

Reorganization in Three Cities

Explaining the Disparity between Intended Actions and Unanticipated Consequences

*Hank V. Savitch*¹

Introduction

Since its consolidation in 1898, New York City has undergone six major charter reorganizations. On average, the city's political and administrative institutions have been reorganized every 17.8 years. The French reorganize urban areas by national statute and, on occasion, by referendum. Since the inception of modern Paris in 1871, that city has been reorganized eleven times at an average interval of 11.7 years. The British are slower to change. Since the beginning of modern London in 1888, that metropolis has been reorganized just four times at an average interval of 32.6 years.

The frequency of urban reorganization has been propelled by a swinging pendulum toward or away from the concentration of power (Kaufman 1969). New York began one swing toward decentralization in the mid- and late 1960s only to become sidetracked onto a number of compromising detours during the 1970s. Paris began one of its swings in the mid-1960s toward a centralization of authority only to attempt an abrupt change in direction during the 1980s. London made a giant move toward regional consolida-

tion in 1963 only to swing into full retreat two decades later.

At times, there were efforts to reconcile the seemingly opposite poles of centralization and decentralization by adopting functional and geographic distinctions. When John Lindsay was mayor of New York, he tried to concentrate power at city hall and decentralize some decision making into the neighborhoods. When London was converted into Greater London, its designers pointed out that centralized and decentralized authority ought not to be seen in hierarchical terms. Instead, London's regional council was given a wider, not a higher, role. London's localities were treated as narrower, not lower, authorities.

The Curiosities of Reorganization

What is curious about reorganization is its innumerable twists and its mystifying outcomes. Reorganization is not a simple act in which changes are made at the stroke of a pen and left at that. Rather, it is a multidimensional process, worked out through a complex interplay of forces, laden with stated and unstated

goals with consequences that are often unanticipated—and sometimes contrary to what was intended.²

The main purpose of this article is to explain why and how unanticipated consequences occur. A related purpose is to explain those factors that make up the process of reorganization, to enhance understanding of its paradoxical dynamics, and to provide conclusions about how those dynamics affect organizational behavior. The analysis is offered with specific reference to major reorganizations undertaken in New York, Paris, and London over three decades in an effort to shed light on the commonalities of reorganization across time, place, and circumstance.

The key to understanding reorganization is to view it as a long-term series of episodes through which stages, interactions, and cumulative effects can be traced. In doing this, I offer a model of a process, explain the generation of unanticipated consequences, and show how original intentions may sometimes be undermined.

Toward a Defense, Definition, and Model of Reorganization

In early work, scholars recognized the manipulative potential of institutions and the importance of reorganization in shaping outcomes (Barnard 1968; Simon 1945; Fesler 1949; March and Simon 1958; Schattschneider 1960). By the mid-1960s this approach had been abandoned. The behavioral movement played down the role of institutions and instead emphasized individuals as the crucial unit of analysis. The new orientation brought scholars to observe beliefs, motivations, attitudes, and behaviors (Eulau

1963; Eulau and Prewitt 1973; Storing 1962; Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972).

Following in the behavioral wake, recent authors continue to discount the importance of institutions, arguing that formal structures count for relatively little (Crozier and Thoenig 1976; Thoenig 1988). What really counts, according to this literature, are behind-the-scenes activities of interest groups, iron triangles, and issue networks (Eulau and Prewitt 1973; Hecllo 1978). Some scholars do not view reorganization seriously. Writing on London, O'Leary (1987, 387) concluded that its reorganization is a mere smoke screen, a diversion used to "displace attention from insoluble public policy problems." Finally, those who have tried reorganization minimize its potency. A White House adviser is quoted as telling the president that it is people, rather than organizational structures, that count (March and Olsen 1983; Heineman and Hessler 1980).

March and Olsen (1983) took a more subtle view of institutions and their reorganization. They suggested that institutions may be important because they aggregate individual behavior into "interlocking choices." Those choices may, nonetheless, be subject to whim, to prevailing opportunities, or to the "happstance of short run political attention" (March and Olsen 1983, 286). In effect, they recognized institutional chaos and suggested that good theory should pay attention to why that chaos occurs (Cohen, March, and Olsen 1972).

In this article, I take a cue from March and Olsen in explaining the seemingly chaotic outcomes of reorganization. Urban reorganization is defined as a reformulation of formal institutions, struc-

tures, rules, and practices that govern geographic areas and control their operations. Reorganization may involve changes in the hierarchical setting of organizations (centralization, decentralization), it may include changes in the scope of operations (boundary changes), and it may encompass changes in functions carried out by institutions (division of labor).

The problem of reorganization is not its weakness but its strength and its contradictory effects. I suggest that reorganization embodies a depth of strategy designed to realize multiple values. These values are worked out over considerable stretches of time. Given the scope of reorganization and its long-term frame, some values may be more sustainable than others, some values may conflict with others, and some values may be achieved to the detriment of others. To say the least, reorganization produces outcomes that are difficult to predict. More said, reorganization is fraught with conflict that can reverse the intent of decision makers.

Still another factor affecting reorganization is its context. It is by now a commonplace warning that change does not occur in a vacuum and is shaped by the context of meaning and events. Yet, context also changes, and what was expected under one set of conditions may not be the same under another. In New York, under Mayor John Lindsay, decentralization meant neighborhood control for Blacks and Hispanics, while under Mayor Abe Beame, it was converted into improved service delivery. For the Parisian Left, decentralization connoted a politics of redistribution; for the Right, it entailed less bureaucracy and more privatization.

Reorganization is often used in an ever-pressing effort to accommodate these unreconcilable objectives and changing contexts. Adjustments are attempted to shore up neglected values, changes are made to accommodate different contexts, and compromises are undertaken to build workable coalitions. Sometimes, a radical shift in the political wind brings an opposition into power that initiates still another reorganization.

Looked at from the short run and as a single instance, organizational change may appear as a capricious attempt to gain a margin of advantage. Seen from the long run and as a cumulative series of struggles, reorganization can have profound consequences. The long run exposes the incompatibilities of reorganization, just as it yields its unanticipated consequences.

One way to capture the long-term, cumulative effects of reorganization is to view it as a skein of processes designed to realize particular values. I begin with this and describe the most salient values sought by reorganization. These include

1. administrative efficiency, which would enhance policy making, improve coordination, and facilitate effective planning.

2. political dominance, which would enable groups of partisans to weaken the opposition and govern with little interference.

3. democratic virtue, which would bring government closer to the people and encourage citizen participation in local problem solving.

4. better service delivery, which would make bureaucracy more efficient, effective, and responsive.

5. economic prosperity, which would stimulate development, promote even

growth, and enhance the city's reputation as a world renowned center of commerce and culture.

6. substantive strength in government and a positive public attitude toward government, which would point out the triumphs of reorganization, enhance trust in those who led it, and promote the legitimacy of public institutions.

Next, the flow of the reorganization is represented as (1) *intended action and rationale*, the objectives and justifications for reorganization; (2) *context*, the conditions, meanings, and constraints that me-

diate reorganization; (3) *response and impact*, reactions from, and effects upon, constituents and institutions; (4) *unanticipated consequences*, unexpected behavior or surprising applications; and (5) *undermining effects upon long-term objectives*.

Figure 1 shows the process of reorganization and incorporates some values and examples. Note the intended action for reorganization is divided into a stated action (to bring about administrative efficiency) and an unstated one (to achieve political dominance). This is a matter of salience, not relative importance.

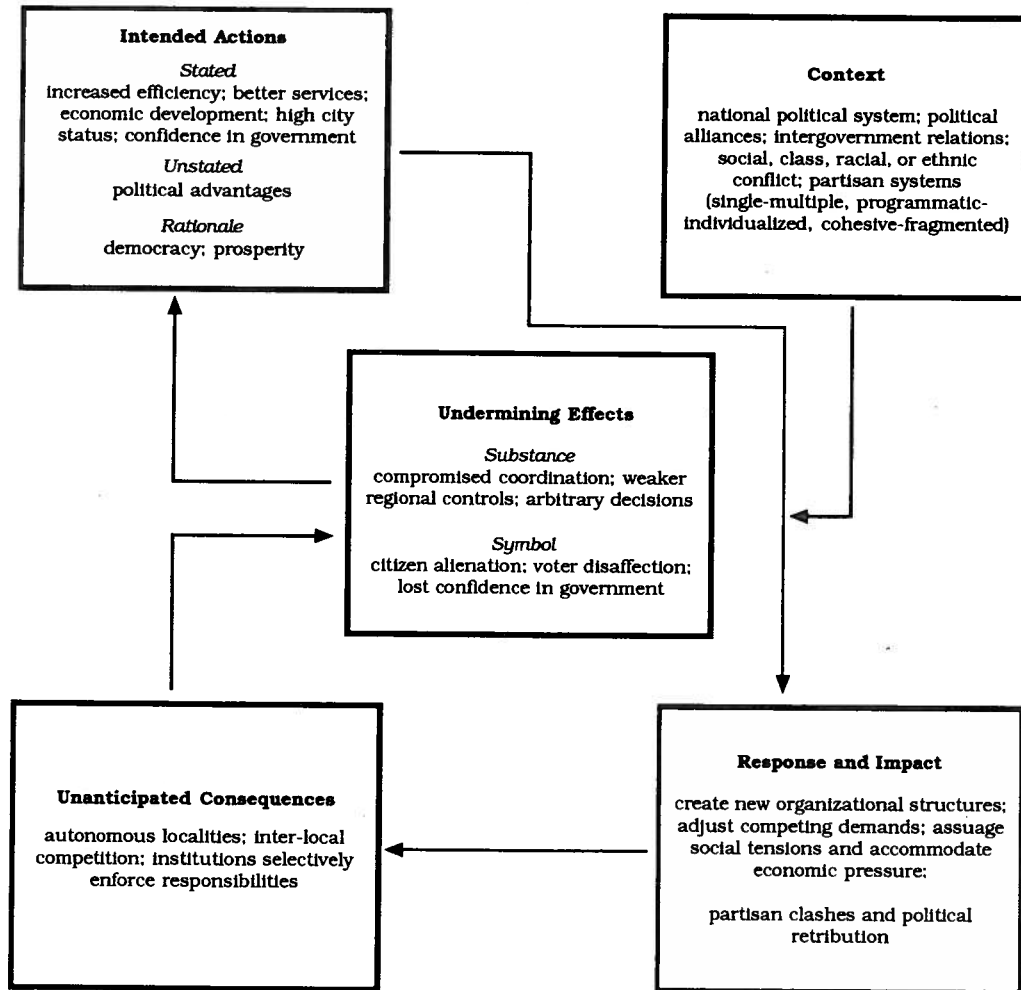


Figure 1. Urban Reorganization: Process and Values

tures, rules, and practices that govern geographic areas and control their operations. Reorganization may involve changes in the hierarchical setting of organizations (centralization, decentralization), it may include changes in the scope of operations (boundary changes), and it may encompass changes in functions carried out by institutions (division of labor).

