EXPLAINING LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICY MAKING: CLASS PRESSURES, PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS AND SYSTEMS OF POLITICAL MANAGEMENT IN TWO COUNTY COUNCILS

Timothy John Harrington

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Abstract

This thesis studies the role of professional officers in local authority policy making. It addresses two questions: what are the determinants of professional influence on local policy and intervention; and how, if at all, does the relative influence of the determinants vary between councils and with time?

A review of urban managerialist, marxist and other theories of local government is carried out, together with a detailed critique of recent 'dualist' models. The approach adopted in the thesis uses a theoretical model of local authority policy making which takes class and non-class variables into account. The model has three elements, each drawing on a different theoretical perspective. A class perspective is used to explain the expansion of state professions and the pressures that constrain professional autonomy. A managerialist perspective is introduced to explain how the interests of state professions act as an independent, non-class determinant of local authority policy. Finally, an analysis of systems of political management - which refers to the relative size of local political parties and the extent of party policies in an authority - is used to account for the precise level of professional autonomy.

Empirical research was undertaken in the county councils of Cheshire and Clwyd. This involved interviews with professional officers in the fields of industrial development, corporate management, planning and social services. Documents produced by the two authorities and a number of secondary sources were also used. The significance of class relations, professional interests and systems of political management is identified by making comparisons between different authorities, different fields of policy, different systems of political management and over time.

A number of conclusions are reached. First, that local authority intervention in various fields resulted from a combination of class-based pressures and professional interests and that the system of political management determined the relative influence of class relations and professional interests in any particular authority. For example, Clwyd's involvement in the field of industrial development was partly a response to the economic decline of the area and the pressures this generated, but the precise form of the County's industrial development programme was determined by the interests of the authority's corporate managers. The system of political management in Clwyd accounted for the degree of professional autonomy enjoyed by corporate managers. Second, that particular features of local government - such as levels of professional autonomy - and patterns of local intervention - involving, for example, high levels of expenditure - may be brought about by different combinations of class relations, professional interests and systems of political management. Third, that a multi-theoretical model in which the theories are related 'hierarchically' (such that each nests within another and refers to a distinct level of abstraction) is preferable to a dualist model. Finally, that the relative influence of class relations and professional interests on local authority intervention varies more significantly with different systems of political management than between different fields of policy as dualist models would suggest.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. The aims of this thesis

The significance of local government has increased in several respects during the second half of this century. Since 1948 the most dramatic rise in public expenditure has occurred at the level of local government. By the mid 1970s local authorities accounted for a third of total public expenditure (Royal Commission on Local Government in England 1969, Vol 3. Research appendices). Local authorities have also become major employers. Between 1948 and 1975 the number of staff they employ nearly doubled from 1.4 million - 6% of the working population - to 2.5 million - 10% of the working population. (Benington 1976, 5). And local government now plays an important part in the lives of most people through its role in fields such as education, housing and social services. The 1970s saw the end of local governments' 'boom period' and since then restrictions on welfare expenditure have forced cuts in local expenditure, staff and services (see National Community Development Project 1979). These cuts also have repercussions for a wide variety of groups - ratepayers and taxpayers, private business (notably, the construction industry) and the various 'providers' and 'consumers' of public goods and services, e.g. teachers and pupils.

Because the activities of local authorities have such widespread ramifications, it seems important to understand precisely their determinants. Several factors are commonly mentioned including class conflicts generated by the economic structure, the influence of local political parties, the organisation of tasks within the authority and the role of particular individuals. This research will examine the

influence of professional officers in local authority policy making and I shall be concerned with two issues: first, what determines professional influence in policy and intervention; and, second, whether the determinants of professional influence themselves vary in any way - for example, between different fields of policy.

There are several reasons why research in this area is required. First, although the importance of professional officers in local government has been widely acknowledged, their precise role in policy making has received relatively little attention (Batley 1982, 108, Rhodes 1980 and Rosenberg 1984 also make this point). And where officers have been examined, the focus of attention is usually the relation between local government professions and external ('client') groups. The significance of a 'professionalised' state administration for the internal organisation, procedures and routines of policy making has not been widely considered (Dunleavy 1981, 4). The need for more empirical research in this area is highlighted by the extent to which discussions of professional officers are obliged to rely on a limited number of studies - notably those of Davies (1972) and Dennis (1970).

But there are other and, I will argue, more important reasons for examining the role of professional officers in policy making. These relate to the theoretical models which have been developed to help explain local authority policy making.

From the evidence available it seems likely that the activities of local government are influenced by a combination of factors. Since the causes of local policy and intervention are complex we must employ simplified representations or models of reality to understand them. The models one constructs will depend on the subjects and issues being

considered. Generally, however, theoretical models of local government display two characteristics.

First, they tend to emphasise a single determinant of local policy and either deny that other factors are significant or fail to adequately explain the relationship between different determinants. The urban managerialist and marxist perspectives, for example, have been developed as competing explanations of the role of professional officers in policy making. The former emphasises that officers influence the allocation of 'scarce urban resources' - land and housing, for example - independently of party political control. In the marxist model the question of the independence of state professionals vis-a-vis politicians is treated as secondary and replaced by that of the relationship between the political sphere as a whole and the economic structure of society. In this view the influence of professional officers is determined primarily by the pressures generated by the economic structure. But the problem with such models is that they tend to over-emphasise the significance of the particular cause of policy on which they focus. Urban managerialism tends to overestimate the independence of local officers, while the marxist model tends to ignore or play down the discretion available to officers within the constraints imposed by the economic structure. By examining the role of professional officers in policy making I will argue that the tendency to reduce explanations of policy and intervention to a single factor is unnecessary and unhelpful.

A realisation that mono-causal models produce over-simplified representations of local government has prompted calls for multi-causal and multi-theoretical models of policy formation. But the relationship between various factors must be clearly established if

such models are to be of use. I will also focus on the part played by officers in policy making as a means of considering how different causes of policy should be related to each other in a model of local authority policy and intervention.

The second characteristic common to most models of policy making is an assumption that the causes of local policy and intervention are relatively constant and do not vary significantly between different fields of policy, for example. Thus, even where models acknowledge that local policy and intervention is caused by a number of factors they do not generally consider whether the relative significance of different causal factors varies systematically: certain urban managerialist models acknowledge the influence of economic pressures and some marxist models note the 'relative autonomy' of the state bureaucracy but in both cases little attempt is made to investigate variations in the causes of policy and intervention. Several recent models do, however, address this subject. The 'dual state' thesis, for example, claims that different policies are determined in different ways at various levels of government (see Cawson and Saunders 1983). This implies that in certain fields, professional officers may determine policy independently of external pressures while in others, their influence is primarily a response to such pressures. I will use the analysis of professional officers to investigate the subject of variations in the determinants of public policy and intervention. I shall be concerned with two issues in particular: first whether the determinants of policy vary most significantly between different fields of intervention; and, second, whether they vary <u>within</u> any particular field of intervention. This will involve an examination of how different systems of political management - which, I will define in terms of the extent of party

politics and the electoral composition of a council - affect the influence of professional officers on local authority policy and intervention.

A focus on local officers is also useful as a means of examining the organisational processes and routines involved in local authority policy making and intervention. To help explain how such an explanation may be useful I will briefly discuss why a study of the internal mechanics of local authorities has become unpopular. There has been a tendency in recent years for analyses of public policy and intervention to ignore this subject and examine instead the external pressures acting on government institutions. According to 'new' urban sociologists like Castells (1977) and Dunleavy (1980) a focus on institutions such as local authorities distorts analysis by relying too much on 'official' definitions and formal descriptions of policy making. The result, they argue, is that many studies of local government attribute causal significance to a physical and institutional entity which has no theoretical meaning. A failure to study the internal dynamics of local authorities has also been justified by the assumption that what goes on inside central and local government is primarily a response to pressures generated by the general social structure. The widespread acceptance of this assumption is confirmed by the large number of studies which examine the outcomes and consequences of public policy for external groups (e.g. businesses and council tenants) as a means of explaining its causes.

The marxist critique of institutional analysis has certainly highlighted faults in many analyses of British local authorities but my response to it is twofold: first, that the causal significance of institutions like local authorities, of official definitions of

policy and of formal policy making processes such as the operation of the local government bureaucracy should be investigated; and, second, that a focus on local authorities does not necessarily involve an emphasis on the 'institutional' aspects of policy making - a study of institutions does not automatically limit one to an 'institutionalist' explanation. The criticisms apply only if official explanations of policy are unreservedly accepted and no attempt is made to go beyond a description of the institutional form of the authorities.

By examining the internal processes of local authority policy making I will consider whether public policy and intervention can be adequately understood in terms of the external pressures on government institutions. A focus on officers is more appropriate as a means of examining the internal processes of local policy making than a focus on political parties since the latter are more closely related (via the ballot box) to the external social structure. An investigation of the influence of professional officers on policy making therefore provides a more rigorous test of that assumption that policy and intervention reflects external pressures.

While the research thus addresses some general issues relating to theoretical models of public policy formation, I have also examined the role of professional officers in local authorities for a more specific, practical reason. Following the rise of 'community action' in the 1960s it has often been claimed that community groups have an important role to play in improving the quality of local democracy (see, for example, Crick 1970). There is some doubt as to how significant a role such groups can play and whether their role is to challenge or supplement the existing institutions of government. But despite

this uncertainty it is widely acknowledged that community action improves the existing 'formal' processes through which public policy and intervention is produced. It seems important therefore that the development of community groups and the activities of existing groups should be supported. Community groups have experienced numerous problems when attempting to influence local intervention (see Community Action magazine for examples). The failure of community groups to influence intervention is often attributed to their lack of resources and poor organisation or to the influence of vested interests such as private business on local authorities. While these factors are undoubtedly important, I suggest that the success of community groups also depends on how clearly they understand the internal mechanics of local authorities. I consider that two things in this respect have hindered the development of community groups or jeopardized their chance of influencing policy and intervention. First, many community groups do not know how much influence professional officers exert on policy and intervention: as a result, they cannot accurately gauge how much of their effort and pressure should be directed at local officers and how much should be focussed on other 'targets', e.g. local councillors. Such uncertainty can have serious repercussions for the success of community action - it makes no sense, for example, to concentrate pressure on councillors if officers are determining policy independently of local councillors. Community groups therefore need some indication of the extent to which officers influence policy and how, if at all, professional influence varies. Second, community groups will be more likely to influence professional officers if they understand precisely the motives of the latter. I will argue that explanations of professional influence which emphasize 'empire-building' as a motive of local officers provide an inadequate understanding of the role played by them in policy making and intervention.

I would argue that in addressing these subjects the research may assist community groups.

1.2 Empirical research methods

The use of case studies

The empirical research reported in this thesis is based on case studies of two British local authorities - the county councils of Cheshire and Clwyd. Before outlining how these were chosen I will briefly explain why a limited number of cases were examined.

The study of a large number of cases is most appropriate where the data being sought is easy to obtain and quantify. But even where this is so, the information will tend to be relatively superficial since detailed analysis may be impractical. In order to make use of such information one must make two assumptions. First, that it is accurate; for example, in order to study a large number of authorities one might be obliged to rely on local authority public plans and documents when collecting information on their activities. One must trust, therefore, that such documents give an accurate account of those activities. Second, since it may be unpracticable to examine in detail the causal processes underlying every case of policy and intervention, one must assume that similar events in different situations have similar causes.

