The London Government Handbook

edited by Michael Hebbert and Tony Travers

GREATER LONDON GROUP

London School of Economics and Political Science

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CONTENTS

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The London government system continued to evolve even as we worked on the Handbook. Because of the elaborate and shifting character of the arrangements here described we must give especial emphasis to our disclaimer clause. Though every effort has been made to ensure it, the Greater London Group cannot formally guarantee the correctness of any information contained in this Handbook.

THE GREATER LONDON GROUP

The Greater London Group is a Research Centre of the London School of Economics and Political Science. It was founded in 1958 by the late William Robson, Professor of Public Administration, himself a notable authority on the problems of big city government, who saw the scope which the LSE offered for impartial study of and comment on the case of London.

The Group aims to maintain a centre of information and documentation on London government, to comment on major policies relating to the capital, to carry out and disseminate research on policy issues, and to provide an independent location for discussion and debate. It has a publications series for research monographs and discussion papers, *The Greater London Papers*.

The current membership of the Greater London Group is given below, with details of the chapters and sections of the Handbook contributed by individual members:

Robert J. Bennett
Professor of Geography

Tom Clegg   Chapters 2, 3 and 4 and all
Research Assistant   of Chapter 5

Derek R. Diamond   Maps
Professor of Geography with Special Reference to
Urban & Regional Planning; Chairman, Greater
London Group

Patrick Dunleavy   Chapter 2
Reader in Government

Stephen Glaister   London Regional
Cassel Reader in Economics with Special   Transport
Reference to Transport

Howard Glennerster
Professor of Social Administration

Alain Guyomarche   Metropolitan Police
Research Assistant

The Greater London Group

Michael Hebbert
Lecturer in Planning Studies, Research
Secretary, Greater London Group

Introduction, Chapters 2, 3 and 10 and Maps

Christopher Husbands
Senior Lecturer in Sociology

All of Chapter 8

Richard Jackman
Senior Lecturer in Economics

George W. Jones
Professor of Government

All of Chapter 1

Martin Loughlin
Lecturer in Law

London Residuary Body

Patrick McAuslan
Professor of Public Law

Brendan O'Leary
Lecturer in Public Administration

All of Chapter 9

Michael Synnott
London River Authority

London Waste Regulation Authority

Tony Travers
Senior Research Fellow; Director of Research, Greater London Group

Introduction, Chapters 2, 3, 4, 7 and 10 and Directory

Carol Vielba
City University Business School

All of Chapter 6

The Greater London Group
London School of Economics and Political Science
Houghton Street
London WC2A 2AE
England
Tel: (01) 405 7686
Telex: 24655 BLPES G
Fax: (01) 242 0392

Map 1 Local government in Greater London – the boroughs

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CHAPTER 9

London Government: Past, Present and Future

This chapter briefly surveys the past organisation of London government, the present structure, and two possible general schemes which are supported by the major political parties for the future of London government. The working definition of London in this chapter is the continuous built-up area in the conurbation surrounding the historic core of the Cities of Westminster and London. This definition, while admittedly vague, is preferred because it is nevertheless more objective and operational than the even more nebulous definition of London as a community.

The Past: Metropolitan Systems

Most people would agree that London is a metropolis with social and economic interdependencies which call for appropriate administrative and political institutions. There has been disagreement over two issues:

1. the boundaries of metropolitan interdependence, and
2. the appropriate structures of metropolitan government.

The first issue raised the question: 'Where is the boundary of London drawn?' This is a matter of obvious concern for local politicians who represent different social constituencies on the ground. The second area of disagreement raises the question, 'What degree of democratic and administrative decentralisation should exist in the metropolis?' This query not only concerns local but also national politicians, because how it is answered affects central–local government relations.

