ones. In policy terms, these boroughs wanted to retain higher populations.. as a matter of pride.⁵³

GLC and borough powers also overlapped in the area of transportation.

Boroughs were responsible for highway construction, maintenance and street lighting as agents of the GLC. The GLC was responsible for traffic management in London's main roads, while the LBCs were responsible for local roads. Here again the two levels conflicted.

The most publicized example of the conflict over metropolitan versus local priorities in roadways occurred between 1965 and 1973. In 1965 the GLC embarked on a massive program to rebuild the London motorways ("ringroads"). The plan, published in 1969, was based upon a firm commitment to create an integrated motorway system which included the building of ring roads through portions of the inner and outer London regions.⁵⁴ The plan required 6,000 acres of land, would

⁵²P. Saunders (1983), Urban Politics a Sociological Interpretation (London, UK: Hutchinson), p. 309.

⁵³P. Self (1971), Metropolitan Planning: The Planning System of Greater London. Greater London Papers No. 14 (London, UK: London School of Economics), p. 19.

⁵⁴The plan was modeled on Abercrombie's plans of the post war period. In this vision London would be divided by a series of "ring roads" connected by cross roads. The outermost ring would be for faster longer journeys around the perimeter of the London area, the innermost ring for short journeys within London.

likely result in the destruction of some 20,000 homes, and the displacement of 100,000 people.⁵⁵ Not surprisingly significant opposition mounted in the London region. Initially there were some 19,000 objections lodged,⁵⁶ and nearly 100 anti-motorway groups were formed.⁵⁷ These groups ultimately allied and worked within and through the LBCs.⁵⁸

Both inner and outer London boroughs were engaged in an all out fight against the proposal. The controversial nature of the plan led central government to create the Layfield Panel to consider the objections to the entire GLDP plan. The panel sat for 237 days and the heard roughly 30,000 objections.⁵⁹ The response by the GLC was a return to the drawing board. After 6 years of review and revision the plan was approved in 1976.⁶⁰ In the final plan the inner London roadway box and a majority of the outer London ringway roads were eliminated.

Education was treated as a special case in reorganization. Separate authorities

⁵⁵The Greater London Council (1969), Greater London Development Plan Statement (London, UK: Greater London Council).

⁵⁶Michael Collins, "Land Use Planning Since 1947" in J. Simmie (ed.), Planning London (London, UK: University College London Press), p. 111.

⁵⁷H. V. Savitch (1988), p. 210.

⁵⁸The development of the interest group networks and their cooptation into borough council politics in London during the GLC phase will be fully explored in chapter 6.

⁵⁹Greater London Development Plan: report of the Panel of Inquiry (1973), The Layfield Report (London, UK: HMSO), p. 3.

⁶⁰Greater London Council (1976), Notice of Approval: Written Statement, Proposals, Map, Key Diagram, and Urban Landscape Diagram (London, UK: GLC).

were created for the management of education in the inner and outer London boroughs, due to strenuous outer borough and popular pressure. During the modern phase, the LCC had controlled education for the inner London region, while the outer London region had been controlled by separate county borough councils. The Herbert Commission had suggested a complimentary arrangement, with the GLC ensuring broad educational standards, and the boroughs responsible for the actual implementation of education policy in their localities.

Prior to the 1964 local elections the London Teachers' Association engaged in a massive protest. They argued that the inner London boroughs lacked the experience to adequately control public education in the outer London region. The outer boroughs also protested the removal of education from their control. In the end a compromise was reached. Education in Inner London was put under the control of a new authority, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA), while education in the newly formed outer boroughs was assigned to the individual borough councils. ILEA was closely linked to the GLC, although separate technically from it. ILEA had 53 members, 40 were GLC councilors representing the inner London Boroughs, and one member each from the 12 inner LBCs and the City. Education in the outer boroughs was placed under the control of the LBCs. The division in organization between inner and outer areas in education further perpetuated the urban-suburban divisions described in section 5.2.

The 1964 reforms also transferred a limited number of powers from central government to the GLC. Herbert had recommended that there be fewer centrally

appointed governing bodies. Transfers were limited to those services which were considered to be a part of the GLC's strategic planning function. Opposition to wholesale transfer of major services areas and utilities came both from Labor as well as professional groups, who believed it would adversely affect the performance of essential services.

As a result, most of the independent boards created during the LCC phase were maintained. Police were controlled by the central government. Hospital administration, electricity and gas remained under the control of the centrally appointed boards. The only major change concerned transportation. The Home Counties Traffic Advisory Commission was abolished in 1963 and its power were transferred to the GLC. In the 1969 London Transport Act, the centrally controlled London Transport Board was dissolved and its functions were moved to the GLC. The 1963 legislation also proposed the transfer of control over water from the Metropolitan Water Board to the GLC, though this never came to fruition.

During the phase subsequent transfers of power to the GLC tended to represent a shift in responsibility for policy problems to the locality. This occurred most obviously in the area of race relations policy. In 1965, central government instituted its first race relations policy. The Race Relation Act of 1965 mandated the creation of the race relations board (RRBs) in the locality.⁶¹ RRBs were locally administered but centrally appointed, but had no real power (it could not compel compliance from

⁶¹Shamit Saggar (1991), Race and Public Policy: A Study of Local Politics and Government (Aldershot, UK: Avebury) p.30.

offenders). Issues of discrimination in housing and employment were initially beyond its scope. The role of RRBs was purely investigatory, with the goal of conciliation not action. The RRBs were mechanisms of placation. As David Smith highlights:

The Act was based upon the principle that people who believe they have been treated unfairly because of their race or color should be able to seek redress for their grievance through the law. However, they are not allowed direct access to the courts; in the first instance they must make a complaint to the RRB, which, after investigating the circumstances, decides whether or not to form an opinion that racial discrimination has occurred. If it does form such an opinion, it tries to settle the matter by conciliation...if conciliation is ineffective it may decide to take a civil action...Individuals are not allowed to start such actions; they can only be started by the Board on behalf of the complainants.⁶²

While it is not the intent of this research to investigate national trends in race relations policy, what is significant is that this policy area was administratively and later politically decentralized down to the locality.

Following the passage of the Act came measures by central government to bolster local race relations through the development of linkages with grass roots organizations.⁶³ With this came yet another centrally appointed body, the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (NCCI), which set up a network of local voluntary agencies known as Voluntary Liaison Committees (VLCs). Through this process local voluntary associations were brought into formal governing processes. Full political decentralization in race relations policy was achieved in 1976 with the

⁶²D. J. Smith (1977), p. 314.

⁶³see the Second Report by the Commonwealth Immigrants Advisory Council (February 1964), Cmnd. 2266, (London: HMSO) p.14; and Prime Ministers Office (August 1965), Immigration from the Commonwealth, White Paper Cmnd. 2739 (London: HMSO).

Race Relation Act, whereby it became the duty of local authorities to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities. Race in turn became a central focus of the GLC during the late 1970s, and the GLC became a major stimulant for minority activism and political participation (see chapter 6). Studies have shown that, in many ways, the local authorities became brokers among local community organizations. The impact was to divide minority communities and absorb potential community activists.⁶⁴

As with the other power divisions in the London institutional terrain, even in the area of race relations, the GLC often found itself at odds with the outer London LBCs. During the 1980s for example, the GLC made a range of grants available to minority voluntary associations in the London region. The outer boroughs were particularly vocal in their opposition to these policies.⁶⁵ Opposition could be explained in part by the urban-suburban divide. Funding was targeted to minority groups concentrated in the inner London area. When the GLC was abolished in 1986, one of the major arguments raised by the outer boroughs supporting its demise, was that it had inappropriately allocated resources to minority fringe groups.

The *rational* and *efficient* division of services according to local versus strategic needs provided the initial justification for the creation of the GLC system. However, it was in ensuing borough based struggles for power that the actual

⁶⁴See T. Sewell (1993) and M. Fitzgerald (1984), Political Parties and Black People: Participation, Representation and Exploitation (Nottingham, UK: Runnymede Trust).

⁶⁵see Shamit Saggar (1991), chapters 4 and 6.

allocation occurred. Efficiency was a key basis for the creation of the GLC and lack of efficiency due in part to the failure to effectively divide powers and services, later became the justification for its reform 20 years later.

The intent in the early 1960s was to create two tiers of government, equal in power yet dealing with different policy areas. The reality, however, was quite different. The GLC phase came to represent a period of political conflict between levels of government, regular shifts in policy direction and control of services between local levels of government and central government. The loser in the struggle was most often the metropolitan level of government. As Savitch argues,

a certain amount of myth has grown up about London's ostensible tidiness and its governability...the GLC has been caught between the millstones of borough primacy and close government supervision.⁶⁶

5.5 Divided Power and the Politicization of Local Government: Policy Shifts

The attempts to rationally divide services between the two tiers of government and create a clearer local government arena must be regarded as less than successful. The GLC system was in reality both larger and more complex than its predecessor. The reforms in London government in 1964 created an institutional arena of divided power, overlapping services and polarized territories within an environmental backdrop of demographic transition and economic decline.

The incomes of authorities based on [taxes] and government grants, determined in part by population, were stagnant or contracting in real terms, while the cost of delivering services to a smaller population remained high. Pressures on public services led to declining quality in many areas, and hence to increas-

⁶⁶H. V. Savitch (1988), p. 180.

ing dissatisfaction with government among large sections of the population.⁶⁷

The GLC phase broadly became a battle ground within which political parties, levels of government and citizens contended to gain power and control of the local arena. As the table 5.4 illustrates, political control in local government changed every three to six years.

⁶⁷N. Buck and N. Fainstein (1992), "A Comparative History, 1880-1973" in Susan Fainstein, Ian Gordon & Michael Harloe (eds.), Divided Cities: New York and London in the Contemporary World (Oxford: Blackwell), p. 59.

Table 5.4
London-wide Party Control by Election 1964-1982
 (overall % of seats won in GLC and LBC elections by each party)

	Conservative	Labor
GLC		
1964	36%	64%*
1967	82%*	18%
1970	65%*	35%
1973	34%	63%*
1977	70%*	30%
1981	45%	52%*
Borough		
1964	36%	60%*
1968	77%*	19%
1971	32%	66%*
1974	38%	58%*
1978	50%*	46%
1982	51%*	41%

Source: C. Rallings & M. Thrasher et al. (1993), Local Elections in Britain: A Statistical Digest (Plymouth, UK: Local Government Chronicle Elections Center), Table 4, p. X. Note: *indicates party control. I have not included any third parties in this table, because no third party gained outright control of the GLC or LBC during the GLC phase.

New groups came to power with fresh ideas and values, resulting in frequent local policy changes. The differences between Labor and Conservative policies was often stark.

This switching backwards and forward on policy made it very difficult for any GLC initiative to be carried through to fruition.⁶⁸

The clearest example of these difficulties came with the GLC's attempt to implement the Greater London Development Plan (GLDP). The GLDP was the first major test of the GLC's strategic planning role. Preparation of the plan began in 1965 when Labor

⁶⁸A. Forrester, S. Lansley, R. Pauley (1985), p. 31.

controlled the GLC, re-evaluation occurred in 1968 when the Conservative party was in control. The GLDP was published in 1969. Labor regained control of the GLC in 1973. It took a further six years of wrangling with Conservative local administrations, the LLP and LBCs for the plans final adoption in 1976.

By this time, much of the statistical basis was out of date, making appeals against it more likely to succeed.... The late arrival of the GLDP was a setback from which the GLC was never to recover....it is clear that the odds had been stacked heavily against the [GLC] planners from the start.⁶⁹

The final plan was markedly different from the original. Most of the roadway plan was scrapped and the development proposals severely constrained.

Power shifts also affected metropolitan housing policy. In 1965 Labor's policy was to improve London housing standards, through a policy of building new homes in areas of low residential concentration, and the movement people out of areas with high residential concentration. In 1967 under Conservative leadership the GLC policy goal was to limit the GLC's housing role by selling council housing to tenants and transferring the remaining GLC housing stock to the LBCs. Ultimately, under Conservative control, the entire GLC housing program was halted. Labor attempted to resuscitate it's housing policy in 1973, but in 1977 under Conservative leadership the GLC's housing stock was transferred totally to borough control.

Policy shifts such as these were evident throughout the GLC phase, a further indication of the impact of creating a powerful local government entity within a socially and economically divided territory. Policy debates revolved around control at

⁶⁹A. Forrester, S. Lansley, R. Pauley (1985), p. 107.

certain points and ideology at others.

5.6 New Actors and Competing Values: Parties and the Politicization of the Local Institutional Arena

Political conflict infused the GLC phase. It was out of these clashes within and between political parties and new coalitions, between old and new power holders, that transformations in the values surrounding London local governance occurred.

The restructuring of 1964 also led parties to structurally reorganize. Political parties needed to adapt their structures to the new London boundaries, and determine strategically where to focus their efforts in order to capitalize upon the new London power structure. The 1963 Act was initially viewed as anathema to the London Labor Party (LLP), due to the London boundary extensions into Conservative suburbia. Despite organizational necessity Labor was slow to respond to the changing conditions. In the short term rather than changing themselves, Labor pledged to change the system by repealing the 1963 London Government Act if they won the national election (expected in 1964).

The 1964 local elections surprisingly resulted in a Labor victory. In retrospect one can point to three factors to explain the Labor victory. First, the LLP was well organized in the inner boroughs, and thus able to capture support in 87% of the inner London boroughs. Labor had controlled metropolitan government in London for the previous 34 years. Second, contrary to expectations, 50% of the outer boroughs voted for Labor. Outer borough support can in part be understood as a protest vote against the Conservative party who had instituted the 1963 reforms. Third, the 1964 local

elections were heavily influenced by national political circumstances.

The 1964 elections occurred within one year of the national elections. What is relevant here is the fact that the Conservative party, in power nationally at the time, decided to hold off calling elections to the latest possible moment. Under optimal circumstances the party in power calls elections at a strategically advantageous moment, leaving the opposition with minimal campaign time (national campaigns run for one month only). However the Conservative party nationally was under duress for a range of reasons (see 5.1), and so the national elections were left to the last possible moment (end of five years).

The GLC elections were carried out in May, and National elections in October. Party campaigns for the national elections overshadowed the local campaign issues. For example, Mr. Mellish (Chairman of the London Labor party at the time) announced in a press conference that "Labor would fight the [local] election as a minor general election."⁷⁰ As Young and Rhodes reiterate,

Much commentary was devoted to interpreting the results in terms of the probable timing of a general election and who was likely to win it....The electorate of 5 1/2 millions did indeed offer the prospect of a 'mini-general election' as the commentators were fond of calling the GLC election....The GLC election offered a much larger electoral sample than any of the previous authorities.⁷¹

The combined effect, locally and nationally, was that Labor was able to capitalize

⁷⁰K. Young and G. Rhodes (1972), "The Electoral System and Elections" in G. Rhodes (ed.) The New Government of London: The First Five Years (London, UK: London School of Economics), p. 68.

⁷¹Ibid.

upon the general disillusion in the electorate with the Conservative government.

Locally they were able to exploit their solid inner London support base, and capture enough of the outer boroughs to win the GLC elections.

In victory, the National Executive (NEC) of the Labor party turned its attention away from the locality, focusing instead on national issues. As Gyford comments,

The party..became less and less oriented to local, specifically working-class interests, concerns and more to the ideological issues of national and international significance which preoccupied middle-class activists. This made the party yet more unattractive to potential working-class activists.⁷²

The LLP, in opposition to the NEC, sought a decentralized party system which would allow them greater autonomy and permit a more local focus. The NEC feared that the LLP could pose a challenge and a threat to the party in the future. In the end local party interests were sacrificed to national. National Labor leaders decided that the LLP would be replaced by a regional council with limited powers, a general secretary and assistant secretary appointed by the NEC. The LLP in protest decided to withhold party assets. When the regional council was created, the LLP remained in existence for an additional 6 months, stifling the development of a new more inclusive London based labor movement for a time. In 1967, the national executive dissolved the LLP.

One outcome of these internal party wrangling was the erosion of Labor's traditional working class support base. Party membership declined.

Real membership figures for individual constituencies ceased to be recorded

⁷²J. Gyford (1985), The Politics of Local Socialism, (London, UK: George, Allen and Unwin), p. 22.

once they slumped below the 1,000 minimum for affiliation to the national party...active membership plummeted.⁷³

While Labor adopted a national focus, the Conservative party organization was mobilizing locally in response to their 1964 defeats. In fact the Conservative party had begun reorganization discussion as early as 1961, when the government white paper was published on London reform. The Conservative party created a London-wide area organization in 1963. Like Labor, they adopted a more centralized organizational form, however the Conservatives focused their efforts on building support in local communities.

The poor state of the party in the early 1960s and the loss of two general elections in 1964 and 1967 led to a revival of the immediate post war strategy of beating a path back to power through local electoral success.⁷⁴

The local approach proved successful and in the 1967 GLC elections the Conservative party gained power with a 90% share of the votes in the outer boroughs and 60% in the inner London boroughs. In the borough elections of 1968, the Conservative party gained a majority in 90% of the outer boroughs and 83% of the inner London boroughs.

Despite Conservative victories, the late 1960s was a period in which popular disillusion with both parties grew, due in part to the inability of either major political party to resolve the economic crisis. Party membership declined across the board

⁷³S. Goss (1988), p. 79.

⁷⁴K. Young (June 1986), "Party Politics in Local Government: An Historical Perspective" in The Committee of Inquiry Into the Conduct of Local Authority Business, The Conduct of Local Authority Business, Cmnd. 9801, Research Volume IV, p. 101.

during the GLC phase.⁷⁵ In London, it was at this point that the *new left* began to emerge, drawing support from the new more active London local populations (new immigrants and the middle class activists). In the 1971 elections in Croydon, for example, twenty two of the twenty nine Labor members elected had no previous local government experience.⁷⁶

In 1977 the *new left* gained a majority on the Regional Executive of the London Labor party. During the following years the *new left* gradually gained a majority on many of the inner London LBCs, and then in 1981 they gained control of the GLC. The *new left* group differed from the traditional Labor group both in its composition and its ideology.

The *old right* [of the Labor party], the majority of whom were older and had manual-working backgrounds, saw themselves as representing the traditional respectable manual-working families...They saw themselves as representing their communities by a process of reflection...They did not consult their constituents formally, because they saw it as their business to know what *their* people thought.⁷⁷

Minority groups, the newly enfranchised youth (voting age had been lowered to 18 in 1969), and women increasingly regarded *old* Labor as out of touch. In addition, the post-industrial transition had introduced into the London scene a growing body of white-collar service workers who viewed local labor authorities as unresponsive.

⁷⁵C. Game & S. Leach (February 1995), "The Role of Political Parties in Local Democracy", Commission for Local Democracy Research Report, No. 11 (London, UK:CLD Limited) p. 7. Membership dropped by over 50% between 1953 and 1976.

⁷⁶P. Saunders (1983), p. 227.

⁷⁷S. Goss (1988), p. 151.

These were the groups which dominated the new left movement, and their rejection of *old labor* was one key reason for Labor's overwhelming electoral defeats in the 1967 and 1968 London elections.

The elections of 1967 and 1968 had in places effectively destabilized a pattern of local Labor politics that had persisted in some cases for a generation. The resulting fluidity was to facilitate the progress of the new urban left as it earmarked on its activity in local government in later years.⁷⁸

Ideologically the *new left*,

while acknowledging the importance of gaining a parliamentary majority to legitimate and encourage the process of change,...recognizes that this will fail unless a priority is given to extra-parliamentary struggle and campaigning...With that in mind the Labor left is seeking to build alliances with rank and file trade unionists, with community groups, the women's movement, and with single issue protest campaigns.⁷⁹

Once in power locally these groups began to introduce reforms within the locality concerning access to local councils, mandatory participation in policy formulation, and an emphasis on expanding information distribution to local constituents.

It was [in the late 1960s] that there began a series of changes and events in and around the Labor party and its relations with local government which paved the way for the rise of the new urban left; and it in the same period that there also emerged the first of a series of social movements and bodies of ideas which created a climate of opinion favorable to a more decentralized form of..local politics.⁸⁰

While London (particularly inner London) was increasingly moving leftward

⁷⁸J. Gyford (1985), p. 26.

⁷⁹P. Hain (1980), The Crisis and Future of the Left (London, UK: Pluto Press), pp. 13-14.

⁸⁰J. Gyford (1985), p. 21.

politically the national government was moving rightward. Margaret Thatcher became Conservative leader in 1975 and prime Minister in 1979. Thatcher's rise marked the emergence of the *new right*, who gained local support in the outer London boroughs. The new right was committed to,

a free market economic strategy and did not consider state intervention to subsidize inefficient economic activities to be appropriate public policy.⁸¹

The center-local clash between these two *new* groups would ultimately produce radical changes in the structure, values and goals of London local governance.

5.7 The Values Shifts of the GLC Phase: From Representative--to Participatory--to Economic Individualism

The transmission of values to institutions during the GLC phase took a distinct and different course than in previous periods. The conflictual nature of the period and regular shifts in control led to difficulties in the implementation of any broad based reforms. During the LCC phase conflicts of interests tended to result in government inaction. In contrast, during the first 15 years of the GLC phase, central government avoided controversial decision-making by producing a series of advisory and discretionary policies. Local authorities were given the option to implement reforms, as opposed to central mandates. The outcome was that reform occurred unevenly within the London region. The inner London boroughs tended to adopt the policies recommended by Labor administrations, and the outer boroughs adopted the advice of

⁸¹T.R. Gurr & D.S. King (1987), p. 168.

Conservative governments. When the *new right* Conservative party came to power in 1979, strategy changed to a centrally defined approach of mandated local change.

During the GLC phase the dominant values underlying local governance changed; initially from representative to participatory ideals, and later to a free market model. For Herbert, the architect of the GLC, healthy local democracy had been perceived in terms of "representative democracy," and citizen participation was viewed as an activity that took place at the ballot box. Concerns with the "health" of democratic processes had much more to do with who was elected and the electoral process, rather than citizen empowerment.

Local government is with us an instance of democracy at work....active participation in the work by capable, public spirited people *elected* by, responsible to, and in touch with those who elect them.... The main purpose of any government (and local government is no exception) is to do for people what a group of persons, elected according to law by a majority of citizens *but on election becoming representative* of them all, conceive to be good within the limit of their legal powers.⁸²

Yet as noted in chapter 4, there was evidence of a changing perception regarding the relationship between citizen and local government towards the end of the LCC phase. Abercrombie's *Greater London Plan* made mention of greater involvement by "informed citizens". Value changes however, were slow to develop and marked by conflict between those who sought to sustain existing institutional arrangements ("old" Labor and Conservatives), and the pressure of a growing and active body of "informed citizens" in London who sought a more participatory local government system.

⁸²Cmnd. 1164, para. 222, p. 59.

Analysis of the GLC phase Commission studies and legislation demonstrates the slow changes in democratic goals and values, and their application to formal structures. The table below provides a summary of the key commissions and legislation affecting local democratic processes.

Table 5.5 Commissions and Legislation with implications for Democratic Reform: The GLC Phase

1964	Maud: Committee on the Management of Local Government
1967-1969	Redcliffe-Maud: Royal Commission on Local Government in England
1968	Town and Country Planning Act
1968	Seebohm: Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services
1969	Skeffington: Committee on Public Participation in Planning
1969	The Community Development Project
1971	Town and Country Planning Act
1972	The Baines Commission Report: The New Local Authorities Management and Structure
1972	Local Government Act
1973	Redcliffe-Maud: Conduct in Local Government
1974	Committee on Local Government Rules of Conduct
1974	Local Government Act
1974	Department of Environment: Neighborhood Councils in England
1975	Dohbry: Review of the Development Control System
1975	Conduct in Local Government

The GLC phase was characterized by an intense and regular series of reappraisals of local governance in the London region.

The one common thread running through the decisions to examine this or that aspect of local government was simply the alleged inadequacy of the system to cope with the growing demands made on it.⁸³

The Redcliffe-Maud and Maud studies were carried out between 1964 and 1969.

Redcliffe-Maud's study on Local Government in England was a follow-up to Herbert's, initially commissioned in 1958 soon after Herbert had begun, but disbanded due to inadequate resources (see chapter 4). It was replaced in 1966 by the Royal Commission on Local Government in England (Redcliffe-Maud).

Redcliffe-Maud's remit was to study local government reorganization outside London. However he studied the London experience during the first years of the GLC phase as a comparative case study. At the time there was agreement among local and national government actors that reform was necessary, but no agreement as to what that reform would entail. The Redcliffe-Maud Commission was instigated by Richard Crossman, the Labor Minister of Housing and Local Government. It was a body of independent experts appointed by central government.

In 1964 the Maud Committee on Management was formed, reporting in 1967. Unlike Redcliffe-Maud, this was a local/national joint action committee initiated at the behest of local authorities themselves. The Committee included local authority

⁸³Lord Redcliffe-Maud, Bruce Wood (1974), English Government Reformed (London, UK: Oxford University Press), p. 3.

representatives alongside independent experts. It was felt, at the time, that internal management reforms in local authorities could not be effectively controlled centrally.

As Maud and Wood comment:

The internal organization of a local council is essentially a matter for that council itself. A government could enforce a particular organizational structure by legislation, but this no government would traditionally wish to do as it would blatantly offend against the principle that a democratically elected council should manage its business.⁸⁴

The two reports though carried out separately were complimentary; one looked at structure and the other at internal management. Both studies reflected the concern at the time for local government efficiency and responsiveness, an outgrowth of the previous period and a response to the growth of local unrest.

During the mid 1960s a search for appropriate practices to ensure a more integrated and effective local governance environment for the whole of England had begun. Questions of shoring up local representative democracy took a more central position in these discussions than they had in the earlier Herbert study.

The Redcliffe-Maud study included the first surveys of popular attitudes towards local government. He argued that local government was out of touch with the population.

We found both ignorance of and indifference to local government on the part of the public; and indeed it is not uncommon to hear the contempt expressed. This is partly, no doubt the healthy attitude of any free society towards its governors, but it goes far beyond that and must be a cause of great concern to anyone who cares about...democracy in Britain.⁸⁵

⁸⁴Redcliffe-Maud and Bruce (1974), p. 6.

⁸⁵Cmnd. 4040, para. 95, p. 28.

Redcliffe-Maud suggested that London's problems could be resolved through reorganization of local government along similar lines to the London reforms of 1964. They suggested that local authorities could benefit from the creation of clearer internal management structures.

What is relevant from the Redcliffe-Maud and Maud studies for the current analysis is the way Maud diagnosed London's problems and his recommendations. He argued that divided responsibilities and multiple small authorities left local authorities unable to adequately respond to citizens' needs. In contrast to Herbert, Maud's analysis was based upon detailed study, surveys and quantitative analysis. Maud argued that the problems were structural. He recommended a simplification of the local government system to enable local representatives and officials to more effectively carry out their jobs, and to facilitate a better understanding by the public of who was responsible for what.

The values promoted in the Maud study clearly reflected the continuing dominance of the "representative" model of local democracy. Maud did not suggest any radical democratic reorganization, though he made continuing reference to need to decentralize power from central to local authorities. But the scale of the units he recommended would represent some local consolidation. The power shift would be to local representatives not citizens.

The Maud studies drew linkages between representatives and citizens in a way which Herbert had not. For efficiency purposes, Maud went so far as to suggest the creation of local managerial bodies to coordinate local service activities. These boards

would operate in all local councils, be made up of between five and nine local councilors, and would have the power to delegate responsibility to committees and community organizations.