I would suggest that the subjects of this research - the influence of professional officers and systems of political management - could not be adequately examined by considering a large number of cases. The influence of officers and systems of political management is difficult to observe without detailed study. Newton (1976) and

Dearlove (1973) have pointed out,for example, the problems involved in penetrating beyond statements that local officers are simply public servants rather than policy makers. And extensive and prolonged contact with particular local authorities and groups of professional officers is required to gain the cooperation needed to gather details of policy making[1]. Nor were the subjects of analysis easy to quantify. One cannot necessarily see and measure the determinants of social phenomena in the way one can with physical phenomena: as Saunders (1979, 336) has argued, the exercise of power and influence in public policy making is "inherently unquantifiable". It makes no sense in this situation to try and add together a large number of cases. Finally, I began with the assumption that a particular outcome such as high levels of local authority expenditure on various services could be due to different things in different authorities - e.g. professional interests in one and the colour of a council in another. I could not therefore rely on the superficial level of information provided by large scale surveys and structured questionnaires.

I therefore concluded that the use of a limited number of case studies was both necessary and desirable given the subjects of this research.

Although the empirical research in this thesis is based on only two local authorities I would argue that the research findings shed light on the nature of public policy making and intervention generally.

The choice of cases

The choice of Cheshire County Council and Clwyd County Council

as case studies was influenced both by the above-mentioned aims and various practical and personal factors. I began to investigate the question of variations in the determinants of policy and intervention by considering Saunders'(1979a) claim that policies related primarily to the sphere of production are produced differently from those related to the sphere of consumption - a distinction between activities which assist mainly private business and activities which chiefly affect other groups (e.g. council house tenants). Most local authority services are related more clearly to the sphere of consumption - e.g. social services. The need to include an area of policy which related clearly to production prompted me to focus on authorities with industrial development programmes.

The 1981 local government elections were notable for the number of 'hung' councils elected. (These are councils run on party political lines in which no single party has an overall majority.) This prompted me to consider whether policy making varied between hung councils and authorities with other systems of political management. Liverpool City Council was the most-publicised case of a hung council and attracted my attention to authorities in the North West. My concern with industrial development programmes reinforced a focus on this area: although many authorities have such programmes they are more common and well established in declining industrial areas like the North West. Such a focus also allowed me to conduct research in an area with which I am both familiar and personally interested.

The councils I contacted in the North West were not equally willing to cooperate with my research[2]. Of the authorities which were most willing to cooperate the county councils of Cheshire and Clwyd were the most suitable and interesting. Each had comparable services that related to the spheres of production and consumption -

industrial development and social services: and each lacked, at the time, a party with a clear majority. In Cheshire this led to a hung council; in Clwyd, to a system of 'power-sharing'. This permitted a consideration and comparison of policy making under different kinds of political system. In addition, prior to the 1981 local government election Cheshire had been dominated by one party. This therefore allowed me an interesting comparison of policy making in an authority before and after the election of a hung administration.

In the initial stages of the empirical research I also decided to examine policy making and intervention in a field somewhere between the spheres of production and consumption. I therefore began research in the Highways departments of Cheshire and Clwyd. However, despite initial assurances that departments would cooperate, I was later told that Clwyd's highways department were not willing to assist me. As this made a comparison between Cheshire and Clwyd in this area of policy impossible I did not consider the subject of highways policy any further.

The final shape of the research in each authority - the particular interviews conducted, the precise questions asked, the various documents used and so on - was determined by two further things. My critique of dualist models emphasised the need to consider the development over time of policy making procedures, e.g. the rise and operation of professional groups like planners and corporate managers. By employing a <u>temporal</u> perspective I was able to consider how external pressures may become internalised as part of the local authorities - leading, for example, to the growth of professional officer groups - and how such groups subsequently affect policy making. A second factor influencing the research was my growing familiarity with the

County Councils of Cheshire and Clwyd. Research in the two authorities brought to light certain subjects of interest, not initially apparent.

As a result of these two factors, in addition to my above-mentioned concerns, the research included an examination of the historical links between the reorganisation of local government in 1972, the establishment of 'corporate management' groups and procedures and the subsequent influence of corporate managers on 'industrial development' policy[3].

1.3 The plan of this thesis

Each of the chapters is designed to fulfill one or more of the following major aims: first, to establish that the influence of local officers on intervention is caused by a variety of factors - in particular, by factors which are internal or specific to local authorities (such as the division of tasks and the characteristcs of professional groups) and pressures which are generated by the wider social structure; second, to argue that a multi-theoretical model is required to represent these determinants of intervention; and, third, to examine how the determinants of intervention vary.

In chapter 2 I examine various theories of local government and state intervention. These are divided into two categories. Theories of the first type focus on the internal characteristics of local authorities and emphasize how policy and intervention is determined independently of pressures generated by the wider social structure. Theories in the second category concentrate on explaining how policy and intervention is produced in response to pressures generated by the social structure - e.g. in response to conflicts between property speculators and 'community' groups or the 'need' to support business

development. I argue that the internal characteristics of local authorities and the external pressures on them constitute distinct determinants of policy and intervention and that both must be taken into account to provide an adequate explanation of local intervention. Since theories focus on one or other of these determinants I conclude that a multi-theoretical model of local government is required to provide an accurate representation of policy making and intervention.

Chapters 3 and 4 then consider how a model which emphasizes both internal and external determinants of local intervention and adopts a multi-theoretical approach can be developed. In chapter 3 I examine dualist models of public policy and intervention. These models claim to identify a 'mode' of policy formation in which intervention is determined independently of external pressures and a mode in which it is primarily a response to such pressures. Dualist models distinguish between independent and responsive modes of policy making by arguing that the economic structure of society is divided into spheres of production and consumption, each of which generates different determinants of intervention. The dualist models are thus distinguishing between determinants of intervention that derive from different aspects of the general social structure - i.e. between different external causes of intervention rather than between external and internal determinants. From my critique of dualist models I conclude that a model of external and internal determinants of intervention must begin with two elements: the first is an analysis of how the general social structure generates political institutions and produces pressures and constraints on them; the second is an analysis of how political institutions operate within such pressures and constraints.

In chapter 4 I explain why a distinction between external and internal determinants of intervention is required to explain the influence of professional officers in local authorities. This involves using a marxist perspective to help explain how the class relations associated with a capitalist 'mode of production' give rise to a 'relatively autonomous' state bureaucracy. Class relations are presented as a source of external pressures and constraints on local officers. I then draw on a Weberian model of bureaucracy to help explain how the interests of professional officers influence policy within the above-mentioned pressures and constraints. The interests of professional officers are presented as an internal determinant of intervention since they stem from the organisational form of local authorities rather than the general class structure.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 attempt to illustrate the relationship between class forces and professional interests, to examine how the latter influence policy and to consider the issue of variations in these determinants of intervention by referring to case studies of Cheshire County Council and Clwyd County Council. In chapter 5 I argue that both class relations and professional interests influenced the development of high levels of expenditure and services by Cheshire County Council during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. I attribute Cheshire's particular high levels of expenditure and services to the way in which a sizeable and stable majority encouraged the Conservatives in the Council to grant professional officers an unusually large degree of discretion in the development of policy. I go on to emphasize the significance of professional interests as a determinant of policy by describing how the 1972 reorganisation of

local government and the introduction of corporate management procedures were, in part, an attempt to reduce the autonomy of professional groups in local government. In chapter 6 I examine the role of Clwyd County Council's corporate managers in the development of that County's job creation schemes to illustrate how the interests of professional officers can determine the precise pattern of local intervention. I again describe how a system of political power-sharing by Clwyd's parties increased the autonomy of the authority's professional officers. Chapter 7 mainly discusses variations in the relative influence of class relations and professional interests on local intervention. I begin by outlining some important constraints imposed on officers and also describe how a hung council in Cheshire restricted their autonomy. I then consider whether the autonomy of professional officers - and, hence, the influence of class pressures and professional interests on intervention - varies more significantly between different fields of policy or with different systems of political management.

Chapter 8 summarises the main arguments of this thesis and outlines some theoretical and practical implications of the research.

Chapter 2

Theories of local government policy making

2.1 Introduction

My aim in this chapter is to outline and discuss theories currently used or potentially available as explanations of local authority policy making. This involves reference to a wide body of literature and I have drawn selectively from it to illustrate its scope and content. By so doing I will raise some issues which face any study of local authority policy making. This in turn will indicate how certain theories may be used in later chapters to assess the role of professional officers in local authority policy making.

Any literature review will to some extent reflect the interests of the reviewer. This chapter has been shaped by (a) my concern to understand how and why local authorities may produce policy independently of socio-economic forces and (b) my view that it may be necessary to develop a multi-theoretical approach to explain local authority policy making.

The rest of the chapter is divided into four sections. In section 2.2 I discuss theories which see local authorities as units - 'organisations' - which are distinct from their external 'environment'. The theories emphasise internal features of local authorities - professional groups for example - in their explanations of policy making and view such features as independent variables which do not reflect the influences of environmental forces on local authorities. These will be termed organisational theories of local authority policy making. The theories in section 2.3 see local authorities primarily as reflections of society and emphasise the role of external, societal forces in policy making. I shall call these political theories of policy making. Section 2.4 examines studies of British local government. The final part summarises

the above discussion and assesses the differences between the theories and studies.

2.2 Organisational theories of local authority policy making

The origins of organisation analysis

The study of organisations began in the nineteenth century with Weber's analysis of bureaucracy. Weber's aim was to show how society was becoming more rational by developing a certain form of organisation and to warn of the danger (of alienation) he foresaw in a 'bureaucratic society'. In his view 'society' would be unable to control the operation of bureaucratic organisations: within local authorities, for example, elected politicians would lose control of officers. In this situation, rather than responding to the wishes and interests of the electorate, officers would determine policy according to the bureaucratic criteria that stressed the need for rationality and efficiency.

The subsequent development of organisation theory in the 1920s and 1930s had quite a different root: researchers were concerned with using organisational analysis to improve the efficiency of organisations. 'Scientific management' - often referred to as 'Taylorism' in memory of one of its most famous proponents, F.W. Taylor - included thousands of studies, all of which were designed to promote the production of firms. In the U.S.A. the approach rested on the view that the 'efficiency' or output of a firm was to a large extent dependent on how its senior staff managed the workforce: efficiency could be improved by rearranging the firm's internal structure. Individuals within the firm were seen as cogs in a machine, to be tinkered with as and when the interests of the organisation demanded. The subjugation of the workforce to the 'organisation's' goals and interests was justified by the assertion that the organisation represented the interests of <u>all</u> its

members. This view legitimised the 'authoritarian' organisation: members of the firm need not be consulted since what was good for the organisation was good for them. Many of the ideas within this strand of organisational theory were later applied to the analysis of British local government (partly influencing, for example, the introduction of 'P.P.B.S.', 'Corporate Management' and other such systems of 'rational' decision making).

Given the view that organisations represent a consensus of interests early organisation theorists had great difficulty in explaining conflict within organisations, e.g. why industrial disputes occurred in private firms or why political conflict occurred in local authorities. Many subsequent organisation theories have attempted to explain such conflict.