Since liberal democracy was fully established in the UK, i.e. since full adult suffrage was introduced in 1928, there have been only three ways in which London has been governed. These three patterns have represented different possible answers to the two key issues of the boundary of London and the appropriate degree of decentralisation.
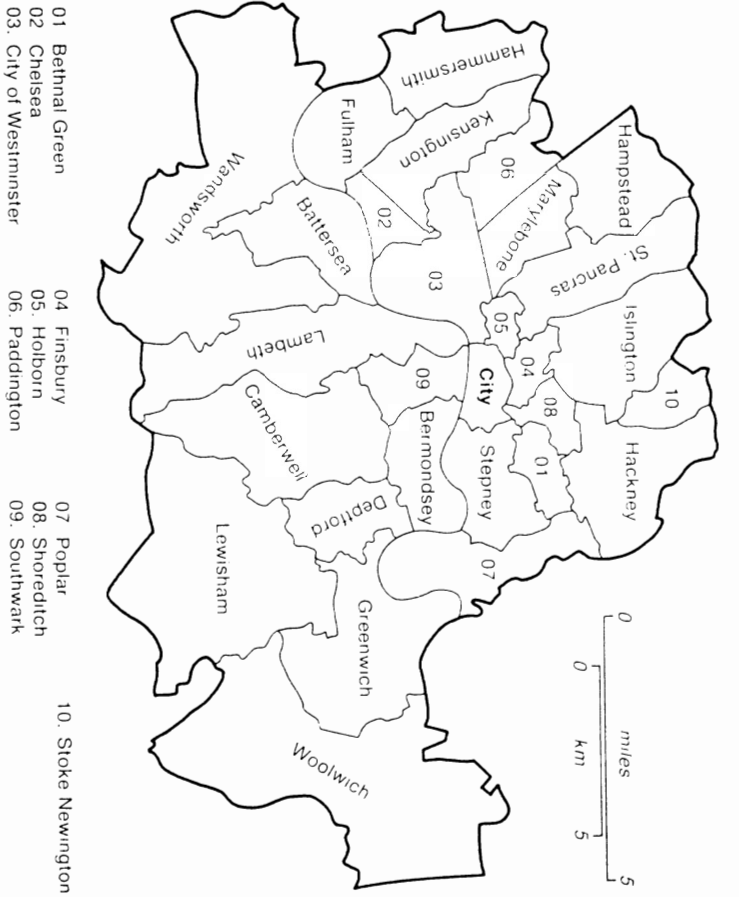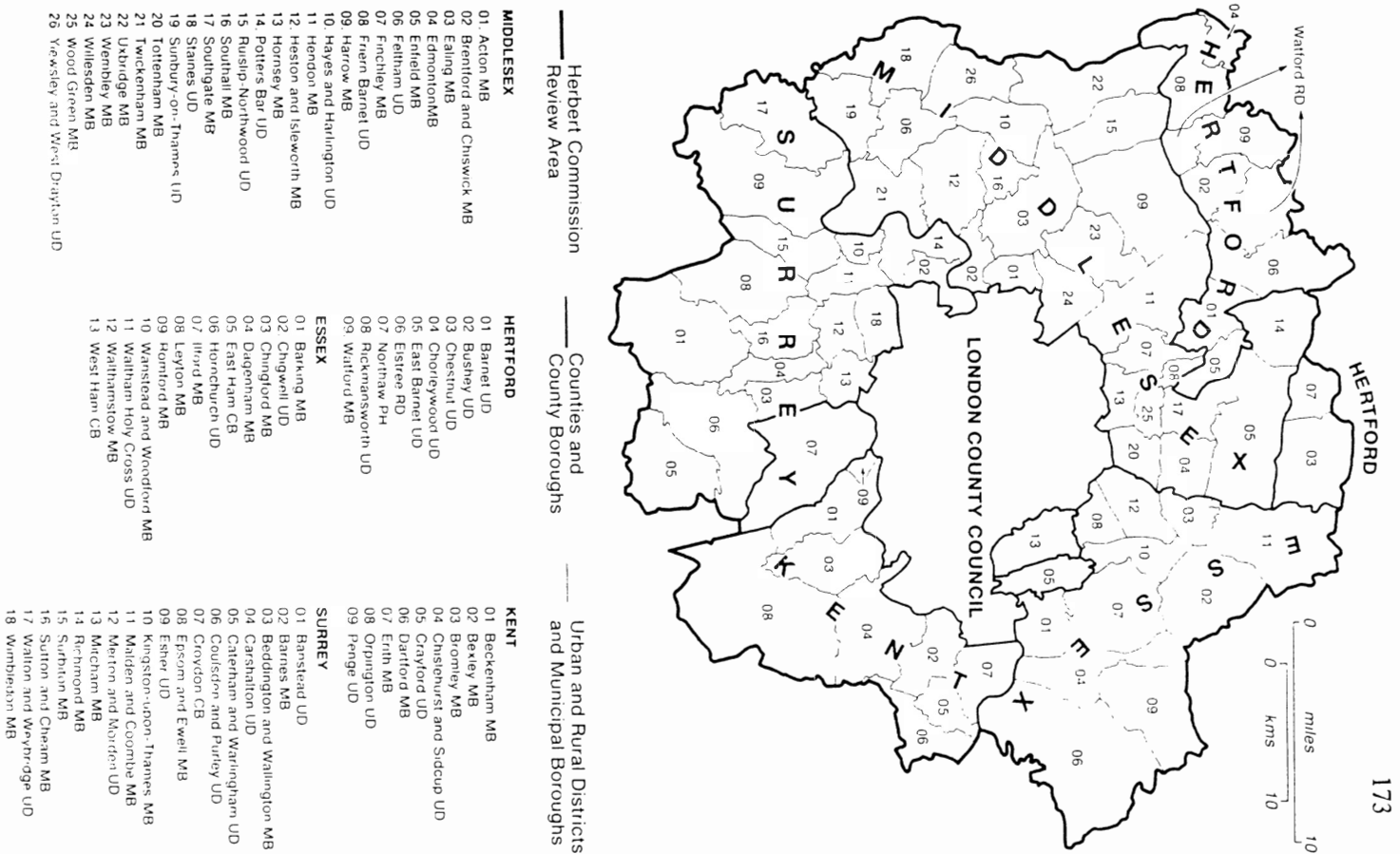
London Government: Past, Present and Future