Each local authority should work out the form most suited to its particular requirements, but the case is surely cast-iron for a central body to advise the council on its strategy and priorities, co-ordinate the policies and work of the service committees, and ensure that the best managerial methods are adopted in each department and in the work of the council as a whole.⁸⁶

Opposition to this particular suggestion came both from central government and LBCs, who felt that these changes would vest too much power in too few individuals.

The democratic deficits of the system in Maud's assessment concerned a lack of connection between the business of government and the lives of citizens. If local government were made more efficient, then it followed (according to Maud) that it could be more responsive. Maud assessed the democratic problem to be based on problems of representation not participation, though in suggesting managerial decentralization he was providing a bridge to communities.

The creation of clearer lines of authority, and the introduction of local experts to deal more efficiently with local service provision, would free up local elected members to be able to be more responsive to local citizens. By making government more responsive through local elected representatives, citizens might then become more interested in their local government and might consider running for office. Citizens would be more satisfied with local governance and more likely therefore to participate.

⁸⁶Cmnd. 4040, para. 489, p. 125.

Internally Maud suggested a corporate system of management by specialists controlled by representatives. According to the Maud studies, representatives listening and experts implementing would create a local governance system more sensitive to popular need.⁸⁷ This model was similar to that proposed by Woodrow Wilson in the US in the late 1800s, and the reform movement in many American central cities.⁸⁸

Maud suggested the creation of single tier authorities throughout most of England, and a two tier system in three larger metropolitan areas in England. Maud recognized the possibility that larger government units could lead to a more closed system, and so he also recommended the creation of a third tier of smaller elected neighborhood bodies to represent local opinion to the larger local authority units. The Maud report on management was published in 1967 and the Redcliffe-Maud Commission reported in 1969.

The Labor government accepted most of the Maud recommendations, though they suggested several additional two-tier metropolitan authorities be created. Strong opposition came from the existing county councils, who would lose power under the new system. Counties argued that the plan would severely hinder local democratic processes. As Byrne comments,

many other critics thought that the Royal Commission had sacrificed democracy in the pursuit of consistency and of efficiency.⁸⁹

⁸⁷Cmnd. 4040, paras, 490-497, p. 125.

⁸⁸Woodrow Wilson (1887), "The Study of Administration" in Political Science Quarterly, pp. 197-222.

⁸⁹T. Byrne (1984), p. 38.

The Conservative party opposed Maud's single tier authorities, because their local power base rested in the provincial counties, which would be abolished by Maud's plan. Labor lost the 1970 national elections, and with this the Maud recommendations were sent back to committee for further review. The two-tier system was later adopted under the 1972 Local Government Act (see below).

While the Maud studies were underway, a second transition in thinking was occurring in the field of planning. The system which had developed out of the 1940s had been one which stressed the control of physical space as a means to affect population movements, with little concern for neighborhoods and community identity.

There was at this point a broad acceptance of the idea that larger *regional* mechanisms were a more efficient way to organize planning. Community opposition during the mid 1960s and the diagnosed failure of the regional plans of the 1950s, led to a major rethinking.

As discussed in chapter 4, during the post war period of the LCC phase, regionalism was the vogue amongst government officials. The Abercrombie plan had been based upon assumptions that employment growth and population shifts towards London could be halted. Abercrombie did not factor in the impacts of Britain's baby boom and immigration. By the mid 1960s, population in the United Kingdom was increasing by 700,000 annually. One half of that growth occurred in the South East of England in a ring outside London (25-75 miles outside), but not in the designated *new towns*.⁹⁰

⁹⁰M. Collins (1994), p. 94.

The Strategic Plan for the South East was begun in 1965.⁹¹ Its goal was to rethink regional planning strategies and redevelopment targets. The planning team reported in 1970. They suggested that five *urban regions* at a distance of 40-80 miles from London should be formed to act as strategic planning authorities and as magnets for population and industry from London. In this plan, London would cease to dominate the South East region. Not surprising there was fierce opposition from London.

The plan was never implemented due to political opposition, and an unexpected demographic shift. The study had projected that population migration would produce a population increase of 2.8 million outside London. However by the mid 1970s, real population growth outside London amounted to a mere 174,000, and inner London's population grew. London continued to dominate the regional economy.

The real shift in regional thinking came in the 1970s when the national government discovered *inner city poverty*. London had historically been viewed as the economic center of the nation. During the post war period, regionalism was promoted as a means to prevent London from sapping the resources of the nation. In 1977 a Department of Environment study reported that parts of London were in poverty.⁹²

In 1979 the new right came to power nationally and they began to promote

⁹¹Department of Environment (1970), Strategic Plan for the South East, Report by the South East Joint Planning Team (London, UK: HMSO).

⁹²Department of Environment (1977a), Inner London: Policies for Dispersal and Balance, Final Report of the Inner Area Study (London, UK: HMSO).

policy which focused on small as opposed to large geographic areas. Economic development policy promoted enterprise zones and Urban Development Corporations as mechanisms for economic regeneration, rather than larger regional approaches. In 1983 "strategic planning was officially described as a discredited notion" of the 1950s and 1960s and it was formally abandoned.⁹³

During the same period the number of activists and community action groups grew in housing, transportation and development to oppose planning in London (see above on Transportation, Housing and Greater London Development, also chapter 6). Community based pressure led government to rethinking the role of citizens in the planning process. Popular protest against local authority development activities was causing planning gridlock in London.

There [were] mothers jamming dangerous road crossings, council employees [were going] on strike, council house tenants [were] withholding rent, and [there was] even an isolated case, in London, of school children holding demonstrations....Social workers in at least two London boroughs openly [took] sides with their clients against their employer.⁹⁴

These developments, along with Maud's findings on citizens attitudes towards their local government, led to a second set of proposals and reforms dealing specifically with issues of citizen participation.

Of particular significance for local democracy was the publication of the Skeffington Report in 1969, People and Planning. This report was the first compre-

⁹³M. Collins (1994), p. 98.

⁹⁴Redcliffe Maud and Wood (1974), p. 73.

hensive statement by government concerning the importance of building a more participatory democratic framework. As Maud and Wood pointed out,

This official concern [was] a response to changing circumstances. As local authority services..widened in scope and touched on people's lives more closely, public reaction to officialdom became more critical....In recent years there has been notable growth of local pressure groups voicing their criticism, as citizens have sought to show their council the existence of a responsible organization of local opinion that will not be ignored....The last few years have seen a considerable increase in direct action.⁹⁵

The committee was empowered to explore methods for publicizing local authority planning activities, "to secure participation at the formative stages of planning policy."⁹⁶

Skeffington provided one of the first official statements concerning the need to reform the system to include citizens in policy formulation processes. Skeffington's proposals, however, centered upon the enhancement of information distribution and efficiency. As Long comments,

Skeffington saw public participation primarily as a public relations exercise concerned with reducing opposition...by raising the level of public consent, thereby contributing to the drive for speed and efficiency.⁹⁷

The debate focused on the question of how local authorities could best implement plans in the face of local opposition.

The solution at this point was deemed to be better information distribution.

⁹⁵Redcliffe-Maud & Wood (1974), pp. 72-73.

⁹⁶Committee on Public Participation in Planning, Ministry of Housing and Local Government (1969), People and Planning (London, UK: HMSO), para.1.

⁹⁷A. R. Long (1976), "Participation and the Community" in D. Diamond, J.B. McLoughlin (eds) Progress in Planning, Vol. 5. Part 2 (Exeter, UK: Pergamon Press), p. 78-79.

Skeffington suggested the creation of neighborhood forums to facilitate collective discussion, and the hiring development officers to procure popular support.

Opposition to the Skeffington proposals came from local authorities who viewed increased citizen participation as a threat to local authority power and control. Professional planners also resisted, viewing popular input as an obstacle to efficiency. Their opposition was strong enough to result in government instituting a much more watered down version of the Skeffington plan in 1968.

The Town and Country Planning Act of 1968 gave local authorities the responsibility to include the public in its planning decisions. However the Act was very vague in terms of the actual practice of informing, and authorities were given latitude in terms of how they were to accomplish this.

The local planning authority should take steps as will in their opinion secure: (a) that adequate publicity is given....[to] persons who may be expected to desire the opportunity of making representations....[and] that such persons are given an adequate opportunity [of doing so].⁹⁸

Local authorities were simply instructed to respond to local objections as they saw fit. The 1968 Act provided suggested courses of action but no mandates. Interestingly, the word *participation* appears nowhere in the Act itself. The detailed requirements for participation in planning were not spelled out until 1977 (see below).

The twin prongs of democracy and efficient management continued to emerge during the late 1960s. The Seeborn Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services was created to explore ways to better coordinate social

⁹⁸Town and Country Planning Act 1968, Chapter 72, Part 1, Section 3 (London, UK: HMSO) p. 4.

services. The piecemeal development of services during the post-war period resulted in a complex series of separate agencies. Reporting in 1968, Seebohm argued that the fragmentation of local government social services, meant that citizens were unable to satisfactorily resolve social needs. Seebohm recommended the creation of stronger local authority structures with single social service departments and the creation of local advice centers. Seebohm also stressed the importance of citizen participation:

There is certainly a link to be forged between concepts of popular participation and traditional representative democracy.⁹⁹

The discourse was certainly shifting and the ideas of participatory local democracy were gaining vogue.

A conservative government was in power nationally between 1970 and 1974. In 1971 as a follow-up to Maud's study of internal management, the Conservative government created the Bains committee to advise on internal management in the proposed new local government structures outside London. Like the Maud reports, Bains suggested a corporate approach based on a system of integrated management of local authority services. This report clearly represented a shifting back in emphasis towards efficiency. As the report stated, "we should pay particular attention to the...machinery to ensure value for money."¹⁰⁰ Bains interpreted its role as making

⁹⁹Report of the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services (1968), The Seebohm Committee Report (London, UK: HMSO), para. 494.

¹⁰⁰The New Authorities (1972), The Baines Committee Report (London, UK: HMSO), chapter 2, para. 2.3.

"democracy as efficient as possible," through more efficient information distribution mechanisms in local authorities. Local government reform for England and Wales was finally achieved with the passage of the Local Government Act of 1972, and implemented in 1974. The Act was one of the first concrete attempts to remedy some of the democratic defects cited by Maud and Skeffington. Though the Act was predominately concerned with restructuring local government in England and Wales, there were several important aspects which related to democracy and affected local authorities in London.

Though the act was designed to achieve efficiency, it also acknowledged the importance of local democracy and the need to ensure local authorities were both representative and accessible to local communities. Under this act the position of appointed local Aldermen was abolished, and rights of public access to the council were extended to the meetings of all committees. What was to provide highly significant however was the enhancement of local discretion. According to the Act,

local authorities have the power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of their functions, even if they have no statutory power for that action.¹⁰¹

In 1974 Labor regained national and local power in many of the inner London LBCs. Central government began instituting a range of advisory suggestions concerning local democracy and local innovation. This advice, coupled with the increased local discretion given by the 1972 Act enabled Local authorities to pursue a range of

¹⁰¹Department of Environment (1972) Local Government Act, Circular 121/72 (London, UK: HMSO), para. 16, section III.

democratic initiatives. In 1974, the Department of Environment published a report encouraging local authorities to create neighborhood councils as bodies to facilitate community discussion. Seven of the inner London boroughs immediately instituted this policy, and more since that time, each doing so in its own innovative way. For example Islington created twenty four local area councils, Camden created fourteen, and Lewisham created five. Islington also instituted 15 multi-service neighborhood offices to provide residents "one stop shopping" for LBC services. By the early 1980s Lambeth had created 32 local housing offices to facilitate community involvement in local housing management and council housing policy.¹⁰² In 1975 government suggested that local authorities should publicize their plans in local newspapers, and for important development issues authorities should hold public hearings. Following this advice, in Lambeth

in addition to the...neighborhood councils, and their advice centers, there was a consumer advice center, citizens advice bureau, community law center and town planning advice center-all sponsored by the council...The town hall had initiated a 24-hour emergency service. A new public relations officer was appointed.¹⁰³

At the metropolitan level democratic reforms were instituted by the "new left", who gained control of the GLC in 1981. Under their control, the GLC created a range of open and accessible special committees to deal with minority and women's issues. The opening out of local government occurred across most GLC policy

¹⁰²J. Gyford (1986), "Diversity, Sectionalism and Local Democracy" in The Committee of Inquiry Into the Conduct of Local Authority Business, Research Volume IV. Aspects of Local Democracy, CMND. 9801 (London: HMSO), p. 119.

¹⁰³C. Cockburn (1978), p. 136.

committees. Consultation exercises were carried out regularly in all 32 London boroughs, annual open meetings and forums were conducted, and regular surveys were carried out to maintain needs-based information on the community. In addition the GLC became heavily involved in information distribution concerning policies and programs throughout the London region.

The GLC became the largest single source of funding in Britain for voluntary sector projects run by women.¹⁰⁴ In the area of race the GLC created an ambitious program of research, consultation and grant aid run by the Ethnic Minorities Unit. Equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies were instituted throughout the metropolitan tier.¹⁰⁵ They promoted development initiatives which stressed increased community involvement in policy decisions.¹⁰⁶ Table 5.6 provides a chronological listing of some of the major activities of the GLC between 1980 and 1984.

¹⁰⁴Greater London Council (1986). Serving All Londoners: Annual Report 1984/1985, (London, UK:GLC).

¹⁰⁵See M. Fitzgerald (1984).

¹⁰⁶See A. Forrester, S. Lansley, & R. Pauley (1985).

5.6 Major Greater London Council Initiatives 1981-1984

July 1981	Ethnic Minorities Committee - Campaigned on race issues, provided funding for ethnic minority groups and projects, and acted as a monitoring agency on racism in London.
July 1981	Economic Policy Unit -Developed economic policy based on popular input from community residents.
July 1981	"Art for People" policy - promoted community oriented arts policy.
Oct. 1981	'Fares Fair' - 25% cut in London Transport rates.
Jan. 1982	'Greater London Training Board' -promoted training and industry policies targeted to women and minorities.
Jan. 1982	Gay and Lesbian working party - addressed issues of sexual discrimination in London.
May 1982	Women's Committee - provided funding for women's project, acted as a monitoring agency of gender discrimination in London.
Dec. 1982	Welfare Benefits Unit - promoted more equitable distribution of welfare benefit in London, launched the welfare rights campaign.
Jan. 1983	Stress Boroughs Program - program designed to target aid to the poorest boroughs in the London region.
May 1983	'Just the Ticket' - London Transport travel card introduced, lower fares.
Sep. 1983	Forum for the elderly - provided a arena for discussion of issues of concern to the elderly on London, provided information and assistance.
Nov. 1983	Race and Housing Action Team - its main role was to combat racial and sexual harassment in public housing facilities.
1984	Declared anti-racist year
1984	Women and Housing Working Party - to advance women's interests in housing policy. Arranged a range of technical courses for women in housing development areas.
May 1984	London Consortium for Disability - to advise the GLC on problems of the disabled, and provide a forum for debate on issues of concern for the disabled.

Sources: A. Forrester, S. Lansley and R. Pauley (1985), pp.48-49 and The Greater London Council (1986), Working for London (London, UK: GLC).

The twin prongs of democracy and efficiency continued to pervade discourse on London local government. Though issues of efficiency continued to be significant, conceptions of citizen participation were slowly broadened and the tools

for implementation in localities were made available. Central government provided suggested as opposed to mandated courses of action. The advantage of this strategy was the central government was able to alter the local democratic debate and shift the values, without major opposition from existing power holders.

Slowly democratic reform became a regular part of local authority activity, particularly in the inner London boroughs and the GLC where the "New Left" was sweeping into power. By 1981 all seven of the metropolitan authorities in England were controlled by the "New Left." The outer boroughs for the most part held to their traditional conservative routes, and were less inclined to adopt the more radical reforms occurring within London and other metropolitan areas. New actors began to gain power and slowly London's metropolitan and local government system became a more innovative, open and accessible system.

In 1979, the "new right" gained control of national government and introduced policies based upon their distinct and different set goals, values and strategies. Throughout the 1980s central government instituted politically centralizing policies which removed local decision making powers in key areas such as finance. Administrative decentralization was inst through policies mandating that local authorities "contract out" services. They promoted a system of local governance in which local elected authorities became moderators of market based interests and preferences over local service provision.

The "New Right's" promoted policies to encourage private investment in localities through enterprise zones, tax shelters, and Urban Development Corporations

(similar to American Economic Development Corporations). The "New Right" vision

implied a residual role for local authorities as *enablers* in a limited sense of elected agencies which made arrangements for the provision of a small number of services which the market could not provide....Authorities would be required to contract out its actual provision to the private sector, the voluntary sector, anyone, it appeared rather than the local authority itself.¹⁰⁷

It was business led urban regeneration. The "New Right" agenda professed that it was

in general, committed to the view that political life, like economic life, is (or ought to be) a matter of individual freedom and initiative. Accordingly, a laissez-faire or free-market society is the key objective along with a minimal state.¹⁰⁸

The rightward shift in values during the 1980s was furthered by a range of centrally mandated institutional reforms which consisted of greater administrative decentralization coupled with political centralization, all designed to protect economic individualism. Participation for the "New Right" was to be expressed through individuals voicing their preferences through local market decisions not through local government politics.

The new urban right vision..saw the role of a democratically elected, but centralized, government as creating conditions under which individuals could compete for rewards....the economic logic..was also..a political logic of suppressing local democratic debate.¹⁰⁹

The arrival of the "new right" nationally, led to an increasingly acrimonious relationship with the "new left" local authorities in the London region. The outcome

¹⁰⁷D. Wilson & C. Game (1994), p. 341.

¹⁰⁸D. Held (1987), p. 244. Also see, R. Nozick (1974), Anarchy, State and Utopia (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell).

¹⁰⁹J. Allen (1993), "Friends and Neighbors: Knowledge and Campaigning in London", a paper for the 1993 APSA Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., p. 232.

was the growth of a highly adversarial relationship between local and central levels of government.

Central-local tensions were clearly not new in London, rather they had a long history dating back to the origins of local governance in England, and the fears which Parliament had long held of the growth of a rival power base in the capital city. During the LCC phase these fears were never fully realized, because local authority powers were very limited.

During the GLC phase local authorities were larger, wealthier, unified and subsequently more powerful. Local government was at last in a position to exert a substantial amount of control over local affairs. Under Thatcher, central control over local government in London increased. According to one account there were 143 pieces of local legislation enacted between 1979 and 1992.¹¹⁰ Unlike the advisory policies of the 1960s and 1970s, the new laws were mandates for action in the locality. Table 5.7 shows, some of the major legislation instituted during the final years of GLC phase (space prohibits a listing of all 143 pieces of local legislation).

The aggregate effect of these reforms was a decrease in the powers of metropolitan governments, reducing local authority governing capacity. In some cases such transportation power was transferred back to central government control. In housing and development services were divided with some aspects passed to the borough level for privatization and contracting out, and others shifted up to central government

¹¹⁰M. Goldsmith (ed.) (1986b), New Research in Central-Local Relations (Aldershot, UK:Gower), p. xv.

control.

The cumulative impact of the many changes introduced since 1980 to the role of local government..has been profound. Local authorities have been transformed from that of the primary agencies from bringing about an improvement in...standards to a key dimension to the problem. In the process, local authority discretion has been greatly reduced as a result of a range of new central government restrictions.¹¹¹

¹¹¹M. Loughlin (July 1994), "The Constitutional Status of Local Government," Commission on Local Democracy Research Report No. 3 (London, UK: CLD Limited), p. 22.

5.7 Chronology of The "New Right's" Major Urban Legislation: From Inception to Abolition

Date Legislation & Description

- 1980 Local Government, Planning & Land Act -Block grant distributed on the basis of central government's expenditure assessment, calculated according to central government's determination of local needs. This was reinforced by penalties placed on authorities which overspent, rate capping. This also required the local authorities to contract out a range of designated public works projects.

- 1980 Housing Act - Vesting of rights in council tenants to purchase the freehold of their homes on favorable terms, determined by central government. Tenants were given formal legal rights, including security of tenure and certain rights in relation to housing management. This act also introduced a new housing subsidy system which provided incentives to authorities to raise rents to commercial levels and made it very difficult for them to provide for the general housing needs of their areas.

- 1984 Housing and Building Control Act - Council housing sales procedures streamlined, residential qualifications reduced, maximum discount increased.

- 1984 London Regional Transport Bill - Took away the GLC's financial and policy control over London Transport and curtailed it's investment capacity in British rail and other transport organizations.

- 1985 Local Government Act - Abolition of GLC and the 6 metropolitan county councils with effect from March 31st 1986.

- 1985 Transport Act - Bus licensing deregulated, reorganization of public transport companies required to keep a distance from local authority and run on commercial lines, local authorities required to not inhibit competition in the provision of transport services. Local authorities limited in ability to provide transport subsidies and only in accordance with tendering regime.

Sources: D. Wilson & C. Game (1985); M. Hebbert & T. Travers (1988); N. Flynn, S. Leach & C. Vielba (1985).

In 1980 a new block grant mechanism was created by central government, calculated by a central assessment of local authority spending needs. When authorities spent more than the central assessment they received a reduced rate of block grant funding. The unmet expenditure was passed on to local tax payers. The purpose of this arrangement was to provide incentives for local authorities to decrease spending and it was also an attempt to increase central control over localities. However, many local authorities chose to accept less block grant revenue in exchange for greater local self determination. Governments response was the Local Government Finance Act of 1982, in which assessments were no longer determined according to local authority needs but rather according to their spending histories.

Neither the 1980 or 1982 legislation, however, resulted in decreased local authority expenditure. Many local authorities chose to accept the penalties of less central funding and increased local taxation levels. The final response from central government came with the introduction of the Rates Act of 1984. The Rates Act gave central government control of the amount of finance which local authorities could raise through taxation, resulting in greater central control of local finance, and a significant decrease in local autonomy.

Meanwhile, in 1983, the Conservative party manifesto included a pledge to abolish the metropolitan authorities throughout England. Soon after the government published its White paper, "Streamlining the Cities."¹¹² This paper argued that the

¹¹²Department of Environment (October 1983), "Streamlining the Cities: Government Proposals for Reorganizing Local Government in Greater London and the Metropolitan Counties", Cmnd. 9063, Volume 53 (London, UK: HMSO).

metropolitan authorities were not efficient and proposed abolition as a means of cutting down on bureaucratic inefficiency.

Local authority discretion was reduced in the area of transportation through the Transport Act of 1985, and in housing through the Housing Act of 1980. Education policies were introduced in the 1980s to enhance the voice of consumers by strengthening the role of parents on school governing bodies. Finally, during the 1980s central government created a range of special purpose agencies to provide services previously under local authority control. For example in 1980, Urban Development Corporation (UDCs) were created. UDCs were centrally appointed bodies with powers to purchase public land, engage in local planning and development of derelict land.

The structural outcome of legislation throughout the 1980s was the promotion of the LBCs as the sole remaining tier of representative Local government in London. However as Hebbert and Travers point out,

while the boroughs have assumed new powers and responsibilities previously belonging to the Greater London Council, in many policy areas their degree of discretion is now circumvented both by ministerial controls and by the presence of new London wide agencies . . . all of which are likely to bring about considerable changes in the internal organization and style of management in the coming years.¹¹³

In 1986 the GLC was abolished on the grounds that its size made it incapable of providing services efficiently, and that its centralized decision making processes

¹¹³M. Hebbert & T. Travers (1988), p.109.

resulted in unaccountability.¹¹⁴ Many argued that the GLC lacked a specific role in London governance. Of course there were strong political motivation on the part of the Conservative government, which had lost influence in London local government.

By 1986 metropolitan governments had indeed become impotent forces. The GLC lacked the capacity to carry out it's fundamental role of representation of local interests. However this was not because of it's inability to identify a role for itself, or a failure to represent local communities, but rather because of cumulative legislative restrictions on it's activities.

The abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan authorities was a hotly contested proposal. While popular opinion in London supported the GLC, the strength of the Conservative majority in Parliament enabled the abolition policy to be carried forward.

5.8 The Quango Phase of London Government 1986-1998

The structure of London's local government during the Quango phase combined both decentralized and centralized powers and functions. The rhetoric of the reforms was about shifting powers down to the boroughs. However the redistribution of powers and function in 1986 was not simply to local authorities but to a series of quasi-autonomous governmental agencies -- including centrally appointed bodies,

¹¹⁴See the Department of the Environment (1983) and the Local Government Act 1985.

centrally regulated private bodies, London-wide local government bodies, and regional bodies. Responsibility for the provision of some services was returned to the boroughs, though few were under total borough control (see table 5.8). Some services were administered directly and others mandatorily contracted out to private providers.

The upper tier authority in London for all intents and purposes became central government, who took control of 70% of local public expenditure in London through ratecapping, control the of London Fire and Civil Defense Authorities, and control over the budgets of the Metropolitan police and London Regional Transport.¹¹⁵

One of the most distinct trends of the Quango phase was the growth of quasi autonomous non-governmental organizations (quangos), or what some argued was simply a return to government in London as it was 100 years ago.

Government is being handed back to the 'new magistracy' from whom it was removed in the counties more than 100 years ago. Elected representatives are being replaced by a burgeoning army of the selected...the unknown governors of our society.¹¹⁶

Government created the Housing Corporation (HC) to regulate local housing associations and formulate policy in the area of housing for social need. Four non-elected regional health authorities (RHAs) were created, whose territories met in central London, with control over hospitals and ambulance services. In 1988 schools were given the power to opt out of local authority control and become directly funded by central government. Housing Authority Trusts were created (HATs) in 1988 with

¹¹⁵M. Hebbert and T. Travers (1988), pp. 21-22.

¹¹⁶D. Wilson and C. Game (1994), p.13.

managerial power over run down housing in urban areas. The London division of Manpower Services Commission (MSC) was given responsibility for training and employment policy in London.

All together as of 1995, there were a total of 4,652 non-elected bodies in England controlling local service provision.¹¹⁷ In London there were roughly 100 bodies engaged in local service provision with 21 different methods of financing. To break this down, there were 24 centrally appointed bodies, 16 London-wide local government bodies made up of centrally nominated LBC councilors, and a series of indirectly elected bodies dealing with services in parts of London (e.g. sanitation--the North London Waste Authority managed garbage removal in 7 boroughs and the South London Waste Committee handled trash in five boroughs).¹¹⁸

A study of the degree of openness of these bodies completed in 1993, found them for all intents and purposes to be closed organizations.¹¹⁹ None of the organizations allowed the public to attend board or committee meetings (with the exception of the District Health Authorities, and here the public was only allowed to attend full authority meetings annually). The public had no right to inspect minutes of meetings or to see policy documents of these meetings. Only two of the aforementioned quangos ever met in public: Training Councils and the National Health Trusts

¹¹⁷J. Stewart, A. Greer and P. Hoggett (February 1991), "The Quango State: An Alternative Approach," Commission for Local Democracy Research Report No. 10 (London, UK: CLD), p. 23.

¹¹⁸D. Wilson and C. Game (1994), p. 57-58.

¹¹⁹S. Weir and W. Hall (1994), Ego Trip: Extra-Governmental Organizations in the UK and their Accountability (Essex, UK: Democratic Audit--University of Essex).