The problem of reorganization is not its weakness but its strength and its contradictory effects. I suggest that reorganization embodies a depth of strategy designed to realize multiple values. These values are worked out over considerable stretches of time. Given the scope of reorganization and its long-term frame, some values may be more sustainable than others, some values may conflict with others, and some values may be achieved to the detriment of others. To say the least, reorganization produces outcomes that are difficult to predict. More said, reorganization is fraught with conflict that can reverse the intent of decision makers.

Still another factor affecting reorganization is its context. It is by now a commonplace warning that change does not occur in a vacuum and is shaped by the context of meaning and events. Yet, context also changes, and what was expected under one set of conditions may not be the same under another. In New York, under Mayor John Lindsay, decentralization meant neighborhood control for Blacks and Hispanics, while under Mayor Abe Beame, it was converted into improved service delivery. For the Parisian Left, decentralization connoted a politics of redistribution; for the Right, it entailed less bureaucracy and more privatization.

Reorganization is often used in an ever-pressing effort to accommodate these unreconcilable objectives and changing contexts. Adjustments are attempted to shore up neglected values, changes are made to accommodate different contexts, and compromises are undertaken to build workable coalitions. Sometimes, a radical shift in the political wind brings an opposition into power that initiates still another reorganization.

Looked at from the short run and as a single instance, organizational change may appear as a capricious attempt to gain a margin of advantage. Seen from the long run and as a cumulative series of struggles, reorganization can have profound consequences. The long run exposes the incompatibilities of reorganization, just as it yields its unanticipated consequences.

One way to capture the long-term, cumulative effects of reorganization is to view it as a skein of processes designed to realize particular values. I begin with this and describe the most salient values sought by reorganization. These include

1. administrative efficiency, which would enhance policy making, improve coordination, and facilitate effective planning.
2. political dominance, which would enable groups of partisans to weaken the opposition and govern with little interference.
3. democratic virtue, which would bring government closer to the people and encourage citizen participation in local problem solving.
4. better service delivery, which would make bureaucracy more efficient, effective, and responsive.
5. economic prosperity, which would stimulate development, promote even

growth, and enhance the city's reputation as a world renowned center of commerce and culture.

6. substantive strength in government and a positive public attitude toward government, which would point out the triumphs of reorganization, enhance trust in those who led it, and promote the legitimacy of public institutions.

Next, the flow of the reorganization is represented as (1) *intended action and rationale*, the objectives and justifications for reorganization; (2) *context*, the conditions, meanings, and constraints that me-

diate reorganization; (3) *response and impact*, reactions from, and effects upon, constituents and institutions; (4) *unanticipated consequences*, unexpected behavior or surprising applications; and (5) *undermining effects upon long-term objectives*.

Figure 1 shows the process of reorganization and incorporates some values and examples. Note the intended action for reorganization is divided into a stated action (to bring about administrative efficiency) and an unstated one (to achieve political dominance). This is a matter of salience, not relative importance.

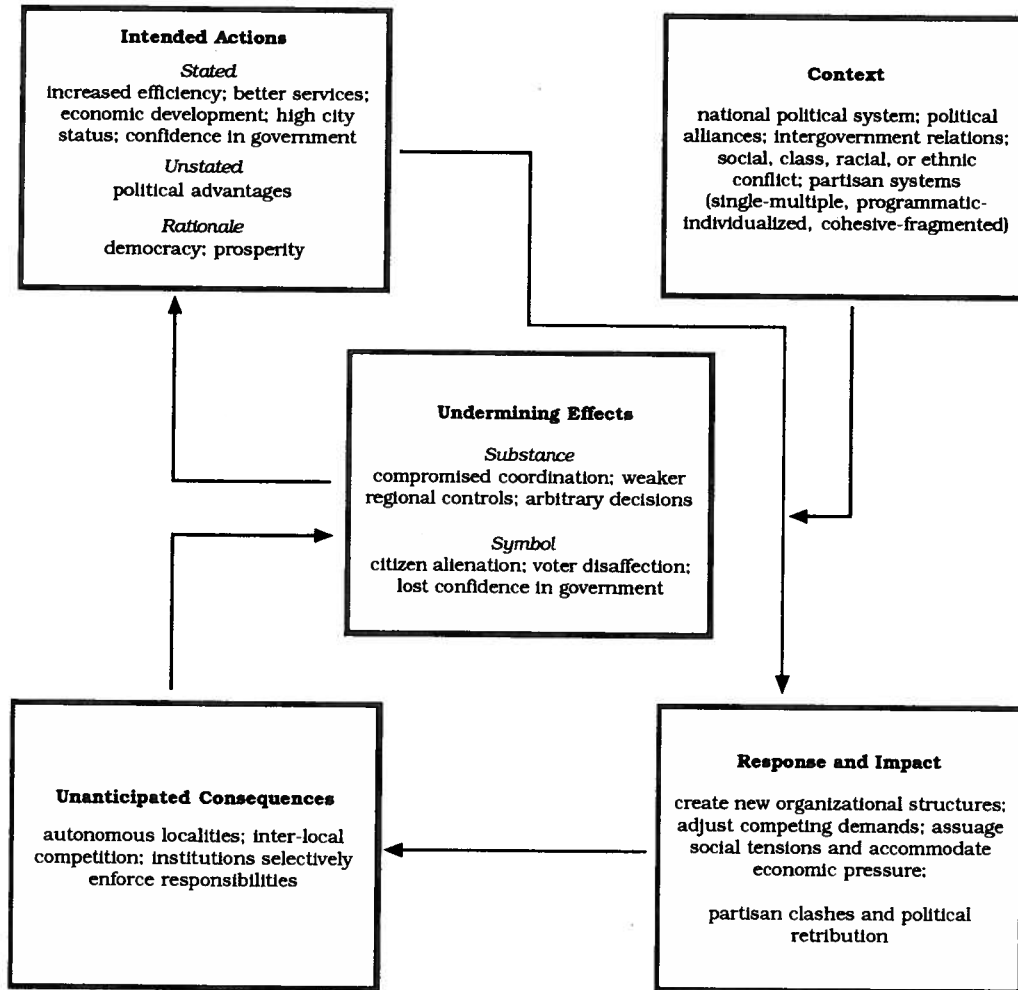


Figure 1. Urban Reorganization: Process and Values

Among other examples, the model shows democracy as a significant rationale for reorganization. Though it is often a secondary consideration for decision makers, democratic virtue furnishes the battleground on which partisans carry out their fight. Partisans clash over who best represents the people, who most values their support, and who will effectively look after popular interests. Rationales are not without meaning and often show their political clout in newly created structures.

Context mediates all reorganizations. Reorganizations are interpreted through the prism of political culture and filtered through institutions and practices, including differential roles played by national authorities, patterns of intergovernmental relations, partisan moods, social conditions, and economic pressures.

Response and impact are often when objectives and values collide. At times, the worthiness of democratic decisions may clash with the best decision for economic viability (should neighborhoods veto economic development?). At other times, political dominance may stand in the way of administrative efficiency (is the "best" manager always the most dedicated partisan?). Even the struggle for efficiency may contradict the seemingly compatible value of better services (do fewer but better trained police officers mean that communities will be safer?). Conflicts of this sort originate with, or land upon, mayors, city councils, political parties, bureaucracies, and courts. These institutions adjust, assuage, accommodate, or ultimately battle over the issues.

No matter what the mix of values, the struggle to have all of them leads to unanticipated consequences and, at times,

has its undermining effects. The results are evident in both substantive modifications to the institutions in question and in symbolic effects (public attitudes and perceptions) of these modifications. Although not all unanticipated consequences threaten intended actions, some eventually are converted into undermining effects.

Setting Sites in New York, Paris, and London

In New York, reorganization occurred on several occasions. It occurred during the mid-1960s and early 1970s when Mayor John Lindsay tried to reorganize the administration of city government radically. Reorganization also occurred in the mid-1970s, when a charter commission created fifty-nine community boards. In the late 1980s, reorganization began anew when still another charter commission reviewed the question of community empowerment. This particular charter commission, known as the Ravitch-Schwarz Commission, was formed after the courts declared the city's Board of Estimate to be malapportioned. The difficulty in reapportioning the board brought the entire structure of governance into question and brought about sweeping changes.

In Paris, reorganization first erupted in the mid-1960s when the city and its environs were consolidated into eight departments (counties) led by a prefect. Reorganization occurred again in the mid-1970s when Paris residents were given the opportunity to choose a major. In the 1980s, reorganization burst onto the scene once more, when a Socialist government sought to decentralize authority.

Since World War II, London has experienced just two reorganizations, both of which were traumatic. In the mid-1960s, a Conservative central government consolidated the region by creating the Greater London Council (GLC) and also delegated substantial powers to thirty-three localities. The new system was the envy of American eyes because it seemed to tie decentralized accountability into centralized metropolitan planning. The envy of urban scholars turned sour twenty years later when the Conservative government abruptly abolished the GLC, leaving London as fragmented as southern California.

A major propellant of reorganization has been economic restructuring. In all three cities, urban reorganization represented an attempt both to stimulate and control urban development. As elites pushed to accommodate new development, they also engendered fears relating to household displacement, threatened neighborhoods, and increased social polarity (Savitch 1988; Sassen 1991; Fainstein, Gordon, and Harloe 1992). Reorganizations were caught in cross pressures between the urge to make up for lost manufacturing (with postindustrial growth) and popular expression for local democracy (through neighborhood councils). The tensions were played on different sides of the reorganization process, and this may well have exacerbated its unanticipated consequences.