01. Bethnal Green
02. Chelsea
03. City of Westminster
04. Finsbury
05. Holborn
06. Paddington
07. Poplar
08. Shoreditch
09. Southwark
10. Stoke Newington

Figure 9.1   Inner London before 1965

Figure 9.2   Outer London before 1965 ▶

—— Herbert Commission Review Area

—— Counties and County Boroughs

---- Urban and Rural Districts and Municipal Boroughs

MIDDLESEX
01. Acton MB
02. Brentford and Chiswick MB
03. Ealing MB
04. EdmontonMB
05. Enfield MB
06. Feltham UD
07. Finchley MB
08. Friern Barnet UD
09. Harrow MB
10. Hayes and Harlington UD
11. Hendon MB
12. Heston and Isleworth MB
13. Hornsey MB
14. Potters Bar UD
15. Ruislip-Northwood UD
16. Southall MB
17. Southgate MB
18. Staines UD
19. Sunbury-on-Thames UD
20. Tottenham MB
21. Twickenham MB
22. Uxbridge MB
23. Wembley MB
24. Willesden MB
25. Wood Green MB
26. Yiewsley and West Drayton UD

HERTFORD
01. Barnet UD
02. Bushey UD
03. Chestnut UD
04. Chorleywood UD
05. East Barnet UD
06. Elstree RD
07. Northaw PH
08. Rickmansworth UD
09. Watford MB

ESSEX
01. Barking MB
02. Chigwell UD
03. Chingford MB
04. Dagenham MB
05. East Ham CB
06. Hornchurch UD
07. Ilford MB
08. Leyton MB
09. Romford MB
10. Wanstead and Woodford MB
11. Waltham Holy Cross UD
12. Walthamstow MB
13. West Ham CB

KENT
01. Beckenham MB
02. Bexley MB
03. Bromley MB
04. Chislehurst and Sidcup UD
05. Crayford UD
06. Dartford MB
07. Erith MB
08. Orpington UD
09. Penge UD

SURREY
01. Banstead UD
02. Barnes MB
03. Beddington and Wallington MB
04. Carshalton UD
05. Caterham and Warlingham UD
06. Coulsdon and Purley UD
07. Croydon CB
08. Epsom and Ewell MB
09. Esher UD
10. Kingston-upon-Thames MB
11. Malden and Coombe MB
12. Merton and Morden UD
13. Mitcham MB
14. Richmond MB
15. Surbiton MB
16. Sutton and Cheam MB
17. Walton and Weybridge UD
18. Wimbledon MB

Until 1965 London was governed by the institutions which had been established in the late Victorian era. This dual system was structured by simple premises. The inner core of London was organised in two elected local government tiers, with the area-wide upper tier authority, the London County Council, having by far the greater functional responsibilities and administrative resources (see Fig. 9.1). The L.C.C, as it was known, remains internationally famous among scholars of comparative public administration as the grandfather of metropolitan government. By contrast, Outer London was organized on the basis of counties, county boroughs, and urban and rural districts. Their size, resources and administrative capacities varied considerably; there was also considerable duplication and overlapping in jurisdictions (see Fig. 9.2). The two Londons, outer and inner, corresponded, albeit very roughly, with the major axis of cleavage in British politics. Outer London was dominated by the Conservatives, Inner London by Labour. The pre-1965 system reflected more than anything else the culmination of historic, pragmatic and incremental adjustments to the numerous organisations which had performed government functions in the pre-democratic era. The system was latterly criticised by planners, administrators and academics as being anomalous, incomprehensible and in need of fundamental reorganisation. But it was largely the Conservatives' political ambition in the 1950s to strike a blow at Labour's L.C.C heartland which led to its demise in the London Government Act, 1963.

From 1965 until 1986, London was governed by a modernised and rationalised two-tier directly elected metropolitan system. Elements of the previous system survived, notably the organisation of education in the Inner London Education Authority, and the archaic and undemocratic government of the City of London. An area-wide authority, the Greater London Council, was established for the purposes of providing 'strategic' or metropolitan-wide functions in housing, urban planning, fire services, traffic, and the like. Public transport was later added to these functions. The 32 London boroughs which were carved out, with little respect for tradition (unusual by English standards), were established beneath the GLC, and were given more local, managerial, direct service and implementation functions (see Map 1). The system which emerged from the 1965 reorganisation reflected the political dilution and transformation of the ambitions of the planners and non-partisan reformers. The upper tier was left much weaker both in its range of functional responsibilities and autonomy than had been envisaged by enthusiasts for wider metropolitan government. The GLC was heavily dependent upon the boroughs for successful implementation of what-