The 'Human Relations' analysis of organisations

The first response was that conflict arose when workers were unhappy. It was not sufficient that an organisation acted on behalf of its workforce: employees needed to feel part of the organisation - to be part of a 'team' (Barnard, 1938). The belief that happy workers produce more underpinned a mass of studies designed to establish what constituted 'good human relations' (see, for example, Katz, Maccoby and Morse, 1950). But the concern with employee attitudes is not designed to transform the organisation from an authoritarian regime: the 'human' relations' approach "treats employees as if they were pigeons, rats in a maze or at best children" (Perrow, 1979, 111). The object is to get 'irrational' or unskilled individuals - employees, politicians, local authority officers, for example - to conform to the goals of the organisation, since the latter, the approach maintains, represent

the interests of them all. Etzioni, for example, contrasts the rationality of organisations with the irrationality of their members and goes on to outline what he considers to be the role of organisation theory:

> "Finding a balance between rational and non-rational elements of human behaviour is ... the central problem of organisation theory ... The basic question is how best to coordinate human activities in order to make a highly rational unit, and at the same time maintain social integration, the normative commitment of participants, and their motivation to participate." (1965, 1).

There was little conception in these early works that conflicts may reflect a difference of interests nor that conflict may stem from the social system beyond a private firm or public authority.

Although the human relations model treated the workforce with some contempt, it explained organisational activity in terms of the ideas and attitudes of individuals. Many studies subsequently showed however, that an organisation's activity could be explained, not in terms of the values and attitudes of its members, but by reference to its 'structure'. This evidence was widely interpreted as a challenge to the human relations theory, and gave rise to the 'structural' analysis of organisations.

The structural analysis of organisations

The development of a 'structural' approach involved an emphasis on the kinds of variables emphasised by Weber: the division of labour, a hierarchical system of control and other such administrative 'structures' (see, for example, March and Simon, 1958). These variables were said to largely determine the efficiency with which a firm produced

goods or a public authority provided services. Like the human relations model the structural model assumes that an organisation has goals which determine its action: but individuals are obliged to pursue these goals because of the structure of the organisation not because they agree with them. This notion of 'structurally determined' action paved the way for a new conception of conflict within organisations. The human relations approach assumed that individuals were free to determine their own behaviour and the fact that they chose to remain part of an organisation therefore meant that an organisation was based on a consensus of interests and objectives. The structural approach, however, with its emphasis on coerced behaviour did not assume this: conflict was seen "as an inevitable part of organisational life stemming from organisational characteristics rather than the characteristics of individuals" (Perrow, 1979, 154). Thus, for example, it was the divisions between staff and workforce, between politicians and public bureaucrats, between different departments in local authorities and so on which were said to cause conflict, not the psychological despositions and values of individuals within the organisation.

The group conflict approach

Cyert and March (1963) demonstrated that an organisation's goals were sometimes multiple and contradictory, reflecting a process of conflict and compromise between groups within it (see also Manning, 1977). But the renewed concern of organisational analysis with conflict did not involve a return to the human relations approach: the focus of analysis was groups not individuals and conflict was seen

in terms of rational 'interests' not irrational 'sentiments'. For example, within a local authority each group of officers - planners, social workers, etc. - has an interest in promoting the service with which it is associated. Conflict may therefore occur if these groups are obliged to compete for the resources needed to promote services.

The group conflict approach was in effect a compromise between the human relations and structural approaches. Individuals were considered, but primarily as members of groups, while group interests resulted from structural features such as the division of labour and hierarchy of control. The question of how an organisation's structure is formed was answered by extending the focus to groups outside the organisation. Selznick's (1966) study of the Tennessee Valley Authority showed how the internal conflicts and programmes of an organisation could be influenced by powerful external interest groups.

This shift of focus marked a major change in organisation theory: previously theorists had been concerned primarily with what happened inside organisations; little attempt had been made to analyse in any detail how the 'environment' of the organisation affected its operation.

The relationship between organisations and their environments

An extensive debate has developed concerning the question of how organisations and the groups within them are affected by their environment. On one side of the debate organisations are held to be autonomous from the environment and capable of shaping it: the environment is only a constraint if it is defined and perceived as such by an organisation (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). "The environment is put

there by the actor within the organisation and by no one else" (Weick, 1969, 28). In contrast, 'contingency' theorists consider that environmental forces will determine the operation of an organisation (Hirsch, 1975). In recent years this view has become popular - due mainly to the persuasiveness of marxist class theory. In the main, marxists have argued that a distinction between organisations and their environments is misleading as the former are simply an aspect of the class structure of society: organisations, in other words, are part of a 'class environment' (see, for example, Clegg, 1977). In this view, organisations, such as local authorities, are to be studied as a means of understanding how class forces operate: they are not considered to contribute a distinctive, non-class influence on policy making and service provision.

There are problems with both of these positions. Against the first - 'solipsist' - view Merton (1976, 174-5) points out that environmental forces may affect an organisation and constrain its action regardless of the perceptions of the actors involved. Against the 'contingency' theorists various writers have pointed to the existence of 'strategic choice' in organisational behaviour (see, for example, Friend et al, 1974). While accepting that goals, needs and motivations operate within a field of constraint, the strategic choice model claims that "organisational decision-makers have certain opportunities to select the types of environment in which they will operate" (Child, 1972, 4).

There has been an attempt to by-pass this organisation-environment debate by characterising the environment as a collection or 'network' of organisations (see, for example, Perrow, 1979, 225). But most organisation theory now tends to adopt a position somewhere between the two

extremes of organisational solipsism and environmental determination (see, for example, Young and Kramer, 1978).

Organisational theories: a summary and assessment

An outline of organisational analysis and its development is useful in two ways: first, it provides an indication of how particular organisation theories may be used to help explain local authority policy making; and second, it raises some of the issues facing sociological enquiry of any sort. Two issues, in particular, are pertinent to an examination of local authority policy making: whether to analyse local authorities in terms of individuals, groups or structures and whether to distinguish between a local authority and its environment as distinct sources of influence on policy making.

Organisational analysis has generally rested on the claim that what happens 'inside' organisations cannot be fully explained by what happens 'outside' them. Attention has been focussed inside organisations although what constitutes the boundary between inside and outside is often left unspecified: in many cases analysts have been too willing to accept the definition given by members of the 'organisation' itself.

The 'positivist' stance of much organisational analysis reflects the reasons for its development. It was primarily designed, particularly in its early years, to answer questions set by business managers. The tendency of managers to blame the workforce for a company's ills led organisational analysis to see 'business problems' as 'people problems'. The dictum, "organisations are people" dominated

the scientific management and human relations traditions of organisational analysis. Organisational functioning was explained in terms of the attitudes and behaviour of individuals. When it became apparent that changing the attitudes of people did not necessarily change a firm's production or solve problems of industrial unrest the emphasis on individual behaviour declined. The structural tradition ignored individuals, arguing that the staff and workforce of an organisation were obliged to behave in certain ways by the structural characteristics of the organisation (e.g. its allocation of tasks). The distinction between the human relations and structural perspectives mirrors that traditionally made between the disciplines of psychology and sociology. The claim made in the structural perspective that an organisation cannot be understood in terms of the individuals within it marks it as a sociological approach. But, like sociological analysis in general, the structural perspective on organisations is left with the thorny question - where do individuals fit in?

The literature on organisations provides an answer to this question and, by so doing, a response to the first issue concerning the examination of individuals, groups and structures. March and Simon (1958) argue that the 'structural' and 'psychological' approaches cannot separately explain the operation of organisations. For them structural variables only constrain the influence of individuals within an organisation. Both approaches are therefore required to fully understand the operation of an organisation such as a local authority. Moreover, the group conflict approach indicates how one might examine the relationship between structural and non-structural factors in local authority policy making. The operation of groups - such as local authority planners, social workers, etc. - is partly a response to the structural features of an organisation and partly a reflection of the interests of their members. By focussing on the influence of groups in policy

making one can trace back and distinguish between structural and non-structural causes of local authority policy.

Selznick's development of the group conflict approach also indicates how the second issue - the relationship between organisations and their environments - might be resolved. Selznick (1966) showed how powerful interest groups influenced the development and operation of an organisation - the T.V.A. External groups in the T.V.A.'s environment used the organisation as a 'tool' to help implement policies which furthered their interests. Selznick thus identified environmental forces as an important cause of an organisation's creation and development. But he also emphasised that the 'tools' created in this way - groups within an organisation - are to some extent 'recalcitrant'. This meant that their 'use' implies consequencies which are not explicable purely in terms of the environmental forces responsible for the creation. He explained this in terms of a process of 'institutionalisation'.

> "Because organisations are social systems, goals or procedures tend to achieve an established, value-impregnated status. We say they become institutionalised." (1966, 257)

The process of institutionalisation (i.e. the formation of institutions) involves the commitment of groups within the organisation to some aspect of an organisation as they come to depend on and identify with aspects of it. As a result, "commitment to established patterns is generated, thus again restricting choice and enforcing special lines of conduct." Choices were restricted and special lines of conduct created, in other words, because the formation of the T.V.A. to represent environmental interests ipso facto generated a new set of groups within the organisation with interests of their own. This did not imply that environmental pressures ceased to influence the operation of the T.V.A. once groups based within it had become

established, but the influence of environmental forces was mediated by the interests of groups formed within the T.V.A.'s bureaucracy.

From this review and assessment of organisation theory I would suggest that an analysis of local authority policy making must distinguish between and take into account, first, both 'structural' and 'non structural' factors - such as the division of committees and departments and the values of councillors and officers - and, second, 'internal' and 'external' factors - e.g. the interests of officer groups and the influence of central government, 'pressure' groups, etc. Selznick's analysis also provides an indication of how an analysis of local authority policy making might characterise the relationship between a local authority and its 'environment'. It suggests that external, environmental forces are significant in generating and constraining the groups within a local authority while internal, organisational factors-- the interests of those groups - are important determinants of how the local authority operates within external constraints.

2.3 Political theories of local authority policy making

Organisation theories concentrate on the internal dynamics of local authorities and neglect what goes on outside such institutions. By contrast, a second series of theories concentrates on explaining how and why 'external' forces affect local authorities. They are each distinguished by their different conceptions of the social structure but they all begin by suggesting that local authorities and their policies are responses to and reflections of external forces - i.e. influences which originate outside local

authorities in the wider political structure of society. The groups and structures within local authorities are not therefore seen as independent influences on policy formation. I will term them 'political' theories of local authorities.

Pluralist theory

The pluralist perspective developed from studies of local politics in the United States and sees local government activity as a reflection of a variety of political forces existing in a society. It claims that businessmen, trade unions, politicians, consumers, farmers, voters and many other aggregates all have an impact on policy outcomes; that none of these aggregates is homogeneous for all purposes; that each of them is highly influential over some scopes but weak over many others. It argues that a 'ruling class' cannot develop in society since

> "people who are in conflict over one issue are not necessarily in opposition camps when the next issue comes up" (Dahl, 1963, 78).

The perspective was developed by the Lynds (1937) and elaborated by Dahl (1956, 1961). It formed the basis of the community power literature which mushroomed in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. (See Bell and Newby (1971) for a summary of the main studies in this tradition.) Focussing on a geographical area, usually defined in terms of boundaries of local government institutions, these studies sought to reveal how private interests influenced local political institutions. A local authority is regarded primarily as an arena within which social interests compete.

> "Government itself is seen as passive and weak, responsive, open to external influences, so that it simply refers or ratifies group demands, or else serves as a sort of automatic transmission belt converting vote inputs into policy outputs." (Dearlove, 1973, 73).

To a lesser extent ,it is also considered to be an object of competition since "When an actor controls the state he can enforce his decisions with the help of the state" (Dahl, 1963, 50).