New York: Squirming through Reorganizations

John Lindsay campaigned for mayor in 1965 on the slogan "He is fresh and

everyone else is tired" (Pilat 1968, 163-64). Lindsay's urban populism promised to address the city's gnawing problems. Planning agencies bemoaned unequal and uncontrolled growth, citizen organizations thirsted for more participation, and almost everybody was frustrated with bureaucracy.

Upon coming into office, the new mayor took steps he hoped would remedy the situation. He adopted a two-pronged strategy to centralize policy making at the top (to control urban development and other critical issues) while decentralizing service delivery at the bottom (to make government and bureaucracy more accountable).

One way to do this was to consolidate the city's fifty-plus departments into ten "super administrations" infused with top-flight executives. The new super administrations would regroup old departments into a sleek command structure. The heads of those structures, or super administrators, would sit in frequent cabinet meetings and work out common policies.

Lindsay's method for bringing accountability to government was to effect it from the bottom up. He hoped to accomplish this by creating "little city halls" that would coordinate services and serve as complaint centers in thirty-five of the city's poorest neighborhoods (Mudd 1984, 57-59).³ Underlying this, the "reformist" mayor wanted to activate a Black and Puerto Rican constituency, which (along with white liberals) provided his political base.

Nonreformist ("regular") Democrats were suspicious that behind the talk of neighborhood outreach lurked political opportunism. Most Democrats feared that little city halls would become nests

of enemy patronage (Tolchin and Tolchin 1971, 27–87). Predictably, the Democratically controlled city council turned Lindsay down, though he later managed to obtain private funding for six little city halls (Kaufman 1969, 3–12).

Determined to push ahead with decentralization, Lindsay proposed a less volatile program, called Offices of Neighborhood Government (ONGs). ONGs brought together, into a single service cabinet, local supervisors of line agencies (police, sanitation, parks, transportation, health), who would work under the coordinating guidance of a district manager. Administratively, the program was designed to replace the functionally based, tall pyramids of bureaucracy with a geographically based, flat pyramid of management (Downs 1967).

Administrative theorists of the day argued that municipal bureaucracies were isolated from the citizens, that citizens were frustrated with hierarchy, and that urban communities needed to be treated as organic wholes rather than as pieces of a functional problem (Lipsky 1977; Goodman 1971). ONGs would handle issues as they naturally intersected with one another, through geographically based institutions. Also, ONGs might serve as mechanisms through which community residents could see themselves exercising some role as consumers of municipal services.

An accommodation also had to be worked out. Traditional groups had become wary of Lindsay's attempt to build a coalition between the mayor's office and the neighborhoods. By this time, neighborhood control smacked of minority control, and racial tensions gripped the city. Years before, the city had been para-

lyzed by a school strike, gripped by a referendum on a police civilian review board, and traumatized by intermittent rioting—all of which cut deeply along racial lines. A white middle class—worried about turning municipal services over to brazen youth who wore dashikis and spoke defiantly about community power—was in no mood for innovation.

Prudently, Lindsay decided to limit the ONGs to only seven and place them in a mix of areas. The objective was to show that decentralization was not just for Blacks or Puerto Ricans but could benefit white working-class communities. Also, ONGs were less partisan than their forerunners. It was clear they would not be linked to an effort to remold the city's politics. Indeed, some of the ONGs were in the bailiwick of Democratic regulars, ensuring some consultation over possible patronage.

By 1974, John Lindsay had left office and was succeeded by a "regular" Democrat, Abe Beame. Most of Lindsay's super administrations have since been relegated to a pile of failed innovations. Little was left of urban populism, except that neighborhood government was no longer a volatile word, ONGs were still in operation, and decentralization was etched in the minds of New Yorkers.

Coincidentally, a charter commission (the Goodman Commission) was well underway in its search to restructure city government. Given the appeals of bringing government closer to the people, neighborhood government could not be ignored (Altshuler 1970; Pecorella 1984; Viteritti and Pecorella 1987). Members of the Goodman Commission had traveled to London and were convinced that British ideas for local administration could

be applied to New York (Costikyan and Lehman 1972; Savitch and Adler 1974). Decentralization became a code word for doing something about urban problems, even if people were unsure about what they were doing. In effect, the commission said, "We believe in decentralization in some form and at some level; we aren't sure about the form and we aren't sure of the level" (Macchiarola 1973, 5).

By 1975, the commission had decided the form and the level—confirmed by referendum. ONGs would serve as models for building an administrative arm onto each of the city's fifty-nine community boards. Board boundaries would approximate "natural communities," and other services would be coterminous with those boundaries. Significantly, community boards were not elected directly or chosen by the mayor, nor were they policy making bodies. Instead, a combination of locally elected officials would appoint board members, whose functions would be advisory. In addition to their major mission as service coordinators, boards would offer opinions on land use and draw up budgetary needs (State Charter Revision Commission for New York City 1975).

The upshot was clear. The Goodman Commission had rejected *all* power to the neighborhoods in favor of *some* power to the neighborhoods. The boards could only advise, but advice could be a powerful tool when backed by popular support.

As matters turned out, community boards evolved in unanticipated directions. Unlike the ONGs, which were close to city hall, the new boards were entirely neighborhood products. District managers were sometimes tied to party clubhouses or to organized local groups (churches, unions, civic associations)

and served at the pleasure of board members (Adler and Bellush 1980, 50).

It was no surprise that central bureaucrats in charge of service delivery were cautious about what the boards or their district managers said. The bureaucrats might listen politely and attend meetings dutifully, but they were under little compulsion to obey. Instead of becoming vital nerves of administration, the boards became public megaphones for unnerved residents. Studies showed that complaint reception was the major board function, while monitoring and coordinating services were the "weakest link in the system" (Lebenstein 1980; Viteritti and Pecorella 1987, 74–82).

Given the initial emphasis on service delivery, it was surprising that boards would pay so much attention and give so much force to land use.⁴ As originally conceived, the boards were advisory and part of an institutional chain that reviewed zoning changes and special permits for development. Within years, advice turned into consultation, and consultation turned into recommendations that were difficult to ignore. Estimates vary on how often community board recommendations were followed, though consensus puts it between 80 percent and 98 percent (Fowler 1980, 8; Wiseman 1981, 62; Mudd 1984, 195).

In retrospect, it is easy to see why, on matters of land use, community boards should grow so powerful. Land use is an issue that touches the physical and social core of neighborhoods, and boards sense its potential for igniting local sentiment. As much as community boards are administrative mechanisms, they are political institutions (Pecorella 1984). On questions of value, social class,

or lifestyle, the link between politics and administration is powerful. It is one matter for boards to give advice on sanitation pickups and quite another for them to render an opinion on who gets to build, live, or work in the neighborhood.

Once opened, the door to land use led to unforeseen harvests—at least for some boards. Frequently, the boards viewed development with a jaundiced eye, and the acronyms NIMBY (not in my backyard) and BANANA (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anything) became part of the popular lexicon. Those who wished to go beyond “as-of-right” construction faced real problems and had to strike deals with the boards by providing amenities. Cases abound in which developers contributed plazas, ball fields, and local meeting halls (Deutsch 1988). What passed for city planning became a vast merchandise market, where those communities in demand were able to bargain over their land while other were begging for customers.⁵

On a number of occasions, boards became points of opposition to billion dollar investment projects. Some of these projects were treasured by central policy makers who claimed they would yield revenue and jobs (Fainstein and Fainstein 1986; Savitch 1988). Though central decision makers could overrule the boards, they chose another route. Rather than directly attacking, they searched out methods of circumvention.

The public benefit corporation (PBC) became the perfect tool for avoiding public accountability. PBCs did not have to comply with regular land-use procedures and certainly did not have to solicit, much less heed, the advice of community boards. They could raise private

capital and funnel it into public purposes with minimal oversight. PBCs managed their own budgets, which were not voted on by legislatures. Perhaps it was not happenstance that as the city went through its most radical reorganization ever, a new crop of independent organizations matured as powerful land developers.

Between 1965 and 1975, a dozen PBCs surfaced—among them were the city’s preeminent builders like the Public Development Corporation, the Urban Development Corporation (UDC), and the Battery Park City Authority (Bailey 1987). These agencies were particularly eager to enhance the city’s status as an international business center. The Battery Park City Authority attracted foreign developers and furnished lower Manhattan with a brand new complex for international finance, and the UDC worked fervently to fill midtown with more office towers. What reorganization gave the neighborhoods with one hand, organizational proliferation took away with the other—and for good reason. The city was faced with irreconcilable choices that could best be eased by creating escape hatches.

Finally, for all the talk (and concern) about strengthening minority participation through neighborhood governments, Blacks and Puerto Ricans have been least able to use them. Minority communities remain at a “comparative disadvantage in exercising land-use responsibilities” and in being able to marshal capital resources (Pecorella and Rogowsky 1987, 11, 17).

All told, New York’s struggle with charter revisions could be summarized as shown in Figure 2. Figure 2 shows that the impact of reorganization on land use

brought about a greater role for PBCs; yet, this role contradicted the intent of those who originally sought reorganization. When development was not influenced by boards, it largely rested with PBCs. Although mayors could work with PBCs, mayoral control was incomplete. Meanwhile, the administrative system fell into deeper fragmentation. The boards held some pieces of the administrative puzzle, and the boards were under the dominion of neighborhood politicians.