ever programmes it chose to pursue, and was constrained by central government. It was sandwiched between central government and the boroughs. This weakness was exacerbated by the fact that political control of the GLC alternated between Labour and the Conservatives, whereas many boroughs, for most of the time, were bastions of one-party rule. Labour dominated Inner London, and the Conservatives Outer London. The GLC suffered from a combination of organisational weakness and political vulnerability. Because of particularist and local resistance, mainly by Conservative-dominated suburban boroughs, the GLC proved incapable of achieving many of its original objectives – especially in housing, planning and road-building – and by the mid 1970s was increasingly exposed to the charge that it was redundant. However, it can plausibly be argued that the Conservative pledge to abolish the upper-tier authority in the 1983 general election again owed more to politics than to considerations of administrative rationality (O'Leary, 1987).

Finally, London is currently experiencing its third governmental system in the democratic era. Since 1986 it has been organised on a stripped-down version of the previous two-tier metropolitan system. The elected metropolitan tier has been abolished and most of its functions and personnel transferred to central government, unelected quangos, statutory joint boards of borough representatives, and to the boroughs themselves. Metropolitan-wide government still exists but is now fragmented among diverse unelected and indirectly elected organisations. The ILEA is exceptional in that it survived reorganisation and was also made a directly elected authority, though it too is now under threat of imminent abolition. The London government system as a whole has also been subjected to the twin drives of the current Conservative administration since 1979: centralisation and privatisation. The financial and policy autonomy of borough governments in spending on housing, social services and education has been reduced, and central government has encouraged local authorities to move toward market and quasi-market policy-making systems in place of the more established bureaucratic mechanisms of public administration. The current government of London remains a modified metropolitan system but is clearly in a state of flux.

The Present: Unstable Metropolitanism

The most striking feature of the present organisation of London government as described throughout this Handbook is that it is fundamentally

unstable. The Conservatives, who have instituted and implemented all of the major reorganisations of London government in this century, are unhappy with the surviving embers of the GLC – notably ILEA – and ambitious to implement completely their streamlined market model of small-scale local government. They are also demonstrably anxious to remove local government functions from the public to the private sector, to relocate other functions, notably education, elsewhere in the public sector, and, as they understand it, to depoliticise local government. The Conservatives are also keen to attack Inner London Labour strongholds, which remain as sporadic, albeit disorganised, centres of political and ideological resistance to present philosophical trends. To the modern Conservative these institutions are not just convenient electoral scapegoats but are regarded as serious obstructions to the revitalisation of Great Britain. For Conservatives the reorganisation of London government has only started. Since 1979 they have moved dramatically away from support for any idea of metropolitan government: the notions of 'strategic' planning in a metropolis and local public sector intervention and administration in transport, housing, land-use and education are not consonant with the doctrines of neo-liberal political economy.

The dispositions of the Opposition parties, both Labour and the Liberal–SDP Alliance, also suggest that the status quo is unstable. The entire Opposition condemned the abolition of the GLC and have frequently complained about the problems it has created. Although the Opposition was much less cohesive in attacking the Conservatives' privatisation drive in local government they have also been united in their condemnation of the centralisation of public administration, both in London and elsewhere in the country. However, while the Opposition were agreed that the Conservatives were wrong to abolish the GLC, since then they have by no means been advocates of a return to the previous arrangements. They do not want just to restore the GLC, although that may figure in part of a wider re-design. The Opposition, like the Conservatives, have moved some distance from their past commitment to the idea of metropolitan government. Some have moved to the opposite extreme of advocating regional government.

The Future: The End of Metropolitanism

Political decentralisation, in principle, can extend from just one single centre in which all political authority and resources are concentrated, to an infinite number of discrete tiers. Similarly the number of functions served by each centre of authority can range from one to infinity. The two

future models of decentralisation for London which are discussed here have been selected from the theoretically infinite number of possible designs on the basis that they are on the political agenda, are administratively feasible, and are compatible with key cultural and ideological alignments in both London and the UK. As the foregoing discussion has suggested, there are two emergent and competing ideals for the future organisation of London government, the *market model with the strong centre* and the *regional model*.

The other obvious possibility for London government is the *unitary model* – with all its many variations. In the full unitary model there is only one tier of directly elected local government with multi-functional responsibilities in each spatial unit and no intermediate elected or unelected tiers of government other than that of central government. The key problems with all variants of the unitary model for London government are obvious. One London-wide authority, however defined, would be extremely powerful, and so large as to defeat some of the objectives of decentralisation. By contrast, several unitary authorities in London – of whatever size and construction – would face all the problems of co-ordination and interdependence which in the past and the present have created the need for metropolitan-wide government whether elected, indirectly elected, or unelected, voluntary or imposed. We can neglect the analysis of unitary models here because they are not on the political agenda and would only come onto the agenda in the event of the future Royal Commission. Bereft of the support of any current political party, the unitary model does not seem to have a good future, despite its cogent advocacy by Ken Young of the Policy Studies Institute and now Director of INLOGOV, and Professor George Jones of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Nor are either of the other two ideals ever likely to be wholly realised as there is always a gap between political aspirations and their implementation. However, it is worth spelling out their salient features, and their most obvious merits and drawbacks, precisely because they are very likely to shape the future of London.