Pluralist theories assume that the issues which divide groups are all contained within a broad consensus of interests and values. In this view, although local authority policy making may be characterised by day-to-day competition between groups it occurs within and ultimately reflects this broad consensus. 'Pluralists' use two kinds of argument to support this. First, society must be based on consensus since "without consensus no democratic system would long survive the endless irritations and frustrations of elections and party competition" (Dahl, 1956, 132). Second, widespread political 'inaction' (the failure of many people to vote or otherwise involve themselves in politics) is seen as evidence that local authority policy reflects the needs and interests of most people since if people were not satisfied they would act and change policy (Dahl, 1956, 135).

Bachrach and Baratz (1970) identify three cases where political inaction neither signifies a consensus of interests nor indicates that government policy is reflecting the interests of 'inactive' groups. First, when those in positions of power simply refuse to represent certain interests or politicise certain issues. (The tacit agreement between the major British political parties that 'Northern Ireland' should not become a political issue is an example.) Second, when groups anticipate that any action will be ignored or will provoke adverse consequences. (West Indian youths, for example, may fail to

report harassment by the police because they believe their complaints will either be ignored or provoke further harassment.) Thirdly, where groups misunderstand their interests or are unaware how certain issues affect them. (People living near the Windscale plant for the reprocessing of nuclear wastes may have failed to actively oppose the original siting of the plant because they were unaware of the consequent levels of radiation in the area.)

There are problems in establishing what constitutes 'non-decisions' (see Parry and Morris, 1974) but, nevertheless, Bachrach and Baratz's critique is a strong challenge to a pluralist theory of local authority policy making (Saunders, 1979, 31).

An even stronger challenge was made possible by evidence that political 'coalitions of interest' do not necessarily shift and change as suggested by pluralism. To use Northern Ireland once more as an example, many of the Province's local authorities are continuously dominated by a single interest group (based on the protestant religion) which enforces its interests across a wide number of 'issues' ('housing', 'employment', and others).

Evidence that stable interest groups dominate numerous issues forms the basis of elite theory.

Elite theory

Like pluralism, elite theory is concerned with "the way the state acts, that policy is made and decisions taken" (Hewitt, 1974, 49). It examines the relationships within and between different kinds of 'elites' ('political', 'economic', 'military') and non-elites.

These are said to form a 'power structure'. The term elite is used to describe those who occupy the leading positions in organisations or institutions such as local authorities.

> "Political elites are those who occupy such positions in the state, that is elected political representatives and the top civil servants. Social elites are those who control the non-political organisations that either embody sectional interests like 'business', 'labour', 'the professions' or represent attitudes and opinions. The non-elites are made up of sub-ordinates and rank and file members in organisations as well as unorganised publics" (Hewitt, 1974, 45).

Elite theorists see society as characterised by a relatively cohesive ruling group of elites which rules over non-elites and does not, as pluralists suggest, change significantly on most issues.

The perspective originated in the works of Michels (1915), Pareto (1935) and Mosca (1939) and was developed and applied by Hunter (1953) and Mills (1956). It has been used in numerous studies of power structure both at national and local levels of government (see Domhoff, 1980, 7 for a brief summary).

Mosca summed up the elitist conception of society in the following terms:

> "In all societies ... two classes of people appear - a class that rules and a class that is ruled. The first class, always the less numerous, performs all political functions, monopolises power and enjoys the advantages that power brings, whereas the second ... is directed and controlled by the first in a manner that is now more or less legal, now more or less arbitrary and violent." (1939, 50)

Michels argued that society needed government by an elite if it was to survive. This dependency gives power and advantages to the group of leaders so that they become unaccountable to their followers (i.e. their electorate).

Mills used the notion of elitism to counter both pluralist and

marxist conceptions of political power. Against the pluralist view of dispersed power and numerous groups, Mills claimed that the U.S.A. was governed by a small, triumvirate of 'corporate rich', 'political insiders', and 'military warlords' who came together at the top of their institutional pyramids as an interlocking and overlapping 'power elite' (1956). Hunter's (1953) evidence that power was concentrated among and restricted to a few corporate leaders also lent support to this. Against the marxist view Mills claimed that there is no necessary connection between economic classes and the ruling elite. Like other elite theorists he saw marxism as "a rather simple theory as its conception of a ruling class of economic interests did not allow enough autonomy to the political order and its agents" (1956, 277). Domhoff (1982, 12) points out that this aspect of the perspective is sufficient to invalidate the claim (see Poulantzas 1973,325, for example) that elitism is simply a cruder version of marxist instrumentalism[1].

The claim that no necessary link exists between social interests and political power has led elite theorists to assume that social interests must be directly linked to positions of political power if they are to ensure political representation. Elite theory, in other words, assumes that social interests must deliberately and cohesively act to gain and exercise political power. It is difficult therefore to defend elite theory unless one can demonstrate the existence of 'conscious cohesive and conspiratorial' elites (Meisel, 1958). Elite studies (e.g. Mills, 1956, Guttsman, 1963, Domhoff,1967 and 1974) are generally designed ,therefore, to investigate how political power is instrumentally linked to social interests. It is undeniable that in

some cases such direct links do exist and that social interests depend on them to ensure that political institutions represent their interests (see Whitt, 1980, for example). But the research techniques used in elite studies have led them to overemphasise the cohesiveness of elites and significance of social links.

Elite theorists have generally used 'positional' and 'reputational' techniques to define elites and examined 'social networks' to reveal which interest groups are connected to the elites - pluralists also used these techniques. The Positional technique defines the power elite by examining occupants of top positions in formal institutions. It would therefore suggest that local parties, officer groups, chambers of commerce for example are elite groups with regard to local authority policy making. The reputational technique defines the elite by relying on the evidence of those within 'powerful' institutions as to who is involved in the exercise of power. The analysis of social networks and backgrounds involves discovering which social groups the political elite is connected to (through marriage, membership of clubs, etc.) or recruited from. (See for example Guttsman's (1963) analysis of recruitment into the British civil service.)

There are various weaknesses in these techniques which limit the value of the empirical information gathered by elite theorists. The reputational and positional techniques tend to emphasise individuals involved in the obvious and/or formal exercise of power. They ignore (a) aspects of power that result from what in organisational analysis were termed 'structural variables'; (b) aspects individuals do not recognise or acknowledge; and (c) those that involve no observable action. Links between social groups and those in positions of power

do not necessarily signify a cohesive interest group or lines of influence: businessmen may cultivate social contacts with politicians but this does not indicate a common set of interests or that government will represent business interests. Conversely, the absence of links between businessmen and politicians may denote lack of need to exert influence: a 'communion' of values may make contact unnecessary (see, for example, Saunders' study of policy making in Croydon (1979)).

In many cases there is little evidence that elites act or need to act in an organised way (Di Tomaso 1980, 257). Elite theory does not explain cases where certain consistent social interests benefit from government policy even when they fail to 'act' or act in an incoherent and contradictory way.

Marxist theory

Marxist theory sees local authorities as part of 'the state'. Following this, local authority policy making is seen primarily as a response to class relations derived from a 'capitalist mode of production' (see, for example, Poulantzas 1978, 25). The explanation of why aspects of the state such as local authorities reflect and 'reproduce' capitalist class relations takes two forms - instrumentalism and structuralism.

As in elite theory, instrumentalism distinguishes between political power and economic power: no automatic link exists between the focus of political power - the state - and the dominant economic group - monopoly capital.

> "In reality there is a capitalist state on the one hand and monopoly capital on the other. The relation between them is close and getting ever closer, but there is nothing to be gained, and much by way of insight to be lost by a reductionist oversimplification of that relation." (Miliband, 1977, 96)

But instrumentalism differs from elite theory by identifying the capitalist mode of production as the only source of power and monopoly capital as the only dominant elite: the idea that military, political and other elites may exist alongside an economic elite does not form part of instrumentalism. The state is essentially ('in the last instance') an instrument of only one elite, monopoly capital (Lojkine, 1976).

In his earlier elaborations of the theory, Miliband (1973) explained the instrumentalism of the state in terms familiar to elitists, stressing the social background, connections and ethos of state personnel. But in later versions (see Miliband, 1977), the state is said to serve the interests of monopoly capital for two reasons. First, because it is 'structurally' constrained to do so (by its reliance on the capitalist economy for its revenue). And, second, because it remains relatively autonomous from the dominant class (acting 'on behalf of' rather than 'at the behest of' monopoly capital). This allows the state the freedom it needs to decide how best to serve the long-term interests of the dominant class - and so remain an instrument of the dominant class.

The structuralist analysis of state intervention was developed in France in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Poulantzas (1973) and Castells (1977) in particular developed the 'structuralist' reading of Marx proposed by Althusser (1968). Structuralism is based on the thesis that society cannot be understood simply at the level of 'appearances' - i.e. by reference to the behaviour or 'practices' of individuals and groups. An attempt is made to locate such practices within a series of social structures, since structural relationships are regarded as the most significant determinants of society's form.

According to Castells (1977, 251) individuals and their actions can only be understood with reference to "the social content they express" - they are the 'bearers' of objective social relations. The aim of structural analysis is to uncover these relations.

Structural relations occur on three, relatively autonomous, levels - the economic, the political and the ideological. In capitalist society the economic is regarded as the dominant level of structures and political and ideological relations are said to be derived from it. But to a certain extent the latter develop independently and generate their own effects. The state - and hence local authorities - is seen as a reflection or 'condensate' of these structural relations and is said to help reproduce them through its intervention (Poulantzas 1978, 164).

Despite the concept of a relative autonomy between 'levels' structuralism involves a functional analysis of state intervention. For example, Poulantzas claims that one way in which the state fulfills its structural function - to support the interests of capital - is by responding to the pressures resulting from class struggles. (1973, 192). The state's response to class struggle is thus explained in terms of a specific function. Class struggle is regarded as the spark or catalyst which prompts the state to fulfill its structural role. The concept of a relatively autonomous state also takes a functional form: as with Miliband's notion of relative autonomy, the state is said to act somewhat independently of any one class in order to represent the interests of capital (Poulantzas, 1973, 285).

Castells (1977, 244) attempts to prevent a lapse into functionalism by contrasting the state with "urban social movements". In Castells' analysis local authorities as part of the state are situated outside the class struggle and defined simply in terms of their structural

role of 'managing' and reproducing social relations in the interests of the capitalist class (1977, 429) (a function described by Castells as 'urban planning'). Urban social movements are characterised as 'systems of practices' that tend "objectively towards the structural transformation of the urban system or towards a substantial change in the balance of forces within the political system as a whole" (1976, 151). Castells (1977, 208) regards the state as a device for the exercise of class domination. Reformist intervention is "always imposed by the class struggle and therefore from outside the state apparatus" (1977, 208, emphasis added). In the absence of class struggle the state will act because of structural forces. In this way a simple dichotomy is developed between structures, the state and system maintenance on the one hand and practices, class struggle and social transformation on the other. In his later work Castells (1978) places more emphasis on practices and relies less on the notion of structures. But as Saunders stresses

> "the point about this shift is that it represents more a modification of his earlier position than a fundamental break with it ... the emphasis has changed but the components of the analysis remain the same, for both formulations necessarily include the elements of structure and function on the one hand and practice and class struggle on the other" (1981, 195).