The more reorganizers sought to make administration accountable, the more fragmented the whole system became. The more reorganization tried to grapple with faltering government and build trust, the worse those problems became. Since this period, the loss of confidence in government has been dramatic. By the mid-1970s, three-quarters of the city's population believed New York was poorly run, and in the 1980s well over half the population felt that prospects

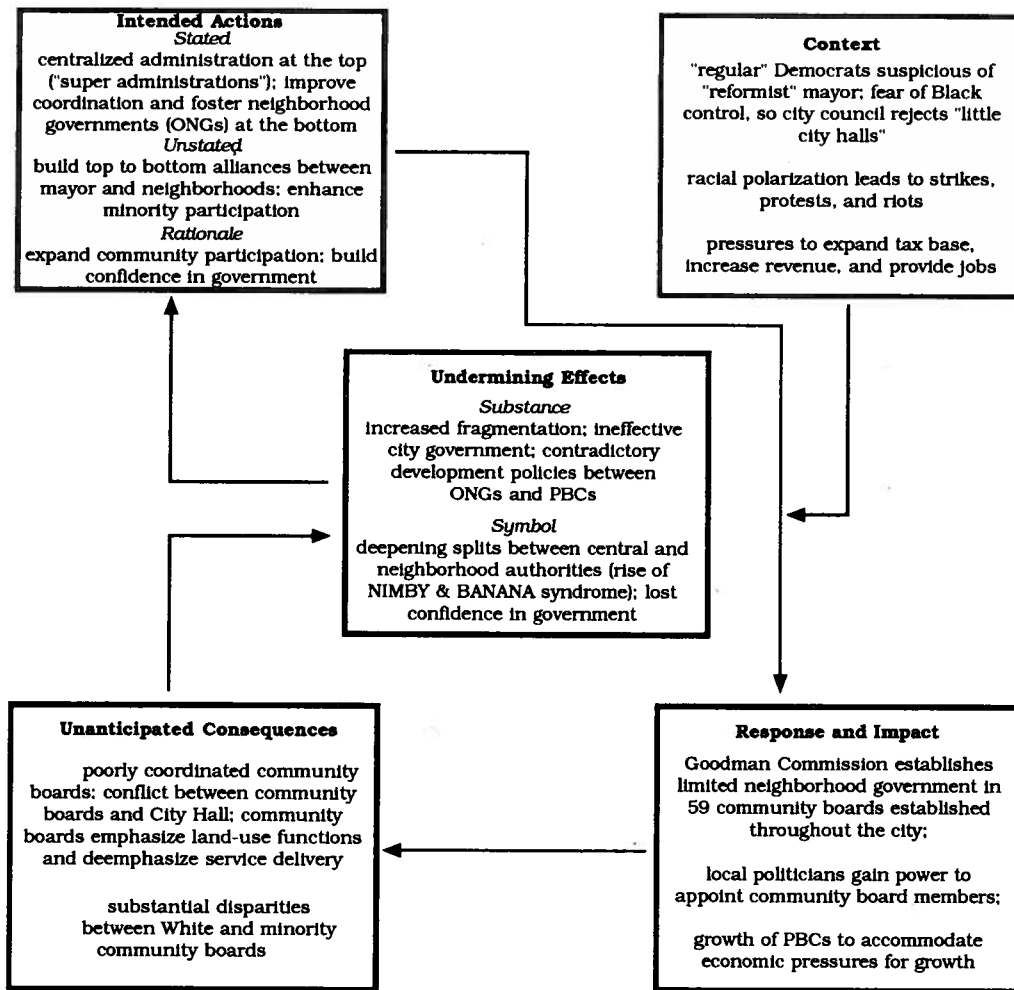


Figure 2. New York Reorganization: Process and Values

had grown worse over the previous decade (Dembart 1975; Barbanel 1989). In the neighborhoods, half of the respondents said they could not recommend their community to others, and only 37 percent said they willingly remained (Center for Social Research 1988, 9; Time Magazine Poll, 17 September 1990, 38–40).⁶

Paris: Reorganization via the Sand Bag

Paris, too, was caught in the throes of reorganization during the 1960s, although reorganization there was of a different sort. Industry was packed in and around the city, while much of France lay vacant. For years, officials had talked about spreading industry into the countryside and rationalizing the quagmire of communes and departments in the region (Gravier 1947; Sundquist 1975; Carmona 1979). Reorganization could provide the means for the central government to move industry and people from the city, it could enable the central authorities to build new towns in outlying areas, and it could provide the impetus for an infrastructure of highways, utility lines, and mass transit (Delouvrier, pers. com. 1985; Savitch 1988).

To accomplish these objectives, the state would have to create new administrative machinery and obtain better control of local government. Between 1965 and 1968, the state enacted a series of measures to consolidate its power (Carmona 1979; Gremion 1976; Tarrow 1977). The Parisian region was widened to encompass eight new departments. Paris at once was made a department and a municipality. A *super prefect*, named Paul Delouvrier, stood at the head of the new region. With the power to chose other

prefects and with direct ties to the state, Delouvrier wielded immense power.

Other, more political advantages were to be gained from reorganization. At this time, the state was controlled by the Gaullists, and there was little forethought they would lose control. Paris, however, had posed a problem. Before 1965, that city was part of the larger Department of the Seine. Known as the Red Belt, the Seine could overwhelm Paris with its working-class voters and its left-wing legislature. After 1965, Paris was hived off, and standing alone, the predominantly middle-class city could be counted with the Right. Moreover, after reorganization the Communists were isolated in a handful of working-class communes outside the city (Alduy and Dagnaud 1980). Cut off from Paris, left-wing power was also diluted throughout the region. This isolation would make the Left vulnerable to Gaullist control. As Delouvrier (pers. com. 1985) recounted,

I told the General [DeGaulle] that the State had disappeared from the suburbs of Paris. It was the mayors who ruled. It was the Communists who held power. We needed to reassert the power of the State, and to do this we needed to redo all the departments.

The Left fought against reorganization, but there was little it could do.⁷ By the mid-1970s, reorganization was well in place. The Right believed Paris was secure, and for the first time since the bloody days of the commune, the city council chose its own mayor. Even so, there were divisions within the Right. The new mayor, Jacques Chirac, was the leader of the Gaullists and at odds with the more centrist president, Giscard d'Estaing (Townsend 1984). Chirac and d'Estaing quarreled over the powers accorded to the

prefect (as agent of the state) and those exercised by the mayor (as chief of the city).

By 1981, another shift was in order. This time, the Socialists—arch opponents of the Gaullists—held national power, and they were determined to decentralize. Although the Socialists also sought a more even development, they believed these objectives could be reconciled with decentralist grassroots politics. Convinced that local democracy was suffocating, the Socialists took aim at the prefects and transferred many of their formal powers to elected representatives in departments (council presidents) and communes (mayors).⁸

Ironically, this strengthened the authority of Gaullist mayor Jacques Chirac, but the Socialists were not finished. Following the logic that public services were best administered by locally elected representatives, the Socialists suggested that Parisian neighborhoods (*arrondissements*) were really equivalent to medium-sized cities. They planned to divide the city into twenty self-governing neighborhoods, each electing its own mayor. Neighborhood mayors, in turn, would elect a grand mayor of the *urban community*.

The proposal would radically redo the administrative face of Paris. Neighborhoods containing roughly 100,000 people would run essential services and rule on planning and development. This proposal surpassed the most bold plans for community control in American cities (Arnstein 1969; Altshuler 1970; Zimmerman 1972).

Behind the Socialist design was an effort to cut the ground from under Chirac. Although Paris was overwhelmingly Gaullist, enough neighborhoods

would vote for the Left, thereby splitting the city. The Gaullists would be deprived of their political trampoline, enabling the Socialists to intervene from their perch in the central government. In one sense, decentralization in Paris was not unlike the Lindsay efforts in New York years earlier. By devolving authority to the grassroots, new structures could generate an alternative to the existing political machine.

Chirac fought back, mobilizing the Parisian electorate with massive petitions and demanding a citywide referendum. He accused the new government of trying to cut up the city for partisan gain. The Socialist proposal was clearly unpopular, and even Socialist allies regarded it as a debacle (*Le Monde*, 1, 2, 3, 6, and 9 July 1982). The Socialists fell into retreat and, in the end, settled for a face-saving gesture that established consultative councils in the neighborhoods.

Having lost the battle with Chirac, the Socialists nonetheless won the war for local democracy. Socialist decentralization has taken an abiding hold on the country. Powers over budget, taxation, zoning, and construction, which once belonged to the prefects, are now with politicians in the departments and the communes. Mayors now have greater authority to spend money, operate their bureaucracies, direct economic development, and furnish loans and grants to fledgling industries. Scholars correctly point out that well before formal decentralization, elites at all levels had created a de facto decentralization (Ashford 1982; Thoenig 1988). Nonetheless, its enactment into law emboldened politicians who now realized their actions were backed by sanction. In the United States,

where local autonomy is customary, these measures are not unusual; in France, the impact is notable.

The reams of central directives and massive reallocations that shaped the Paris region during the 1960s are no longer feasible. Delouvrier planned the Parisian region from the top down, in secret, thirty years ago. One result of that epoch was the building of La Défense—a massive complex of towers, parks, and retail outlets. As the Socialist government tried to extend Delouvrier's legacy into La Défense II, it faced a barrage of counterproposals from localities in the area—that it could hardly resist (Levine 1992).

Nowadays, mayors have become public entrepreneurs—raising revenues, recruiting investors, allocating resources, and initiating U.S.-style deals with private capital. With expanded revenue discretion, more than a third of local funds are raised internally (Bernier 1992). Seine-Saint-Denis, once the heart of the Red Belt, now welcomes capitalists, and Communist mayors are among its most creative *renovateurs* (Levine 1992).

To be sure, the Socialist government continues its subventions, but the old restrictions are gone and a new political economy has arisen (Machin and Wright 1985; Schmidt 1990). Localities are now engaged in vigorous competition for industry, employment, and capital. One writer noted that any form of urban unification has now disappeared. The Parisian region has become a field of rivalry between the Right and the Left. After the 1982 decentralization, cities in the region erected fortresses around themselves. It's each mayor for himself, as each shoves unwanted industry, incinerators, auto routes, and massive housing complexes

to the outer fringes of his city. It's the politics of the sand bag (Les enjeux du Grand Paris 1988).

The impact of decentralization is also ironic. Under the Right, realty, banking, and development interests were restricted in competing for land profits. Beginning with DeGaulle, the government imposed heavy taxes on development in congested sections of Paris (*la rédevance*), controlled development through special zoning (Zone d'Aménagement Concerté [ZACs] and Zone d'Aménagement Différé [ZADs]), and supplied incentives for undeveloped areas (Délegation d'Aménagement du Territoire [DATAR]). Socialist decentralization compromised these controls, effectively liberating the bourgeoisie.