The Market Model and the Strong Centre

The modern Conservative party has attempted to move towards a more market-type model of local government. Many of the thinkers behind modern Conservative ideals have regarded local government as monopolistic and bureaucratic suppliers funded by general taxes, and therefore as generically prone to the wasteful over-supply of services. The

government's White Paper which preceded the abolition of the GLC was spending more than was necessary to provide basic services, in pursuit of unspecified goals: 'The upper tier authority has a large rate-base, and an apparently wide remit. This generates a natural search for a "strategic" role which may have little basis in real needs' (Department of the Environment, 1983).

Policy-makers within the Conservative government appear to have been influenced by the market-type model of local government expounded by 'Public Choice' theorists of the American New Right. These believe that in the best of local government worlds citizens should be able to adjust their public service-local tax mix by 'voting with their feet' to local authorities whose tax mix best meets their preferences (Tiebout, 1956). The implication of this model is that if there are more, single-purpose, and smaller local authorities in the London area, then the greater will be the degree of consumer control over the local authorities. However, supporters of a more market-orientated kind of local government accept that it is not feasible to have as many authorities as there are individual preferences. And they realise that decentralisation, by itself, does not guarantee an accurate picture of citizens' preferences. The voting system, the organisation of local government and inter-governmental relations can seriously distort the articulation of voters' wants. Moreover, over-decentralised local government can result in losses of economies of scale.

These qualifications mean that it is possible to support the idea both of a more free-market approach to local government *and* of metropolitan-wide government, provided that such government is financed, wherever possible, by specific levies or from user-charges, and provided that quasi-market mechanisms such as contracting out are used to encourage efficiency. However, there remains considerable pressure with Conservative thinking to reduce the role of central government, new quangos, the new London-wide authorities and the boroughs in the direct public provision of services in London. To this end, Mrs Thatcher's third administration can be expected to consider a number of further reforms.

First of all, education is to be simultaneously centralised, fragmented and marketised. The education reforms legislation of 1988 implied almost as profound a reorganisation of local public services as did GLC abolition. The service is increasingly to be financed by earmarked funds from central government. Schools will be offered the possibility of opting out of local government control and into control by the DES. Effectively,

power would go to the DES and governors/heads. ILEA is to be fragmented, with its polytechnic supervisory functions being altogether removed from its ambit.

Second, London boroughs, especially Inner London Labour-controlled ones, are likely to experience increased central controls over their finances and compulsory contracting out of services. The central government will in part be responding to the high levels of indebtedness in such authorities. It may continue to bypass the boroughs when trying to promote economic development by setting up further special agencies like the London Docklands Corporation and by extended promotion of deregulated enterprise zones. Moreover, it is not implausible that for both administrative and political reasons the Conservatives will be tempted to reorganise the boundaries of Inner London authorities. The effects of final crises through the collision between Labour's local socialists and Conservative retrenchment from Whitehall will create the opportunity for further fragmentation and parcelling. In this case the Government will continue to encourage boroughs to combine voluntarily to contract out to private suppliers, especially in such activities as waste disposal. It is even possible that a Ministry for London, in which Inner London is governed directly from Whitehall, will be considered as a possible response to the 'ungovernability' of the inner city. And third, we can expect that certain major services, such as London Transport and the Thames Regional Water Authority will become prime candidates for privatisation.

The ideal of privatised local governments run by streamlined councils – consisting of little more than elected councillors with teams of financial, computer and legal advisers engaged in the management of contracts – clearly appeals most to many Conservatives who regard it as a route to greater freedom and efficiency. But there are four major drawbacks to this model for London government.

First, the market model with a strong centre has been, and is likely to be, unpopular, making its implementation problematic and intensely conflictual. In the absence of electoral reform and agreement over boundaries the system is only likely to last as long as the Government does – thereby encouraging further bouts of adversarial politics.

Second, the move to greater use of market forces throughout London government is likely to exacerbate metropolitan inequalities.