(annually). The only type of public information provided were annual reports and annual financial accounts. Further, with the exception of the District Health Authority, none of these bodies was subject to public scrutiny by ombudsmen.

Other nationally appointed bodies with London divisions were English Heritage and the Sports Council, the Greater London Arts board, and the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC). Finally, a range of centrally appointed bodies were created within London with public monopolies; these include Thames Water, the Post Office, the London Electricity Board, and British Rail.

The growth of these centrally appointed bodies during the Quango phase became the most significant feature of the institutional map of London local government.

Many of them are either new or recently reformed, and there can be little doubt that they are often less accessible to the public than locally appointed bodies.¹²⁰

The linkages between these departments and the LBCs are informal. Meanwhile, the LBCs have relatively little autonomy, being tied to central government by systems of patronage and the purse strings.

Five joint bodies were created to assume the responsibilities of the GLC that were considered unsuitable for control at the borough level; London Fire and Civil Defense (LFCDA), The London Waste Regulation Authority (LWRA), London Planning and Advisory Committee (LPAC), The London Borough Grants Committee (LBGC), and The London Area Mobility Scheme (LAMS). These bodies were

¹²⁰M. Hebbert and T. Travers (1988), p. 25.

composed of representatives from every London LBC and several central appointees.

The 1985 legislation gave the London boroughs prominence as the sole remaining tier of elected local government in London. However,

while the boroughs have assumed new powers and responsibilities previously belonging to the GLC, in many policy areas their degree of discretion is now circumscribed both by ministerial controls and the presence of new London-wide agencies.¹²¹

As table 5.8 illustrates, central government dominates the Quango phase division of powers. Even services provided by the boroughs are now linked to central agencies.

¹²¹M. Hebbert & T. Travers (1988), p.109.

Table 5.8 Quango Phase: Service Distribution by Level of Government

	Central govt. body	Centrally appointed private body	Centrally regulated local govt. body	London wide local govt. body	Part London body	Borough
Ambulances	X					
Arts & Library		X		X		X
Cemeteries						X
Civil Defense				X		
Consumer Protect						X
Education				X		X
Electricity		X				
Environment					X	
Fire				X		
Gas			X			
Health		X				
Housing				X		X
Land Drainage		X				X
Planning	X			X		X
Police	X					
Pub. Transport		X				
Recreation		X				X
Refuse				X		X
Roads	X					X
Sewerage		X				
Social Services			X			X
Traffic	X					X
Water	X	X				

5.9 Conclusions: Institutions, Values and Prospects for Local Democracy

The GLC phase was marked by several distinct institutional features. Political decentralization created larger local authorities with greater power and local discretion. More powerful local authorities produced a more politically contentious

local institutional terrain. Conflicts occurred within local authorities, between levels of government, and between citizen and government. The attempts to heal London's fragmentation were never realized. Instead structural reform compounded demographic divisions between urban and suburban communities. The metropolitan authority was never able to overcome this large scale division.

The conflicts which emerged between the powerful local authorities and central government embodied clashes of interests which yielded policies that progressively removed local authorities' powers, culminating in the abolition of the metropolitan tier. Thus institutional conflict bred institutional change.

The confrontations between the levels of government also represented clashing ideologies and values. The problems which had plagued London from ancient times prevailed; fragmentation became the defining characteristic of the Greater London region. The GLC became a base of power in the London region, which was then fought over by parties, authorities, interest groups and citizens. Participation occurred both through formal and informal channels. Abolition of the metropolitan tier did not removed the contention, rather it relocated it to the myriad of new institutions.

Institutional changes allowed different segments access to decision-making at different points in time. For most of the GLC phase marginalized communities found an advocate in the GLC. As chapter 6 will illustrate, this led to increases in participation during the phase. The value focus on participatory democracy and political empowerment were central features of the GLC phase. The shift to economic liberalism which began nationally at the end of the GLC phase came to dominate the

London institutional environment, and altered the institutional playing field. Access existed but it was limited to groups with resources.

New institutions were redefined by the actors who came to power and the ideologies these actors brought to bear upon the governance of London. New actors then altered the institutions themselves. Conflict between institutions, actors, ideologies and values brought the GLC phase to a close. The Quango phase brought London full circle back to its Victorian institutional heritage; dominated by private economic interests and divided by multiple competing local government institutions.

Ch. 6 Political Participation: Formal Institutional Impacts

Thus far the focus of this analysis has been on the formal institutional structures which characterized local government in London during the LCC, GLC and the Quango phases. Though clearly local government has undergone something of a continuous evolutionary process starting in 1888 and continuing through to the present, at the same time one can clearly identify distinct features of each phase of local governance (see table 6.1).

The primary question of this study is the degree to which institutions influence and are influenced by urban political participation. As Hill argues,

empowerment...means different things from different standpoints. There is a common emphasis on community, on a variety of definitions of localism, and on the need to generate the will to engage in action. Such motivation arises both from enlightened self interest and from shared values and common loyalties. But is also argued that institutions and processes which encourage and promote participation themselves provide the motivation, the will, which the practice of citizenship requires.¹

This chapter explores the degree to which changes in the key democratic institutional features in London's governance enhanced urban political participation.

Local government has been viewed by democratic theorists as a vital component of democratic society because it is at this level that the qualities underlying democratic citizenship can be fostered. As Carol Pateman points out, one of the major problems with the discussion of democratization of structures is the lack of

¹D. Hill (1994), Citizenship and Cities (Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf), p. 29.

information concerning outcomes.² Specifically, would the introduction of more opportunities to participate in a broader range of government levels and spheres of decision making result in a decrease in political apathy and create a more democratic society?

As the American experience demonstrated, often the channels created for participation lacked substance and concrete reality. Not surprisingly, the outcomes of policies with mechanisms for participation, by many accounts were less than satisfying.³ For example, the War on Poverty programs were criticized for failing to live up to the expectation encompassed in the notion of "maximum" feasible participation;⁴ though channels for participation existed, they were designed not to empower local residents but rather to placate them. According to Pateman this "pseudo participation" engaged communities in discussions of decisions with

²C. Pateman (1970), Participation and Democratic Theory, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).

³see for example D.R. Marshall (1971), The Politics of Participation in Poverty (Berkeley: University of California Press) which points to the problems in the CAP program in Los Angeles as one of a failure due to a lack of meaningful community power in decision making; W. Rosenbaum (1978), "Public Involvement vs. Reform and Ritual: The Development of Citizen Participation Programs" in Stuart Langton (ed), Citizen Participation in America (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co.), on governmental failure to provide adequate incentives to agencies to implement citizen participation programs; S. Krinsky (1982), "New Roots for Citizen Involvement in Social Risk Assessment" in Journal of Voluntary Action Research, 11 (January 1982), pp. 8-23, on the limits imposed by technocrats on citizen participation in federal programs; and W. Rosenbaum (1978), "Slaying Beautiful Hypotheses With Ugly Facts: EPA and the Limits of Public Participation," in Journal of Voluntary Action, 6 (July/October 1978), pp. 161-173, on the weakness of the EPA's citizen participation programs due to organizational failures.

⁴Lillian Rubin (November/December 1967), "Maximum Feasible Participation: The Origins, Implications and Present Status," in Poverty and Human Resources Abstract.

government, but did not allow the community to actually influence the outcome.⁵ As

Verba comments:

Participation...was limited to member endorsements of decisions made...[and to] group discussion as a means of inducing acceptance of the goal.⁶

Making the channels available is only the first step towards the creation of a participatory community, it is also essential that participation is made meaningful.

Interests must be incorporated into decisions such that people will feel their participation has a concrete value. In calling for wider opportunities to participate, theorists like Pateman are referring to widening the sphere within which citizens are able to have the opportunity to voice their opinions--not simply participation in elections, but participation in decision making. Coupled with opportunities to participate, there must be adequate flows of information to facilitate meaningful participation.

Sherry Arnstein's understanding of participation proved useful for my research.⁷ She points out that citizen participation runs along a continuum from voting to violence, with a number of variations in between. Each level on her eight rung "ladder of citizen participation" produces different outcomes. Maximum participation through citizen control of decision making mechanisms produces citizen

⁵C. Pateman (1970), pp. 68-70.

⁶S. Verba (1961), Small Group Politics and Political Behavior (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), p. 321.

⁷Sherry R. Arnstein (June 1969), "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," in the Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 35, pp. 216-224; and (January/February 1970), "A Working Model for Public Participation" in Public Administration Review, 5, pp. 70-73.

empowerment. Below this is consultation, which produces empowerment but not to the same degree as citizen control. This is followed by partnerships which produce slightly less real citizen power. At the opposite end of the scale are things like "informing," whereby citizens are told of government decisions after they have already been decided; or citizens being appointed to advisory boards (consultation) but given no real influence over events which becomes a form of "manipulation" for the purposes of placation. The key factor then is the degree to which political participation entails a sharing of power. Real participation represents a redistribution of power.

The contemporary debates regarding democracy center around a distinction between "participatory" and "legal" democracy, or what both Sandel and Putnam contrast as the republican versus the liberal traditions.

The republican tradition, unlike the liberal conception, requires a formative politics, a politics that cultivates in citizens the qualities of character that citizenship requires.⁸

The qualities of character are centered on the idea of civicness, a unity of community and citizen in the identification and resolution of common problems.

Participation then can be linked to the degree to which societies are able to overcome the liberal individual features of the contemporary industrial city, and to build its stock of social capital. As Putnam comments,

By social capital, I mean features of social life--networks, norms, and trust--that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared

⁸Michael Sandel (1996), Democracy's Discontent (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press), p. 6.

objectives...the term 'civic engagement' refers to people's connections with the life of their communities, not only with politics.⁹

However to move beyond Putnam, the growth or decline in social capital is not simply a feature of non-political realms. Political factors can stimulate the growth of social capital. As Skocpol states, if we care about democratic values, we must not

hastily conclude that the answers...lie in civil society understood apart from, or in opposition to, government and politics....Organized civil society has never flourished apart from active government and inclusive democratic politics. Civic vitality has also depended on vibrant ties across classes and localities. If we want to repair civil society, we must first and foremost revitalize political democracy.¹⁰

Political democracy requires participatory mechanisms designed to empower citizens through a sharing in power over decision making processes.

The participatory framework gained vogue in the UK during the late 1960s, inspired by the American civil rights and the student movements, with policies created very much along the lines of the War on Poverty programs. Participatory ideology was articulated in the UK by the "new left" and embodied in many of the reforms they instituted in the urban arena. During the late 1970s, these ideas were challenged by the "new right" in power at the national level. The new right supported a model more reflective of the legal variety of democracy.

This liberalism asserts the priority of procedures over particular ends....the procedural republic....A liberalism that conceives persons as free and independent selves unencumbered by moral or civic ties that have not been

⁹Robert Putnam (Winter 1996), "The Strange Disappearance of Civic America," in The American Prospect, (Cambridge, MA: New Prospect Inc.), p. 1.

¹⁰T. Skocpol (March-April 1996), "Unravelling From Above," in The American Prospect, No. 25, (Cambridge, MA: The American Prospect Inc.), pp. 24-25.

[freely] chosen.¹¹

Although at points elements of both the liberal and republican models have been incorporated into local governance practices in the London region, the balance towards one or the other has shifted over time.

What is significant about the participatory model is its understanding that formal legal rights in and of themselves do not necessarily translate to individuals truly enjoying or exercising those rights. Rights in legal form do not necessarily become tangible, in the sense that all individuals in society freely share in them. Many individuals, by virtue of their lack of adequate resources and opportunities are in fact denied these rights. Inequalities based on race, gender and class can hinder the expression of the right to freely participate in a democratic society. One possible solution is the creation of more open and accessible governments that are sensitive to the needs of diverse populations, and in which information flows freely in all directions. The development of a system composed of decision making structures which are both responsive and responsible to community goals and needs would be more likely to facilitate higher levels of citizen participation. Such a system would enable "citizens [to] interact as equals, not as patrons or clients."¹²

In Pateman's studies of participatory experiments in Britain, she found that citizen apathy could be countered by making democracy count through the extension

¹¹M. Sandel (1996), p. 6.

¹²R. Putnam (1993), p. 88.

of popular control of key institutions.¹³ If opportunities exist, and are perceived to be meaningful then enhanced participation is possible. As Sandel comments,

Political institutions are not simply instruments that implement ideas independently conceived; they are themselves embodiments of ideas.¹⁴

There are a range of studies which have demonstrated that increased participatory capacity does lead to a range of positive civic outcomes.¹⁵ Almond and Verba's civic culture study found that citizen participation in civic organizations led to the development of cooperative skills, and bred a sense of collective responsibility.¹⁶ Putman's study of civic traditions in Italy found that greater civic participation enhanced the democratic processes in Italian regional governance. Finally, Berry, Portnoy and Thompson's study of participatory change in five American cities found that,

at any given level of SES [socio-economic scale], engaging in community participation activities is clearly and significantly related to political efficacy.¹⁷

This chapter is not an assessment of the impact of an increase in participation on

¹³C. Pateman (1970), pp. 45-66.

¹⁴M. Sandel (1996), p. ix.

¹⁵See J. Mansbridge (1983), Beyond Adversary Democracy (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press); C. Pateman (1970), Participation and Democratic Theory (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press); and J.F. Zimmerman (1986), Participatory Democracy: Populism Revived (New York, NY: Praeger).

¹⁶G. Almond and S. Verba (1963), The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), ch. 11.

¹⁷J. Berry, K. Portnoy and K. Thompson (1993), The Rebirth of Urban Democracy (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution), p. 265.

policy outcomes, in fact I begin with an acceptance of the benefits of participation and consider the relationship between democratic institutional reform and citizen participation. This chapter therefore explores the degree to which the creation of a more participatory institutional configurations leads to increased levels of popular participation.

In the table 6.1 below, I present a summary of the key democratic institutional features of the three phases of London governance. These attributes include the geographic features; the functional features; the degree of autonomy of the organization (measured in terms of central/local relationships); the extent of citizen access to decision making; access to information; and finally the dominant values of each phase. In table 6.6 each feature is assigned a weight according to its degree of "participatory capacity."¹⁸ My assessment focuses on the degree to which one of these configurations facilitated higher levels of individual and group political participation. Table 6.1. presents a broad descriptive table of the key features included, followed by a discussion of each of these factors and how they were evaluated.

¹⁸It must be recognized that in studying this question through the lens of the London experience, I am not looking at pure models, but rather at the real world of urban democracy at three different historical periods. Thus the three phases represent institutional configurations which incorporated a mix of democratic practices.

Table 6.1 Key Institutional Features of London Governance

<u>Features</u>	<u>LCC Phase</u>	<u>GLC Phase</u>	<u>Quango Phase</u>
Territorial Size	Small 117 sq. miles/ 2611 representatives	Large 620 sq. miles/ 4043 representatives	Large 620 Sq. Miles/ 3214 representatives
Population Size	3,173,000	7,764,000	6,770,275
Use of Non-Elected Authorities	Moderate Development in various decision making spheres	Minimal Reduction in use, and introduction of features to democratize-public hearings, community representation, publicity, etc.	Maximum Increase in range and use, and reduction of democratic features - limitations on popular access in defined policy areas.
# and Types of <i>Elected</i> Local Governments	Two Tier - Small 12 MBCs (Borough) 1 LCC (Metro)	Two Tier - Large 32 LBCs (Borough) 1 GLC (Metro)	Single Tier - Large 32 LBCs (Borough)
Primary Service Strategy	Metro.- "Oversight" Borough-Limited Local Service	Metro. - "Strategic" Borough - Broad Local Service Provider	Metro. - None Borough-Enabling Limited Local Provider
Central/Local Power Balance	Strong Central Weak Local	Moderate Central Moderate Local	Strong Central Weak Local
Citizen Access	Minimal	Moderate	Minimal
Participatory Mechanisms	Elections Only	Elections, Consultation, Membership on Committees (with limited voting rights)	Elections, Membership on Committees (with limited voting rights)

Table 6.1 Continued

<u>Features</u>	<u>LCC Phase</u>	<u>GLC Phase</u>	<u>Quango Phase</u>
Access to Information	Info. & access to full council meetings	Info. & access full council meetings, committees & subcommittees	Info. & access full council meetings & committee meetings
Local Authority Publicity	None required	Maximum feasible	With limitations
Dominant Values	Efficiency Representation	Efficiency Representation Political Participation	Efficiency Representation Market Participation
Participatory Capacity	Minimal	Maximum	Moderate

6.1 *Participatory Capacity: Factors and Features*

Working with a scale from one to three, I assigned a value to the democratic features of each phase of London government relating to its participatory capacity. As my universe is London local government, numbers are based upon comparison between London governance phases. In each case a score of one is correlated to a higher degree of capacity for popular participation, and conversely a score of three represents minimal participatory capacity. It is important to recognize that these scales were designed for descriptive purpose only. The scales are utilized to create a guide which identifies and weighs each participatory factor, and categorizes the local government phases studied. The assignment of these numbers while somewhat subjective, is grounded in theory concerning democracy and political participation. The assigned number is computed through comparison between the dominant attributes across the three phases under study. In sections 6.2 through 6.4 I will present data on group and individual participation and consider whether these features can help us understand the changing patterns of urban political participation.

A. Size of local authority

Researchers have long held that the correlation between the size of a local authority and the electorate was an important factor in shaping local patterns of participation. Does the size of the constituency relative to the number of representatives make a difference? Rousseau argued that small scale government was key to facilitate citizen involvement. The size of a local authority is explored both in

terms of geography (the size of the territory) and representation (ratio of representatives to territory and population).

For Thomas Jefferson, the problem of large scale governance was both geographic and representational. Local governance would suffer if territories were too large because the population would be prevented from physically joining together in the resolution of common problems. The lack of face to face contact would weaken democratic process. Jefferson saw the importance of small scale government in sustaining healthy local democracy. Similarly, De Toqueville in his travels through America, found that New England style direct democracy (town hall style government) created a more harmonious local government system. The system facilitated citizen involvement in decision making and participation in group discussion and problem resolution.

As societies modernized, urbanized and expanded these issues of scale became increasingly significant for local democracy. Urbanization brought diverse populations physically closer, yet undermined the bonds of citizenship which characterized the communities of an earlier time. In British cities, like American cities, traditions of privatism tended to counteract community building. As Scott Greer reflects, modern industrial cities became "communities of limited liability."¹⁹ The size of contemporary cities often mitigates against kinds of interaction which encourage the building of a civic community. As Sandel points out,

¹⁹S. Greer (1962), The Emerging City: Myth and Reality (New York, NY: Macmillan), p. 139.

the modern industrial system actually undermines the common identity of those whose activities it coordinates....The industrial system was a cooperative scheme in the sense that it coordinated the efforts of many individuals; but unless the individuals took an interest in the whole and regarded its activity as an expression of their identity, it did not constitute a genuine community.²⁰

There have been a range of debates concerning the relationship between the *size of local authority* territory and citizen participation. On the one hand there are those such as Plato and Rousseau who assert that smaller local authorities offer the greatest opportunity for participation because they are closer to the community. In smaller authorities, as Jefferson and de Tocqueville also argued, the possibility of face-to-face contact is enhanced, which breeds a stronger connection with one's community.²¹

The opposing view asserts that larger local authorities can enhance local democracy because they would be more powerful and capable of being more responsive to local needs. This position was perhaps most clearly articulated by the Federalists, in support of the creation of a strong federal government. These arguments are also efficiency based. As Keating states,

Large scale units will be more democratic since they can be given greater powers and functional competence, thus giving more local control over policy.²²

Size coupled with adequate power and authority then become key components of local

²⁰M. Sandel (1996), p. 207.

²¹See for example J. Mansbridge (1983), C. Pateman (1970), B. Barber (1995), and R. Bellah et. al.(1985).

²²M. Keating (1995), "Size, Efficiency and Democracy: Consolidation, Fragmentation and Public Choice" in D. Judge, G. Stoker & H. Wolman (eds), Theories of Urban Politics, (London, UK: Sage), p. 119.

democracy. Larger local authorities in being able to achieve more, can generate more positive relationships between citizens and government. The logic goes, that citizens will be more likely to engage in political participation if they feel that local authorities have the capacity to respond. These were the arguments presented by Redcliffe-Maud in the late 1960s.

England needs a pattern of local authorities with clear responsibilities, big enough in area, population and resources to provide first class services, able to give decisions....We believe that the public would then become both more aware of local government and more interested in it.²³

Critics of larger authorities assert that larger authorities will be more remote from citizens and thus discourage participation. Moreover, larger local authorities can be a positive threat to community interests if the "wrong" group gains control of it.

This study tests the assumption of the participatory democrats: "Smaller" size it was hypothesized is one factor contributing to the production of greater participation.

Small size encourages concern for the area and leads to higher levels of participation, especially where the community exercises some degree of control over local decisions.²⁴

Table 6.2 below, presents descriptive data on the size of local authorities in London during each of the three phases of governance.

²³Redcliffe-Maud (June 1969), Royal Commission on Local Government in England 1966-1969, Volume 1, Report, Cmnd. 4040 (London, UK:HMSO), para. 99.

²⁴Hill, p. 61.

Table 6.2 Size of Local Authorities (geography, population, representation)

	<u>LCC Phase</u>	<u>GLC Phase</u>	<u>Quango Phase</u>
Territory (sq. miles)	117	620	620
Average London Population	3,173,000	7,764,000	6,770,275
Average Borough Population	121,845	251,350	192,817
Total # Elected Metropolitan Councilors	126	100	100
Average # Metro. Electors/per Metro. Councilor	21,585	66,931	0
Average # Elected Borough Councilors/per Borough	45	60	60
Average # Borough Electors/per Borough Councilor	2,708	4,189	3,214
Average Total # Elected Local Councilors	2,611	4,043	3,214
Average Population #s per Elected Councilor	2,415	3,843	3,526

As the above table demonstrates, in terms of territory the LCC represents higher participatory capacity than either the GLC or Quango phases. Each elected representative on average represented a smaller geographic territory. The expectation

then is that during the LCC phase, the borough representatives were more likely to have closer ties to the community. Citizens were physically closer to their local elected representative. During the GLC and Quango phases the territory is larger. Comparisons of these two phases reveals that there were more elected representatives during the GLC phase because of the existence of the metropolitan level of government. Thus the GLC phase on this scale had a higher participatory capacity than the Quango phase. The LCC was comparatively the smallest in terms of geographic territory, population size, and ratio of representatives to citizens, while still incorporating a larger metropolitan level. Thus in relationship to size (as one factor contributing to participatory capacity), the LCC phase scores the highest, the GLC phase is second and the Quango phase represents the low score for this particular measure.

B. Non-Elected Authorities

Clearly participatory capacity is enhanced by the existence of accessible local institutions. Decisions made within a closed organizational structure are not conducive to the building of a participatory society. One basic institutional measure of access can be found by identifying the degree to which decision making is the outcome of elected or appointed authorities. As was discussed in chapters four and five, in London appointed bodies include few if any community representatives or citizens. Often these bodies were closed to public access. Thus, those periods in London governance in which there was greater reliance upon *non-elected authorities* as local

decision making bodies are scored lower on the participatory capacity scale.

Non-elected authorities were developed initially during the LCC phase. There was a minor decrease in their use during the GLC phase, and increased usage during the current phase. In addition, as discussed in chapter 5, during the GLC phase efforts were made to incorporate citizen participation into the decision making practices of many of these London based appointed bodies. Citizens were brought into the policy committees of local authorities, and public hearings were held prior to decisions. On this scale the GLC scores the highest because it relied much more heavily on elected authorities and community organizations in decision making than either of the previous periods.²⁵ The Quango phase scores the lowest on this measure because of its increasing reliance on these non-elected bodies, and limitations on citizen involvement in their decisions.

C. Number and Type of Elected Local Authorities

Debate exists over the question of whether consolidated or multiple local authorities help or hinder the development of citizen participation. Public choice theorists argue that multiple small decision making units maximize citizen participation, because they offer citizens greater choice. Tiebout argued that citizens

²⁵However, as will be illustrated in sections 6.2 and 6.3, though community organizations had greater access to local decision making during the GLC phase (as compared with the LCC and Quango phases), these organizations were often only a narrow representation of the community. Group access was determined according to ideological affinity of the group with the local authority, rather than broad based community interest.

as rational self maximizers, would be able to choose the locality that best suited their needs. Citizens would, in turn, feel more content with their local authority and therefore would be more likely to participate.²⁶

The problem with Tiebout's model is that he assumes mobility for all citizens. In the inner city such choices are rarely available. These theories are premised upon a view of citizens as "economically rational", with no recognition that citizens also make decisions for moral and altruistic reasons. Moreover, some decisions are the outcome of emotion, which may represent an economically "irrational" outcome. Lastly, Tiebout's model makes no distinction between political, social and economic needs as distinct and separate categories. Needs can conflict and lead to what might be perceived as an "irrational" decision. Thus, while smaller units may be more efficient, public choice theory does not prove useful in relationship to understanding patterns of citizen participation.

Others have argued that multiple small governments can be hinderance to the development of community (a key component of participatory democratic theory). As Michael Keating argues,

In a fragmented system it is possible to build highways, assemble land and provide infrastructure. What is difficult is to relate land use planning to social and political priorities.²⁷

In this line of reasoning decentralization poses a threat to the broader social needs of

²⁶Charles Tiebout (1956), "A Pure Theory of Local Expenditure" in The Journal of Political Economy, 64 (4), pp. 416-424.

²⁷Michael Keating (1995), p. 126.

the community. Smaller units are more prone to dominance by local elites. These were the issues which preoccupied both by both Maud and Herbert. Fragmentation in this argument can lead to community breakdown and NIMBYism. As Keating points out, "small communities may be an oppressive restriction on the freedom of individuals."²⁸ A fragmented system in this perspective can result in inequitable power distribution, leading to a breakdown in representation citywide. In Atlanta, according to Clarence Stone, fragmentation allowed the downtown business elite to exert a disproportionate degree of influence over decisions. This was facilitated because they had stronger organizational skills, which allowed them to capitalize on the fragmentation of interests in Atlanta more broadly.²⁹

Participatory democrats for the most part support multiple local authorities with multiple points of access, on the grounds of their increased capacity to foster a participatory society of individuals who care about their neighbors. Such a system is likely therefore to build social capital. According to Carol Gould, the participatory democratic personality encapsulates a 'disposition to reciprocity,' which can only develop in a social situation in which individuals are able to understand the perspectives of others.³⁰ This is similar to what Clarence Stone referred to as "social learning." In small groups, social interaction breeds "other" regarding behavior, and a

²⁸Ibid, p. 128.

²⁹C. Stone (1989), Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1986 (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press).

³⁰Carol Gould (1988), Rethinking Democracy, (New York: Cambridge University Press), ch.11.

better appreciation by group members of the broader needs of society and the community.