Although one should take into account that development is driven by demand, policy governs how that demand will be met, and Paris has been a high demand area in both Gaullist and Socialist periods. The differences in rightist and leftist policies are reflected in indices of office growth for Paris. During the last decade of rightist rule (1970–1980), the state imposed restriction on office construction, and growth fell to less than one-half million square feet per year (Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme 1986). By the mid-1980s, leftist decentralization took hold, and office construction surged to over two million square feet per year (Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme 1988). The spurt in expensive office space put a squeeze on the city's scarce housing. Working-class neighborhoods are now especially pinched by the spread of gentrification. Strange as it seems, the rightist agenda to make Paris a middle-class fortress is being advanced by

unanticipated economic pressures set in motion by leftist decentralization.

Decentralization also may be sharpening interurban inequities. Paris is by far the wealthiest commune in France, yet it enjoys the lowest tax of any major metropolis. The average Parisian pays one-quarter of the tax paid by a resident of Marseilles and one-half that of a resident in Lyons or Le Havre (Hotel de Ville de Paris 1986). The percentages for local commercial taxes reveal similar imbalances, with Parisian businesses paying half the amounts collected elsewhere (Hotel de Ville de Paris 1986).

Decentralization has strengthened the hand of a Gaullist mayor vis-à-vis a Socialist state. Giving decentralization his own twist, Chirac privatized street cleaning and garbage collection. The mayor also runs a powerful machine from city hall and uses the city as ministate to show the rest of the nation what can be done with a little autonomy (Lagroye 1988). In his last bid for the presidency, Chirac used the slogan (albeit unsuccessfully), "I will do for the rest of France what I've done for Paris" (Lagroye 1988, 3).

Almost twenty years of struggle could be summarized as shown in Figure 3. Urban reorganization produced greater, rather than fewer, challenges from the localities. By the mid-1980s, planning and administration were seriously impaired, and even the Socialists were hinting about the need to repair the damage. By the late 1980s, the Socialists took steps to polish the lost luster of prefectural authority by putting together a white paper to strengthen central coordination (Direction Régionale, Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme, Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme 1990). Yet much of

the Socialist planning objectives have been lost. As Keating (1991) observed, "The tradition of integrated planning and spatial investment has faltered and been supplanted as the dominant motif by development, as the term is understood in North America."

Moreover, political challenges are now reversed. Today, the Left occupies the top, and the Right threatens from below. The Gaullists who sought to consolidate power now profit from its deconsolidation. The Socialists who sought to disperse power are challenged by its diffusion.

London: Reorganization Hard and Clear

London's reorganization was not so quixotic. What had come to be called London was little more than a multiplicity of vestries, boroughs, and districts. Not until 1888 was Inner London given some identity through the creation of the London County Council (LCC) (Young and Garside 1982). Dissatisfaction persisted, and throughout the war years, tomes were written about London's predicament (Robson 1939; Abercrombie 1945; Barlow Commission 1945). Fragmentation made strategic planning difficult and policy coordination unmanageable. Although local governments could always turn to Whitehall, doing so would have undermined any semblance of local democracy. Moreover, Inner London and the LCC were Labour bastions that the Conservatives were eager to upset.

Not until 1963 did a Conservative government take action (Smallwood 1965; Rhodes 1970). For the first time in its history, London was consolidated into a metropolitan region, which was called Greater London. Out of the hundreds of

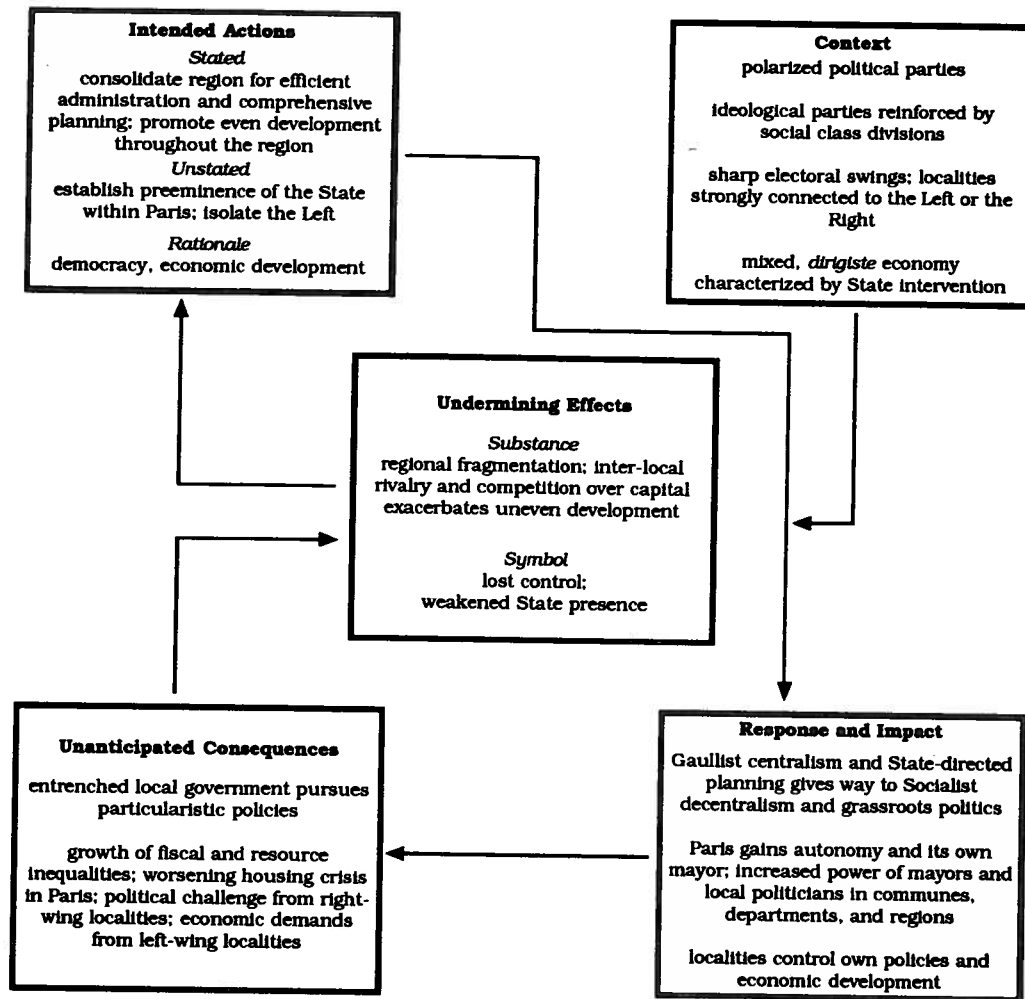


Figure 3. Paris Reorganization: Process and Values

local authorities, the central government carved a twin system that accorded area-wide authority to a Greater London Council (GLC) and local powers to thirty-three elected councils.

The idea of the system was to put responsibility in the hands of jurisdictions that had the best capacity and motivation to fulfill the urban mission. After all the years of discontent, London's new organizational suit was regarded by many as a stroke of administrative genius

(Smallwood 1965; Sayre 1971; Netzer 1973; Kantor 1974). The GLC was not to be a *higher* authority but a *wider* authority that would manage regional functions (control pollution, plan major highways), undertake capital-intensive obligations (finance plants for waste disposal), or redistribute resources (equalize tax burdens, construct "overspill housing"). The boroughs were conceived as *narrower* entities responsible for labor-intensive functions (social services), local needs

(public housing), or the enforcement of local regulations (parking codes).

Besides having a nice clean format, reorganization gave the Conservatives great political opportunities—this was as important a motivation as any (Smallwood 1965; Rhodes 1970; Young and Garside 1982). The new organization brought outlying suburbs into Greater London, and these suburbs were predominantly Conservative. After reorganization was completed, political prognosticators believed the GLC would move toward the Right while the boroughs split. By these accounts, the Conservatives would hold the balance of power.

As events turned out, the GLC record was mixed. On the positive side, the GLC gave London an institutional symbol and policy continuity that it badly needed. London could be promoted as a world city—indeed, as a 24-hour city that could conduct business with Europe within the normal workday, with North America during early evening, and with Asia after midnight. On a less global scale, the GLC protected more than 2,200 square miles of Green Belt, which girdled the metropolis and gave Londoners a sense of where their town began and ended. For fifteen years, the GLC set policy for Underground and bus lines competently and with fervent dedication to the cause of mass transit.

On the negative side, the GLC was caught in a functional squeeze. Administratively, the GLC found itself ground between the prerogatives of central government, the operations of other authorities, and the interests of the boroughs. Wherever it turned, the GLC seemed to bump into one governmental agency or another. Central government guarded its

trusteeship as manager of London's largest parks. Independent authorities and boards held onto their bailiwicks within education, hospitals, or ports. When the GLC tried to build a system of motorways, it met fierce opposition from Inner London boroughs (Hart 1976). When the GLC sought to subsidize mass transit or build overspill housing, it faced the wrath of Outer London boroughs (Game and Leach 1988; Young 1984).⁹

Contrary to expectations, roughly half the GLC elections turned out to be Labour majorities, and with each Labour victory the Socialists grew more militant by expanding the scope of metropolitan issues. Labour's leader, Ken Livingstone, led the charge against Margaret Thatcher by promoting reduced fares on the Underground and by embroidering GLC headquarters with a huge banner announcing the latest unemployment figures. So staunch was Labour's opposition that it took symbolic positions of declaring London a nuclear-free zone and of supporting local feminism or rights for homosexuals. When "Red Ken," as the Tories called him, began to spend too much on "gas-and-water socialism," the prime minister struck back.

Thatcher's strike went beyond her original aims. As a way to curb Socialist spending and hit back politically, Thatcher appointed a cabinet subcommittee, code named MISC 79, to look into rising property taxes. MISC 79 was unable to find an acceptable solution, but as a "sop and almost as an afterthought" (Game and Leach 1988, 9), it suggested that economies could be made by abolishing the GLC. Thatcher latched onto the proposal, and by 1983, it was incorporated into the Conservative Manifesto.

The Conservative rationale for abolition was put forth in a slim pamphlet entitled *Streamlining the Cities* (Department of the Environment 1983). Its central argument was that metropolitan councils "have found it difficult to establish a role for themselves" and "that the search for a wider role brings them into conflict with lower-tier authorities" (pp. 3-4). The official view was that abolition would provide a "system which is simpler for the public to understand" and that it would "remove a source of conflict and tension" (p. 5).