Third, the market ideal explicitly downplays the importance of government regulation of the environment and of social costs, and suggests that where local authorities have common interests they will co-operate with one another without any need for co-ordination by a higher-level

regional or metropolitan authority. If they do not co-operate they will produce sub-optimal welfare outcomes, but if they do try to co-operate every authority will have the incentive to free-ride on the contributions of the others. In principle there are only two optimal solutions to this dilemma. Either voluntary co-operation emerges over the long run through social learning or coerced co-operation by the centre is essential. It is worth recalling that it was precisely the evidence of the failure of voluntary co-operation in London's past which was used as an argument by Conservatives for the establishment of the GLC (Smallwood, 1965; Rhodes, 1970) in the 1960s. And the current joint boards provide plentiful fresh evidence of the difficulties with voluntary co-operation. In the recent reorganisation the Government had to opt for coercion through provisions for the Department of the Environment or the Department of Transport to intervene where necessary to compel co-operation between boroughs. The government's belief that the new joint boards would be more efficient and effective than the GLC does not fit the evidence (Flynn and Leach, 1984). These facts suggest that the Conservative case against metropolitan government per se is not over-whelming, even on its own terms. When co-operation fails coercion may be the best solution. And if there has to be metropolitan government because of metropolitan-wide problems the critical question is: why should it be the central government which chooses and compels the mode of co-operation in the metropolis? A consistent 'new right' theory would hold that where possible the relevant consumers-citizens should not have their welfare controlled by people who are not elected to represent their preferences. The Conservatives' strategy for London is not consistent in this respect. The legitimacy of the centre's decision-making powers in the metropolis will be continually at issue, quite apart from the administrative load which will be placed on the centre.

Finally, it is often argued that the market model with the strong centre neglects the existence of explicitly regional public problems which create a case for a distinct regional level for the management of public policy. This criticism is the starting point of the second possible future model of London government.

The Regional Model

The Labour party and the Liberal-SDP Alliance, albeit to differing extents and with very important differences over the issue of electoral reform, have both moved in favour of a regionalist organisation of local

government in the UK. What are the principal assumptions behind this emergent regionalism?

First, it is believed that the existence of distinct city-regions or regional economies, spatial units with high interdependencies, notably in housing, transport, land-use and labour markets, creates a prima-facie functional case for a tier of government distinct from either traditional local or central institutions.

Second, it is argued that a regionalist solution to the organisation of decentralised government provides the most democratic and effective mechanism for dealing with administrative overload and complexity. On the one hand much central government field administration and various quasi-governmental agencies, such as the National Health Service, the Water Authorities, British Rail and London Transport, are effectively free from democratic accountability at any level, and lack any compelling managerial justification for being nominally controlled by Whitehall. They could, in principle, be subordinated to elected, or indirectly elected, regional governments. On the other hand a regional tier of government, organised over a wider and coherent spatial area, in principle, offers the prospect of easier and more effective co-ordination of recognised regional issues than that provided through the voluntary co-operation of smaller and more numerous local governments. The latter are likely to be in competition with each other for resources and keen to export their difficulties in ways which will produce overall reductions in welfare.

Third, regional government is seen as a mechanism for creating a more powerful counter-balance to the central government than that which has been provided by local governments in the past. Regional governments will draw support from wider electoral and financial bases, and, provided the distribution of functions between centre and region is carefully organised they will have an excellent chance of obtaining the legitimacy, stability and capacity to resist centralisation.

Fourth, it is argued that there are distinct regional identities, shared cultures which transcend other forms of stratification, which ought to be reflected in democratic political institutions. Such recognition might enhance the legitimacy of the political system.

Finally, regionalists generally are in favour of maintaining local governments rather than abolishing them or subjecting them to central-ised controls. They seek an extra tier of democratic government not the substitution of one tier by another, through the confederational orga-nisation of the regional and local governments, and they believe that regionalist solutions will strengthen local government by removing many
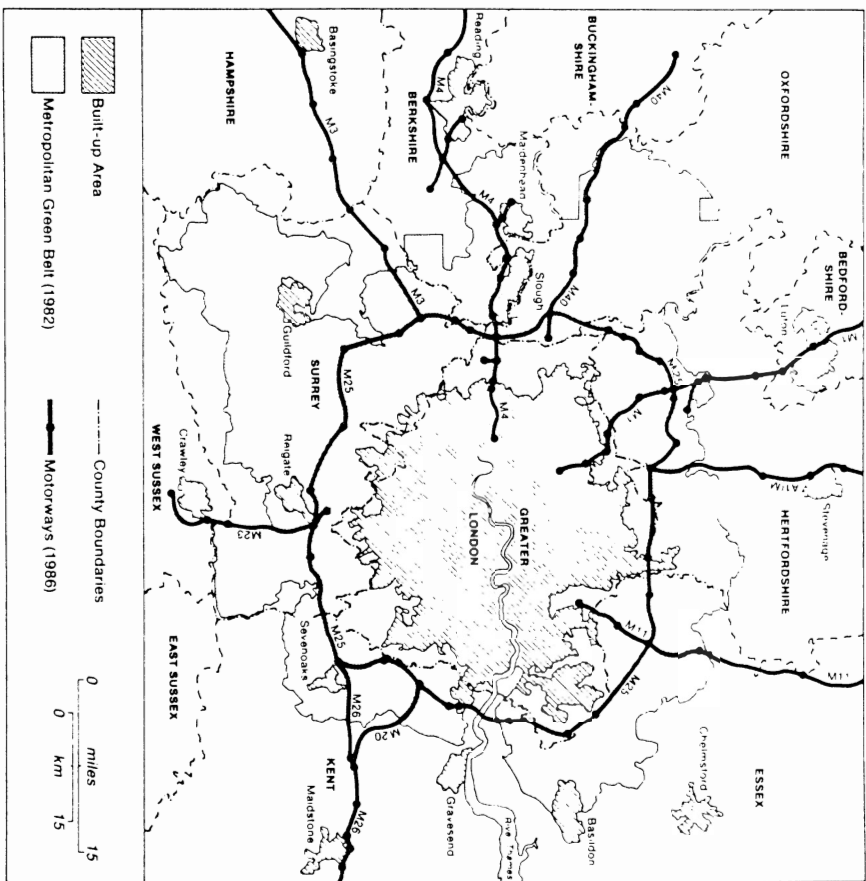
Figure 9.3   The London Region as defined by the Metropolitan Green Belt