Both the benefits and threats of small scale units are problematic for participatory models. Smaller units can offer distinct benefits, but at the same time they are more vulnerable to elite dominance. There is little conclusive data regarding precisely how many and how small such local authorities should be. As Berry et. al. point out,

It is important not to overstate the case: face-to-face interaction does not inevitably lead to cooperative, public spirited behavior. A majority faction may use its numerical strength to override the concerns of others. In addition, face-to-face forums allow for peer pressure and decisions that mask real disagreements.³¹

In this study it is argued that within large urban areas, a hybrid model which combines both small scale neighborhood government, and a consolidated metropolitan level of government offers the greatest participatory capacity. A federated local governance system provides protection for the needs and interests of traditionally marginalized groups at the metropolitan level, while still recognizing the importance of small scale community in the form of local level governments. By providing a wider range of potential points of access government is made more permeable. Finally, a federated system allows citizens a greater choice and a greater range of areas within which the potential exists for influencing decisions. The fact that different authorities handle different service areas or aspects of services, can allow the citizen a clearer indication of who is responsible for what. As Sandel argues,

³¹J. Berry, K. Portnoy and K. Thompson (1993), p. 12.

consider the unrealized possibilities implicit in American federalism. We commonly think of federalism as a constitutional doctrine, that once dormant, has recently been revived by conservatives who would shift power from the federal government to the states. But federalism is more than a theory of intergovernmental relations. It also stands for a political vision that offers an alternative to the sovereign state and the univocal political identities such states require. It suggests that self-government works best when sovereignty is dispersed and citizenship formed across multiple sites of civic engagement.³²

Thus in my model, the *number and type of elected local authorities and their service area* are relevant factors in gauging participatory capacity. The GLC phase on this measure represents the institutional configuration with greater participatory capacity, because it represents a system encompassing multiple sites for political engagement. The GLC phase had a two tier hybrid structure (metropolitan and borough authorities), and during this phase the option existed for the creation of a third level of local government in the form of neighborhood councils (see chapter 5). The LCC phase also had a two tier system, though no neighborhood councils. The Quango phase has only a single tier of elected local government thus scoring lowest in participatory capacity on this measure.

D. Primary service strategy

Differences in local authority strategy are also considered important in this model. Each phase of London government was characterized by differences in the roles assigned to each level of government representing ideological changes in leaders concerning the nature of local governance. *Primary service strategy* represents these

³²M. Sandel (1996), p. 347.

designated roles for each level of government.

For example, the LCC was limited in its actions to an oversight role, thus behaving as "regulatory" body. The regulatory role was viewed as one of protection and prevention. As discussed in chapter 4, during the LCC phase the franchise was expanded. Citizen participation was still a relatively new concept, framed within a "representative" model of limited and controlled citizen involvement through elections. The MBCs were viewed as the implementing arm of government, covering a limited range of service areas (see chapter 4). Though MBCs could expand their terrain of service provision, they were very real limits imposed by the metropolitan and national levels of government. In regards to citizen participation this "regulatory" role can be viewed as more likely to hinder the development of social capital.

During the GLC phase the role of the metropolitan level of government was defined as "strategic," while the LBCs were designated to be local service providers (see chapter 5). The GLC was a "strategic authority" involved in a more facilitative relationship with local citizens. The GLC promoted the development of a London wide community identity, and facilitated some degree of social learning; both are key to enhancing citizen participation. The GLC phase emphasized the goal of enhancing political participation. Its ideological underpinnings represented greater attention to the so-called republican traditions mentioned above.

The Quango phase incorporates the notion of LBCs as "enablers" with limited local powers over service provision. The quango phase strategy promoted local authorities as enablers of individual choices in a free market system, more reflective

of the liberal individual ideological framework. The promotion of the individual over the community would seem less likely to foster broad based citizen participation. Quango phase participatory capacity is, on this measure, greater than the LCC phase because it was designed to facilitate participation (though in different terrains than the GLC phase) in the market. LBCs as "enablers" provide citizens economic choices which breeds individual satisfaction.

Individuals are empowered (with the resources of access and information) to claim their rights as consumers; councils become "enabling" bodies responsible for good governance of their communities, but not necessarily providers of all services.³³

Thus on this scale, the GLC scores the highest and the LCC phase the lowest, with the Quango phase falling midway between the two.

E. Central/Local Relations

In a system such as London's, where multiple levels of government (local and national) exist, autonomy in the locality is important in relationship to goals of increased participation. When citizens feel that local government is non-responsive, they are likely to turn their attention to higher levels of government or to the external paths of protest and/or riot. Conversely, the development of closer ties between citizen and government are likely to facilitate higher degrees of citizen participation. When local authorities are given greater autonomy does this in turn enable local authorities to build stronger relationships with local constituents and local groups?

³³D. Hill (1997), p. 62.

What affect does this have on the growth of citizen participation?

Some of these issues are taken up in the current debate on social capital, which explores the relationship nationally between welfare state development and the norms and networks of civic engagement in societies (social capital). Putnam suggests that the development of the modern welfare provision in the United States, characterized by large scale bureaucracy has led to a decline in social capital. "State intervention has subverted civil society."³⁴ Putnam suggests that social capital and the welfare state represent two opposing forces, the growth of one is at the expense of the other.

These same arguments can be raised in relationship to the question of local autonomy and the development of the metropolitan level of government in London. Conservatives today would suggest that the emergence of the LCC and the GLC as large local bureaucracies might in fact result in a decline in local social capital. Large metropolitan governments might lead to a decrease in trust amongst citizens and a decline in networks of civic engagement.

The problem with the Putnam model however, is its failure to explore the dynamic relationship which exists between citizens and government. Putnam's model assumes a dependent relationship, in which citizen participation would likely grow in response to the removal of government involvement in the locality. A decline in participation occurs in response to a growth in central control in the locality.

Putnam however, fails to recognize the important role which government can play in facilitating higher levels of citizen participation particularly in marginalized

³⁴R. Putnam (Winter 1996), p. 8.

communities. The evidence from London would suggest that state intervention can lead to greater citizen participation, and that popular pressure can result in an expansion of government involvement in the locality. As Skocpol rightly points out in her analysis of social capital in the United States; group participation and the welfare state

have historically operated in close symbiosis...federations have both pressured for the creation of public social programs, and worked in partnership with government to administer and expand such programs after they were established.³⁵

What Skocpol is suggesting is that the debate is not one of government versus local community, but rather a recognition that the building of social capital requires an acknowledgement of the symbiotic relationship that exists between citizens and government.

My data would suggest that the building local social capital is not simply a question of greater or lesser central government involvement. Understanding the changes in local social capital over time requires a more nuanced understanding of the relationships which have developed between citizens and government. Greater attention must be paid to issues of power, equity and the level of government in which citizens are participating.

Lack of local autonomy has been the traditional argument raised to explain the historically lower levels of political participation in local elections as compared with national elections (see chapter 2). The same case can be made within the locality. My

³⁵T. Skocpol (March-April 1996), p. 21-22.

data reveals that electoral participation in metropolitan elections increased in relationship to its increase in power. While electoral participation at the borough level decreased when its powers were reduced. Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 (below) illustrate this point.

As described in chapter four, towards the end of this phase the powers of the metropolitan authority increased. The tables below demonstrate that with these increases came a shift in salience between boroughs and metropolitan level elections. By the end of the phase the metropolitan level had consistently higher turnout levels than the borough levels. This trend continued during the GLC phase. Parliamentary elections not surprisingly have always had the highest turnout levels.

Table 6.3

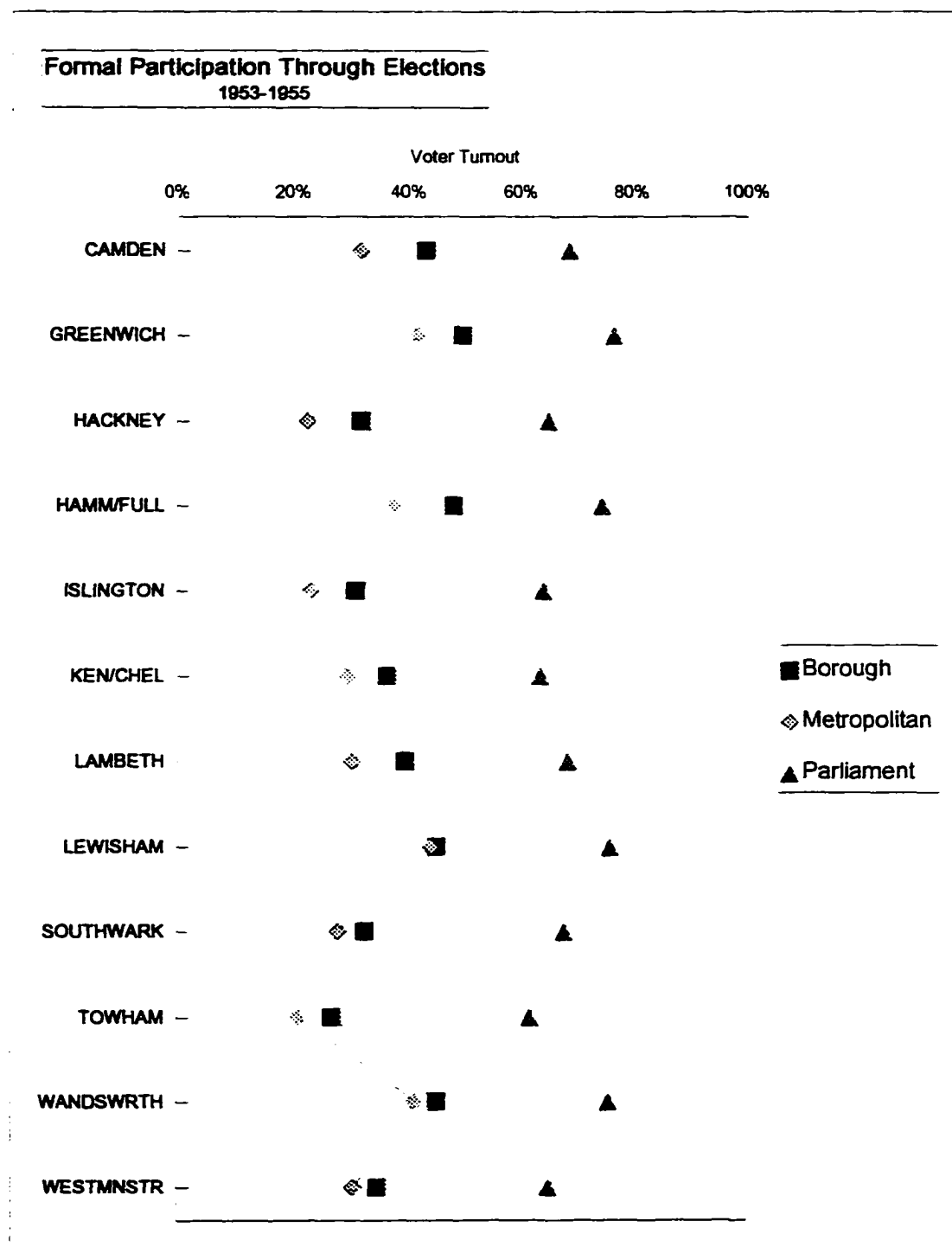


Table 6.4

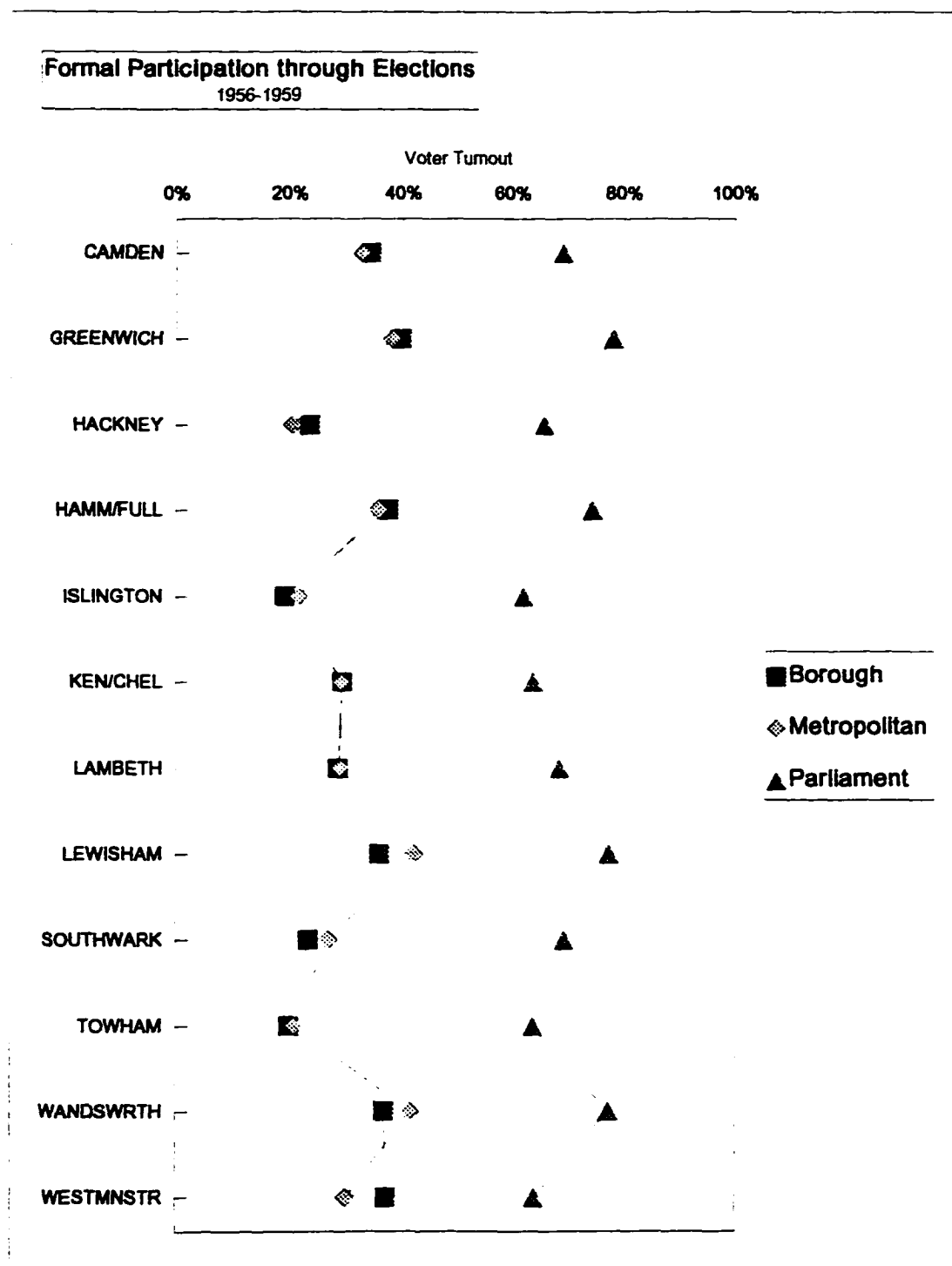
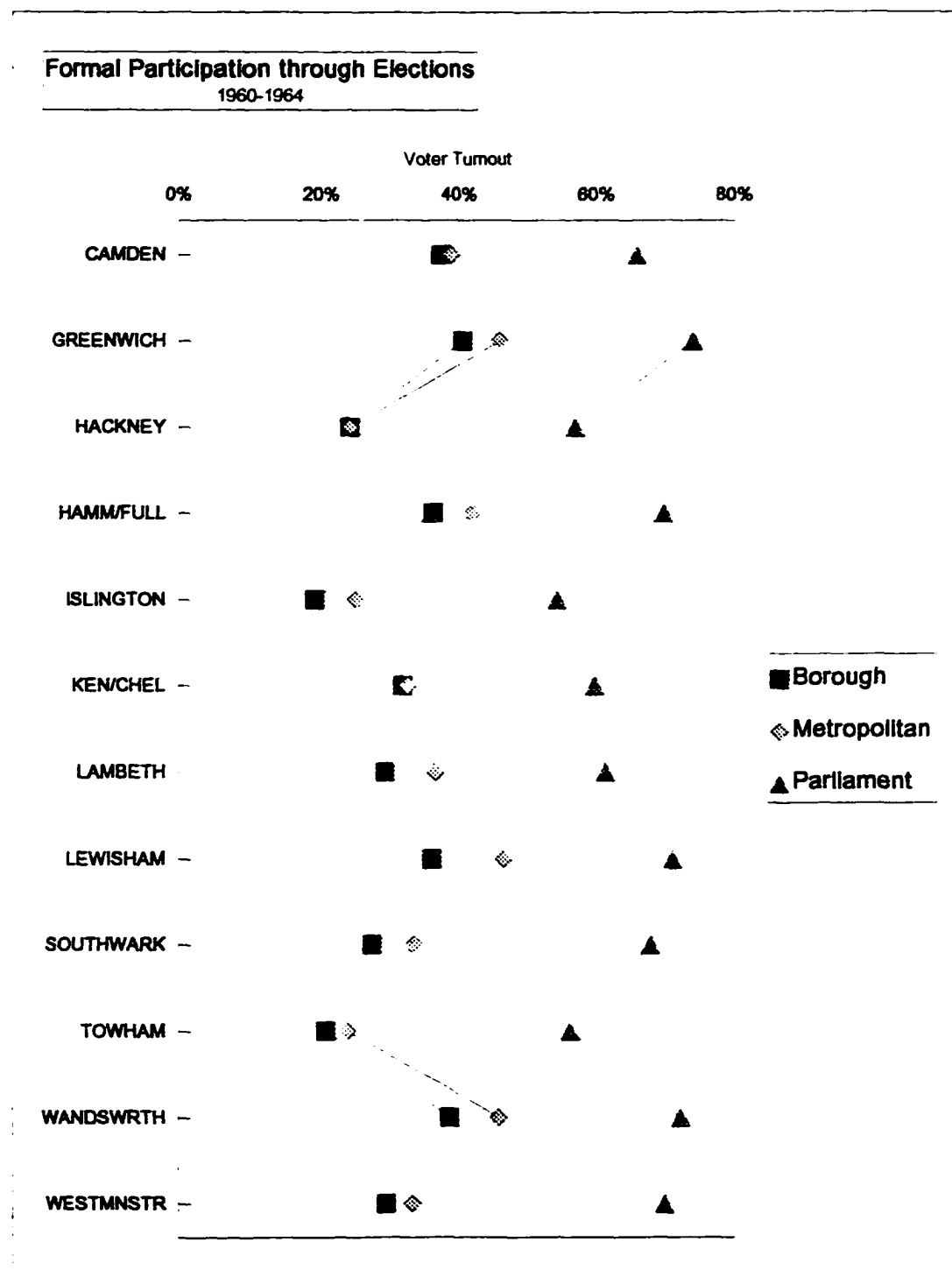


Table 6.5



In London, the metropolitan level of government has historically played a fundamental role in building social capital. However, to facilitate this process, local authorities require both sufficient autonomy to respond to local needs, and actors responsive to those needs. The LCC and Quango phases represent periods of strong central government and weak local authorities. The key difference between these two phases concerns the capacity of the authority to appear salient to local citizens.

The salience of the authority is key because citizens tend to participate in that level of government which they perceive to be responsive to their needs. Salience here represents the degree to which local authorities are able to build relationships with local constituents. Comparatively, local authority capacity was greater during the Quango phase. For example, local authorities though centrally mandated to contract out services to private providers are given some latitude over the determination of which providers are selected.

A clearer measure of local autonomy can be found through analysis of local authority expenditure. During the GLC phase, on average 38% of all local authority expenditure was determined by the local authority itself. In areas such as land use planning, local authority decisions were subject to local consultation (chapter 5). Decision concerning social service provision were reached in consultation with local community organizations. Thus, greater local authority autonomy was coupled with mechanisms for greater citizen involvement. In contrast, by 1992 only 15% of expenditure was locally determined. Citizen involvement in the Quango phase was

channeled through mechanisms for "consumer protection."³⁶ For example, the majority of legislation of the late 1980s and early 1990s mandated that local authorities needed to publish service standards, and citizens had the right to comment on those standards to their local authority or to an independent auditor (after the fact). During the LCC phase, while there was some discretion in the locality, most local authorities' finance came from the central government in the form of block grants with defined uses. The degree of salience of a local authority can be facilitated by autonomy, but again autonomy represents one aspect of participatory capacity only.

F. Participatory Mechanisms

Facilitating participation through formal governing institutions requires the development of mechanisms through which citizens can participate in decision making. The LCC phase afforded citizen only the right to vote. The GLC phase in contrast offered a wider and developing array of participatory mechanisms such as public hearings, consultation, and cooptation. During the GLC phase local authorities also utilized mechanisms such as opinion polls and surveys of citizen attitudes in formulating policy. The Quango phase had fewer policy arenas open to community participation. In certain areas such as education and council housing users had the right to opt out of local authority management in favor of community control. Thus the Quango phase, while having fewer mechanisms than the GLC phase, still had more than the LCC phase. During the Quango phase policy makers utilized public

³⁶D. Hill (1994), p. 221.

hearings, consultation, and cooptation, but within a much narrower range of policy areas.

The development of mechanisms for participation were the outcome of historical developments and ideological shifts. As discussed in chapters four and five, limitations to participation during the LCC phase must be interpreted within a historic context, and a "representative" perspective. The utilization of participatory mechanisms during the GLC phase occurred within the context of demographic, ideological and political transitions. The Quango phase represents both structural and ideological shifts, from mechanisms for political participation to mechanisms for economic participation.

G. Access to Information

The free flow of information is a prerequisite to participatory democracy. In order to participate effectively, citizens must be provided with adequate information. Information in advance of a decision allows citizens to effectively formulate opinions. This in turn allows participation in the decision making process, rather than simply responding to decisions formulated in spheres apart from themselves. As Berry et. al. comment,

the ability and commitment to get information into the hands of all citizens in the community on a regular basis is one of the strongest characteristics of the participation system...³⁷

³⁷J. Berry, K. Portnoy and K. Thompson (1993), p. 61.

Citizen access to information was greatest during the GLC phase. A wider range of information was available, and a broader segment of local authority business was made public. For example, the Local Government Act of 1972 mandated that council, committee and subcommittee meetings be open to the public. The Access to Information Act of 1985 allowed public inspection of background documents to these meetings. The Education Act of 1980 allowed parents to become involved in education curriculum decisions. In addition, the GLC engaged in extensive publicity before, during and after major local government initiatives. As Hill points out, local authority public relations exercises increased significantly during the GLC phase.³⁸

During the LCC phase there was limited public access to government. The minutes of LCC committee meetings were not open to the public, while the minutes of the LCC council meetings were.³⁹ The problem with this arrangement was clear, as both the Herbert Commission and the Maud Commissions later found, most decisions were actually reached in committee not in council. The Quango phase included public rights to access, but only in limited form. As Hill points out:

The provisions for consultation and participation were considerably reduced.

³⁸D. Hill (1994), p. 57.

³⁹In 1939 legislation was passed requiring public access to the minutes of LCC Council meetings. However in 1960 an action was brought by a local government elector against an officer of the LCC when that elector was refused access to committee minutes. Initially the courts decided in favor of the elector. Their decision was based on the idea that because Committees were delegates of the Council, and Council minutes were open to the public, then so to were the committee minutes. The LCC however, appealed this decision, and the High Court overturned the decision, arguing that the minutes of a committee were not the same as the minutes of the LCC and were thus not subject to the same degree of public scrutiny as LCC minutes were.

For example the Local Government Act of 1988, prohibited publication of any material designed to effect public support for a political authority.⁴⁰

As local authorities are highly political, this limitation was significant. In addition, the movement of services to quasi non-governmental organizations which were not governed by the same access rules as elected authorities, allowed quangos to limit the information they distributed to citizens. Thus, in the Quango phase certain aspects of local authority activity were closed to public view.

H. Dominant Values

As chapters four and five illustrated, each phase of London governance was characterized by a range of dominant values. There was very limited discussion of the need to enhance political participation during the LCC phase, despite the low levels of voter turnout and the virtually non-existent role of the ordinary citizen in policy making processes. Participation in local governance was looked upon in terms of its impact on efficiency and cost effective local government. Thus participation was seen through the lens of the dominant local governance values. Participation was viewed as a mechanism to select qualified local representatives, along the lines of what C.B.

Macpherson later referred to as an "entrepreneurial market" model:

The main stipulations of this model are, first, that democracy is simply a mechanism for choosing and authorizing governments, not a kind of society, nor a set of moral ends....the voters' role is not to decide political issues...it is

⁴⁰D. Hill (1997), p. 57.

to choose men who will do the deciding.⁴¹

More than anything else, popular participation was viewed as something of an inconvenience as compared to efficient local governance. Too much local participation was perceived as a distraction to local councilors and officers, interfering with efficient service provision. Much of this attitude, of course related to the relative newness of the expanded franchise. Policy makers lacked confidence in the capacity of the newly enfranchised to take an effective role in urban governance processes.

Efficiency has been a dominant value throughout the history of London governance. Only the GLC phase emphasized political participation as both a goal and a value (also see chapter 5).⁴² The Quango phase was dominated by values that stressed economic participation and down-played political participation.

From a participatory democratic framework the importance of widely shared political power is key. A participatory society is one in which citizens have the opportunity to participate in political, economic, and social decisions. Thus by comparisons the values of the GLC phase were more supportive of participatory capacity, those of the LCC phase the least supportive.

⁴¹C. B. Macpherson (1977), The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), p. 78.

⁴²see for example the Ministry for Housing and Local Government (1969), People and Planning (London, UK: HMSO); Seebohm Committee (1968), Report of the Committee on Local Authority Personal Social Services (London, UK: HMSO); and the Department of Environment (1972), Local Government Act, Circular 121/72 (London, UK: HMSO).

1. Participatory Capacity

Table 6.6 is a summary scale developed for measuring the participatory capacity based on the institutional configuration of each phase of London government. Broadly, a higher degree of institutional participatory capacity is related both to a greater popular access and higher levels of shared power between citizens and local governments. Clearly, at no point, has local governance in London represented a total sharing of power. However within these three phases, the GLC period represented maximum capacity, as compared with minimal capacity in the LCC phase, and moderate capacity during the quango phase.⁴³

⁴³The scale is based purely upon comparisons between institutions within the periods under study. Thus the assignment of minimum as compared to maximum is not based upon an "ideal" type model, whereby these represent total citizen control versus no control at all. Rather, these labels represent the comparative realities within the periods under study.

Table 6.6 Summary Scale of Participatory Capacity By Phase

	<u>LCC Phase</u>	<u>GLC Phase</u>	<u>Quango Phase</u>
Size/Territory	1	3	2
Size/Population	1	2	3
Use of Non-Elected decision making bodies	2	1	3
# of Elected Auth.	2	1	3
Service Strategy	3	1	2
Central/Local	3	1	2
Participatory Mechs	3	1	2
Info. Access	3	1	2
Publicity	3	1	2
Values	3	1	2
Totals	<u>24</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>23</u>

Scale used by factor 1 = most participatory/3 = least participatory. Overall participatory capacity scale: 12-18 = maximum 18-24 = moderate 24-30 = minimum

What is important in this analysis is the overall institutional configuration rather than single factors. Thus despite the fact that in some cases like size the GLC phase scored lower than the other phases, in the overall picture the GLC phase represented one in which the institutional configuration was comparatively most supportive of citizen participation. I now turn to a consideration of whether the institutions did or did not affect patterns of participation.

The data in sections 6.2 explores the relationship between institutional

configuration and group participation. In section 6.3 participation in policy formulation is examined. Finally, section 6.4 explores the relationship between institutional configuration and individual political participation through analysis of electoral registration, local voter turnout and party membership.

Capturing the impacts of institutions is difficult, particularly in light of the significant institutional changes occurring in London during the period under study. As the preceding section indicated, the democratic institutional configuration includes a range of components. Identifying causation of single institutional variables is not the goal of this study because these factors are considered to be dynamically related to each other. It is not therefore, the individual characteristics but rather the combined impact of these characteristics which is relevant to this study.