The GLC waged a campaign to fight back. Its proponents in the Labour party argued that the GLC was the only democratically elected body for all of London, that abolition would increase the power of central ministries, and that without the GLC London would be run by "faceless Whitehall Mandarins" (The Greater London Council 1984). However, they could do little to save it. By 1984, the House of Commons had passed legislation to abolish the GLC, and by 1986, it had ceased to exist.

Abolition set numerous forces into motion. In some ways, power has been sponged up by the central government; in other ways, it has splayed in numerous directions. To be sure, the boroughs play a crucial role, but what was once a recognizable system between the boroughs and the GLC has been replaced by innumerable boards, committees, and special authorities.

The term *Quango*, standing for quasi autonomous nongovernmental organization, has come to dominate the jargon of British administration. *Quangos* essentially are appointed boards designed to carry out particular tasks and are used

to charge future planning (*Manchester Guardian*, 15 May 1991). One type of *Quango*, the UDC, has usurped some of the developmental functions of the boroughs and intensified competition for capital investment.

In the post-abolition era, *Quangos* have given birth to *Quelgos*, or quasi elected local governmental organizations, which supervise line agencies. *Quelgos* have been known to spawn *Delgos*, or directly elected local governmental organizations. What is left of London seems to be run by a multiplying assemblage of acronyms. *Quangos*, *Quelgos*, and *Delgos* have taken over the management of water supply, fire fighting, and, for a time, education. Structurally, and perhaps superficially, London was withdrawn into the nineteenth century, in which tiny pieces of government undertook a bewildering array of functions.

More to the point, the new fragmentation has put the boroughs on a collision course. Boroughs now compete with one another to elevate their tax base and to attract business. Central government policies stimulated this competition by imposing restrictions on tax policies (rate capping, poll taxes), thereby forcing boroughs to either terminate services or seek other sources of revenue (Association of London Authorities 1987). Areas in overcrowded Central London, once thought out of bounds for additional office space, now offer themselves for still higher office towers.

There may be other casualties of abolition. Without the GLC, the Green Belt is vulnerable to spot development (Hall 1986; Nicholson 1986). With abolition, mass transit is no longer a protected service. Labour attributes the rash of mass

transit breakdowns and accidents to a sluggish Conservative attitude toward public services. Environmentalism, consumerism, and the rising number of homeless no longer have a metropolitan-wide defender (Association of London Authorities 1987; London Strategic Policy Unit 1987).

Most of all, comprehensive planning, the banner under which Greater London was invented, has been eviscerated. London did profit from the winds of economic prosperity during the 1980s, but economic prosperity now comes in uneven

gusts. Some areas in Central London and portions of Outer London are buoyed by the surge. Other areas are mired in depression and suffer the sting of ghettos for the unemployed.

The twenty years of trying to put London together could be summarized as shown in Figure 4. By most accounts, London has become more difficult to manage and still searches for a larger identity. Six years after abolition, the conservative *Times of London* declaimed Thatcher as having acted out of "personal spite" and concluded that "the govern-

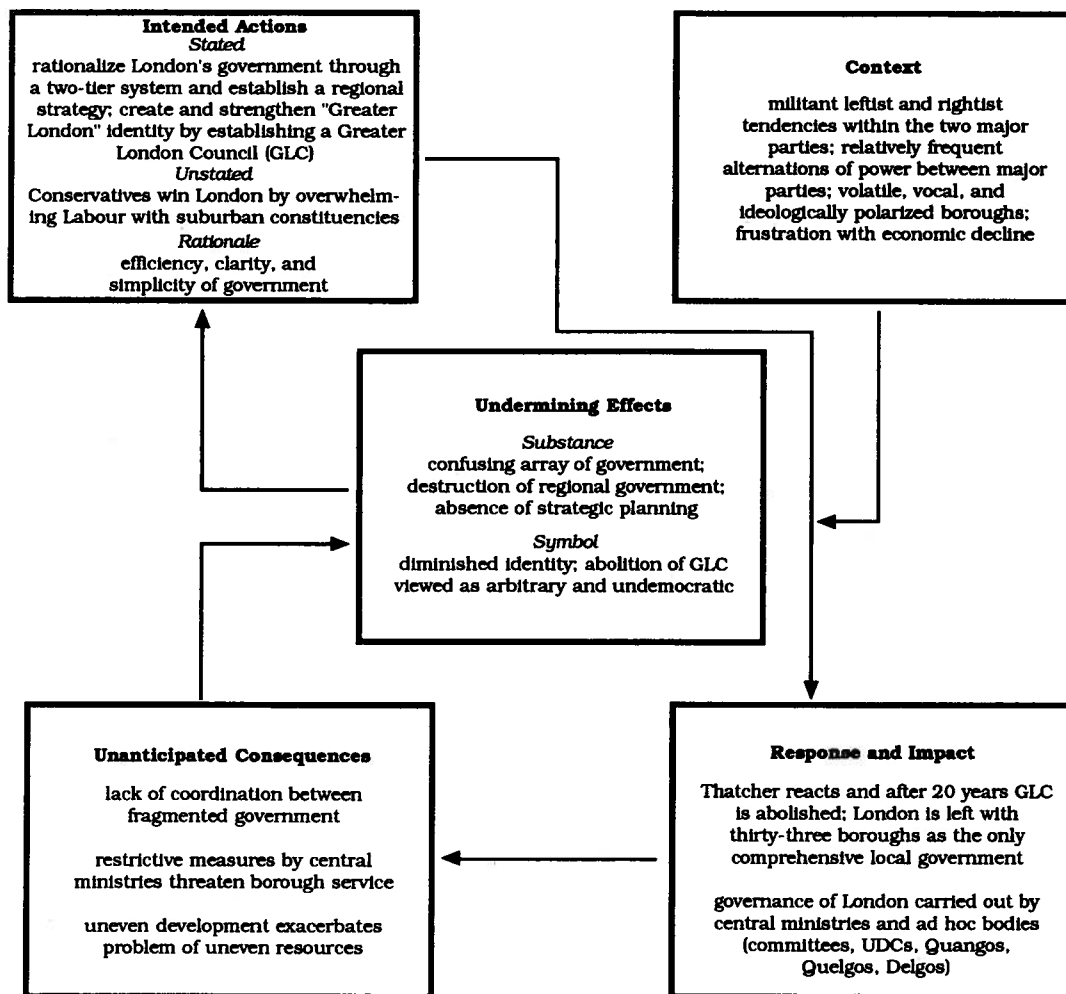


Figure 4. London Reorganization: Process and Values

ment of London is a mess" (*Times of London*, 30 January 1992).

Both Tories and Socialists recognized this during the last election, and both parties produced manifestos promising some sort of strategic relief (*Times of London*, 29 January 1991, 8 October 1991, 30 January 1992). The Socialists argued for a slimmed-down elected authority for Greater London, and the Tories opted for an appointed body. As matters stand, the Tory victory in 1992 produced a cabinet committee, which is dedicated to Greater London affairs, and an appointed agency, which is supposed to promote business in the region.

Abolition has been costly to implement. Critics claim that without external grants to prop it up, the new system would collapse (Association of London Authorities 1987). The costs of abolition are not just monetary but political. From the start, the idea was unpopular. Conservatives on the GLC were against it, and so was the overwhelming majority of London's population (Office of the Leader of the Opposition 1984; Husbands 1985; O'Leary 1987). Londoners showed a "remarkably consistent pattern of hostility toward abolition" (Husbands 1985, 61-62), and polling data showed the median disapproval was 66 percent.¹⁰ The general feeling was that Thatcher had taken an unprecedented and arbitrary action.¹¹

Unanticipated Consequences and Organizational Behavior

Lessons are to be learned from the experiences of New York, Paris, and London. Contrary to the view that minimizes structural impact or insists that personal

abilities can override structure, *structure counts*, and it counts a great deal (Eulau 1963; March and Olsen 1983; Heineman and Hessler 1980).¹² Organizational structures define and establish patterns of authority. These patterns determine who is boss, and they allocate authority to constituencies. Structure then throws weight onto individuals who are animated by particular motives and special interests.

Structure also set up divisions of labor. It determines actors with regard to their function, their scope of discretion, their control, and their accountability. These divisions are not just technical assignments or optimal ways for carving up responsibility. How labor is divided determines position, perspective, and, ultimately, how vital actors are likely to interpret a problem (Seidman and Gilmour 1970). Even those who are personally indifferent to a directive may be caught in a process of modifying or unwittingly distorting its intent.

Structure also determines how functions relate to one another. Functional relationships not only are boxes connected by arrows on organizational charts but are ways of linking means to ends that are bound to shape outcomes. Functional divisions convey norms and behavioral expectations. Explicitly or implicitly, they furnish cues about discretionary bounds and individual relationships. More broadly, they set a mood that shapes attitude and underlies whether to emphasize, underplay, or ignore a mandate.

For these reasons, *structure counts in determining unanticipated consequences*. The layering of authority and the creation of multiple organizational enclaves are levels for the selection of values. How

subgroups respond to this and how they interpret their roles create consequences for further action. Whether community boards in New York chose to emphasize land use, mayors in France chose to pursue economic development, or the GLC chose to emphasize social justice was very much a function of how mandates were connected to a larger pattern of relationships. In New York, a change in community-board reporting from the mayor's office to local politicians generated consequences for land use. In Paris, a change in revenue policies combined with a diminished prefect, created profoundly different consequences for mayoral behavior. In London, a combination of a metropolitan-wide constituency and the absence of a mayor set a different pathway for the GLC.

Significantly, *structure counts differently in different contexts and in different systems*. Given another type of system, structural impact may not be uniform. Regional government in London operated quite differently than it did (and does) in Paris. Although the British context and party characteristics prompted the GLC toward a regulatory and redistributive role, the French system induced regional councils to opt for more economic development. Moreover, national contexts and patterns greatly influence how structures respond. The threat of interference from national government and the flexibility or rigidity of intergovernmental relationships mean a great deal for how structures operate. Indeed, greater flexibility of intergovernmental relations in France made decentralization and local discretion possible, whereas more rigid intergovernmental relations in Britain produced an attitude that central government

would brook no serious challenge from the GLC (Ashford 1982; Crozier and Thoenig 1976).