unnecessary sources of conflict between centre and locality.

These assumptions are all contestable. But regionalist philosophies have made some headway in discussions of the future of London government among the Opposition parties. There are, however, three difficulties which the Opposition parties share in considering the implementation of the regionalist ideal for London, and one which divides them.

The first difficulty is the most straightforward: what region is London in? The minimalist answer to this question is obvious: the Greater London area – or the old GLC boundaries. This solution amounts to a restatement of the case for metropolitan government. And within the Labour and Alliance parties there are some advocates of a revived but strengthened GLC – with a new functional allocation of powers and greater capacity to implement strategic plans. The intermediate answer to the question is based upon the commuter region – which might include all the territory within the boundaries of the M25 and the Green Belt (see Fig. 9.3) or go beyond these boundaries to incorporate satellite dormitory and new towns. The maximalist position, based on the logic of economic interdependencies, presumably will include the Home Counties, East Anglia and Kent within the appropriate boundaries of a South East Region (see Fig. 9.4). The size of the regional unit clearly matters considerably for administrative and political reasons. The wider the definition of the region the more likely it is to increase the cultural, economic and political dominance of the South East of England within the UK – and the more likely it is to be controlled by the Conservatives. A large South East region will imperil support for regionalism elsewhere, and in the absence of electoral reform, will be against the party political interests of the Opposition parties.

The second difficulty is: what functions should the region have? The maximalist position of permitting the region to pass laws, make policy and raise taxes as it wishes, subject only to explicit prohibitions, is incompatible with British constitutional convention, and is almost certainly a non-starter. However, the Opposition parties have moved towards support for a local income tax. Most regionalists also have a favoured list of functions in London which they believe are appropriately managed at the regional level: transport, land-use, waste–disposal, water supply, health services, public health and safety, and environmental regulation, to which policing, economic development, employment creation and education are sometimes added. These are functions, it is argued, where interests are sometimes so transcend the constituent parts of London and its environs that they require a strategic authority for their articula-
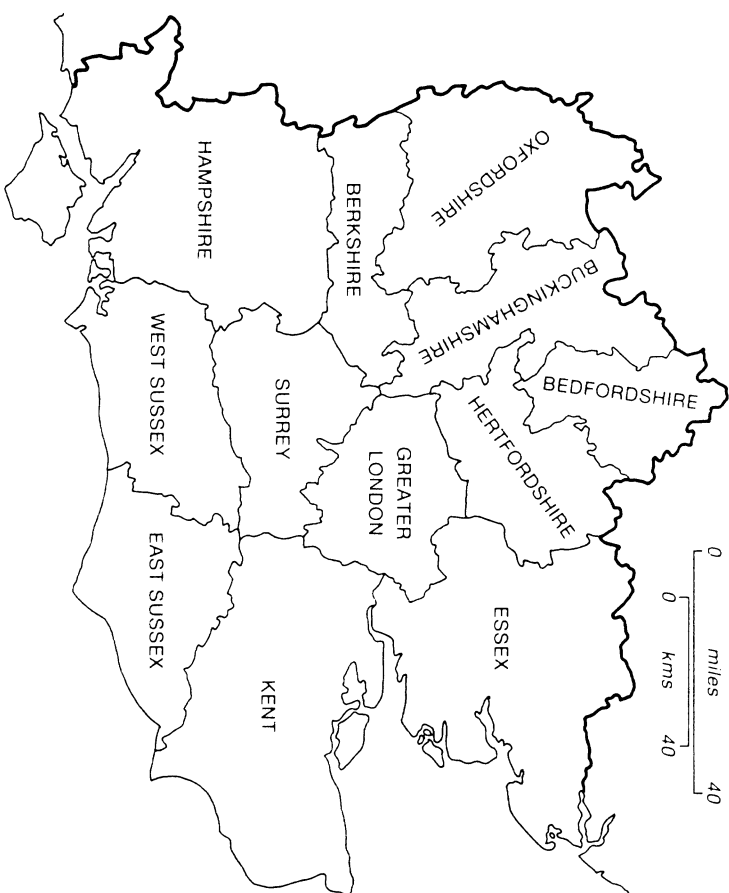
Figure 9.4 The South East Planning Region

tion and aggregation. Regionalists argue that such a multi-functional regional authority need not be bureaucratically top-heavy. Provided that it is given sovereign legal authority over its plans, it could manage implementation at arms length, through existing public agencies and/or contracts with private agencies.