Political theories: a summary and assessment

Pluralist, elite and marxist theories focus on the structure of society and suggest that local authorities reflect and reproduce this structure. They differ however in their conceptions of society and in their explanations of how the social structure comes to be reflected in local authority policy making. Pluralism portrays society as made up

of shifting, competing coalitions of individuals. Local authorities reflect this competition and by permitting its resolution, help to preserve the social order. Elite theory suggests that coalitions of interest are fewer and more stable and considers that state more as an object of competition. In this view local authorities are influenced by the most powerful elites in society and as a result local authorities help to ensure the continued dominance of these elites.

Marxist theory involves a more abstract analysis of local authority policy making, drawing attention to the pressures and constraints generated by a capitalist mode of production. Its strength stems from the claim that the functioning of local authorities cannot be explained simply in terms of the conscious and deliberate action of individuals and groups. Its weakness lies in its claim that local authority policy making is necessarily a product of class relations and can be understood simply in such terms.

Before comparing political with organisational theories of local authority policy making I will briefly outline how these theories have influenced studies of British local government. I shall then be in a position to examine how an explanation of local authority policy making should be developed.

2.4 Studies of British local government

Many studies of British local government, particularly before the 1960s, made little attempt to draw on the theories outlined above. Those that have do not often fall clearly and neatly into particular theoretical categories. Nevertheless it is possible, I would argue, to trace links between these studies and the distinction between organisational and political theories of local authorities. My initial aim, however, will be to outline and assess various studies as explanations of local authority policy making. This will be done by considering

them as five categories of study: institutional description, administrative science, urban managerialist, community power and marxist.

Until the mid-1960s most studies of British local government simply described the legal characteristics of public institutions (see, for example, Jackson, 1963). These 'institutional description' studies were based on an assumption that legal prescriptions and other formal statements as to how local government should operate can be used as descriptions of how it actually does operate (Dearlove, 1973, 15). Jackson (1963), for example, referred to a legal stipulation that every rural parish council should meet once a year to imply that such meetings occurred once a year, but this was not the case (Stanyer, 1967, 9). Similarly, Richards' (1956) description of the relationship between councillors and officers consists simply of an outline of the legal and formal aspects of their respective roles - this ignored the fact that there was relatively little law determining their relationship (Cross, 1966).

In some cases the mistaken and distorted picture produced by many of these studies reflected a lack of interest in what was actually happening in local authorities. There, is, however, a strand of literature which has been deliberately written from a point of view that emphasises the value of local government. For example, it has been argued by Dearlove (1973, 17) that a belief that local authorities should have more autonomy from central government led Robson (1954) and Jackson (1965) to exaggerate the extent of central control over local policy formation.

These formalistic and partisan accounts of local government led to calls for detailed empirical studies (see, for example, Stanyer, 1967). These calls were met by various kinds of empirical study. By far the most numerous are those which focus on the internal mechanics of local

government. The assumption underlying this literature is that policy formation cannot be explained in terms of the external pressures and environment surrounding local government (see, for example, Burch and Wood, 1983, 17-18). One such body of literature - which may be termed administrative science - distinguishes the administration of local government services from the politics of local government policy formation (see Richards, 1976). In the former type of study, 'non-political' variables such as the size of an authority, the 'technical expertise' of its staff and the division of tasks are considered as the major determinants of services (see Committee on the Management of Local Government (Maud) 1967 of Eddison, 1973). 'Politics' - involving value-judgements, vested interests and party competition - takes place away from the sphere of administration. The political process sets the objectives to be achieved within the sphere of administration and any further intrusion of political influences is generally denied or considered aberrant.

The administrative science literature has provided some detailed empirical descriptions of local authority committee structures, links between different services, and links between local services and central departments (see for example Griffith 1966, Maud 1967). But the usefulness of much of this research is compromised by a tendency to treat the local government bureaucracy as value free and 'beyond politics' (Fay, 1976). In fact, the most sophisticated examples of administrative science do not make this claim. Greenwood, et al. (1975), for example, acknowledge the influence of 'interests' and 'ideology' on the administration of local services. But even in these more sophisticated accounts the emphasis remains on 'structural' variables (such as the division of functions within an authority).

Not all empirical studies focussing on the internal processes of local government adopt the 'end of ideology' tone of the administrative science literature. Elkin in his case study of planning in London, for example, explained the 'technical', apolitical appearance of local policy formation in terms of the interests and ideologies of various professional groups - planners, engineers (1974, 125). Similarly, Rex and Moore (1967), Dennis (1972) and Davies (1972) emphasised how the interests of planning officers and housing managers influence local authorities in the area of housing. Pahl (1975, 268) classified these studies under the heading of urban managerialism and described urban managers as 'social gatekeepers who help to control and distribute urban resources' (1975, 201). In the case of local authorities, managerial groups are based on the different 'services' - housing, planning, etc. - and built around the officers associated with each service. The urban managerialist thesis claimed that local government officers were able to act autonomously from local politicians and that, by so doing, they were able to formulate policy and distribute resources according to their own interests and objectives.

Gray (1976, 81) complained that urban managerialist studies fail to consider what determines the availability and scarcity of the resources distributed by managers. Gray's criticism is only relevant if one considers that the production of urban resources (e.g. the level of public finance available to an authority) wholly determine the allocation of those resources between education, transport and social services, for example. More pertinent is Norman's observation that managerial studies do not adequately explain the basis of managerial power (1975). Weber's (1948, 232) claim that technical knowledge and control of information will allow managers to escape political control is part of the answer.

But it does not explain why the extent of autonomy enjoyed by particular managerial groups varies over time - planners, for example, seem to enjoy less esteem and independence now than in the late 1960s and early 1970s - and between different local authorities.

The major criticisms of the urban managerialist thesis were made from within a marxist perspective. From this view the autonomy of local managers from polical control does not imply that they exert an independent influence on policy formation since their actions are said to be determined by economic structures and pressures.

In response Pahl (1975) revised the urban managerialist thesis to acknowledge that urban managers were constrained by the economic system. Accordingly, local officers were no longer said to distribute resources independently of economic forces: they simply mediated between such forces and the precise distribution of public resources. Nevertheless, Pahl maintains the essential elements of the urban managerialist thesis: that the policies of state institutions such as local authorities do not simply reflect economic forces but also the interests of managers like local officers; and that policy making is to some extent a product of relationships between <u>individuals</u> not classes (1979, 43).

The main insight offered by the administrative science and urban managerialist studies of British local government is that state policies may be influenced by the <u>internal</u> aspects of the state. But they do not analyse how the state is influenced by external pressures and constraints. They do not, in other words, provide a comprehensive analysis of state policy formation.

In contrast to the administrative science and managerial analysis other studies have emphasised the role of external pressure on local authority policy formation. The general concern in Britain with the formal institutions of government has shaped the research focus of much of

this literature. Gyford (1976), Birch (1964) and Beer (1965), for example, concentrate on the role of local elections and political parties as external pressures.

A number of studies in what approximates to the community power tradition also emphasise the role of external pressures on local authorities but go beyond a focus on formal institutions and highlight the influence of informal interest groups in the community (see, for example, Miller, 1970). One of the best studies in this category is Newton's (1976) examination of the role of local interest groups in policy making of Birmingham City Council. Newton notes how numerous groups were reorganised within the community and describes the close contacts which developed between them and 'local policy makers' on various issues such as 'educational reform' (1976, 225). But Newton emphasised that some groups within the community - building firms, professional associations and house owners, for example - were more powerful than others because they were better able to organise themselves, had more resources and had better access to decision-makers on the local council (1976, 227-228).

Studies drawing on marxist theory became more popular in the 1970s (e.g. the National Community Development Project 1974). They also emphasised the role of external pressures in local authority policy making but attempted to relate their analysis to a wider context based on a conception of the role of the state in capitalist society. Cockburn (1977, 45), for example, argued that it was only possible to understand local authority policy making by 'dissolving' institutional boundaries and examining how general class forces -operating principally at a national and international level - affect a particular locality. Marxist studies did not see local authorities as distinct units but as parts of an amalgam of public agencies including the police, central government

departments, the courts and the health service which formed 'the local state'. In this view the council is only part of a large state structure which ultimately represents the interests of 'capital'.

Some marxist studies explain this 'function' of local authorities in a way similar to elite theory and community power studies. Benington (1976, 23-4), for example, notes that local authority officers are often drawn from the 'private sector' and emphasises "the web of interlocking memberships between public and private bodies". Others maintain that local authorities are biased towards the capitalist class regardless of such relationships. Cockburn (1977, 44), for example, suggests that the forces influencing local authorities are "in the main invisible". Local authorities, it is argued, tend to produce policies which favour capitalist interests irrespective of demands and influence from external groups.

Some studies of British local government do not fit neatly within any of the five categories into which I have divided my discussion. Young et al. (1980), for example, emphasise that the influence of external social conditions on policy will be mediated by the perceptions ('assumptive worlds') of politicians and officers. Dearlove (1973) also showed that the influence of various interest groups on policy may depend to some extent on the ideologies of councillors and officers. These studies are distinctive from studies in the five categories because they see policy as a product of both external pressures and internal features of local authorities. But such studies are rare: in general policy making is explained in terms that emphasise either the independence of local authorities from external pressures or their responsiveness to such pressures.

2.5 Theories of local authority policy making: a summary and assessment

The main contrasts between the theories of local authority policy making discussed in this chapter can be seen in relation to two issues. The first is whether local authorities - i.e. groups within them and their structural features - exert a distinctive influence on policy making or whether their influence is simply a reflection of interests and structures operating throughout society. In the former case attention will be focussed on the internal organisation of local authorities, and in the latter attention will be turned to the external environment of local authorities.

The second issue is whether policy results from the deliberate attempts of various groups to pursue their objectives or from the influence of social structures which operate regardless of the values and intentions of such groups.

Many of the theories discussed can be divided in terms of the position they take with regard to these two issues. As explanations of local authority policy making they tend the emphasise either internal features or external influences and either individual values and group interests or structural features of local authorities and British society. With respect to the second issue, for example, Castells presents 'individualism' and 'structuralism' as mutually exclusive ways of explaining state intervention, declaring that

> "the theoretical issue is this: historical actors founding society through their actions, or support agents expressing particular combinations of the social structure through their practice" (1976, 77-78).

Figure 2.1 describes the distinctions between the main perspectives in terms of internal-external and behavioural-structural issues. Figure 2.2 illustrates the position of British studies of local government with regard to the same issues. Thus, for example, managerialist studies focus on the interests of individuals within local authorities,

Figure 2.1 The position of the theories of local authority policy making with respect to the Internal-External and Behavioural-Structural issues

Issue	Internal (Local authorities are seen as a distinctive influence on policy formation and as independent of societal pressure)	External (Local authorities are seen as a reflection of societal influence, and as responsive to societal pressure)
Behavioural (Local authorities are seen as collections of individuals and groups)	Human relations approach to Organisations	Pluralist and Elite theories
Structural (Local authorities are seen in terms of structural factors like the division of labour)	Structural theory of Organisations	Marxist theories

Figure 2.2 The position of British studies of local government policy making with respect to the Internal-External and Behavioural-Structural issues

Issue	Internal	External
Behavioural	Urban Managerialist	Community Power
Structural	Administrative Science	Marxist

arguing that the influence of urban 'managers' cannot be explained in terms of external forces. Administrative science studies also adopts an internal focus but emphasises the significance of structural variables - such as the division of tasks - to explain policy formation. Community power studies see local authorities acting in response to external pressure from individuals and groups. The marxist studies also see local authority policy making as a reflection of external forces but switch the emphasis away from individuals to class structures.