6.2. Group Participation

The vitality of associationalism in a community has long been regarded as one measure of the health of a democratic society. De Toqueville, writing in the 1800s saw the propensity to join together voluntarily in order to resolve common problems as one of the strengths of the American democratic system. More recently Putnam argued that,

civil associations contribute to the effectiveness and stability of democratic government...both because of their internal effects on individual members and because of their external effects on the wider polity. Internally associations instil in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity and public spiritedness...Externally, interest articulation and interest aggregation are

enhanced by a dense network of secondary associations.⁴⁴

While Putnam was referring specifically to civic as opposed to political associations, the lessons concerning the impact of association on group members are also relevant for community based political organizations. As Gittell comments:

Participation in organizations provides a training ground in citizenship for individuals who participate; it is also the only means for some segments of the population to gain access to the political system.⁴⁵

In contemporary democratic societies therefore, the vitality of associational life becomes an important measure of the health of local democratic processes.

Participation and association are...[a] means of developing new leadership, involving larger segments of the population in the creation of public policy, and thus encouraging the development of more responsive policies....Individual participation cannot provide these advantages.⁴⁶

In this study it was hypothesized that institutional changes which enhance participatory capacity should result in higher levels of group participation, and changes in the types of groups participating. Studies of local participation in Britain nationally have found that, during the 1990s

around two thirds of the adult British population belong to at least one group, aside from trade unions. While half either are or have been members of a union or staff association...Group ties provide a major boost to participation, their absence is an important expression of inactivity.⁴⁷

⁴⁴R. Putnam (1993), p. 67.

⁴⁵M. Gittell (1980), Limits to Citizen Participation: The Decline of Community Organizations, (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications), p. 246.

⁴⁶Gittell (1980), p. 21.

⁴⁷G. Parry, G. Moyser and N. Day (1992), Political Participation and Democracy in Britain (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), pp. 85, 98.

The interest group environment in London has shown some of the most distinct changes across the three phases of governance studied.⁴⁸ During the LCC phase interest groups existed quietly on the periphery of the local government system, so much so that foreign observers described the London political scene as virtually devoid of active interest groups.⁴⁹ Today, analysts of the London scene assert that local organizations have become a "shadow state," not perched on the periphery or as supportive adjuncts to local authorities, but engaged directly in the governance of London localities.⁵⁰ What has occurred over time is both a growth in the number of groups and a diversification of the group structure as a whole.⁵¹ According to Smith,

it is now argued that we are entering an era of anti-politics in which the pressure groups are the dominant mode of political..expression.⁵²

A. The Changing Balance of Power in Group Participation

⁴⁸While the above reference refers to citizen membership in groups generally, including civic associations, my research focuses more specifically on more overtly political associations, broadly encapsulated in the term "pressure group." Distinctions between political groups are discussed below.

⁴⁹see S. Elkin (1974), Politics and Land Use Planning (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).

⁵⁰See J. Wolch (1990), The Shadow State: Government and the Voluntary Sector in Transition (New York, NY: The Foundation Center).

⁵¹As mentioned above, my focus is upon political groups specifically. I utilize the generic term "group" to refer to these political groups. In references to non-political associations I will utilize the term "civic associations."

⁵²Martin Smith (1995), Pressure Politics, (Manchester, UK: Baseline Books), p. 1.

Groups take a range of forms in the locality. In this study I utilize the fourfold group classification developed by Stoker and Wilson in their research of local pressure groups in Britain.⁵³ They identify the following categories of local pressure groups: economic, community, cause and voluntary sector groups. *Economic groups* are associations which form to protect and promote, often through political routes, the economic and professional interests of their membership. These groups include trade unions, professional and business associations. *Community groups* are social and territorial associations organized around the material needs of their defined communities of interest. These groups will utilize political methods to achieve changes in those local public policies which impact upon their membership. *Cause groups* are activist organizations promoting the political ideas and beliefs of its membership. Cause groups unlike community groups seek changes of a more general benefit, not confined exclusively to their members. And finally, *voluntary groups* are groups established to provide a specific service to meet a defined need within a community. Voluntary groups are service providers, who are at times drawn into political action related specifically to their service area.

In London the balance of power within the group environment has changed

⁵³G. Stoker & D. Wilson (Summer 1991), "The Lost World of British Local Pressure Groups," *Public Policy and Administration*, Vol. 6, 2, p. 22. The discourse on British pressure groups is relatively new, and as yet there is little agreement as to how to categorize groups. Reference is made throughout the literature to "pressure groups", "voluntary groups" and "community organizations." In most cases these terms are utilized to encompass the entire range of politically active local associations. I found Stoker and Wilson's classification to be the best descriptive vehicle because it encompassed the nuances within the group environment that are often lumped together in the literature.

over time. These changes can be understood in the context of changes in the institutional environment of London local governance. As Gittell comments in her study of community organizations in the United States:

The variety of organizations, particularly at the local level, and the patterns and types of prevalent organizations should suggest some notions about cause-and-effect relationships, i.e. why certain environments stimulate particular kinds of [group participation].⁵⁴

During the LCC phase the dominant groups tended to be voluntary and economic groups. However, voluntary groups operated outside the formal political terrain, while economic groups operated within. As Kendall and Knapp point out, when the LCC was formed during the late 19th century voluntary groups acted

as a bulwark against poverty in areas considered inappropriate for state involvement...combining direct provision of resources with its quintessential advocacy role...The state through workhouses provided for the undeserving poor, voluntary associations to the deserving poor.⁵⁵

During the early years this philanthropic component of group activity thrived.

According to one study the total income of London based charities exceeded the entire income of many nation states.⁵⁶

The groups with more direct links to formal local governing institutions were economic groups, specifically trade unions and professional associations. Trade unions at the time were intimately tied to the Labor party. Until 1910 Labor party

⁵⁴Gittell (1980), p.26.

⁵⁵J. Kendall and M. Knapp (1993), Defining the Nonprofit Sector: The United Kingdom, Working Papers of the John Hopkins Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project, No. 5 (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies), p. 3.

⁵⁶D. Owen, English Philanthropy: 1660-1960, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), p. 40.

membership was exclusively through trade union membership. The Labor party itself was created by trade unions to exert direct political influence. Other more traditional economic groups were given formal access to decision making through consultation and co-optation based on their expertise.

During the post war period relationships between the local state, voluntary and economic groups changed. Local authorities gave grant funding to voluntary organizations to provide services in the fields of health care, education and welfare.⁵⁷ The transition in voluntary sector/local government relations related to two trends. First, economic decline and war heightened community needs. The voluntary sector lacked adequate resources to respond. As Kendall and Knapp comment,

To rely solely on the voluntary sector [as a welfare provider] appeared increasingly unwise, since the money it could generate seemed to fall far short of the nation's requirements for a healthy and well-educated population.⁵⁸

During the depression voluntary organizations became service providers, in a limited range of areas, for local authorities. According to Deakin,

the voluntary sector has held a unique relationship to local government in London throughout its history. In the 1930s, for example, when Lord Morrison was leader of the LCC, he presided over a number of successful examples of statutory-voluntary collaboration, notably the much admired school care committees...⁵⁹

⁵⁷Kendall & Knapp (1993), p. 13.

⁵⁸Kendall and Knapp, p. 47.

⁵⁹Nicholas Deakin (1995), "The Perils of Partnership: The Voluntary Sector and the State, 1945-1992" in Justin Davis Smith, Colin Rochester and Rodney Hedley (eds.), An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector (London, UK: Routledge), p. 43.

The voluntary sector increasingly allied itself with local authorities and was subsidized by them.⁶⁰

During this same period some economic groups were brought into corporate style decision making arrangements with government. Government turned towards professional associations for expert advice, though segregating out trade unions.

Unions were alive and well, but..it was felt they had become embroiled in party politics and could no longer be seen as voluntary associations, nor provide the basis for the delivery of state welfare through mutual aid.⁶¹

Thus during the LCC phase, groups which had operated on the periphery were slowly incorporated into formal governing processes.

The dominance of values stressing economy and efficiency help to explain why only certain types of groups participated in the formal institutional terrain. As Smith points out,

traditionally, politics has been dominated by economic groups....These groups had either direct economic power or information that the government needed and so were given direct access to the policy process.⁶²

Thus access to decision making by these groups was determined by the needs for expert advice by local government authorities.

Overall group participation in politics during this phase was comparatively small. For example, in the London borough of Southwark between 1945 and 1964, with the exception of the Communist Party, and the few short lived and

⁶⁰P. Thane (1982), The Foundations of the Welfare State (Harlow, UK: Longman), p. 171.

⁶¹Kendall & Knapp (1996), p. 53.

⁶²M. J. Smith (1995), Pressure Politics (Manchester, UK: Baseline Books), p. 3.

unstable tenants' associations organized in private tenements, there were no other community organizations, tenant organizations, amenity groups or pressure groups outside the Labor party. The wide range of interest and pressure groups that we have become accustomed to in recent years did not exist during this period.⁶³

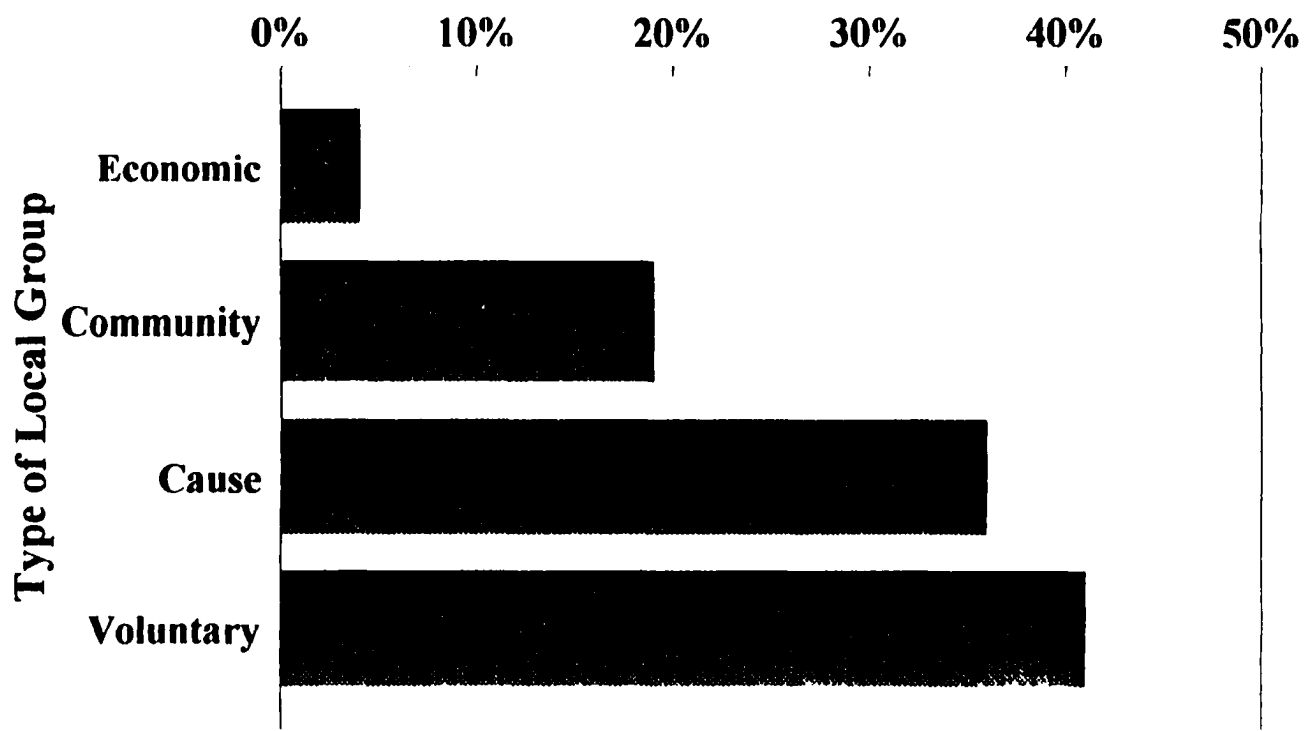
According to researchers the proliferation of group participants in the locality did not begin in earnest until the GLC phase.⁶⁴

The GLC phase was a period of both group diversification and activity. In addition to voluntary and economic groups, this phase saw the rise of cause and community groups. Table 6.7 below provides a broad description of the distribution of local groups which characterized the GLC phase. Drawing upon a listing of over 500 organizations registered in the Greater London area (1987), I formulated a distribution using Stoker's four group types (economic, community, cause and voluntary). I included only those groups which had been founded during the GLC phase. While the list is not comprehensive it does provide a broad picture of the group environment.

⁶³S. Goss (1981), Local Labour and Local Government: A Study of the Changing Interests, Politics and Policy in Southwark from 1919 to 1982, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), p. 41.

⁶⁴S. Beer (1982), Britain Against Itself (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company), p. 35.

Distribution of GLC Phase Organizations



During the GLC phase Britain's community power struggle came into full force. As Gyford comments,

local government itself had been built up around a structure of professionally oriented departments which purported to offer...professional solutions to..problems. Increasingly, the professional claims...began to be called into question by a skeptical public informed by a combination of more widespread educational opportunity, investigative journalism in the media and-sometimes the most crucial-their own lay experience of professional solutions.⁶⁵

Demographic changes in wealth and education lead to the growth of a more educated middle class population. Minority population growth in Inner London produced a growing urban-suburban polarization along racial lines. Internally the phase was characterized by a growing expansion of participatory opportunities to groups through consultation and co-optation in local authorities. Externally, more active participation received a boost by the experiences of the civil rights movement in the US and the student movements in the US and France.

What occurred in London was the expansion of opportunities, the emergence of a more politically active community, and the development of a new group of leaders. The combined effect was the growth of a more vibrant and active form of group participation. The existence of opportunities provided the initial motivation behind group formation in many local authorities, however it was the failure of these participatory opportunities to offer communities real political power which sparked group development.

⁶⁵J. Gyford (June 1986), "Diversity, Sectionalism and Local Democracy" in The Committee of Inquiry Into The Conduct of Local Authority Business, The Conduct of Local Authority Business, Research Vol. IV, Cmnd. 9801, p. 108.

As citizens became more knowledgeable about local politics and more educated, they began to participate more through groups. The notion, espoused by researchers like Almond and Verba in the early 1960s, that British political culture was based on deferent behavior was challenged in the 1970s. According to central government, "participation...had become a significant social characteristics of...British Society."⁶⁶ During this period marginalized communities in London began to organize and take action.⁶⁷

The 1960s was the critical "awakening" for black political self organization. Not only had the myth of "returning back home" begun to dissipate...the nature and focus of black self-organization [began to change]....there was a proliferation of black organizations that operated on the politics of resistance and protest.⁶⁸

The black community in Britain's central cities began to organize and place pressure on the system.

The combination of local and national environmental pressures during the GLC phase initially led national government to adopt positions more favorable to local democratic reforms, as a means of creating stability within an increasingly unstable environment. The opening of access to formal decision making processes, enabled new sets of local actors to gain power.

Participation...may have been seen as a means of channelling some of the

⁶⁶Central Statistics Office (1976), Social Trends, (London,UK: HMSO), p. 195.

⁶⁷See section B (below) for a fuller discussion of political participation in London's black communities.

⁶⁸T. Sewell (1993), pp. 40-41.

conflict and unfavorable opinion along more manageable lines.⁶⁹

During the GLC phase attempts were also made to make local government more accessible. This was particularly evident in the case of planning and housing, where popular participation became a required component of local authority planning. Concomitantly one finds the growth of tenant groups, community action groups, amenity groups, and a range of voluntary associations which had not existed during the LCC phase.

Groups in the locality became more involved in political struggles, particularly those between central and local government. What is interesting about this period is that access was based upon the degree to which a group supported the broad goals of the authority itself. The group environment was increasingly politicized. Local authorities began to,

use of the voluntary sector as a strategic weapon in the political struggle between central and local government..which partly explains local authority grant making to the sector during the [early] 1980s; [though] the familiar rational of cost effectiveness, flexibility and innovativeness, choice and specialization..also motivated the [local] tier of government.⁷⁰

The political manipulation of group participation was most evident in local authority co-optation practices. Fifty five percent of all GLC committees included group cooptees, the majority of whom had voting rights. Councils (metropolitan and

⁶⁹A. R. Long (1975), "Participation and Community" in D. Diamond, J. B. McLoughlin (eds.) Progress in Planning, Vol. 5, Pt. 2 (New York: Pergamon Press), p. 79 .

⁷⁰Kendall & Knapp (1993), p. 15.

borough) offered access to those groups, which were considered to be "the helpful group." In London, Labor controlled authorities were more likely to co-opt community and cause groups, while Conservative authorities co-opted economic and voluntary groups.⁷¹

In working-class Labor inner London, [locally based] organizations were seen by new leaders as important mobilization mechanisms, in some ways replacing Labor party or trade union branches in raising issues and gathering support for council policies.⁷²

According to a study by Jacobs, minority groups for the most part shared a commitment to the policies of Labor. Access for these groups was made easier in the 1970s when Labor gained control of the metropolitan authority.⁷³

The limitations in decision-making access provided to groups during the GLC phase were most fully explored by Dearlove in his study of Kensington and Chelsea. He suggests that groups gain access to decision making by adopting what he terms "acceptable demands" and "acceptable communication styles."⁷⁴ Dearlove never labels these limitations as party political, however I believe that party clearly played a

⁷¹S. Leach, C. Game, J. Gyford and A. Midwinter, "the Political Organization of Local Authorities" in The Committee of Inquiry Into the Conduct of Local Authority Business, The Conduct of Local Authority Business. Research Vol. 1: The Political Organization of Local Authorities, Cmnd. 9798 (London: HMSO), pp. 35-40.

⁷²A. Glassberg (1981), Representation and Urban Community (London, UK: Macmillan), p. 76.

⁷³B. Jacobs (1986), Black Politics and Urban Crisis (London, UK: Cambridge University Press), p. 77.

⁷⁴J. Dearlove (1973), The Politics of Policy in Local Government: The Making and Maintenance of Public Policy in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (London, UK: Cambridge University Press), p. 169.

moderating role for group access. The evidence drawn concerning group participation during this phase strongly suggests that while channels were developed, political ideology was a dominant factor in determining who gained access through these channels.

In the course of my research it became clear that my original hypothesis which stressed the importance of structure in shaping patterns of group political participation required rethinking. Structure alone could not explain shifts in the patterns of access to groups. Structure created the possibility for access, but the ideology of the actors working within those structures played a key role determining which groups gained that access. Further, ideological divisions were not simply party based but generational -- "new" versus "old" Labor for example.

In Glassburg's comparative case study of three London boroughs during the GLC phase, he found that each borough displayed different degrees of responsiveness to voluntary sector organizations. "New" and "old" Labor authorities had very different attitudes to group participation which influenced their policies of access to decision-making.

The new Islington leadership saw itself as going beyond simply reacting to groups which spontaneously arose, but actively sought to encourage more of them to develop. In contrast...in Tower Hamlets, these groups were legitimated ...by funding them with local government money and involving them in the hierarchy of the council.⁷⁵

The "new" Labor attitude was amenable to formal participation in decision making by voluntary groups. "Old" Labor authorities were suspicious of voluntary sector groups

⁷⁵A. Glassburg (1981), p. 72.

and used funding as a means of incorporation, while "new" Labor authorities promoted partnerships with these groups. The increase in group participation during the GLC phase, may have had more to do with partisan shifts in control to "new" Labor. As Wilson and Game point out, GLC grants to voluntary bodies increased from £427,000 in 1965-1966 to £82 million in 1985-1986.⁷⁶

The increased involvement of voluntary bodies in service provision at the local level is a characteristic of both left and right local authorities. The precise mix of groups involved in service delivery at any one time partly reflects prevailing norms within individual local authorities as well as differing local needs; it also partly reflects the increased assertiveness of many local pressure groups.⁷⁷

Structure is still relevant to understanding patterns of group participation, however its effects appear to be moderated by ideology. Research on other two-tier metropolitan authorities in England during the GLC phase also reported a growth in group participation. In Birmingham for example, Newton identified over 4,000 voluntary associations in 1976.⁷⁸ Stoker points out that during the same period group activity in single tier authorities became less pronounced.⁷⁹ While not conclusive, these contrasts do suggest that structure remains a factor in understanding aspects of group participation. However structure must be explored in conjunction with

⁷⁶D. Wilson and C. Game (1994), Local Government in the United Kingdom, (London, UK: MacMillan), p. 283.

⁷⁷ibid.

⁷⁸K. Newton (1976), Second City Politics, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press).

⁷⁹G. Stoker (1991), The Politics of Local Government, (London, UK: MacMillan).

ideology. The Birmingham case also reiterates the importance of ideology. Over time in Birmingham, in conjunction with changes in local leadership, the composition of groups gaining access to decision making also changed. In 1976, Newton found that minority groups tended to be denied access, while a study by Ben-Tovim in 1986 found ethnic minority groups to be key participants.⁸⁰

B. The Case of Group Participation in the London Borough of Ealing: Ethnic Minorities, Politics and the LBC

Ealing provides a useful case study of the changing nature of group participation in marginalized communities between the LCC and GLC phases. In the final years of the LCC phase the minority population in the borough trebled,⁸¹ and ethnic conflicts began to brew. The local authority responded to public pressure by bringing local ethnic voluntary organizations into formal governing processes. Small grants were provided to these organizations in return for their support of local authority policies.

In 1963 the LBC promoted the creation of the Ealing International Friends Society (EIFS). EIFS was a broad umbrella group representing the interests of the ethnic minority community of Ealing. During the LCC phase, the LBC approach was to devolve responsibility on issues of race to the EIFS. The EIFS was considered, by

⁸⁰G. Ben-Tovim et. al. (1986), The Local Politics of Race (London, UK: MacMillan).

⁸¹David Woolcott (1965), "Southall," in N. Deakin (ed), Colour and the British Electorate (London: Frederick Praeger), p. 32.

the LBC, to be a "helpful group" because it was non-confrontational. The borough created a committee to deal with immigrant issues, along with a liaison officer who worked directly with the EIFS.

The access provided to the minority community generated counter pressures from the traditional white community who formed the Beaconsfield Road School Parents Association and the Southall Residents Association (SRA).⁸² These groups were formed to oppose what they viewed as the special status of the minority community in the borough. During the LCC phase both organizations had been non-confrontational and worked through formal council channels.

During the GLC phase this all changed, rather than working alongside the LBC some groups became direct participants within the LBC. The SRA began to include LBC councilors as members. With these links, groups like the SRA quickly gained direct access to the local authority decision makers. In 1965 two LBC councilors separated from local political parties and won council seats as SRA representatives. The white groups became overtly political organizations working directly with the majority on the council.

The ethnic groups began to find the channels of access to decision making blocked, and in response began to take conflictual and confrontational stances to local authorities. The closure of access to minority groups sparked the growth of a whole new range of community and cause groups in Ealing. The minority communities

⁸²Though the names of these organizations reflect community concerns, the goals of these organizations were very much about issues of race. These were cause groups above all else.

reaction to the inclusion of the SRA on the council was to begin organizing actions at the grass roots level in the community to bolster their power base. The LBC responded by cutting funds to the EIFS. As one Ealing councillor commented in 1970,

if they continue to play politics, I will move that they have no grant next year.⁸³

According to Saggar, the LBC's unwillingness to support an active and campaigning ethnic community played a large part in radicalizing ethnic politics.⁸⁴

The point that I am illustrating here is that, during the GLC phase, though initially the LBC provided both financial support and access which helped facilitate the early growth of community organizations, it was in fact the failure of the routes to be truly meaningful which led to the explosion of local ethnic groups in Ealing, as in other London boroughs.⁸⁵

During the early 1970s local religious and community organizations began to assume political roles in the boroughs, protesting LBC policies in a range of areas. During the late 1970s an ethnic youth movement became active. During the 1980s, following the riots in 1979 and 1980, the LBC itself became involved in funding local self-help and community organizations.

The case of Ealing illustrates the growth of GLC phase group participation.

⁸³Minutes of Council Meeting, January 20, 1970, cited in Shamit Saggar's, Race and Public Policy, (Aldershot, U.K.: Avebury) p. 55.

⁸⁴S. Saggar (1991), p. 62.

⁸⁵see S. Goss (1988).

However as Saggar comments:

The race policy environment expanded to accommodate the voices, if not always the interests, of many more ethnic minority groups...However, the opening of channels of participation...did not necessarily mean outcomes.⁸⁶

Thus the GLC phase was a period of expansion in both the number and diversity of group participants. While growth was facilitated by the enhanced participatory capacity of local governing institutions, it was community dissatisfaction with these mechanisms which spurred the most dramatic growth in group participation.

C. The Quango Phase: Partnerships and Economic Exclusion

The Quango phase, contrary to expected outcomes, did not evidence a decline in group participation. However, patterns of group participation show evidence of a change in the ways in which groups interact with decision makers, and a narrowing in the scope within which groups are provided access.

While the GLC phase represented a period of confrontation between groups and local authorities, the Quango phase reflects attempts to build consensus between *some* groups and local authorities, and deny access for other groups. The basis for consensus was defined in economic rather than political terms, which by some accounts resulted in exclusion for groups representing poor and minority interests.

What is interesting about this phase is that two opposing forces have led to increased group activity. The closure of access has led to the further growth of community and cause groups, and the opening of select access has led to the growth

⁸⁶S. Saggar (1991), p. 55.

of economic and voluntary groups.

Broadly the following features of the quango phase proved relevant to this growth. Administrative decentralization over services such as housing made access for local tenant groups easier.⁸⁷ Privatization and contracting-out have attracted greater local involvement by voluntary groups, private interests and economic groups as potential service providers services. As contractors these groups have greater access to local decision makers. According to Stoker and Wilson, competitive tendering increased the degree of economic group/local authority interaction, which they suggest, will allow business groups growing influence over local decision making. In education, government policies which allowed schools and council tenants to opt out of local authority control have led to an increase in grass roots organizing by parent and tenant associations. The greater reliance on Quangos has also led to the growth of local cause groups protesting a loss of access to local decision making. As Hill points out,

Where no channels exist through which groups feel that they can make their views known, conflict and confrontation may be the preferred forms of participation.⁸⁸

Many of the institutional reforms associated with the Quango phase, while leading to an overall increase in group participation, also led to a decline in access for certain groups. For example in housing and education, groups formed to promote or

⁸⁷Rob Baggott (1995), Pressure Groups Today (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press), p. 196.

⁸⁸Hill (1994), p. 51.

oppose "opting out" of local authority control. However if supporters achieved separation from the local authority they lost access to local authority decision makers, as the local authority itself was removed from the decision making process. According to Kendall and Knapp,

Central government continued to justify support for the [voluntary] sector - most prominently via funding channeled through Quangos...and legislation to encourage contracting out...with the [voluntary] sector arguably being used as a tool for centralizing power by-passing local democratic control [via local authorities].⁸⁹

As Hill points out, in partnerships between local government, the voluntary sector and not-for-profits,

cooperation has costs as well as benefits, and can lead to incorporation, with its problems of loss of an independent critical role and potential distancing from supporters. The result may be a lack of trust and even the alienation of a group from its members, especially with local black groups and in conditions of financial stringency.⁹⁰

The key buzzword of the Quango phase for group participation was "partnerships." As in the United States, both at the central and local levels government has focused a great deal of energy on the idea of building greater local capacity by creating public-private partnerships. For local authorities the decline in power and resources during this phase, and the decreasing central investment in localities led local authorities to pursue partnerships with local economic and voluntary groups. As Bailey comments,

The dramatic shift of power to Whitehall meant that local authorities looked

⁸⁹Kendall and Knapp (1993), p. 15.