The lesson from New York, Paris, and London is that *structure also creates opportunities and allows for their selection*. Political transformations enable new elites to bend structures toward regime priorities. Some elites stress coordination and enhanced services; others stress policy innovation and new opportunities. Some elites underscore the necessity of control; others encourage free interplay. In New York, Mayor Lindsay used structure to create new alignments. His successor, Mayor Beame, used it to keep the city in equilibrium. In Paris, the Gaullists depended on structure to keep things in order. Their Socialist opponents used it to formulate a new synergy.

Those who run structures select what they believe to be the most advantageous functions. Down through the organizational pyramid, structure takes on a life of its own. What is taken for resistance may in fact be that, plus a very important assertion of new authority. Agencies will avoid some power vacuums and fill others; they will slough off roles that do not enhance their profile and absorb those that do. When mayors in the Parisian region play up job creation, they choose functions that draw public acclaim and avoid those that may be more frustrating. When London's GLC grew militant, they chose to be conspicuous policy crusaders. That other functions may have been more essential to these agencies is, in operational terms, irrelevant. Structures do not always perform roles for which they have been suited. They fill roles that suit their best performance.

Still another lesson is that reorganization is an ongoing process. *Structures*

continually interact and make adjustments to each other's power and discretion. Like armies on the field, agencies develop mechanisms and tactics for offsetting the other's advances. The record of reorganization is replete with inter-agency tactics and countertactics, organizational shields, and measures to penetrate those shields. As New York's community boards began flexing their muscles on land use, central authorities relied more on PBCs to promote development without neighborhood interference. As community boards began to expand their role over amenities, central authorities sought to constrict that role by formulating amenity guidelines (City of New York, Office of the Mayor 1987; Association of the Bar of the City of New York 1988). As soon as Thatcher abolished the GLC, Labour boroughs formed a counterorganization to represent their collective demands. The central government countered by refusing to grant official recognition. The matter was finally fought in the courts and resolved in the boroughs' favor.

Because of continual interaction, every element of discretion and every line of accountability can lead to enormous ramifications. Just as a sliver of authority can grow in untold permutations, so can a break in accountability dry up influence. When it comes to reorganization, the ramifications are either geometric or nonexistent. Often, there are no 50 percent solutions. In New York City, a compromise permitting district managers to coordinate municipal services without giving them a say in hiring or promoting agency representatives resulted in a lost function. Without a chance at influencing the advancement of central bureau-

crats, district managers were not just hamstrung but were rendered beggars. In Paris, the Socialists settled for consultative neighborhood councils instead of full-fledged decentralization and then lost the entire battle with Chirac. Without clout, the councils could do nothing, and Socialist upmanship stopped at the Paris city line.

Moreover, the outcome of this interaction is important because *structures pull in centripetal and centrifugal directions.* These pulls occur seriatim, making reorganization a tug-of-war between forces of accumulation and forces of dispersal. One understates the gravity of these pulls by phrasing them as centralization versus decentralization or as center versus periphery. The pulls of centripetal and centrifugal forces mask a larger struggle over the purpose, intent, and control of public policy.

Centripetal forces prefer to administer rather than represent. They often insulate themselves from continued public accountability by organizing along functional lines and by relying on appointed boards to oversee their affairs. PBCs are frequently used in the United States as centripetal instruments. In France, public development corporations are used by central ministries to avoid local opposition. In Great Britain, UDCs, Quangos, Quelgos, and Delgos are ways to restructure constituencies along functional lines and keep the opposition at bay. By contrast, centrifugal forces prefer representation over administration—perhaps because representation is a handy way to stop outsiders from neighborhood intrusion. Often centrifugal forces are structured along geographically based residential lines, and their natural base of support is citizen participation.

Finally, *structures are multidimensional*. Those who manage them adopt different roles, which determine their behavior, and rely on a number of reference groups, which influence their decisions (Gouldner 1957, 1958). It is not easy to know which role or which reference group an actor may adopt at a given time. To borrow from the functionalists, there are periods when some roles may be manifest while others are latent (Merton 1968), periods when manifest and latent roles are congruent, and periods when they conflict. There are also periods when some reference groups loom as more important than others, periods when old groups disappear, and periods when new groups are born.

Yet, reorganization simplifies structure and role. With reorganization, it is assumed that structures will respond to the majority of their constituents and that roles will be consistent with territorial jurisdiction. With the London reorganization of 1965, it was assumed that the GLC would respond to wider concerns and be preoccupied with technical matters because of its geographical base and the mix of its constituencies (Smallwood 1965; Rhodes 1970).

Little more than a decade later, GLC members were trumpeting high ideology and embracing some controversial minorities. Conservatives argued that Labour had radically changed, and to some extent, this might be true. But a better explanation is that much depended on the relative positions of the parties. As long as Labour was out of national power, it would oppose Conservatives from its position at other levels of government.

In sum, reorganization is a moving phenomenon, multifaceted and multidimensional,

and laden with conflict. Those seeking to control reorganization may find avenues of success, but they are bound to stumble along its detours. ☼

Notes

¹ This article first appeared in the June 1994 issue of *Urban Affairs Quarterly*. The work for it was undertaken with the support of the University of Louisville's President's Research Initiative Grant. I especially would like to thank the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, which afforded me research support and an outstanding environment in which to work during the summer of 1992. A note of appreciation also goes to Wilson intern Jennifer Horney, who helped in so many important ways.

² The concepts of anticipated consequences is extensively discussed by March and Simon (1958), who attribute this phenomenon to a loss of control by an organization's hierarchy. In general, they explain unanticipated consequences as due to information loss, inaccurate communication, mistaken cues, low levels of compliance, motivational constraints, and extra organizational pressure. Unanticipated consequences are viewed as part of a "pathological process" because mistakes are bound to occur within complex organizations.

³ Other decentralizing initiatives were undertaken by the Lindsay administration. These included establishing urban action task forces in poor or underserved neighborhoods, demonstration school districts in mostly Black and minority communities, and community action programs, which were part of the federal war on poverty.

⁴ Created in the 1950s, community planning boards were earlier forms of neighborhood government. Controlling land use was the major function of these boards, and one might see these as forerunners to the current community boards. On the other hand, ONGs were the pilot projects for the current boards, and these emphasized service monitoring and coordination. Also, the public became increasingly concerned about municipal service delivery. A 1972 Gallop poll showed that 60 percent of New Yorkers believed that city government was poorly run, and by 1975, that number had climbed to 76 percent. The Goodman Commission was

especially impressed by this, and my own experience with that group left me with the belief that the improvement of city services was the most important charge given to community boards. Other principal charges included land use and capital budget reviews. What is surprising is that boards assigned relatively greater importance to land use than to other functions (see also Pecorella 1989; State Charter Review Commission 1974).

⁵ The process became still more complicated after the charter revisions of 1989. Those revisions abolished the Board of Estimate whose eight members had the final say on land use. The Board of Estimate's power has since passed to the city council; its fifty-one members now decide land-use measures. Under the new system, land-use decisions move from recommendations by the community boards to a new thirteen-member planning commission and ultimately to the city council, which automatically decides some issues and leaves the remainder to the planning commission. However, with the concurrence of borough presidents, the community boards can have the city council call up all land-use issues. Whereas there were once just eight individuals as final arbiters, there are now at least fifty-one (city council) on some issues, thirteen (planning commission) on other issues, and sixty-four (council plus commission) on still other issues. Given the neighborhood orientations of council and community board members, the process may well have a stronger local bias than previously existed.

⁶ It is not possible to establish a causal relationship between efforts at reorganization and citizen discontent, but the associations are striking. In the aftermath of New York's most frequent reorganizations, polls indicated rising dissatisfaction with government as well as deepening cynicism. Only a fraction of the population (between 3 percent and 8 percent) were satisfied with city services, and more than half the population believed that city government is "run by a few big interests" (Center for Social Research 1988; Dembart 1975; WCBS News-New York Times Poll, 9-10 March 1986). Further, the charter commission's public hearings of 1988 revealed a persistent theme: Community boards felt ignored and were powerless in the face of big-city interests. Community board representatives asked for a redress of the situ-

ation by requesting additional powers, standing to sue, and resources to hire lawyers (New York City Charter Revision Commission 1988). It is ironic that as city hall devolved more power to community boards, complaints also rose. This could be explained by a gap in relative expectations and/or a whetting for still more discretion just as more of that discretion was granted. ⁷ In 1969, DeGaulle tried to extend central power still further by consolidating communes throughout France and by strengthening regional government. That effort failed in a national referendum, and DeGaulle was forced to relinquish the presidency.

⁸ The emphasis here is on the transference of formal powers. Scholars point out that informal relationships between elected officials (mayors, heads of department, or city councils) and prefects have always been much more fluid and filled with cross pressures, so that rather than being viewed as hierarchical, the system was viewed as a "honeycomb" (Crozier and Thoenig 1976; Ashford 1982). By the same token, the transference of formal authority to elected officials has undoubtedly enhanced their power and diminished those of the prefect (Schmidt 1990). These observations reveal much about the efficacy of formal structuring.

⁹ The GLC and its predecessor, the LCC, had a history of building housing in Outer London and a history of quarreling with suburban localities. So heated did these quarrels become that in 1973, the outgoing chairman of the GLC's housing committee signed "nonaggression pacts" with the suburbs (Young 1984).

¹⁰ Although there had been broad public support for the GLC and there is current support for a strategic planning unit for Greater London, a number of boroughs and Conservative elites are against any kind of comprehensive authority. In the city of Westminster and in boroughs such as Croyden and Wandsworth, there are strong beliefs that London is better off without an overall authority, and Conservative circles make a powerful case to leave matters as they are.