There are three reasons, I would suggest, why theories stress either internal or external factors and propose either a behavioural or structural explanation of local authority policy making. First, authors have tended to overstate the weaknesses of the perspectives they seek to criticise. Castells, for example, suggests that an approach which begins with a focus on concrete actors "necessarily ends" in "mere description" (1977, 251, emphasis added). But he does not explain why this is bound to be so: that is, he does not explain why an approach which begins with a focus on 'historical actors'/practices cannot lead to or include an analysis which recognises the relevance of 'support agents'/structures. Castells is rightly critical of those theories which focus only on the motivation and intentions of individuals in order to explain events - they are incapable, he points out, of understanding how individual action may depend upon and be determined by social context (Ibid). In his attempt to provide a counter to individualism/voluntarism he over-reacts by putting forward an approach - structuralism - which is as different as possible. We are then told that the approaches are mutually incompatible and are obliged to choose between them. But in his own work Castells moves from 'pure' structuralism to a position where 'practices' and class struggles (which in some way must involve 'historical actors founding society') form an increasingly important element of his theory.

Second, theories tend to neglect the chief concerns of their supposed rivals. For example, urban managerialist studies are concerned mainly with examining how the interests of 'state managers' influence policy making while marxist studies have paid more attention to the way a 'capitalist mode of production' imposes pressures and constraints on local authorities.

The third and final reason for the preference of certain theorists for particular questions and methods of explanation is related to the social circumstances within which theory is developed. The human relations approach to the analysis of organisations, for example, was a product of social circumstances in two respects. First the questions it asked (what influences a firm's 'output', how can output be improved?) were set by business managers; second, the way answers to these questions were sought - investigating the attitudes of workers - reflected the management's conception that poor production was due to the 'irrationality' of the workforce. Social conditions also help to explain the predominance of studies which focus onthe internal characteristics of British local authorities and emphasis their independence from external pressure. Evidence of the 'responsiveness' of governments, used to substantiate external theories, is not as obvious in Britain as in the United States. Britain is often said to have 'strong', 'independent' governments in 'weak' and 'passive' environments (see, for example, Dearlove, 1973, Elkin, 1974). Acceptance of this claim, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s, led to the popularity of internal perspectives such as urban managerialism.

So far I have discussed the differences between theories and studies of local government policy making and suggested that they are not necessarily in competition with one another. This implies that it

may be possible to combine different theories to explain local authority policy making. The potential advantages of such a strategy are apparent in the works of the few authors who have sought to improve on particular theories by drawing on insights offered by other perspectives. March and Simon (1958), for example, drew on aspects of the human relations approach (the focus on individual attitudes and group behaviour) to improve the structural analysis of organisations. Some elite theorists (for example Di Tomaso, 1980) have suggested that organisational analysis is needed to help explain how elite power is maintained when elites are fragmented. Castells has improved Althusser's structuralism by noting the significance of class struggle. Dearlove (1973) attempted to improve pluralists analysis by describing how the characteristics of local government mediate the influence of external interests on policy formation. Generally, "the most interesting studies in each tradition find themselves drawing, if selectively, upon concepts and insights central to the others" (Connolly, 1981, 121).

Areas of conflict undoubtedly exist between particular theories. For example ,elite theory competes with instrumentalism since the former denies while the latter maintains that local authorities are ultimately the instrument of only the economically dominant class. But the categorisation of theories and studies in terms of the internal-external and behavioural-structural dimensions may be used as a guide to indicate which theories can be combined in an explanation of local authority policy making. The categorisation indicates theories which focus on different questions and employ different kinds of analysis. Theories within the 'internal' category, for example, are interested mainly in what causes policy when local authorities act independently of external pressure while theories under the 'external' heading are more concerned with finding out what explains the responsiveness of local authorities to

societal pressure. If one accepts that these questions refer to different aspects of local authority policy making then it may be useful to combine theories emphasising internal determinants of policy with those stressing external determinants. Similarly, behavioural theories may be compatible with structural analyses of local authority policy making.

I have suggested that a multi-theoretical explanation of local authority policy making may be appropriate. I will begin to develop such an explanation by examining in chapter three models of state policy making produced by Claus Offe, Alan Cawson and Peter Saunders.

Chapter 3

Explaining local authority policy making: a critique of some recent 'dualist' models

3.1 Introduction

Offe (1975), Cawson (1977) and Saunders (1979a, b) elaborate models of policy making that distinguish between internal features of the state (which includes local authorities) and external forces acting on it. Internal and external factors are seen as distinct influences on policy making. The models will be called 'dualist' since they claim that certain aspects of policy can be explained primarily in terms of the state's independence from external pressure while others reflect a response to such pressure. The models of Cawson and Saunders, together with a model they later developed jointly (1983) also adopt a multi-theoretical explanation of policy making. Saunders, for example, argues that the strength of dualist models lies in the way they combine different theories to provide an explanation of policy making.

> "It is my argument ... that, taken on their own, each of these three main perspectives (i.e. instrumentalism, structuralism and managerialism) is inadequate" (1979a, 1).

> "I would suggest that different theoretical perspectives are useful for analysing different functions of the state and in particular, that the productive function can be explained in terms of a managerialist perspective while the consumption function is better explained through an instrumentalist perspective" (1979a, 14).

I argued in chapter 2 that a distinction between the internal features of local authorities and the external pressures on them together with a multi-theoretical approach may help explain local authority policy making. A critical evaluation of the dualist models, therefore provides a means of further examining and developing these arguments.

In section 3.2 I shall outline the dualist models of Cawson,

Offe and Saunders and go on in section 3.3 to evaluate them by examining their distinction between internal and external influences and their rationale for an independent mode of policy making. Section 3.4 then assesses the models by discussing Saunders' study of policy making in the London Borough of Croydon. I argue that within the dualist models the distinction between internal and external influences is unsatisfactory. Section 3.5 goes on to explain why it may still be useful, in some other context, to make a distinction between internal and external influences and proposes a multi-theoretical approach that is conducive to such a distinction. The final part of the chapter summarises its main themes and outlines some criteria to be satisfied by any model of local authority policy making which makes a distinction between internal and external influences.

3.2 Dualist models: an outline of their theoretical background and form

I shall outline in turn the dualist models of Offe, Cawson and Saunders.

Offe's model stems from a conception of the state as above all a product of the process of capital accumulation (1975, 125). Offe sees this process as the major determinant of state policy and suggests that it is possible to identify two modes of state intervention, corresponding to the formation of 'allocative' and 'productive' policy (1975, 128). The first refers to the allocation of resources and powers controlled by the state. Offe cites the manner in which the state sets protective tariffs for certain industries and fixes interest rates as examples.

The second, productive intervention, is said to occur when

'something more and different' from allocative policy is required to assist capitalist accumulation. Rather than merely allocating already available resources 'some physical input into production is required' (1975, 129). That is, the state itself must produce the goods and services required by the accumulation process. This may occur where the market is failing to supply some aspect of constant or variable capital which is necessary for continued accumulation.

Offe introduces a dualist model to distinguish between the modes of policy making in the two areas of productive and allocative intervention. In the case of 'productive policy' he argues that the state cannot rely on the directions for action recommended and demanded by politically dominant groups, because 'to satisfy the interests of one group is one thing and to restore the accumulation process as a whole is another' (1975, 133). A policy which simply responded to external pressure would be incapable of overcoming the 'failures' of the accumulation process because the groups from which the pressure stems are the contributors to failure of the market. For example, the development of urban centres has often led to 'problems' such as congestion. But if the demands of the dominant social groups involved in this development process - property speculators and builders - are heeded, such problems will not be overcome, since their principal demand - that the state should assist development by using public powers to assemble land - will only exacerbate the problem. In this situation the state must <u>ignore</u> the demands and pressures emanating from these groups if it wishes to alleviate congestion. As the market cannot generate adequate solutions to the problems being dealt with the state must decide for itself what policies are needed to improve on the rationality of the market.

> "Stabilisation of the accumulation process is thus dependent on the ability of social or state forces, which represent the well-being of capitalism as a whole, to resist the narrow and conflicting interests of individual capitalists" (1973, 111).

Policy formation in the area of productive policy is thus based on internally-formulated decision criteria generated by the state itself which lead it to act in an independent manner, detached from external pressure.

> "The state has to devise decision rules of its own ... the rules and laws that govern politics (i.e. the free play of market forces) are not sufficient ... An additional set of decision rules is required that determines policies" (1975, 133).

This is Offe's first mode of policy making, which I will term the independent mode.

In the area of 'allocative policy' the state uses a second 'political' mode of policy formation. Here policy is said to be a response to the demands that arise from political competition among various external groups (1975, 129) and I shall therefore term this the responsive mode. The state becomes an arena for a political 'power struggle' which determines the allocation of already available goods and services. Offe's rationale for the responsive mode appears to result from the idea that for certain areas of intervention a response to external pressure will produce policy which is functional to capitalist development.

Turning now to the dualist models of Cawson and Saunders; these authors also identify an 'independent' mode of policy formation. According to Cawson's (1977) model of state policy-making, 'economic' policy (i.e. that most related to the process of capital accumulation) will be the product of a corporatist mode of policy formation in which the state attempts to direct the activities of capital in partnership

with the representatives of dominant interest groups - employers and unions. The rationale for this is that in such cases the state is attempting to plan and co-ordinate the development of the accumulation process and is using its partnership with corporate groups as a means of achieving this. Thus, although external groups are present as part of the policy making process, they are not the basic influence underlying that process in the area of economic policy. The 'planning imperative' of the state (Cawson, 1977, 6), reflecting the presence of internally-generated decision making criteria, is the basis of policy formation and prompts local authorities to act independently of the pressure from external groups.

Saunders also identifies a mode of policy making based on decision making criteria internal to the state and involving a rejection by local authorities of external demands as the basis of policy making. He suggests that the role of the state in 'safeguarding capital accumulation as a whole' will lead local authorities to resist in certain cases the demands of dominant groups as the basis of policy formation. They will, he claims, determine productive policies 'independently of outside interests' (1979a, 16) because 'the demands of the most powerful groups will not necessarily be consistent with the policies which are necessary for safeguarding capital accumulation as a whole' (1979a, 15). And, in his research on commercial development in Croydon, Saunders, like Cawson, identified the relationship between business and the council as 'one of partnership ... Far from being a passive tool of business interests the local authority has operated autonomously of outside political pressures' (1979b, 324). Where outside groups were involved this was explained as a means of

implementing policies generated by the state. 'These interests have provided a continuing source of guidance and direction for (the council's) own policy initiatives' (1979b, 324, emphasis added).

Like Offe, Cawson and Saunders also identify a 'responsive' mode of policy formation in which external pressure is the main determinant of policy.

With regard to the services undertaken by local authorities Saunders suggests that productive policy (and hence an independent mode) corresponds to activities like the use of planning and the provision of roads to aid capital accumulation while allocative policy (and hence a responsive mode) corresponds to policy making in areas like housing, education and social services (1979a, 15).

Because the authors use different terms to describe the independent and responsive modes and to describe the areas of policy in which they apply the similarities between the models is not always apparent. I have clarified in figure 3.1 the main features of the dualist models and listed the terms used by each author to describe them. The important thing to note is that all three authors identify independent and responsive modes of policy making by stressing a distinction between the influence of 'internal' factors (such as the employment by state policy makers of decision making criteria that do not reflect political pressure) and 'external' factors (such as political pressure) on the formation of policy. Their distinction between independent and responsive modes thus depends on the distinction between internal and external influences on policy making[1].