⁹⁰D. Hill (1994), p. 51.

for new institutional arrangements at the local level in order to maximize both their influence and the leverage by which limited funds, or resources such as land, could be used to maximize advantage.⁹¹

Partnerships, though experimented with in prior years, became a key aspect of the Quango phase. What distinguished Quango phase partnerships, was the required inclusion of private sector interests.

The focus on private sector interests had also been reflected in shifts in local consultation processes. For example, the Local Government and Housing Act of 1989, mandated that in formulating local economic development policy, local authorities must consult local commercial and industrial bodies.

In order to explore the nature of group participation during the Quango phase, the most fruitful direction appeared to be a consideration of the balance of power of groups within London based partnerships. Table 6.8 below provides data on the composition of group participants in twelve partnerships across London.

⁹¹N. Bailey with A. Barker and K. MacDonald (1995), Partnership Agencies in British Urban Policy (London, UK: UCL Press), p. 8.

Table 6.8 Composition of Group Participants in Twelve Quango Phase Partnerships				Group Participants on Management Boards					
	Location	Year Founded	Primary Activity	LBCs	Central Hospitals	Voluntary	Economic	Community	
Park Royal Partnership	Outer London	1991	Business retention Economic Development	3	2	3	0	7	0
Hounslow Initiative	Outer London	1993	Attract Business Property Development	3	1	0	0	13	0
Community Links	Outer London	1977	Children at Risk, Care Domestic Violence	0	0	0	0	0	14
Southwark Challenge	Inner London	1990	Economic Development Community Development	5	2	0	2	6	3
Waltham Forest Housing Action	Outer London	1990	Housing & Business Development Training & Employment Advice	1	1	0	0	5	4
Action For Change	Inner London	1993	Economic Development Vocational Training	5	0	1	2	4	6
Hackney 2000	Inner London	1991	Coordination of Development Initiatives	Yes	0	Yes	0	Yes	0
Finsbury Park Community Trust	Inner London	1986	Employment Training & Info. Small Business Advice	3	0	0	3	18	0
Greenwich Waterfront Development Partnership	Inner London	1992	Property Development Business Development	5	2	0	0	5	5
East London Partnership	Inner London	1989	Economic Development Community Development	Trilateral Partnership Public/Private/Community					
Dalston City Partnership	Outer London	1993	Economic Development Housing, Training, Health	5	1	1	2	7	23
AZTEC	Outer London	1990	Business Development Training	3	0	0	2	10	0

In the majority of cases the balance of power in these partnerships rests with economic groups. Of the seven inner London partnerships five included community representation (with Hackney 2000 reporting future plans to include 8 community organizations on its management board). While of the five outer London partnership schemes, only Community Links in Newham (an east London borough dominated by minority and poor populations, and solidly Labor) had community representation.

While the above list is not comprehensive, it does provide some broad information concerning which types of groups have influence in decision making in Quango phase partnerships. These findings would tend to support the contentions of other researchers that economic groups have the advantage. The evidence also indicates a decline in access and support for community organizations. As Kendall and Knapp argue;

[organizations] particularly small, local ones, may be further marginalized because central government fails to recognize their contributions and local authorities find it increasingly difficult to fund them...this is particularly the case for community-based, participatory and campaigning groups, for whom...support is presently minimal and precarious in any case.⁹²

A comparative review of the group participants in the consultation exercises of the Maud and Widdicombe committees revealed that little had changed between the two phases in terms of which group participated. As table 6.9 illustrates, while the overall number of groups participating as consultants was greater during the GLC phase, the distribution across groups by type showed little difference.

⁹²Kendall & Knapp (1993), p. 16, footnote 8.

Table 6.9 Distribution of Groups by Type Involved in Consultation Exercises

	Cause	Community	Economic	Voluntary	
GLC	12%	6%	62%	20%	N = 121
Quango	12%	5%	54%	29%	N = 110

6.3 Individual Participation

Participatory democratic models suggest that under optimum circumstances participation should occur at all levels of decision making within political as and non-political realms. Participation must be based upon equal rights as well as equal capacity to exert those rights. Lack of resources (economic, social and political) impinges on the capacity to participate.

In mapping the institutional configuration in London over time my research suggests that the GLC phase, in comparison with other London local governance arrangements, represented an institutional configuration with enhanced participatory capacity. The question then becomes to what degree was this capacity translated into individual action by Londoners? Did the creation of supportive institutions alter the participatory outputs?

Individual participation can be explored in a range of ways. Quantitatively I have measured individual participation through the study of changes in voter turnout, voter registration and party membership. Changes in citizen attitudes are explored through analysis of existing attitude surveys, and the changing patterns of citizen interaction with their local council and councilors.

A. Voter Registration and Turnout

While voting is of course only one of many forms of formal political participation in local government, it is the most common form. Its costs in time and energy to the individual, relative to other forms of participation are low. Voter turnout figures have been calculated by comparing the actual number voting in a constituency with the number reported on the electoral register.

There are weaknesses in using electoral turnout as a measure of citizen participation. Turnout alone tells us only about the voters, but little about the broader local community. Non-voting for example, has been interpreted by some as an indicator of individual satisfaction with government, and by others as an indicator of systematic inequalities in access. As Lipset suggests low voter turnout may simply be a reflection of stability in the political system.

Neither high nor low rates of participation and voting in themselves are good or bad for democracy; the extent and nature of that participation reflect other factors which determine far more decisively the system's chances to develop or survive.⁹³

In this research I am specifically looking at changes in voter turnout as an indicator and reflection of institutional change. I am also interested in changes in patterns of individual participation in traditionally marginalized communities. Thus, while voter turnout may be considered a weak measure of citizen participation, it is still useful in identifying broad aspects of citizen state relationships.

There are more specific weaknesses in voter turnout data in London. First, by

⁹³S. M. Lipset (1963), Political Man, (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books), p. 229.

some accounts the lag between the October formulation of the register and December publication can result in as much as a 10% inaccuracy by the date of publication due to deaths and residential mobility.⁹⁴ For the purposes of this study, perhaps the key weakness in this measure relates to a trend which began during the Quango phase in relationship to the introduction of the poll tax. Researchers in 1986 began to note a shortfall when comparing the estimates of the eligible adult voting population and those actually registered to vote.⁹⁵ Citizens were abstaining from registration. As Rallings and Thrasher comment,

There motive for removing themselves from the electoral register was clear-- the less visible they became as citizens the easier it would be for them to avoid paying the poll tax. The government expected the electoral register to be used in compiling the community charge register....The decline..was quite dramatic..particularly in the inner cities....the total shortfall in Great Britain as a whole is in the region of six hundred thousand people.⁹⁶

In the inner London boroughs, abstention amounted to as many as 20,000 electors in low socio-economic boroughs.⁹⁷ Table 6.10 provides data on the average change in

⁹⁴see Pinto-Duschinsky and Pinto-Duschinsky (1987), Voter Registration. Problems and Solutions, (London: Constitutional Reform Center), and C. Rallings and M. Thrasher (1997), Local Elections in Britain (London: Routledge), pp. 39-40.

⁹⁵Department of Environment (1986), Paying for Local Government, Cmnd. 9714; Wadsworth and Morely (February, 1989), "Compiling a Register for the Poll Tax", Public Finance and Accountancy ; C. Maclean and M. Smith (1995), "the Poll Tax, The Electoral Register, and the 1991 Census" in D. Broughton, D. Denver, D. Farrell and C. Rallings (eds.), British Elections and Parties Yearbook 1994 (London: Frank Cass).

⁹⁶C. Rallings and M. Thrasher (1997), p. 40.

⁹⁷Shortfalls were calculated by comparing average adult population to numbers on the register. Though according to one set of researchers these differences may have had more to do with the drawing up of a more accurate register. Curtis and Steed (1992), "The Results Analyzed" in D. Butler and D. Kavanaugh (eds.), The British

numbers on electoral registers in the inner London boroughs immediately before and after the implementation of the poll tax. This table would seem to confirm that during the Quango phase the numbers registered have declined more substantially than in previous years. The inner London boroughs exhibited declines ranging from 767 to 15,000, representing decreases greater than could be accounted for by population movement.

General Election Of 1992 (London, UK: Macmillan).

Table 6.10 Electoral Register Data: Comparisons Immediately Prior to Poll Tax

	Difference in Numbers Registered			1986-90	1982-1986
	<u>1982</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>After Tax</u>	<u>Before Tax</u>
Camden	138,720	132,711	126,862	-5849	-6009
Greenwich	161,732	162,600	157,515	-5085	868
Hackney	136,256	136,415	137,490	1075	159
Hammersmith & Ful	103,073	102,898	98,916	-3982	-175
Islington	120,076	117,144	112,075	-5069	-2932
Kensington & Chel	103,850	96,852	91,653	-5199	-6998
Lambeth	180,772	181,482	176,185	-5297	710
Lewisham	182,965	180,241	178,709	-1532	-2724
Southwark	172,011	171,492	170,725	-767	-519
Tower Hamlets	104,781	118,483	110,114	-8369	13702
Westminster	135,483	123,340	107,989	-15351	-12143
Wandsworth	196,713	198,249	190,582	-7667	1536
Average Difference in Inner London Borough				-5258	-1210
Total Change in Greater London 1981-1992				-173,229	

Table 6.11

**Overall Percentage Difference in the Size of the Electorate by Borough
Between 1964-1992**

Camden	-27%
Greenwich	1.1%
Hackney	-34%
Hammersmith & Fulham	-29%
Islington	-36%
Kensington & Chelsea	-54%
Lambeth	-25%
Lewisham	-14%
Southwark	-18%
Tower Hamlets	-18%
Wandsworth	-11%
Westminster	-43%

Source: Rallings and Thrasher (1993), Local Elections in Britain: A Statistical Digest (Plymouth: Local Government Chronicle Elections Center).

These figures do point to substantial drops in registration during the Quango phase.

A further weakness in measuring individual participation through voter turnout relates to the fact that marginalized communities (minority and poor) show consistently lower levels of voter turnout. Thus turnout may be a weak gauge of broad patterns of individual participation because it does not capture the non-voter. Each of these weaknesses will be discussed in relationship to the outcomes.

At the local level voter turnout in London has been historically low (averaging 30-40%). The descriptive data on voter turnout showed that average voter turnout has increased incrementally over time--minor increases in the GLC phase as compared

with the LCC phase, and further increases during the current phase.⁹⁸

Table 6.12
Descriptive Data on Aggregate Voter Turnout in Local Elections by Phase

	<u>LCC Phase</u>	<u>GLC Phase</u>	<u>Quango Phase</u>
Mean	.316	.335	.420
Range	.285	.404	.202
Minimum	.182	.119	.324
Maximum	.467	.523	.526

If institutional configuration impacts upon participation through voting, I would expect there to be differences in average voter turnout during each time period, with the GLC phase showing the highest average turnout due to its higher "participatory capacity" (PC). However, as the table above indicates in comparing the differences between phase groups, the Quango phase showed the highest levels of voter turnout in local elections. Simply relying upon this data, would lead to a rejection of my hypothesis that the institutional configuration of the GLC phase is more likely to influence levels of individual citizen participation as measured in voter turnout. Indeed, it would be equally plausible to suggest that changes in participation are a function of societal development. The current population is more educated and more affluent; key variables correlated to increases in citizen participation. However

⁹⁸The differences in voter turnout tend to be numerically small. By many statistical measures these differences would not be considered significant, however small yet persistent increases are indicators of change, which must be regarded as both relevant and significant in analyzing citizen participation over time.

these findings must be questioned particularly in light of the fact that those both voting and registered to vote during the Quango phase may represent a skewed sample caused by the "poll tax" phenomenon. If Rallings and Thrasher are correct in their assessment of this phenomenon, it could indicate that a larger proportion of those registered to vote during the Quango phase were "civic" minded, thus leading to an inflated voter turnout figure by comparison to earlier periods.

Regression analysis of voter turnout in the London boroughs by phase revealed a correlation between institutional change and voter turnout ($R^2 = .11$), 11% of the variation in turnout was related to institutional variables. This correlation however is weak. Institutional configuration represents one factor affecting individual participation. Qualitative data revealed the importance of other factors such as leadership, ideology, and environment as important variables in understanding patterns of citizen participation.

Looking within each phase I noted that there were differences in the range between scores. This data is interesting because it indicates that, within each phase participation patterns varied significantly by borough. During the LCC and GLC phases for example the lowest turnout levels registered were 18% and 12%, while the Quango phase low was 32%. The differences provide further indication of inflated voter turnout numbers during the Quango phase. Although the aggregate differences in voter turnout between phases appeared minimal, the disaggregated differences were significant. This led me to explore the patterns of participation within each borough in search of an explanation for these phase based variations.

Comparisons of data dissagregated by the socio-economic characteristics of the boroughs proved significant. Socio-economic level has been well established as affecting patterns of political participation. Other studies of voter participation in London confirm these findings. According to Rallings and Thrasher:

Census variables, particularly those relating to housing tenure and unemployment status, consistently loaded heavily into the regression equation and they explained between 29.8 per cent and 55.8 percent of the variance in the turnout between boroughs.⁹⁹

As Verba, et. al. point out in relationship to studies of American electoral behavior,

When we examined the issues that animate political participation, we found that while all groups bring diverse concerns to their activity, the particular mixture differs substantially among groups....the disadvantaged speak with a distinctive voice.¹⁰⁰

In my own data analysis I factored in census variables relating to minority population and institutional configuration. The inclusion of these variables added strength to the importance of structure and socio-economic levels as predictors of voter turnout. Over a longer time period (London local elections between 1955 and 1990), multiple linear regression analysis revealed that unemployment, home ownership, minority population and institutional configuration combined produced an R² value of .62, meaning that 62% of the variation in voter turnout could be explained by these variables.

But, it was the factoring of institutional configuration that truly enhanced the model. Boroughs with high minority populations and high unemployment levels

⁹⁹Collin Rallings and Michael Thrasher (1997), Local Elections in Britain (London: Routledge), p. 56.

¹⁰⁰S. Verba, K. Leahman Scholzman, H. Brady, N. Nie (June 1993), "Citizen Activity: Who Participates? What Do they Say?" in APSR, Vol. 87, No. 2.

(above the mean in London by year) showed different patterns of voter participation than in boroughs that had low minority populations and low levels of unemployment during different phases of London government. I found an interaction effect, meaning that race and class appeared to have a moderating affect on participation under different institutional configurations. Comparisons between the GLC phase and the current phase were particularly illuminating in this regard. Boroughs characterized as poor and minority showed increases in the levels of voter turnout during the GLC phase and decreases during the Quango phase. Evidence from the most recent local election (1998) indicate that voter turnout levels are declining.¹⁰¹ In contrast, pre-dominately white boroughs showed decreases in voter participation during the GLC phase and increases during the current phase. Graph 6.13 presents data on average voter turnouts in high minority/low socio economic boroughs and low minority high socio economic boroughs. Table 6.14 charts the regression lines for minority poor communities during each phase. The GLC phase shows increased levels of participation correlated to higher minority populations, and negative correlations in relationship to both the Quango and LCC phases. Meaning that during the LCC and Quango phases, boroughs with high minority poor populations tended to vote less than low minority wealthy boroughs.

¹⁰¹While the 1998 data has not been included in my data set, these outcomes are relevant for consideration of the future trends.

Graph 6.13

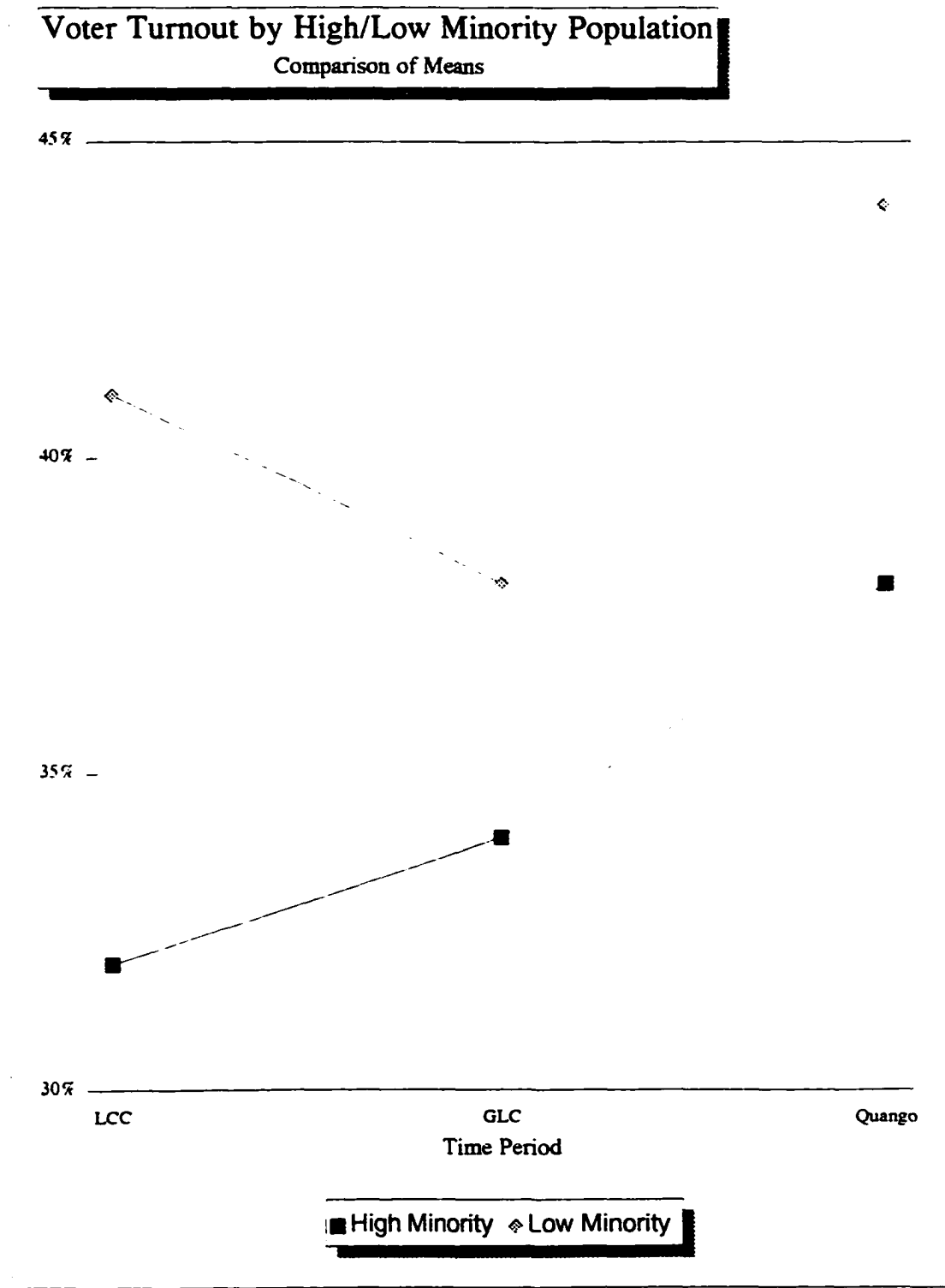
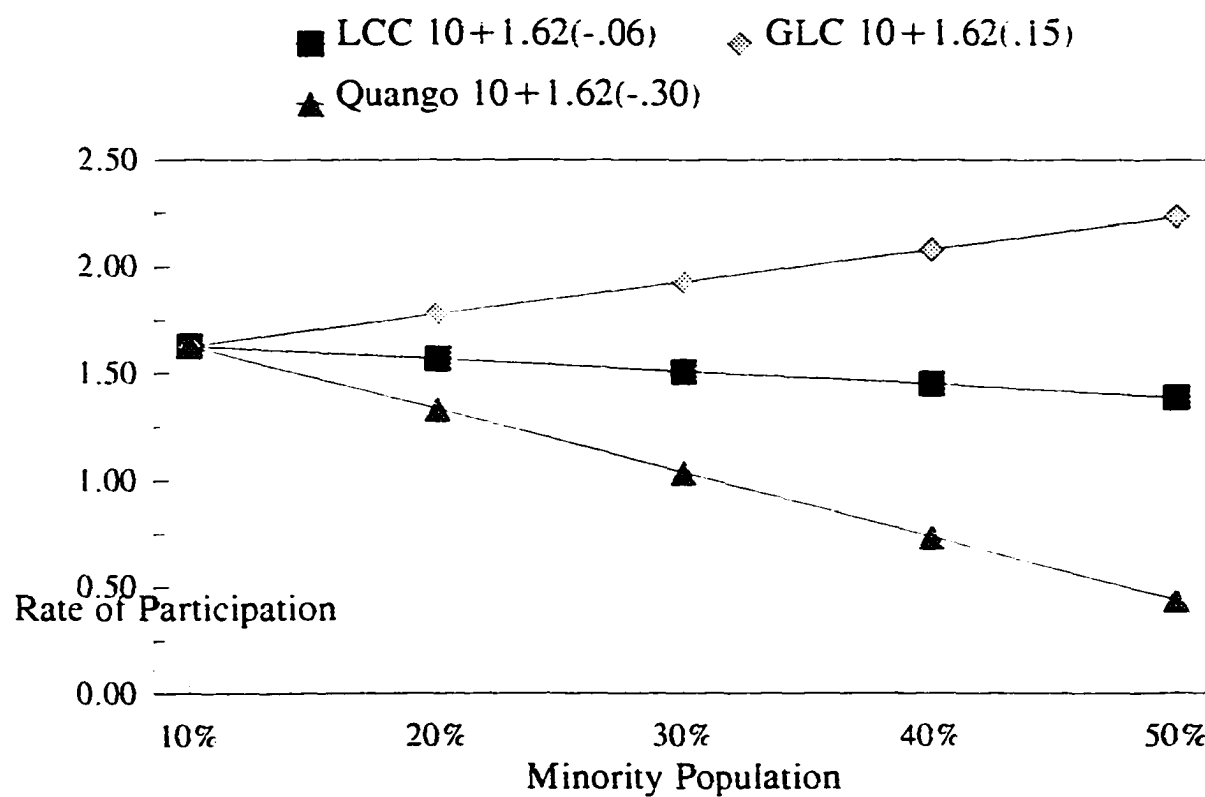


Table 6.14

Regression Lines For Poor Minority Community



While aggregate voter turnout levels have increased over time, patterns of participation within communities characterized by above average levels of minorities and the poor vary by institutional configuration. This data therefore points to the possibility that participatory capacity is more relevant for marginalized groups in society. The institutional configuration of the GLC phase therefore appears to have been instrumental in stimulating voter participation in poor and minority communities. In contrast, both the LCC and Quango phases show decreased levels of voter turnout in these communities.

B. Individual Participation: Consultation

Individual participation in council activities can occur through several channels: consultation, complaints and council attendance. Consultation represents one form of participation. The degree to which this mechanism becomes an effective vehicle for citizen involvement concerns the extent to which the views gathered through this process are incorporated into policy and program outcomes. Consultation practices on London local government have varied over time.

During the LCC phase of weak PC, consultation was often a superficial exercise. The GLC and Quango phases utilized consultation mechanisms in more meaningful ways. The most extensive consultation exercises tend to be instigated by central government in the form of Royal Commissions. The Herbert Commission, the Maud Commission and the Widdicombe Committee each represent consultative committees concerned with London local governance. Comparisons both of the

methods and numbers of individuals who participated in each of these consultative processes in London provides us with further information concerning individual participation patterns.

The Herbert Commission of the LCC phase solicited individual public opinion through a press notice which invited members of the public to make recommendation on London government reform. The request for submissions was made in February 1958 and the bulk of the information was received by July 1958, representing a five month period of data collection on individual attitudes. The Herbert Commission received a total of 174 responses from the broad public.

The great majority of these were complaints, justified or otherwise, with regard to specific matters which were currently in dispute and were not directly relevant to our inquiry.¹⁰²

For the above reason, the Herbert Commission commented on only two of the 174 public statements. These two recommendations, not surprisingly, fell in line with the commissions own views.

The Maud Committee also appealed for individual input through the press. The request went out at the end of June 1966. Maud's report does not indicate the time period available for submissions, though the Commission existed for roughly two and a half years. Maud received a total of 2,156 pieces of evidence, of which roughly 560 were individual public submissions. While these numbers are substantially larger than Herbert, it must be recognized that Maud's studies covered the entirety of the U.K., while Herbert was looking only at London. In addition to this broad solicitation,

¹⁰²Cmnd. 1164, para. 207, p. 55.

Maud also based his research on a surveys of local electors and community attitudes. Maud's analysis therefore included more mechanisms for individual participation and greater attention to the data gathered.

The Widdicombe Committee of the Quango phase held a press conference to solicit individual participation. They allowed a one month period for submissions. A total of roughly 150 individuals submitted evidence. Widdicombe also carried out a public attitudes survey, and interviews were carried out in the homes of 1,144 individuals (21 in the Greater London area), of which 117 represented non-voters. Widdicombe's study may be best compared to Maud, in that it too covered the whole of the UK.

Table 6.15 Consultation Exercise Comparisons

	<u>Herbert</u>	<u>Maud</u>	<u>Widdicombe</u>
Scope	London	UK	UK
# Individual Responses	174	560	150
Additional Measures	None	Surveys	Surveys Interviews
Time	5 months	2 years	1 month

Comparisons among the three consultation exercises reveal interesting differences in individual participation. The commission of the GLC phase incorporated the views of larger number of individuals and allowed a longer period to collect and

review the evidence. The Quango phase commission had fewer individual respondents and also had a much shorter period in which consultation occurred. The LCC phase commission while receiving a substantial number of respondents, tended to utilize this information in what can only be described as a cursory way. The most obvious problem with drawing any hard fast conclusions with this particular set of information concerns differences in the technological complexity of the times. The LCC phase lacked the technological facility for a broad based appeal. During the GLC and Quango phases the advance of media and television clearly allowed for a broader segment of the population to be informed.

The strongest comparisons can be made between the Maud and Widdicombe commissions which covered similar geographic areas and policy issues. Individual participation in these commission exercises was higher during the GLC phase than the Quango phase. This may be a further indicator of the importance of PC in influencing individual citizen participation in local government policy formulation. Other studies of consultation practices in Britain have pointed out that more of these exercises occurred during the Quango phase (between 1974 and 1979--28.6 annually as compared with 277 annually between 1988-1993). However the consultation process became more superficial.

They were in reality statements of intent, and the procedure was rarely used to garner views on what could be done to tackle a particular problem.¹⁰³

Differences in the tactics used for community consultation point again to the impor-

¹⁰³B. Baggot (1995), p. 111.

tance of ideology in promoting greater citizen participation. Though channels existed, much depended on the combination of both the channels and the actors operating within those channels.

C. Individual Participation: Citizen Council Relations

Others indicators of individual participation practices can be found in studies of the relationship between citizens and local authorities. The LCC phase was characterized by its closed and centralized style of decision making. The Herbert Commission pointed to very low attendance rates at local authority meetings as an indicator of problems with local participation mechanisms. Maud's study at the start of the GLC phase found that few citizens had either knowledge or interest in local authority activities.