¹¹ There is a short-term strategy for reasserting control, and it seems to be working. With abolition, Conservatives are better able to deal with opposition boroughs and can direct local activities through the central ministries. To a real degree, this is a political recentralization of

power. By the same token, the absence of the GLC also means that boroughs are deprived of a collective voice. Although Labour boroughs have formed the Association of London Authorities as a "GLC in exile," this organization lacks real clout. The marketplace result then is greater fragmentation and competition between boroughs—which is precisely the kind of economic decentralization that Thatcher wishes to achieve.¹² It may be useful to quote one practitioner, discounting the notion of structure. One of President Jimmy Carter's major operatives in the White House, Jack Watson, advised Carter as follows:

After all is said and done about how to organize governments and White House staffs, the success of your presidency and your reflection in history will be determined, not by organizational structures or management theories, but by people. In the final analysis, you really have only one initial task of overriding importance—and that is to choose wisely and well the men and women who will serve you (Heineman and Hessler 1980, 48).

References

- Abercrombie, P. 1945. *The Greater London Plan, 1944*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Adler, M., and J. Bellush. 1980. A look at the district manager. *New York Affairs* 6:49–53.
- Alduy, J. P., and M. Dagnaud. 1980. *l'Aménagement du territoire d'Ile-de-France*. Paris: Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme Région d'Ile-de-France.
- Altshuler, A. 1970. *Community control*. New York: Pegasus.
- Arnstein, S. 1969. A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35:216–24.
- Ashford, D. 1982. *British dogmatism and French pragmatism*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Association of London Authorities. 1987. *London's financial problems*. London: Author.
- Association of the Bar of the City of New York. 1988. The role of amenities in the land use process. New York. Mimeograph.
- Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme. 1986. Situation et perspectives du marché des bureaux en région Ile-de-France. Paris. Mimeograph.
- . 1988. Le Marché des bureaux en région Ile-de-France. Paris. Mimeograph.
- Bailey, R. 1987. Capital planning, institutions and fiscal crisis: The case of New York City, 1965–1985. Paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, September.
- Barbanel, J. 1989. New Yorkers fear no mayor can solve city's top problems. *New York Times*, June 22, p. 1.
- Barlow Commission. 1945. *Report of the Royal Commission on the distribution of industrial population*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Barnard, C. I. 1968. *The functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bernier, L. 1992. Political and financial consequences of decentralization in France: A survey of the 1980s. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. Cleveland, OH, April.
- Carmona, M. 1979. *Le grande Paris*. Paris: Girotypo.
- Center for Social Research. 1988. Some preliminary findings. New York: City University of New York.
- City of New York, Office of the Mayor. 1987. New York. Mimeograph.
- Cohen, M. D., J. G. March, and J. P. Olsen. 1972. A garbage can model of organizational choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17:1–25.
- Costikyan, E., and M. Lehman. 1972. Restructuring the government of New York City. New York: Task Force on Jurisdiction and Structure. State Study Commission for New York City.
- Crozier, M., and J. C. Thoenig. 1976. The regulation of complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 21:547–69.
- Dembart, L. 1975. Most New Yorkers, in poll, still like city. *New York Times*, 30 June, pp. 1, 55.
- Department of the Environment. 1983. *Streamlining the cities*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Deutsch, S. 1988. Testimony of Sylvia Deutsch, Chairperson of the City Planning Commission, before the Bar Association of the City of New York. New York. Mimeograph.
- Direction Régionale d'Ile-de-France, Institute d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Région d'Ile-de-France, Atelier Parisien d'Urbanisme. 1990. *Le livre blanc de l'Ile-de-France*.

- Downs, A. 1967. *Inside bureaucracy*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Eulau, H. 1963. *The behavioral persuasion in politics*. New York: Random House.
- Eulau, H., and K. Prewitt. 1973. *Labyrinths of democracy*. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Fainstein, N., and S. Fainstein. 1986. Economic restructuring and the politics of land use planning in New York City. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 53:237-48.
- Fainstein, S., I. Gordon, and M. Harloe, eds. 1992. *Divided Cities*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Fesler, J. 1949. *Area and administration*. Tuscaloosa: Univ. of Alabama Press.
- Fowler, G. 1980. Community board wrap-up. *New York Affairs* 6:7-17.
- Game, C., and S. Leach. 1988. The abolition of metropolitan governments. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association. Washington, DC, September.
- GLC Public Relations Branch. 1984. Keep the GLC working for London. London. Mimeograph.
- Goodman, R. 1971. *After the planners*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Gouldner, A. 1957. Cosmopolitans and locals: Toward an analysis of latent social roles-I. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 2:281-305.
- . 1958. Cosmopolitans and locals: Toward an analysis of latent social roles-II. *Administrative Science Quarterly* 3:444-79.
- Gravier, J. 1947. *Paris et le desert francais*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Gremion, P. 1976. *Le pouvoir peripherique*. Paris: Seuil.
- Hall, D. 1986. Reconciling the Green Belt and Greenfield. *The Times* 16.
- Hart, D. 1976. *Strategic planning in London*. London: Pergamon.
- Heclo, H. 1978. Issue networks and the executive establishment. In *The American Political System*, edited by A. King, 87-124. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.
- Heineman, B., and C. Hessler. 1980. *Memorandum for the President*. New York: Random House.
- Hotel de Ville de Paris. 1986. 1986: Le budget. Paris. Mimeograph.
- Husbands, C. T. 1985. Attitudes to local government in London. *London Journal* 11(1): 59-72.
- Kantor, P. 1974. The governable city: Islands of power and political parties in London. *Polity* 7:4-31.
- Kaufman, H. 1969. Alienation, decentralization and participation. *Public Administration Review* 29:3-12.
- Keating, M. 1991. Local economic development politics in France. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 13:443-59.
- Lagroye, J. 1988. Untitled manuscript. Paris. Mimeograph.
- Lebenstein, D. 1980. A report card. *New York Affairs* 6:10-18.
- Les enjeux du Grand Paris. *Le Monde*, 28 July 1988.
- Levine, M. 1992. The transformation of French urban politics. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Urban Affairs Association. Cleveland, OH, May.
- Lipsky, M. 1977. Toward a theory of street level bureaucracy. In *Theoretical Perspectives in Political Science*, edited by W. D. Hawley, M. Lipsky, S. E. Greenberg, et al. 196-213. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- London Strategic Policy Unit. 1987. *GLC: One year counting costs*. London: Association of London Authorities.
- Macchiarola. 1973. Political decentralization in New York City: Progress report. Paper presented at the summer meeting of the American Political Science Association. New Orleans, LA, September.
- Machin, H., and V. Wright. 1985. *Economic policy and policy making under the Mitterand presidency*. New York: St. Martin's.
- March, J., and J. Olsen. 1983. What administrative reorganization tells us about governing. *American Political Science Review* 77:281-96.
- March, J., and H. Simon. 1958. *Organizations*. New York: Wiley.
- Merton, R. 1968. *Social theory and social structure*. New York: Free Press.
- Mudd, J. 1984. *Neighborhood services*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.
- Netzer, D. 1973. Local government in heaven and hell. *New York Affairs* 1 (1):98-108.
- New York City Charter Revision Commission. 1988. Transcript of testimony, Manhattan public hearing, 30 June.
- Nicholson, B. 1986. How the Green Belt will be lost. Unpublished manuscript.

- Office of the Leader of the Opposition, GLC. 1984. Streamlining the cities: The government's proposals for reorganising local government in London. London: Response by the GLC Conservative Group.
- O'Leary, B. 1987. British farce, French drama and tales of two cities: Explaining the reorganization of Paris and London governments, 1957-1986. *Public Administration* 65:369-89.
- Pecorella, R. 1984. Coping with crisis: The politics of urban retrenchment. *Polity* 17: 298-316.
- . 1989. Expectations in the 70s, performances in the 80s: Community boards in New York City. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the New York State Political Science Association, April.
- Pecorella, R., and E. Rogowsky. 1987. Community board blues revisited: The Brooklyn boards. Paper presented at the New York State Political Science Association meeting. New York, April.
- Pilat, O. 1968. *Lindsay's campaign*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Rhodes, G. 1970. *The government of Greater London*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press.
- Robson, W. 1939. *The government and misgovernment of London*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Sassen, S. 1991. *The global city*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Savitch, H. V. 1988. *Post industrial cities*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Savitch, H. V., and M. Adler. 1974. *Decentralization at the grass roots*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Sayre, W. 1971. The relevance of the Greater London governmental experience to New York City government. New York: State Study Commission for New York City.
- Schattschneider, E. 1960. *The semisovereign people*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Schmidt, V. 1990. *Democratizing France*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Seidman, H., and R. Gilmour. 1970. *Politics, position and power*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Simon, H. 1945. *Administrative behavior*. New York: Free Press.
- Smallwood, F. 1965. *Greater London*. New York: Bobbs-Merrill.
- State Charter Revision Commission for New York City. 1974. Revising the New York City charter. New York: Author.
- Storing, H.J., ed. 1962. *Essays on the scientific studies of politics*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Sundquist, J. 1975. *Dispersing population*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.
- Tarrow, S. 1977. *Between center and periphery: Grassroots politicians in Italy and France*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.
- Thoening, J. C. 1988. State bureaucracies and local government in France. In *Interorganizational policy making: Limits to coordination and central control*, edited by K. Hanf and F. W. Scharpf, 167-97. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Time Magazine Poll. 1990. 17 September 1990, 38-40.
- Tolchin, M., and S. Tolchin. 1971. *To the victor*. New York: Random House.
- Townsend, J. 1984. A mayor for Paris—an early example of decentralization. *Public Administration* 62:455-72.
- Viteritti, J., and R. Pecorella. 1987. Community government. Paper prepared for the New York City Charter Revision Commission. New York.
- WCBS News-New York Times. 1986. WCBS News-New York Times Poll, March 9-10.
- Wiseman, C. 1981. Power to the people. *New York Magazine*, 6 October.
- Young, K. 1984. Governing Greater London: The political aspects. *Political Quarterly* 55:256-72.
- Young, K., and P. Garside, 1982. *Metropolitan London*. New York: Holmes & Meier.
- Zimmerman, J. 1972. *The federated city*. New York: St. Martin's.

Hank Savitch is a professor of urban policy and management and director of the Ph.D. program in urban and public affairs at the College of Business and Public Administration, University of Louisville. He has authored three books on various aspects of urban affairs, including neighborhood politics, national urban policy, and comparative urban development. He also has written articles in the areas of public administration and urban and regional politics and coedited a volume entitled *Big City Politics in Transition* (with John Thomas). He is currently coeditor of *The Journal of Urban Affairs*.