3.3 An evaluation of the models

Having outlined the dualist models of Offe, Cawson and Saunders,

Figure 3.1 The main features of the dualist models and the terms used by each author to describe them

	Mode of policy making	
Author	Independent (policy is produced by the state independently of external pressure)	Responsive (policy is a response to external political pressure)
Offe	'internal' mode relating to sphere of 'productive' policy	'political' mode relating to sphere of 'allocative' policy
Cawson	'corporatist' mode relating to 'economic' policy	'pluralist' mode relating to non-economic policy
Saunders	'managerialist' mode relating to policy with a 'production' function	'instrumentalist' mode relating to policy with a 'consumption' function

I shall now evaluate their two common features: the distinction between internal and external influences on policy, and the rationale each model offers for the independent mode of policy making.

The internal-external distinction

The distinction between internal and external influences is only meaningful if it refers to mutually exclusive sources of influence. The dualist models see the state and social forces as separate determinants of policy. Whether they are in fact separate depends on the theoretical framework one adopts. It is undoubtedly true that at any one moment influences on policy making can in principle be separated into those which come from outside the state apparatus and those which do not. It follows that in any framework which ignores the temporal dimension internal factors such as the ideologies of policy making (one factor upon which the 'independence' of certain policy decisions from political pressure is based in the models) and external factors such as political pressure from dominant social groups would indeed be treated as independent. However, once the historical dimension is introduced, as it must inevitably be in Marxist-inspired theorisations of the state/society relation such as the dualist models under discussion, the internal/external distinction can no longer have the same meaning. In particular it must be allowed that the present structure of the state may represent the outcome of past external influences. What seem to be 'independent' (internal) state initiatives may in fact merely represent a reaction to earlier (external) social forces. For example, the ideologies currently held by local authority councillors and officers may have been produced by political pressure exerted in the past. For this reason the absence of external

pressure at one point in time does not necessarily indicate that policy making will reflect internal forces which are independent of such pressures.

The dualist models do not incorporate a temporal dimension and so do not consider whether external forces become internalised over time within the state. It is clear, however, that the internal-external distinction is only useful if one argues that to some extent the influence of that state - i.e. councillors and officers for example - on policy cannot be explained in terms of present and past external pressures.

I will now go on to consider the rationale used by the dualist models for the state's independence from external pressure. This will allow me to assess whether the models are in fact maintaining that the state is acting independently of present and past external forces.

The rationale for state independence

The second common feature of the dualist models upon which their validity depends is the rationale they put forward for the state's independence from external pressure. All the models claim that the state acts independently in certain areas of policy because it has a particular role or function to fulfill - safeguarding and promoting capital accumulation. And in their assessment of the independent mode the models stress how it benefits 'capitalist interests as a whole' (Offe and Saunders) or 'corporate groups' (Cawson). The policies or interventions produced by the independent mode are thus explained in terms of the state's response to 'imperatives' or 'needs' generated

by the wider social structure: they do not arise, according to the rationale, from forces generated within the state. I suggest therefore that rather than supporting a distinction between internal and external influences in policy making the rationale used by the models simply implies a distinction between different kinds of external influence.

I have argued that the dualist models ignore the possibility that past external pressures may cause the state to ignore the demands of external groups[2]. As a result, the models do not provide an adequate basis for distinguishing between external and internal influences on policy making. I have also suggested that their rationale for state independence serves to deny rather than explain the distinction between internal and external influence. I will now relate these criticisms to an empirical study of policy making by Saunders.

3.4 An assessment of the dualist models against empirical evidence

Saunders (1979b) uses a dualist model in his study of local authority policy making in Croydon. His study focussed on the decision of the local authority to redevelop the centre of the town as a major commercial area. For my purposes what is relevant is his analysis of the original decision of the council to initiate the scheme. He argues that this illustrates the independence of certain areas of policy formation from the influence of external pressure but I shall show that an alternative interpretation, which stresses the role of such influence, is possible.

Discussing the scheme Saunders suggests that

> "the influence of big business has rarely been in evidence in questions of policy formulation ... consistent support of town centre enterprises by the local authority ... has taken place with little prompting from interests outside the town hall" (1979b, 319).

He goes on to depict the redevelopment as the product of the council's

'own policy initiatives' (1979b, 324).

Since the case is presented as one of 'independent' policy making, if it is to be construed as compatable with a dualist model, Saunders must confirm: (a) that in initiating the scheme the local authority did in fact act independently of external pressure - i.e. that the 'internal' decision to initiate the scheme was not a product of 'external' influence, and (b) that the initiative of the council was prompted by its attempt to 'assist capitalist accumulation as a whole', i.e. that the rationale for independent policy making used by Saunders applied in this case.

I will first examine Saunders's evidence that the local authority acted independently of external pressure. His argument is that because various non-local, commercial interests (unrepresented in the council) were the main beneficiaries of the scheme, rather than the local groups that one would normally expect to influence policy decisions (local business and ratepayers well represented in the council chamber), the council's decision reflected the independence of policy making from external pressure. However, as Pickvance has pointed out (1980, 451), Saunders is incorrect when he argues that local interests would not benefit from the scheme. One of the main reasons offered for the scheme by the council, and accepted by Saunders, was the general lowering of rates that would be made possible by it, and this would benefit local interests[3]. Particular local interests may, as Saunders notes (1979b, 304), be disadvantaged by council policy, but in the case of the town centre redevelopment he is incorrect in his assertion that council policy was generally against the interests of Croydon's politically dominant groups. Clearly, a lowering of rates is in the interests of local groups

such as ratepayers (representing local business and house owners), who were described by Saunders as an important political force. He also identifies a strong representation of ratepayers' interests on the local council and notes the general 'political communion' between the former and the latter (1979b, 239). Thus I suggest that even though local groups did not specifically demand the initiation of the redevelopment scheme the 'internal' policy making criteria on which the council based its decision to formulate this particular policy clearly reflected a consideration of the interests of certain local groups[4]. I argue, therefore, that the Croydon case study suggests that what is represented in Saunders's model as the 'internal' decision to initiate the town centre redevelopment, rather than being made independently, was in fact a product of what is represented as 'external' influence.

The second question I will raise about Saunders' study is whether the evidence it adduces for independent policy making by Croydon council corresponds to the rationale contained in his dualist model. Saunders does not present any direct evidence concerning the reasons for the council's alleged independence from political pressure, but the reasons he gives for the scheme's initiation are the increase in rateable value that would occur and the 'prestige' that policy makers felt it would bring to Croydon once completed (1979b, 307). If these reasons are valid, they clearly indicate a very different rationale for 'independent' policy making from the rationale given in the theoretical foundations of his dualist model, namely that independent policy making is required to secure the conditions of capital accumulation as a whole. Thus even if the independence of the council's decision from external political influence had been established by Saunders'

case study the rationale given for it does not conform with that required to validate his dualist model. On the contrary the rationale here seems to refer to competition between towns for prestige developments, and the political attractiveness of low rates to both domestic and business ratepayers. In both cases there is undoubtedly a favourable impact on capital accumulation, viz. expanded investment opportunities for developers and lower rates - but these are only elements of a rationale which goes beyond the purely economic.

An alternative interpretation to the one presented by Saunders is possible. It may be argued that what the case study reveals is how Croydon council initiated action as a result of the internalisation of external pressures and demands. Saunders does not give a detailed historical account of policy making in Croydon but, given that ratepayers were acknowledged by him to be an important local group, I would speculate that they were a significant source of pressure on the council. If so, it may be argued that this pressure would be internalised in policy makers' ideologies and would become an important element in the policy making process of the council.

3.5 Towards an alternative model of external and internal influence on local authority policy making

I shall now argue that my criticisms of dualist models do not invalidate the idea that local authority policy making may be influenced by internal forces (i.e. by forces which operate independently of the wider social structure). I will also suggest what kind of multi-theoretical approach is suited to a model of local policy making that distinguishes between internal and external influences.

In a recent model of policy making Cawson and Saunders (1983) maintain a multi-theoretical approach but abandon the distinction between internal and external influence and the notion of state independence. They claim that different theories are appropriate to the analysis of policy making at local and central levels of the state. But their major distinction is now between different types of external influence on policy making rather than between external and internal influences. Policy which is concerned primarily with 'production', they claim, is produced at the level of central government by a limited number of class interests - a 'corporate' mode. Policy concerned mainly with consumption, on the other hand, is said to be produced through local government by a multitude of non-class groups, 'battling' with one another over specific issues - a 'pluralist' mode. Instrumentalism is used to explain the corporate mode and a theory of 'imperfect pluralism' is applied to the pluralist mode. While this seems a useful distinction I will suggest that policy making (at any level) can only be fully explained by focussing on internal as well as external influences.

I have criticised the dualist models for failing to consider that external influence may become internalised within local authorities over time and cause them to act independently of external demands. But this does not imply that the internalisation of external pressure will necessarily or only result in the representation of external interests in policy. In chapter 2 I drew attention to Selznick's (1966) study of the T.V.A. in which he described how external pressures, by generating an organisation to represent their demands, promoted a set of groups within the organisation which <u>modified</u> its operation in

accordance with their own interests. What this means is that the internalisation of external influence within an organisation such as a local authority may result not only in the subsequent representation of external interests but also in policy that reflects the interests of officer groups for example. To say that the internal structure of local authorities reflects internalised pressures does not rule out the possibility that it also contributes a distinctive, independent influence on policy making. For this reason, recognising the significance of past pressures does not invalidate the distinction between external and internal influences on local authority policy making. It means rather that to make the distinction one must demonstrate that to some extent a particular policy is not explicable in terms of the present and past external pressures on a local authority.

This conclusion has implications for the way theories are used to explain internal and external influences on policy formation. I will elaborate this point by contrasting the multi theoretical approach used in the dualist models with an alternative way of combining different theories.

The dualist models emphasise that different theories are appropriate to the analysis of different areas of policy. This involves the juxtaposition of different theories within an overall explanation since they relate to the same level of analysis. In the case of the distinction between production and consumption for example, theories are being used to explain policy making areas which are both defined in terms of the economic structure. The problem with this approach is very simple: by splitting up the empirical objects of the explanation it draws attention away from any connections between them. For example, the relation between 'production' and 'consumption' emphasised in marxist analysis becomes de-emphasised when using a dualist model.

Similarly this approach encourages the view that internal and external influences relate to different areas of policy and draws attention away from the relationship between them in any one area.

In the second multi-theoretical approach theories are employed to address questions at different levels of abstraction rather than different empirical objects. With this approach theories are hierarchically related so that as Pickvance states, "each theory nests inside the other" (1982, 96), For example he suggests that overall social consumption or investment (e.g. on health spending or industrial aid) may be open to a Marxist explanation, whereas its allocation between areas and types of item may reflect managerial and local political pressures. It thus suggests that various theories relate to different scales of analysis within any one area of policy rather than to discrete areas. This approach is therefore more suited to a model that distinguishes between internal and external influence since the argument for this distinction is that internal influence cannot be explained in terms of the same scale of analysis - the general economic structure - as external influence. It also indicates the relationship between external and internal influences, suggesting that external forces create the conditions and constraints within which policy making occurs but do not completely determine the content of policy.