The third difficulty compounds the first two: how will the creation of the region affect the rest of the governmental and intergovernmental system? Regionalism creates obvious political and organisational tensions. Localists fear that the creation of powerful regions will largely take place at the expense of local government. They believe local government is already eviscerated by centralisation, reduced to an administrative apparatus of Whitehall, and already too large, by European standards, to be genuinely local. Regionalism to them represents the termination of English local government. By contrast, 'centralisers' fear that the creation of powerful regions will take place largely at the expense of Whitehall and ministers, exacerbate the considerable turbulence in intergovernmental relations, and potentially block the centre from achieving its programmes – including regional equalisation and equalisation of service provision.

Only one set of these anxieties can effectively be alleviated. Most regionalists in the Opposition parties do not want the creation of a South East Regional Government or Greater London Council to take place at the expense of local government. Therefore they emphasise that regional functions should largely be ones which are currently exercised by the centre or quasi-governmental agencies, or in the case of London, functions formerly exercised by the GLC. They also want the bulk of personnel to be employed by local government rather than the region, separating out, as far as is possible, policy-making to the region and implementation to the local authorities. And critically, most regionalists see a case for the restructuring of the London boroughs and the City Corporation to make them fit better with any proposed regional authority.

Several proposals for such restructuring have been floated, though mostly it should be noted by non-regionalists. One school of thought has advocated the amalgamation of the Inner London boroughs to create a core London authority, reminiscent of the London County Council (Fig. 9.1), capable of managing the inner city. By contrast, another suggests that all the London boroughs should be abolished and carved up into five wedges of similar size and resources, akin to the London Fire Divisions (Map 14).

The fourth difficulty is controversial both within and across the

Opposition parties: how should the region be elected? There are two issues at stake here. The first is whether the regional government should be directly elected or indirectly elected, and the second is whether the voting system should be reformed. The enthusiasts of direct elections argue that they are more democratic and more legitimate and will give the new regions a fighting chance of survival. The advocates of the indirect election of elected local councillors to the regional authority believe that such procedures are more likely to harmonise regional–local relations and relieve anxiety at the centre about the emergence of a rival power-centre. The issue of electoral reform divides the Opposition parties, with the S L D and S D P favouring proportional representation and the Labour party at present still in favour of the plurality rule mechanism. Labour is in a painful dilemma. The application of proportional representation throughout London local government would weaken Labour's domination of certain areas – especially Inner London. But the wider the boundaries of the region in which London government is situated the more likely Labour is to benefit from proportional representation and to suffer from the plurality rule. The general election result of 1987 may perhaps concentrate Labour's mind on the rationality of its position and on the subject of electoral reform.

The regionalist ideal has many coherent arguments and enjoys support within the Opposition parties. It has major difficulties in design and implementation which its enthusiasts recognise: the issues of appropriate boundaries, functions, intergovernmental relations and the election system being the most obvious. However, there are further drawbacks which must enter into judgements of its feasibility. With the unflattering exception of Northern Ireland, regionalism is wholly novel to British political tradition. A South East Region is not a popular demand, this being a region that paradoxically has a much clearer definition in the eyes of the rest of the United Kingdom than of its own population. And here's the rub. A London Region will be regarded elsewhere as another instrument for developing the privileged economic position of the South East. The bigger the region the more widespread will be such suspicions. The argument that the South East needs regional government to cope with the problems of affluence and localised poverty whereas other areas need regional government because of their relative deprivation will sound more than a little odd – especially for those concerned by national-level inequalities. Finally, the regionalists will also face the problem that there will be no consensus for their model, although it is less likely to cause the depth of controversy and conflicts that the implementation of the market model promises. Nonetheless, the Con-

servatives can be expected to oppose regionalism with all the support they can muster.

Summary

The future design of London government will be neither the product of administrative rationality or academic reflection, nor the by-product of allegedly inexorable economic or social processes. Rather, it will be shaped largely as a product of party political interests, political ideologies, party conflicts and coalitions. The two most likely configurations are the market model with a strong central government role in London, and some variation on a regional model which will include a reorganisation of the London boroughs. At present the former configuration seems more likely to shape London's future than the latter. But whichever ideal is partially realised we may be confident that for the foreseeable future there will be no going back to the previous modes of metropolitan government.

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