Access to decision making expanded during the GLC phase, however studies of the degree to which access produced citizen participation during this phase are mixed. According to Cynthia Cockburn's study of Lambeth:

The popular reaction to the opening of all council committee meetings to the press and public left officers bemused. It did not fulfill their hopes of a packed press gallery quietly admiring the cut and thrust of committee debate. Instead, nobody much came at all, except when important issues were at stake.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, in Mie Wann's study of housing action in Battersea,

public participation in decision making is not customary in council projects: minor decisions are usually made by senior officers and in any case not by

¹⁰⁴C. Cockburn (1978), p. 135.

tenants or residents.¹⁰⁵

A Department of Environment survey of local government in inner London reported that many participation projects of the 1970s were unsuccessful because they did not offer citizens any direct influence over decisions.¹⁰⁶ As in the American case, channels existed but citizens did not perceive them to be meaningful.

There are many examples of un-actualized participation during the GLC phase. For example, in 1974 the Rent Act established Housing Action Areas (HAAs) in economically deprived areas. Citizens living in rented accommodation within HAAs could approach their local authority to establish whether they were paying a "fair rent." In 1975, however, in one inner London community where there were 100 eligible tenancies, only one household had applied for registration. In a survey of 313 private renters in inner London eligible for "fair rent registration" it was found that while 27% had registered their rent, 25% did not know if their rent had been registered and 19% were unaware that the facility even existed. As the report argued,

Most council tenants..do not play an active part...It may be that this will change if they come to have real influence on tenants life changes.¹⁰⁷

Similarly with neighborhood councils, they found that only one fifth of the population

¹⁰⁵M. Wann (1982), "Livelihood: Housing and Housing Action" in S. Wollman and Associates, Living in South London (London, UK: Gower), p. 95.

¹⁰⁶G. Shankland, P. Wilmott and D. Jordan (1977), Inner London: Policies for Dispersal and Balance (London, UK: Department of Environment).

¹⁰⁷G. Shankland, P. Wilmott and D. Jordan (1977), p. 155.

had ever attended a meeting.¹⁰⁸ Success occurred when supportive institutions were created, information was widely distributed, and the process was made relevant to the participant.

It took a long time and the development of a whole range of other council activities (e.g. nursery, community hall, social events, organization) to encourage new activists to emerge.¹⁰⁹

More often as Harrison's study of inner London suggests:

Whether out of bitter disillusion, apathy, laziness, infirmity, fear of the burdens of shiftwork and childcare, the vast majority of tenants do not even come to even the most important meetings.¹¹⁰

As one man in Hackney commented:

When I tell people that I'm coming to a meeting, they say to me, "what you going there for?" They just take your plans and throw them away.¹¹¹

And a woman:

We had a meeting...the turnout was fantastic (sarcasm). We couldn't get into the hall, we had to fight our way through the crowd, one person. We knocked on every door, no one came.¹¹²

My visits to local authority meetings in south and east London between 1984 and 1987 confirm these findings. For example, while a local GLC meeting could draw larger numbers than LBC meetings, in neither case was attendance ever great. On average there were ten to twenty in attendance. When a crisis occurred the

¹⁰⁸G. Shankland, P. Wilmott and D. Jordan (1977), p. 103.

¹⁰⁹M. Wann (1982), p. 96.

¹¹⁰P. Harrison (1983), Inside the Inner City (Middlesex, UK: Penguin), p.239.

¹¹¹P. Harrison (1983), p. 240.

¹¹²Ibid.

numbers grew (50-100). In general the participants represented a defined group of regulars. Non-participants (outside local authority meetings) expressed disillusion with their elected authorities. The participants expressed a connection to local government which was lacking in the broader population.

Individual participation in council activities declined during the Quango phase. This is partly explainable by the movement of a range of services to Quangos and central levels of government. Local authorities control fewer service areas and thus have fewer realms within which to generate participation. According to recent studies of individual participation in local council activities, only 10% of local residents have ever attended local council meetings, and only 14% of those surveyed had ever been in contact with their local councillor (as compared with 20% of those residing in non-metropolitan areas). Londoners, according to Ken Young's demonstrated a higher level of dissatisfaction with local authorities as well as a higher propensity to have complained to their authority.¹¹³ Thus it would seem that citizens are growing more disillusioned with local authorities in recent years.

D. Citizen Participation and Political Parties

Political parties have historically played a mediating role in democratic societies,

Parties enrolled supporters, channelled their energies towards electoral contests, and enhanced democratic legitimacy and stability of the political system

¹¹³K. Young (June 1986), p. 50.

by integrating groups that might otherwise have been marginalized.¹¹⁴

Political parties can play a central role in the formation of political identity. Indeed, by some accounts, parties when democratically structured can be key outlets for individual citizen participation. As Nancy Schwartz points out:

Assuming the existence of parties, then party membership, primaries and slating of candidates must be open to political contest. Equality of these rights, the equal opportunity to become a political activist in a faction, is as important, if not more so, than equality of the latter mass individual vote.¹¹⁵

In local authorities in London parties have been identified as key catalysts of citizen participation. As George Jones found in his study of borough politics during the GLC phase:

Although public participation in local government is small...[for increases in participation] parties deserve the credit.¹¹⁶

Recent studies of political parties in London point out that party has come to represent a weak influence on individual participation. Individual participation in parties was strongest during the LCC phase, a period when the franchise was expanding, and mass parties were developing. However, parties then tended to be closed and centralized organizations which allowed only limited activity by individual members. During the GLC phase individuals became more politically active and began to reject the closed party organizations, resulting in membership decline.

¹¹⁴S. Scarrow (1996), Parties and Their Members (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), p. 140.

¹¹⁵Nancy Schwartz (1988), The Blue Guitar, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p.140.

¹¹⁶G. Jones (1969), Borough Politics (London, UK: Macmillan), p. 4.

Table 6.16 Individual Party Membership Figures¹¹⁷

	Conservative	Labor
1948	2,806,000	1,005,000
1960	2,800,000	790,000
1974	1,500,000	690,000
1988	1,000,000	265,000

The weak predictive ability of party stems from the growth of an instability in individual party identification.¹¹⁸

Local party membership has been in decline over the years, particularly in localities with entrenched party control. During the GLC phase in Lambeth, out of a population of roughly 300,000 predominately working class citizens, only three thousand were members of the local party, and only 300 on average were active. At local branch meetings on average only 20 members participated, with the number increasing to 30 at election time.¹¹⁹ The reason for low participation in these strongholds is two-fold. First, parties themselves spend less time mobilizing for safe seats, and individuals tend to consider their participation unnecessary (e.g. the benefits will accrue with or without their involvement). Local parties can be facilitators of individual participation in marginal seats, however their degree of success at mobilizing citizens at points other than elections must be questioned.

Party membership has been in decline since the early GLC years. Looking at

¹¹⁷S. Scarrow (1996), table 3.6, p. 75.

¹¹⁸C. Rallings and M. Thrasher (1996).

¹¹⁹Cockburn's figures are similar to the ones which I reported in the previous section on individual participation at council meetings during the GLC phase.

parties as a dependent variable, the question is to what degree has institutional configuration affected participation through the vehicle of political parties? Other studies of participation in Britain have shown that strong party identification is correlated with participation.¹²⁰ However individual identification with the values of a party does not necessarily translate into actual membership. In fact, data on party membership points to a decline in individual membership. This decline began during the GLC phase, and has continued ever since.

Labor party membership fell from more than a million in the 1950s to just over 200,000 in 1992. Conservative party membership fell from a reported 2.8 million in 1960 to 750,000 in 1989.¹²¹

Using party membership as a measure of citizen participation would tend to disprove my hypothesis, because on this scale individual participation in political parties was highest during the LCC phase, the point at which participatory capacity was at it lowest. Table 6.17 below provides a broad picture of Labor party membership between 1955 and 1982.¹²²

Overall Labor party membership figures show increases between the LCC and the GLC phases. However these increases are due to trade union membership and cooperative societies, not to mobilization of individual support. In fact, individual membership as a percentage of total Labor Party membership as of 1982 had fallen to 4% of the total (see table 6.17).

¹²⁰see G. Parry, G. Moyser and N. Day (1992).

¹²¹M. J. Smith (1995), p.1.

¹²²I focus on Labor rather than the Conservative or Liberal parties because of their dominance in the inner-London boroughs.

Table 6.17 Labor Party Membership Changes

	Individual		TUs		Coop Soc.		Total#	
	#	%	#	%	#	%		
1955	843356	13%	5605988	86%	35650	1%	6483994	
1965	816765	13%	5601982	87%	21146	0%	6439893	
1975	674905	10%	5750039	89%	43930	1%	6468874	
1982	273803	4%	6185063	95%	57131	1%	6515997	

The composition of local parties has also changed. Prior to 1975 in Hackney for example, local party leaders and membership was dominated by the working class. By the late 1970s new young homeowners were brought into the party, and by 1983 this group became a majority in Hackney's local labor group. As Harrison comments,

this happened in many parts of Britain over this period, the middle class intelligentsia became the vanguard of the working class.¹²³

To return to the broader question, does PC affect individual participation as measured by party membership? The answer must be a resounding no. Party membership has steadily declined from the LCC to the current phases. However decline in party membership does not necessarily translate to declines in participation. Citizens in London have voiced increasing dissatisfaction with political parties. But often this has led them to participate in other forums, such as interest groups and community organizations. In Young's study of attitudes to local government, 49% of

¹²³P. Harrison (1985), p. 412.

the London respondents felt that London would be better off with a non-party system.¹²⁴ Thus the decline in party membership may simply be a rejection of participation through parties, but not a rejection of political participation itself.

E. Individual Participation Some Broad Conclusions

Across all phases of London local governance individual participation was at best limited. During the GLC phase evidence points to an increase in individual participation in comparison with the LCC phase. The Quango phase while showing increased voter turnout, also showed differential increases moderated by socio-economic status.

The influence of PC on individual citizen participation through the lenses of voter turnout, party membership and council activity were not conclusive. In terms of overall levels of voter turnout; increases were evidenced first during the GLC phase, however the Quango phase produced the highest levels. Though these results must be viewed with caution due to the skew caused by the "poll tax phenomenon." The disaggregated data on participation in traditionally marginalized communities pointed to the importance of PC in motivating citizen participation.

The results in marginalized communities may also be related to leadership within those institutions. Case study analysis revealed that in those communities which instituted neighborhood control mechanisms broad based citizen participation could be effected, but the results were not conclusive. The existence of channels alone has not

¹²⁴Young, table 6.6, p.87.

automatically resulted in increases in citizen participation. In London the nature of the institutional impact varied according to leadership, ideology, mobilization, information and the degree to which participatory avenues were made meaningful.

6.4 Conclusions: Institutional Impact on Individual and Group Participation

The data on individual and group participation during each of the three phases of London governance was mixed. The LCC phase, with the lowest participatory capacity in its institutional configuration proved to have the lowest levels of individual and group participation. The Quango phase however, which scored only incrementally higher on this scale, demonstrated the highest aggregate levels of both individual and group participation. GLC phase participation in the aggregate showed mixed results. Individual participation while greater by comparison with the LCC phase, remained lower in individual participation than in the Quango phase. Group participation during the GLC phase did show broad increases, but the data is not conclusive when comparisons are made with the Quango phase (also demonstrating overall increased levels of group participation).

When participation data was disaggregated to account for socio-economic variation within London, institutional capacity appeared to be more significant. Communities characterized by low socio-economic and high minority populations appeared to be more responsive to institutional participatory capacity, both in terms of individual and group participation, than was the case in either the LCC or Quango phases.

Participation through political parties is clearly on the decline. In many ways participation in interest groups would appear to be eclipsing more traditional routes of citizen participation through political parties. According to Kendall and Knapp, fewer people are now active in political parties and trade unions.¹²⁵ A much greater number participate in groups of all varieties.

Participatory institutional capacity was relevant for the growth of community and cause groups, particularly those representing traditionally marginalized groups. At the same time while a more accessible institutional environment was important, this did not fully explain developments in participation. Open institutional structures can lead to increased citizen participation, but it would seem that other variables are also relevant. Leadership in the community, supportive actors within institutions, and party identity appeared to be particularly relevant for increasing group participation in London.

Institutional reforms can provide participatory capacity, but for capacity to be turned into action the avenues for participation must be viewed by the community as meaningful. Partnerships between citizens and government offer a more realistic route to empowerment because they offer the prospect of shared power. However as long as partnerships are dominated by a narrow and limited range of economic organizations, community empowerment will remain elusive. Institutional values and goals that support citizen empowerment are essential for participatory capacity to be realized. The dominance during the Quango phase of values stressing economy, efficiency and

¹²⁵Kendall & Knapp (1993), p. 4.

individual choice are not necessarily conducive to the development of a participatory "community." Moreover, in times of economic scarcity in the locality competition between groups for resources is likely to grow. Groups with greater resources are more likely to be able to maneuver through the complex London governance system than those with few resources, thus leading to greater inequality and polarization between groups within the London arena. Do institutions matter? Formal institutions can be structured for access, however this must be based upon supportive institutional values, goals, and leadership. Institutions can be instrumental, but much depends upon the actors and the ideologies they represent within those institutions.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

On May 7th 1998, Londoners were invited to participate in a referendum on the future of governance in the metropolitan region. After just over a decade of single tier government, it was overwhelmingly agreed by the voters that the capital city required the recreation of a two tier local governance system. But unlike the LCC phase or the GLC phase, the new system will have an elected mayor.

This research on London's institutional development demonstrated that while formal institutions matter, there must also be a range of supportive institutional factors to convert opportunities into actions. The introduction of an independently elected Mayor combined with an elected two-tier system, offers interesting prospects for the future. The new system expands the number of sites for civic engagement, and promotes a single unified vision for London through the office of the mayor. These features which may well prove to be precisely what London needs, to build social capital and inject greater citizen participation in the process of local governance.

London's governmental history has been marked by its institutional fragmentation. The creation of modern London governance in 1899 was itself intended to weave together the complexity of the formal institutional arena, to unify institutional actors in the common task of governance in an industrializing urbanizing capital city. The GLC phase represented a period in which changes in the socio-economic context brought new institutional actors into a political struggle to redefine the goals and strategies of those local government institutions. The Quango phase

represented the victory of one set of values and the creation of a new political context, which altered the basic rules of the game, shifting the local institutional terrain for citizen participation from one of political to economic openings.

This research suggests that while we are used to thinking of institutions as static elements in a governing system producing regularity, in fact governing institutions themselves can be dynamic agents of change and stasis, of action and interaction. Understanding the present requires us to explore where we have come from. Democratic progress can only come from careful analysis of the lessons that institutional history provides.

7.1 Lessons Learned: Institutional Dynamism -- Strategies, Values, Participants, Embedded Contexts and Citizen Participation in London

In the search for single causal variables to explain outcomes, political scientists become confined by the research questions they pose. The study of citizen participation itself becomes mired in the evaluative task of identifying the few factors which might explain what is clearly a complex phenomenon, the process by which citizens engage in political action.

Institutions are embedded in socio-economic and political contexts. Shifts in either or both can produce changes in the meaning and function of existing institutions. Latent institutional features can become salient. Actors can pursue new strategies. A change in conditions can cause institutional breakdown or change.

If we want to gain a better appreciation of the process of citizen participation

we must situate it within an institutional framework. This research points to the fact that individuals and groups are not simply spectators to the changing conditions of local power relations, but are themselves agents, capable of acting on openings provided by shifting contextual conditions in order to defend or enhance their positions. Participation, then, is only understandable when it is seen as both cause and effect of institutional transformation. Institutions must be understood not simply as formal static structures, but dynamic constructs defined by shifting strategies, values and goals embedded within socio-economic and political systems.

Perhaps the most important finding of this research is that observation of the history of local institutions in London reveals that the nature of citizen participation has been transformed over time.

A. Routes of the Modern System: Victorian Institutional Dynamics

Multiple and separate municipalities controlled by strong vested interests were confronted by a massive and newly enfranchised local population. Existing local governance institutions were closed and unresponsive to both the demands and needs of the population. The traditional values of hereditary power had been eclipsed by values of power derived from property, yet the formal institutional structures in London lagged behind. It was a combination of the failure of institutional actors to adapt coupled with the strategic political maneuvering of the London population (whose actions threatened the very existence of London government) as they protested and rioted in the streets which led to institutional transformation. The threats posed by

popular unrest were magnified by virtue of the fact that Parliament was situated at the center of the metropolis.

Formal routes to participation through existing institutions in the locality were ineffective at producing change. Vested interests acted to stifle popular voice.

Informal citizen participation became the catalyst for institutional change in Victorian London and national institutional actors the vehicle for formal legislation.

B. Institutional Dynamics of the LCC phase

The informal popular mandate which had forced the creation of the modern local government system in London, was derived from a time when local democracy was at its infancy. The demands were simple, more open electoral routes and a system which could respond to the physical needs of the populous in a large urban environment.

The outcomes were the creation of a more politically and administratively centralized system at the metropolitan level, deemed to be an appropriate administrative vehicle to provide for Londoners needs. This was coupled with an elected local level through which popular demands could be more effectively voiced, and vested interests could continue to exert some degree of influence.

Exogenous factors were to play a significant role in the subsequent institutional developments of the phase. Two world wars had a devastating impact on the physical infrastructure and human capital of London, and led to strategic adaptations by political actors. The effects of war led to a growing recognition that the vitality of

cities was intimately connected with the health of the nation as a whole. Regional strategies and institutions were created in response. Regionalism was designed in part to foster unity of purpose between municipalities within the region.

Institutional values shaping citizen participation also received a minor (though narrow) boost during this phase. The push for greater efficiency in local administration led to the pursuit of experts. Local authorities began to create consultative mechanisms to solicit the ideas of the educated minority in turn expanding conceptions of representative democratic access.

Healthy local democracy grew as a value amongst local government actors, though not as a practice. The constraints on change were exerted by existing power holders, who were unprepared to cede authority to the masses. But, it was the development of more expansive democratic values which shaped the form that local government took during the GLC phase. In addition, part of the motivation for change came from assessments of popular attitudes. It was the lack of popular interest in local governance, which led researchers such as Herbert to explore ways to make local governance more salient in the lives of London citizens. At the same time values of efficiency derived from post war necessity continued to influence institutional design.

C. The GLC phase: Institutional Complexity at the Extreme

The GLC phase brought the introduction of an enlarged local institutional terrain. The expansion of London government brought more actors, with diverse

cultural experiences and socio-economic backgrounds into the London governmental arena.

Institutional adaptation during this phase came in the first instance in response to shifting socio-economic contexts. Changes in environmental context (economic decline and population movement) during the GLC phase resulted in the growth of an increasingly dissatisfied London populace. Groups first operated on the outside of local government institutions. Community organizations and cause groups formed, utilizing strategies of confrontation. Local institutions and institutional actors responded by creating a wider range of consultative and co-optive mechanisms. Groups were moved from the political margins into the mainstream.

This process had broader implications for patterns of group participation. Incorporation divided Britain's community power movement. Consultation and co-optation were used selectively by local authorities. The result was to divide groups in the community according to their ideological affinities and political strategies into "helpful" and "unhelpful" groups. Thus, the phase brought an increase in group participants in local decision making processes. However, those who were brought within the formal fold, by many accounts represented a narrower range of perspectives and were a less representative cross-section of participants. Those groups remaining on the political margins became increasingly divided, and narrowly focused.

Thus, while the GLC phase did represent a period of greater participatory capacity, it was tempered by constraints imposed by institutional actors. The

incorporation, however, even of the narrow range of group participants did affect local institutional dynamics. New actors transported from the margins into the mainstream, brought with them sets of values stressing greater citizen participation and empowerment. New actors began to gain control of existing local government institutions. New leadership in these institutions led to further reforms of those institutions, and alliances between those institutions. The radicalization of inner London authorities produced tensions and pressures between local and national institutions and actors.

The GLC phase began as a period of significant fragmentation. It ended with some degree of local unity. Initially, divisions existed in the socio-economic and political environment, and in the formal and informal institutional environments. The outcome was a period characterized by conflicts and struggles, which produced reform and change. While more participants became involved, they represented a narrow section of the community.

What is interesting about the GLC phase, is the clarity of the formal local institutional power base which developed in the inner city. Despite the subordinate relationship formally of local to national institutions, local authorities were able for a time to carve out a niche which was quite resistant to the pressures of national institutions. The power came from linkages formed between local authorities and the inner London community. The GLC's capacity to resist was very much the outcome of a strong base of popular support, which was carefully orchestrated by the aforementioned new local leaders (through massive publicity campaigns, information

distribution, and cultural events).

By the end of the phase, the most significant division in Greater London, was between the inner (urban) and outer (suburban) regions, perpetuated by the social, economic and political differences between the two. Reform in the end was mandated from above through the most decisive of central government actions, abolition. In this decree, national government utilized its strongest card, parliamentary sovereignty as a mechanism of local authority control.

D. The Quango Phase: Local Institutions Embedded in National Contexts

The Quango phase which began with an infusion of national strategies, values, institutions and goals, continued to be marked by the dominance of national institutions in the locality. It is this embeddedness within nationally defined contexts which has shaped London's development in the 1990s. Centralized decision making structures operate alongside the LBCs as local administrators.

These institutional arrangements have implications for local political participation of groups. As most decisions affecting London are now made centrally, the focus for access has shifted upwards. Groups seeking to exert influence must operate at the parliamentary level. Lobbying and action at the national level requires greater resources and organization. Not surprisingly, those groups lacking resources and having weaker organizational structures tend to have less capacity to affect decisions.

At the same time, decreased power and resources in local authorities has led

them to pursue alternative partnerships with local actors. However, partnerships tend to be narrowly defined by local authorities. In an environment of fiscal austerity, local authorities need funding. Economic groups, as a result have tended to be the dominant partners. Their access has been further accentuated by the supportive environment provided by national values and institutions. Access is increasingly predicated upon the resources which groups can bring to the partnership. And influence is granted to a much narrower set of community actors.

Community organizations and cause groups tend to be the victims in this process. They have in many cases lost LBC funding because they have fewer resources themselves, and they lost access to funding which had been provided at the metropolitan level by the GLC. With a scarcer resource base, and fewer points of access and influence, the community itself has become increasingly divided. Many small groups are now competing for fewer resources.

The rules of the game in the Quango phase have been shaped by exogenous political and economic forces. The balance of power has shifted from local to national government. The focus on values stressing individual choice are deceptive. Individuals though given choices, are not themselves empowered to determine the broader parameters of those choices. Individual choice during the Quango phase is more akin to the choices of a consumer operating within a restricted market place of centrally controlled products.

E. Lessons Learned Through Institutions: Some Broad Conclusions

It is clear that understanding the institutional configuration of a local political system is an important component in interpreting the ways individuals and groups interact within it. At the same time, the complexity and dynamism of local institutional environments can for the researcher seem at times to present insurmountable obstacles to efforts at identifying causal relationships.

Local government in London sits in a subordinate relationship to national institutions. The values and strategies in the locality are at times in concert with national goals, at others in conflict. When conflict emerges between levels concerning strategies and values, the outcomes can and have been radical restructuring of the locality according to the goals and values of national governments.

However, what seemed to emerge throughout this research was the fact that though national institutions can at times dominate local political arenas, the conflicting logics of national and local institutions can produce unexpected outcomes. Specifically, attempts by national actors to influence the locality can lead to the informal growth of strong local opposition and the formation of alternative local power bases which include community activists.

Local government can play an important role in unifying the distinct and diverse interests which characterize cities, converting them into policies responsive to local needs, and voicing those interests to national government. This is particularly important in the case of Britain because local government is the only sphere outside Parliament (National and European) which is popularly elected.

The organization of the local political arena plays a critical role in determining which interests will be effectively articulated. Thus, despite the emergence of Thatcherism in 1979, inner London was dominated by the "new left." This meant that even though times were about to change (reorganization in 1986) in inner London, an environment of radicalism prevailed. Groups which may have been excluded from access at the national level were very much involved in local government and politics in London. It might even be argued, that local resistance to the goals and values of central government, caused central government to take the more extreme move of abolition.

Changes in the institutional configuration of the local governance arena provide useful tools for interpretation of changes in broad based patterns of citizen participation. At the same time broad based patterns of citizen participation can also be instrumental in producing changes in the institutions themselves.

7.2 Participatory Democratic Theory and the Evidence from London

The London case provides important evidence regarding democratic developments. While clearly, at no time has London ever been a participatory democratic system in the pure form, it has instituted reforms which fit within the participatory democratic framework. Moreover, the evidence would seem to point to the fact that at a very broad level Londoners over time have adopted more qualities reflective of the participatory democratic personality.

When opportunities to participate in decision making have been provided, there

is no question that the outcome is that more citizens participate in the process. Does this result in massive increases in civic participation and increases in narrow measures such as voter turnout and party membership? Here the outcomes would appear mixed. However, it must be recognized that these activities are not mutually exclusive. If voting produced a system representative of the community, and decisions responsive to community needs, perhaps citizens would vote more. But lack of voter turnout does not necessarily mean that citizens are not participating. Indeed, citizens often turn to alternative routes of participation such as community organizing, lobbying, protest, etc.

The explosion of group participation during the GLC phase, with groups operating both on the margins and in the mainstream would seem to suggest that in the UK, like the US, what we are seeing is a rejection of traditional vehicles of representative democracy and the search for new more meaningful democratic decision making structures.

Participatory democrats point to the fact that participation requires equal access, equal capacity and meaning. To achieve these goals requires more than structural reform. Access is provided through structures as well as actors. Capacity is influenced by education, information and resources. Meaning is articulated in ideology and values, strategies and goals. Researchers seeking truly to understand changes in patterns of citizen participation therefore must expand their horizons to recognize the complexity of democratic practice within a dynamic institutional environment. The only way to determine the success or failure of a specific structural

reform, is to look at the relationship between formal and informal institutions, actors, values, strategies and goals. And, most importantly, to place this within a historical context.

A. The Educative Function of Participation

One of the values which participatory democratic theorists stress, is the educative function of participation. When one engages in the practice of participation, one learns the value of the activity, and in turn is more likely to be a participant in the future. As Barber puts it,

Civic activity educates individuals how to think publicly as citizens...Politics becomes its own university, citizenship its own training ground, and participation its own tutor.¹

One way of interpreting the limited changes in formal voting patterns between the GLC phase and the Quango phase might be through this lens. Perhaps, many of the individuals and groups who became participants during the GLC phase, continued to be participants even after the institutional configuration was transformed into a less accessible and closed environment. Clearly, my data is not sensitive enough to measure the possibility of an educative effect. It would require access to a cohort of individuals who became participants during the GLC phase, and much greater information on the activities of those individuals over time, as well as the development of more qualitative data through interviews with the individual

¹B. Barber (1984), Strong Democracy: Participatory Democracy for a New Age, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), p. 152.

participants.

In fact, it was this aspect of the research which ultimately proved to be the most difficult to grapple with. In measuring participation according to participatory capacity, I failed to consider this educative feature. My expectations were that participation would show a marked decline during the Quango phase, because it scored low on my PC scale. When it did not score low on individual participation, I considered the possibility of rejecting my hypothesis that PC in institutional configuration was instrumental in altering patterns of voter participation. Upon further reflection, I realized that it would be more appropriate to mention the possibility that these aggregate increases in participation may also be a reflection of the educative aspects which participatory theorists posit. According to Parry, Moyser and Day's study of political participation in Britain,

Voting appears to have all the hall-marks of an educative political experience. The reservation...is that one learns from others--especially from political professionals--rather than in the very course of the activity, as the classic educative hypothesis would suggest... [However]....44.2% thought that voting did have this effect...44% agreed that voting gave a favorable impression of politics.²

As for the educative effects of group participation in Britain,

One may speculate cautiously that there is some association between increased knowledge and participation in more organized forms of activity....It would seem that participation with others in organizations reinforces and expands political experiences in the ways that educative theorists would suggest.³

²G. Parry, G. Moyser and N. Day (1992), Political Participation and Democracy in Britain (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), p. 292.

³G. Parry, G. Moyser and N. Day (1992), p. 288.

B. Participation for Marginalized Groups: Problems in Capacity and Access

The disaggregated data showed that institutional PC was important for marginalized groups. Individuals traditionally categorized as non-participants, can under supportive institutional environments be transformed into participants. The key here is the existence of a supportive institutional environment created through actors and structures.

During the LCC phase marginalized groups remained on the margins of the formal local institutional environment. Voluntary groups participated outside governing institutions, operating in areas defined as private and their focus was on service provision. Though at times the voluntary sector became involved in lobbying efforts in the areas of child labor and poverty, they remained during this period apart from local governing institutions.

The GLC phase was marked by an explosion of group activity. Not only did voluntary groups flourish, but a range of community and cause groups became increasingly involved in seeking to alter the local institutional terrain of decision making. The period was one of diversification and growth in social capital.

The data on group participation for marginalized groups during the Quango phase is mixed. Changes were not particularly evident in the numbers of group participants between the GLC and Quango phase, but rather in which participants gained access. Lack of access, has led to two outcomes in London history. At some historical moments groups became more vocal. At the start of the GLC phase many groups operated outside the formal channels in the realm of protest and riot, in an

effort to force access upon the system. Alternatively, groups can also adapt their strategies to work within the system itself, a process which characterized minority group activity during the later GLC phase.

Studies demonstrate that, in London, the movement from the margins to the mainstream actually had a negative consequence for black political participation; it divided the group terrain. These divisions are particularly pertinent to the Quango phase. As Sewell's study found,

The lack of readily accessible resources has made black organizations beholden to the mainstream for their financial viability and organizational credibility. Inevitably the allocation of limited grant-aid funds has fostered divisions and inter-group rivalry.⁴

Many activists were brought within the formal channels, but inside their power was diluted. Inside, they were individuals who lacked the connection with the minority community. According to Sewell, currently the role of those incorporated tends to be one of "broker" between community organizations and local government.

The character of contemporary participation has been one of growing interdependence. The effectiveness of the separate external structure of black self-organization...is almost unimaginable today. With the advent of a brokering role for many black organizations...contact with the mainstream, especially to attract funding, became inevitable and this changed the nature and scope of community activism enormously.⁵

The Quango phase presents different problems for marginalized communities. Inequalities in social and economic resources will now affect access in a more direct

⁴T. Sewell (1993), Black Tribunes: Black Political Participation in Britain, (London, UK: Lawrence & Wishart), p. 35.

⁵Sewell, p. 54.

way. Resources define access in the current terrain. Thus lack of resources will likely inhibit participation. As Fitzgerald comments,

Black people are now and are likely to remain disproportionately powerless in the mainstream of British politics precisely because they are economically powerless.⁶

Thus, the shift in institutional context would seem likely to limit participation in the future.

C. Meaningful Participation

Increasing participation, requires that participation is perceived to have a real value. Channels of access must be made meaningful. The values of each institutional phase therefore were relevant features to understanding why specific forms of participation dominated at different period.

During the LCC phase participation was premised on "representation." Reforms were geared towards bringing a more diverse range of individuals into governing positions so that they might better reflect the communities they served. But this was coupled with a strong emphasis on maintaining efficiency. The outcome was an expansion of the body of participants, but an expansion which drew in a narrow group of experts.

The GLC phase saw the growing expansion of visions of participation, and the growth of a collection of participatory mechanisms designed to expand citizen

⁶Marian Fitzgerald (1984), Political Parties and Black People: Participation, Representation and Exploitation (Nottingham, Uk: The Runnymede Trust), p. 106.

involvement in decision making. At the same time there was no requirement that authorities utilize these mechanisms, and so their impacts varied by boroughs. The options were created, and some communities acted on these options. Of those communities which did incorporate mechanisms, some had positive outcomes, others negative. The difference in success had to do with a range of factors, particularly the degree to which local authorities were supportive, informative and genuine. As mentioned in chapter 6, the increase in citizen participation in Battersea had to do with the local authorities actions in a range of areas, particularly, the creation of supportive institutions.

Local government provides a framework for the exercise of participation. The differences between phases of local government included differences in the degree to which local authorities had power. During the LCC phase, power in LBCs was limited but available. During the GLC phase power expanded. During the Quango phase power is limited. For exercises in participation to be at all worthwhile, there must be genuine decision making capacity in the locality.

This dissertation explored the assumptions that centralized power structures lead to decreases in the level of political participation, and decentralized power structures lead to increases in participation. It was hypothesized that the degree to which local institutions would shape individual and group participation would vary in relationship to the degree to which institutional goals emphasized participation. The importance of goals is clearly relevant. Power can be decentralized, but if the local decision making body is itself closed then participation is unlikely to follow.

During the early years of the GLC phase power was slowly decentralized. This was coupled with the growth of supportive institutional actors and values. The outcome was increased citizen participation in some places for some groups. The existence of the federated system enhanced the number of access points, and provided for the possibility of finding support at different levels. When the GLC was taken over by the new left, it became a vehicle for participation in marginalized communities. It did so because the structures existed and the actors supported it.

The Quango phase represents a structure with fewer access points. There is no metropolitan tier to turn to should the borough authority be unsupportive. Thus, under the current system values become increasingly important within a more limited local government terrain. This means that the degree to which individuals share the values of their local authority will in large part determine their degree of access. At the same time, the environment is also key, so that values and resources together are relevant. If you've got something the authority needs, and you are supportive of the authority you have greater chances of gaining access. Under these circumstances participation will have meaning for some, while for others it will represent something of a hollow exercise. As Hill aptly states:

The economic and political problems of the city highlight the question of the extent to which all can share equally as citizens in the life of the cities.⁷

⁷Hill, p. 243.

7.3 Prospects for Citizen Participation in the Year 2000: A Mayor For London what Light Does the Institutional Framework Shed

The history of London development during the Quango phase, for citizen participation has been mixed. Citizen choice has been the dominant value stressed in urban governance. But as the evidence would seem to indicate choices exist but capacity to exert choice is constrained by resources. In retrospect the abolition of the metropolitan tier of government led to a range of problems. Specifically, the Quango phase has been marked by the absence of a single voice to speak for Londoners. No locally based institution exists to draw together the many fragmented pieces which have characterized London throughout its history.

A. Fragmentation: London Over the Years

During the LCC phase, the fragmentation occurred along social and political lines. Divisions were rooted in class. Participants in anything beyond voting tended to be those able to afford the luxury of becoming an "informed" citizen. And the basis for that designation had a great deal to do with which end of the socio-economic spectrum you were drawn from. Structural fragmentation was perpetuated by struggles for power between vested interests and political parties.

Fragmentation during the GLC phase grew increasingly complex. Urban suburban divisions which were shaped by race and class, were solidified by the institutional reforms which brought the GLC into existence. The entire period was characterized by regular clashes between local authorities and levels of government. Socio-economic change led to growing concentrations by race and income in inner

and outer areas. Economic decline placed pressures on local authorities and limited their capacities to respond to community needs. Spurred in part by the experiences of community power struggles and the civil rights movement in the United States, and the student protests in France, Londoners themselves became increasingly vocal regarding their dissatisfaction with the status quo. They were dissatisfied with the centralized, corporate structures which had emerged out of the post war periods search for efficient local governance. The GLC phase was one of conflict which produced change. Yet throughout most of the period, fragmentation prevailed. Partial unity was achieved in Greater London, in the inner area only briefly during the mid-1980s. Solidarity was achieved through the existence of strong leadership at the metropolitan level, coupled with an accessible and responsive metropolitan government. The unity enabled local authorities to pursue paths independent of central government, even at the risk of losing central government finance. However, even at this point Greater London was fragmented.

The Quango phase has created new alliances within London. However, there is no local authority mechanism to promote any unified vision for the Greater London arena. As the Green Paper, New Leadership for London (1997) states,

London is a city with its own strong identity and we believe that the structure of London's government needs to recognize this. Creating a Greater London Authority (GLA) will fulfill that need and at the same time bring decision-making closer to the people—bridging the gap between community-level government and national government... Nobody knows who speaks for London and too often nobody does.⁸

⁸Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1997), Consultation: A Voice for London, Green Paper, (London, UK: HMSO), para. 1.03.

There have been partnerships between LBCs, but no pan-London co-operation. Economic inequality between boroughs was magnified in periods of fiscal austerity. In recent years the economy has improved, however the gap between the wealthy and the poor has increased. According to Hill:

Urban policy...fostered city projects that have achieved success in their own terms, including a wide range of regeneration schemes for central areas. But these areas are too often surrounded by decay and dereliction; the result has been an increased polarization in conditions and life chances. It is the well being of the whole city which is at issue.⁹

In regards to democracy in London, the current system in many ways produces a vacuum for citizen power. Local authorities continue to offer citizens the greatest access to decision making, however currently local authorities are empowered to make very few decisions. There is currently no capacity or incentive for local authorities to work towards the common good. Indeed, in the current system thirty two separate voices prevail, each with differing perspectives.

The political structures and processes of local affairs have come under strain as governments have sought to shift service provision from the state to deregulated and market led organizations. The future of the citizen as part of the self governing community, however, is dependent on the future of the city as a polis: as a political and civic arena with local government as provider and enabler, and as the setting for renewed civic virtue and pride. The alternative is the dissolution of the city, with the flight of the more prosperous to the suburban hinterland, leaving a disadvantaged and increasingly ghettoized population at the city core.¹⁰

⁹D. Hill (1994), Citizens and Cities: Urban Policy in the 1990s (Hempstead, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf), p. 241.

¹⁰Hill, p. 24.

B. Planning for Reform: The Process of Integrating Values

In a period in which local authorities are embedded within national institutional frameworks, it is not at all surprising that the national election of a Labor government in 1997 would result in subsequent reform and change in the local authority arena. However, the reforms do not represent a return to the structures of the GLC phase. In contrast the proposed reforms represent the creation of a new set of institutions, though premised in part of the values of both the quango and GLC phases.

The economic conceptions of choice have been joined with a set of values stressing democratic participation and equal access. The Quango phase of values stressing economic choice and partnerships is being joined with values based upon the creation of more equal access, and community voice. It is a unification which promotes economic choice alongside political voice.

This is not an exercise to bring back the GLC or tinkering with existing local government structures. We wish to create a new model of government....Of course we should learn from our part and from international experience. We must also reflect the strengths of British local government and our traditions of democracy. It is vital that we preserve and build on the positive developments in recent years, most notably:

the willingness of the private and voluntary sectors to play a part in the formation and delivery of policy...the creation of subregional public/private partnerships to regenerate and promote competitiveness of their areas; and the achievements of the London boroughs.¹¹

This unity of ideas may well represent the beginning of a new institutional dynamic.

Democratic changes have been evidenced even in the process of defining the future of London governance. For the first time in history, the decision for reform

¹¹Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (1997), para. 109.

was placed squarely on the shoulders of Londoners themselves. In an unprecedented move, the resolution for reform was carried out through a local referendum in May 1998. Consultation documents were widely distributed for public consideration. Public hearing were held in London to collect popular views of the details of the reform. Even the consultation process appeared different, as government utilized new technologies such as the internet to publicize widely the possible changes. Even the local authorities themselves were involved in the process of consultation, going directly to their local constituencies to solicit advice. The reform process itself represented a public/private partnership, as well as a collaborative exercise across levels of government.

Consultation occurred over a relatively short period, as the referendum came just one year into the Labor administration. Government put forward a wide range of possibilities, rather than proposing one best way. In addition, in preparation research extended beyond London to international arenas. Indeed one year ago, I amongst other sat with the Minister for London at the APSA convention in Washington to discuss lessons in local governance which the American experience might provide.

C. The Proposal: Outcomes of the Referendum

The outcome of the referendum was the decision to create an elected strong mayor-council system for London in the year 2000. The reforms are unprecedented in the UK experience. At no level of government is there, nor has there ever been, an independent executive. In many ways, the new system takes what was in the past an

informal process of checks and balances, carried out by the existence of multiple levels of government, and provides it with a formal institutional basis.

The mayor will have the quintessential power to formulate the budget for the Greater London Authority (GLA), with assembly approval. The mayor is targeted as a facilitator of London wide discussion, with an emphasis on bringing together public and private sector actors, including strong emphasis on interest group participation. The proposed system in many ways capitalizes upon the growth of the interest group environment in London. The Mayor will have powers to appoint GLA members, with council approval. The key services over which the Mayor will be involved are transportation and planning.

Local authorities will regain financial control over their own budgets, with a strong dollop of community involvement in decision making. The plan suggests that local authorities will put forward budgets which include discussion of local council spending programs and plans. And it is proposed that the tool of referendum will be expanded. Local tax payers will have powers of approval over council spending programs through referendum. Suggestions have even been made that local councils might utilize "consultative referendums" allowing local tax payers to contribute to the creation of the plan itself. Finally, referendums have been proposed as protective mechanism, to be utilized if councils exceed their budget ceiling during a specific year, or at the demand of the population (similar to initiatives in the United States).

The final details are still to be worked out, however the above provides a broad picture of the possible future of local government in London. What is clear is

that change will occur.

D. Some Thoughts on the Future of Citizen Participation in London

Citizen participation in London as in most local governments in industrialized nations has historically been low. However, it is at the local level that the most valuable steps forward have been made. As we have seen from London's history, accessible institutions, mechanisms for discussion, debate, and supportive actors have together facilitated greater citizen involvement. The citizens of London have also, at times of crisis, been quite vocal and active in the process of local governance.

This research has suggested that a federated system offers the best prospect for citizen involvement because it offers a range of access points, it is permeable, and it is a system which is more likely to protect the interests of traditionally marginalized communities. The single tier system accentuated the inequalities which continue to characterize large central cities. A metropolitan tier, because it represents the totality of London based interests, as opposed to the specifics of a single borough is better able to represent the needs of traditionally marginalized communities. The addition of an independently elected Mayor, seems likely to promote a new and different vision for London governance.

First, one of the perennial problems in London has been its position at the center of party political struggle. New parties come to power and altered the policy directions set by previous power holders, resulting in a lack of continuity and creating confusion in the electorate. These outcomes have particularly negative consequences

for local democracy, such as the growth of cynicism in the London population.

An independently elected Mayor, though still likely to represent a party perspective, will be freed from party pressures while in office. Mayors will not be tied to the support of their party in the same way that parliamentary style local assemblies of the past have. Mayors are less likely to be mired in internal political battles. The possibility therefore of a greater focus on London, Londoners and their needs is likely to ensue under the new system. An elected Mayor will need to build a base of popular support in the community, which should work to the benefit of citizen participation. More responsive leadership may create greater satisfaction, and greater local involvement.

The new model also places democratic values at the center of reform. The reforms will create a range of mechanisms to promote citizen participation. These will include referendums, initiatives, consultation, and the incorporation of community based interests in decision making processes. While these mechanisms are important components of a healthy local democratic system, they do not necessarily lead to citizen empowerment. Much depends on who is brought into the local decision making process and the degree to which this involvement is made meaningful.

It is here that questions must be raised. The proposals made clear that economic interests would continue to play a prominent role in local decision making in the future, though emphasis on voluntary organizations are also a key component. The economic values derived from the Quango phase, which stress local authorities as facilitators of consumer choice will continue to be a central feature of London

governance, along with public/private partnerships. Thus the real question for group participation concerns the degree to which the terrain for participation is expanded to include a stronger voice for community.

It would seem that greater stress is being placed upon mechanisms for individual participation. Referenda do offer citizens a veto route. However, as American urban history demonstrates, this route can be costly and dominated by faction. Moreover, it is not a route for active involvement in decision making. Referenda are simply mechanisms of placation, not empowerment. Much will depend on how much real power is delegated to local authorities, and to citizen control. Research shows that individual participation does not necessarily result in the development of community identity. As Gittell points out,

It is only as part of an organized action that most segments of the population can exercise any form of power....value accrues to the system and the individual through acts of participation and association....individual participation cannot provide these advantages.¹²

Though individual participation is a component of local democracy, an effective system must also provide for group participation. Equal rights, equal access, and equal capacity are all key to enhancing citizen participation in local government.

As the institutional history has illustrated we cannot evaluate structures without also considering actors and environments. And so the degree to which these prove successful will have to wait until actual implementation. There are signs in the debate that positive steps will be taken to rebuild a London wide identity, to unify diverse

¹²Gittell (1980), pp. 20-21.

interests, and to incorporate a wider range of perspectives into local governing processes. The creation of a new metropolitan authority, an independently elected metropolitan mayor, and stronger local authorities, alongside a continued emphasis on open, accessible and accountable government are positive steps in rebuilding a healthy, more participatory local government arena.

From a purely structural perspective, the model offers democratic prospects. The creation of a federated system in London, as history shows can under the right environmental circumstances produce positive outcomes. As Sandel has aptly stated,

The political insight underlying...federalism remains relevant today. This is the insight that proliferating sites of civic activity and political power can serve self-government by cultivating virtue, equipping citizens for self-rule, and generating loyalties to larger political wholes.¹³

¹³M. Sandel (1996), p. 348.

Appendix 1: Interviews, Site Visits and Contacts

Members of Parliament

Rt. Hon. Tony Benn
 Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown
 Rt. Hon. Glenda Jackson
 Rt. Hon. Neal Kinnock

Rt. Hon. Tony Blair
 Rt. Hon. Robin Cook
 Rt. Hon. Peter Kilfoyle

Greater London Council Members

Tony Banks, Wandsworth, Tooting
 Arthur Edwards, Newham North West
 Illyd Harrington, Brent South
 Ken Livingston, City of Westminster
 Paddington

Paul Boateng, Waltham, Walthamstow
 Elgar Hardy, Bexley, Erith & Crayford
 Harvey Hinds, Southwark, Peckham
 Frances Morrell, Islington S. & Finsbury
 Valerie Wise, Wandsworth, Battersea S.

Greater London Council Department Staff

London Information Unit
 Art and Recreation Unit
 Office of the Chair

Ethnic Minorities Unit
 Department of Planning
 Office of the Leader

Borough Council Visits

Camden
 Greenwich
 Kensington and Chelsea
 Merton
 Southwark

Croydon
 Islington
 Lambeth
 Newham
 Wandsworth

Organizations and Associations Visited

Association of London Authorities
 London Planning and Advisory Council

The Greater London Group
 London Boroughs Association

Organizations and Associations Contacted

Action for Change
 Community Links
 Conservative Party Headquarters
 East London Partnership
 Greenwich Waterfront Development
 Hounslow Initiative
 London Forum
 Park Royal Partnership
 Waltham Housing Action

AZTEC
 Commission for Local Democracy
 Dalston City Challenge
 Finsbury Action
 Hackney 2000
 Labor Party Headquarters
 London First
 Southwark Challenge

Table 4.3 Board Membership on Key London Boards and Committees by Appointing Authority								
Areas	Membership Source	Metropolitan Water Board	London Electricity Board	N. Thames & South East Gas Boards	London Transport Board	London & Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee	Metropolitan Police	Port of London Authority
London Administrative Area	People							18
	LCC	14				6		4
	City of London	2				2		2
	Westminster MBC	2				1		
	London MBC's	27				6		
Greater London Areas	East Ham MBC	1				1		
	West Ham MBC	2				1		
	Croydon MBC					1		
Surrounding London Areas	Urban District Councils (UDC)	18						
	Rural District Councils (RDC)	1						
	Joint UDC/RDC Committees	11						
Surrounding Counties	Middlesex CC	3				2		
	Surrey CC	2				1		
	Essex CC	1				1		
	Herts. CC	1				1		
	Kent CC	1				1		
Other Board Representation	Thames Conservancy Board	1						
	Lee Conservancy Board	1						
	Electricity Consultative Council		1					
	Gas Consultative Council			1				
Central Government Appointees	British Transport Commission					4		
	Minister of Power		6	7				
	Minister of Transport				5-9	9		2
	Secretary of State					3	6	
	Minister of Labor					5		
	Admiralty							2
	Total # Members	88	7	8		45	6	28

Table 4.4 Percent Distribution of Board Members by Appointing Authority							
Appointing Authority	Metropolitan Water Board	London Electricity Board	N. Thames South East Gas Board	London Transport Board	London & Home Co-Traffic At Police Committee	Metropolitan Police	Port of London Authority
LCC	16%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	14%
MBC's	30%	0%	0%	0%	27%	0%	7%
Surrounding Counties	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%
UDC/RDC	34%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	2%	14%	13%	0%	0%	0%	64%
Central Government	0%	86%	88%	100%	47%	100%	14%

Appendix 2: Research Methodology: Data Problems

In order to evaluate the influence of institutional change on citizen participation, I categorized my data by the three dominant historical phases. Looking at the data through the lens of this historical time-series analysis allowed me to assess of the impacts of major institutional changes upon urban political participation. Data on participation was gathered for the period between 1955 and 1990.¹ My data was supplemented with data derived from other studies of participation in London.²

I selected several boroughs for in depth case study analysis. The determination of which boroughs to study was based on several factors. First and most importantly, the reforms of 1964 dramatically increased the size of the London territory and created 20 new boroughs. As I was interested in the impacts of all three institutional configurations, I felt it necessary to narrow my focus only to those boroughs which had been in existence during all three historical phases (the inner London boroughs $n=12$). Major and minor boundary changes at different points throughout the period studied meant that all the data had to be reconfigured for replication purposes.

By far the biggest stumbling block in this study related to inconsistencies in available data on race and ethnicity. Data collection in this area is a relatively new phenomenon in London, as one census study pointed out:

¹I travelled to London in 1990 and collected data covering the period of 1955 through to 1990. Since 1990 there have been two more local elections (1994 and 1998). Data on these elections was found in newspapers and through telephone contacts.

²These studies are referenced in the body of the text.

It is quite obvious that particularly with the colonial tradition of this country, a person's racial or ethnic origin is not the same thing as their birth place. Yet until recently it was, and to a greater extent still is, a matter of great sensitivity to ask people their ethnic origin. As the census is compulsory no question has yet been asked in this country on a person's racial or ethnic origin, although since 1841 a question has been asked about a person's country of birth. To supplement this, in 1971, the birthplace of a person's parents was also asked.³

It was not until the 1991 census that a question appeared specifically dealing with ethnicity.

The classification of boroughs according to minority population has changed over time. Data on race and ethnicity during the LCC phase was particularly weak. During the GLC phase, although the census data remained limited, extensive and detailed data was collected by the GLC itself. A second problem with the census data was the classification system used. The 1961 census classified individuals by the following three categories; those born outside England and Wales, those born in the Commonwealth and Ireland, and those who are "aliens." Second generation immigrants are not captured by these groupings. The weaknesses of the LCC phase data made detailed analysis of minority voter participation during that period difficult. In the data gathered on both the GLC and Quango phases, many of these problems were resolved. The real growth in minority communities occurred during the GLC phase thus making the LCC data problem less significant. I also utilized a range of secondary resources, studies, surveys and reports on ethnicity in London to compensate for weaknesses in the LCC data (noted in the body of the report).

¹ GLC Intelligence Unit (1988), "Statistics of London's Ethnic Minorities 1979 and 1981", Statistics Series: No. 40 (London, UK: GLC).

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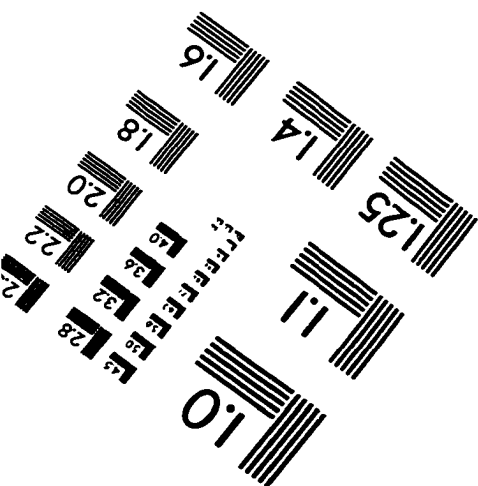
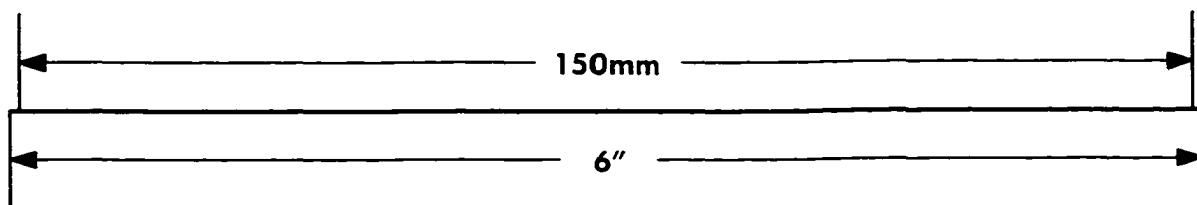
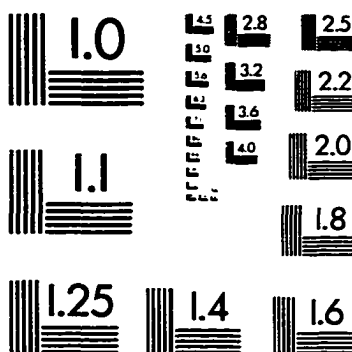
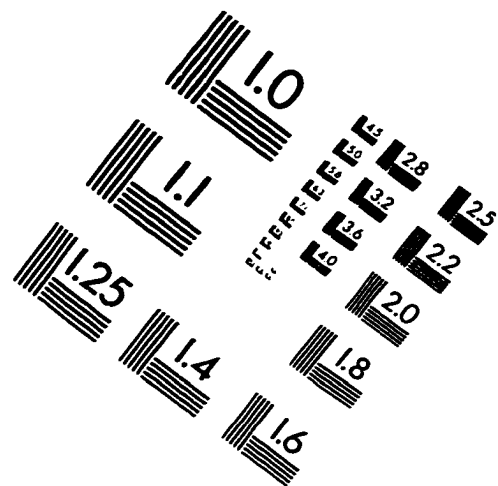
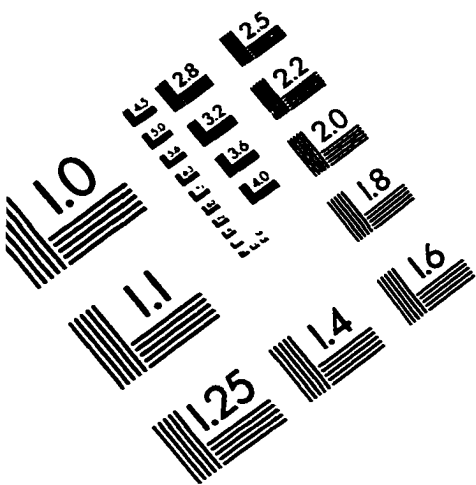
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IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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