3.6 Concluding Comments

From my critique of dualist models I would conclude that they are not appropriate as a means of investigating external and internal determinants of local authority policy. This conclusion is based on three arguments. First, since the models do not include a temporal dimension

they cannot determine what part past external pressures have played in shaping the structure of the state. As a result, they cannot indicate whether a local authority's unresponsiveness to external demands is caused by an internal dynamic which is unrelated to the wider social structure or by past external forces which have become represented within the organisational structure of the authority. Second, they claim that the way in which the state formulates policy independently of external demands can be explained simply in terms of needs and imperatives generated by the external social structure. I have argued that to distinguish an independent mode of policy making one must show that to some extent policy is determined by forces which arise within the state rather than from the wider social structure. Finally, I have argued that the dualist models cannot distinguish between external and internal determinants of policy because they are concerned only with a distinction between the spheres of production and consumption. This involves a single level of analysis, i.e. of the economic structure. But the distinction between external and internal determinants of policy can only be sustained by distinguishing between economic and non-economic determinants of policy. I concluded that this requires an approach in which different levels of analysis are hierarchically related. In the following chapter I will suggest that a distinction between external and internal determinants of policy can be made by analysing, first, the economic structure and second by analysing the organisational characteristics of the political institutions created by that structure.

Chapter 4

Class forces and the independent influence of professional officers on local policy making

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will propose a model of local authority policy making which presents the pressures arising from the capitalist class system and the interests of local authority professional officers as distinct determinants of policy and intervention. The distinction between class relations and professional interests will be presented as a distinction between external and internal determinants of policy. I will argue that an understanding of these determinants requires two levels of analysis - the first relating to the capitalist economic structure and the second relating to the internal dynamics of the political institutions generated by that structure. These two levels of analysis, I will suggest, are hierarchically related in the way outlined in chapter 2 and involve the use of different theories.

In section 4.2 I will briefly emphasise the important role played by professional groups in local authorities and describe how certain characteristics of such authorities effect the autonomy of local officers. Following this, I will attempt to formulate a theoretical framework to help explain the role of professional officers in policy making. This employs both a marxist and a weberian perspective on professional officers.

In section 4.3 I will suggest why class relations and professional interests can be seen as distinct influences on policy making in two ways: first, by drawing on Marx's analysis of how the structural characteristics of a capitalist mode of production tend to promote a relatively autonomous state bureaucracy; and, second, by arguing that historical class relations in Britain reinforced the development of a relatively independent professional group within the state bureaucracy. Having characterised local government officers as a source

of internal influence I use a Weberian analysis of bureaucratic organisations in section 4.4 to suggest how the interests of such officers may affect policy making. Section 4.5 summarises the proposed model of policy making and assesses it in the light of my criticisms of the literature on local authority policy making.

4.2 Some characteristics of local authority professions

The professionalisation of local government

Middlemas (1979) suggests that British politics in the twentieth century has been characterised above all by the relative weakness of political parties compared with the state bureaucracy. One of the major features of the evolution of the state bureaucracy in Britain has been the development of professional groups in local government. The origins of town planning illustrate the role of professional groups in the development of many fields of local government.

The origins of town planning lie in the health reform and amenity movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It became recognised as a statutory function following the 1909 Housing,Town Planning, etc. Act. This Act, although placing strict limits on the scope of local authority intervention, established town planning as a public function. Up to this point, planning was carried out mainly by social reformers and philanthropists. Following the Act, professional groups began to play a greater part in establishing the direction and practice of town planning. The Royal Institute of British Architects was particularly influential (Ashworth 1954, 193). In 1910 it called the first town planning conference to be held in Great Britain and had its own town planning committee. This committee recommended how town planning should be organised and practised. The committee stressed the

importance of shaping the physical environment as a means of solving social problems. As Ashworth notes,

> "there was much in these recommendations that was admirable and clear-sighted. Far more questionable was the supreme role allocated to the architect. To others he might leave the task of discovering what existing conditions were and, in general terms, what future requirements they indicated. But the work of deciding how those requirements could best be satisfied was to be left solely to the architect" (ibid).

Professional architects thus sought to gain control of the new government activity of town planning. Their success in this respect can be measured by the fact that planning subsequently develop an architectural/design bias. Whether its sponsors realised it or not, the involvement of architects was bound to result in a concentration on the outward appearance of things, even though it was the growing awareness of social problems that first created demands for statutory town planning.

Architects have not been the only professional group to influence town planning. And the influence of professional groups within local government on activities such as town planning has not prevented other groups - e.g. landowners and business interests - from affecting public intervention. The important point for my purposes, however, is that the involvement of professional groups in local authority policy making means that interest groups <u>within</u> the local government bureaucracy may influence intervention.

Professional groups have become an important part of local government. Dunleavy (1980, 118), for example, notes that, in addition to their influence within local authorities, professional officers play an influential role in 'the national local government system' - which includes professional bodies representing officers, central government departments and local authority associations. Indeed, he states,

> "the national local government system is the one important context in which professionals can publicly break out of the cultural cliché that they only administer politically-determined policies and move into an overt policy making role" (ibid).

Local authority officers in various services are closely linked to departmental staffs at central government through their membership of common professional bodies. These professional communities interpenetrate local and central levels of government and serve as an important channel by which influence is exerted in a two-way fashion. The influence of local authority officers may thus extend beyond the bounds of local government. But the nature of their position within local authorities and their importance in policy making remains a subject of debate. The question of whether local officers are professionals or bureaucrats, for example, is commonly raised (see Harries-Jenkins 1970, for instance). In the remaining part of this section I will briefly describe some of the characteristic features of local authority officer groups.

The relationship between local authority professions and private sector interests

Not all local authority officer groups share the same relationship to the private sector. Some are part of professions whose members are employed primarily outside local and other public authorities, in the private sector - e.g. engineers. In other cases groups have developed mainly within local authorities with relatively few members in private practice. The town planning profession, for example, never existed as an occupation independent of bureaucratic local authorities. I will briefly outline several cases which generally characterise the relationship between local authority officer groups and private sector interests. First, a minority of the profession may be employed by local authorities or other public agencies so that, although it spans both public and private sectors, most of its members work in the latter sector. In this situation the profession may act as a bridge between the public and private spheres, with the mainly private sector element of the profession influencing the practice of professional officers working within local

authorities. Second, a majority of professionals may be employed in state agencies with only a minority in private practice. Even in this situation the private sector element of the profession may exert a considerable influence on professional practice in local authorities "because professionals in private practice generally have higher status and salaries" and "professional institutions are likely to be dominated by leading figures in the private sector" (Dunleavy 1980, 113). This has been the case in town planning: a numerically small elite of private 'consultants' (e.g. Lichfield and Partners) have influenced practice throughout the whole profession through their leading role in planning education and within the Royal Town Planning Institute (Broadbent 1977). The significance of the relationship between local authority professions and their colleagues in private practice stems from the close contact which often exists between professionals and various interest groups within the private sector. The private sector of a profession may be employed by private corporations (e.g. accountants) and/or may be dependent on them for contracts (e.g. architects). As Dunleavy notes,

> "in this case the profession can come to constitute a key channel of influence by which the sectional interests of corporations distort public policy" (1980, 115).

The relationship of local authority professions to the private sector may also take a third form. An overwhelming majority or all professionals may be employed in state agencies, as in the field of education. In this case, the public sector professionals will dominate the profession and the flow of influence from the private sector to local authority policy making will be substantially less than the first two cases. But it is commonly suggested that professional officers in this category, although aspiring to full professional status, have less autonomy from supervision and external control than 'true' professions. The argument here is that they are reliant on public agencies for employment and must therefore implement government policies (see, for example, Johnson 1972). Officer groups in this category are often termed 'semi-professions' and are said

to enjoy less autonomy and discretion in decision making than professionals in private practice or officers in professions with a substantial private sector element (see, for example, Etzioni 1969).

The question of professional autonomy in local authorities

A sociology of the professions is developed by Johnson (1972) into an analysis of the state bureaucracy by introducing the concept of 'mediation': the state is said to act as a mediating third party in the relationship between professional officers and their 'clients' - the groups 'consuming' or influenced by government intervention. According to Johnson (1972, 46) this mediation by the state changes the basis on which occupational groups within the local government bureaucracy are controlled: to be precise, mediation by the state is said to infringe the autonomy of local authority officers. He defines a profession as a group which regulates its own behaviour - usually through some form of professional association - in which 'producers' (professionals) define the needs of 'consumers' (clients). In return for this self-regulation the profession gains a substantial degree of autonomy from its clients to determine practice. But, Johnson insists, this form of control and the autonomy it allows does not exist in the case of local authority officers: the state becomes the means of occupational control. The state guarantees categories of clients, income and status and, in return, officers - who elsewhere would be professionals - are said to sacrifice their claims to self-regulation and autonomy. They undertake to carry out the social programmes of the state as defined by the state. Because of this, the argument concludes, the functions of the state become the objectives of local authority officers (Johnson 1976).

This emphasis on the way the state influences local officers is undoubtedly important but I wish to argue that the autonomy of officers may in fact be enhanced as a result of their position within local authorities.

A problem with the argument which equates state functions with the

actions of local officers is that it poses the state as a monolithic entity, separate from its bureaucracy. In reality the state is composed of a loose amalgam of heterogeneous elements, including officer groups, which produce public intervention without necessarily working in a concerted way or to any master-plan. Since the local government bureaucracy has become such a significant part of the state, one cannot easily draw a distinction between it and a separate state. Instead, one must allow that local officer groups are an integral part of the state and, as such, are to some extent responsible for determining the functions of the state.

A second problem with Johnson's argument is that it depends on one of two doubtful assumptions (since neither is made explicit it is not known which is being used or whether both are meant to apply in different circumstances). The first is that by pursuing its own interests the local government bureaucracy fulfills the functions of the state. As a result, the bureaucracy has no interest in changing the character of state functions and will simply implement goals and objectives determined outside its boundaries. The second assumption is that local government officer groups passively implement externally divised programmes because they are constrained to do so.

The validity of the first assumption is brought into question by the observation that officer groups within the local government bureaucracy - social workers, planners, highway ingineers, etc. - form a heterogeneous mix. The varied array of ideologies exhibited by these groups indicates that they are unlikely, in pursuing their interests, to pursue a narrow and consistent range of state functions. Further, as I will argue later, in reality the 'output' of the local government bureaucracy does not always possess the functional character attributed to it.

With respect to the second assumption - that the bureaucracy is unable to modify prescribed policies - as Heraud points out, it overemphasises

the extent to which officer groups are compelled to accept externally applied definitions of their tasks.

> "There is growing evidence of the flexible and somewhat encapsulated nature of the professional/client relationship, where the influence of a third party (in whatever guise) can be severely limited" (1978, 26).

Such observations cast doubt on the assumptions that the actions of local government professions must be functional in character.

I will now argue that two characteristics of local authority officer groups enhance their autonomy from external control. The first concerns the relationship between officers and their clients; the second relates to the sources of authority available to local authority officers.

Unlike most of the classic professions (such as law), local authority officer groups do not generally have individual clients and, in many cases, it is difficult to identify a single client group. In the case of town planning, for example, a plan may effect thousands of people within the area of one planning authority. The planning officers responsible for the plan are expected to be responsible for the area as a whole, and not to particular individuals within that area. In addition, it is possible to define different kinds of client groups, each of which has some claim on the expertise of planning officers - e.g. the planning committee of a local authority, the full council of an authority, the Department of the Environment, and local land-users and property owners. Given the diversity of interests represented by these groups it may be difficult to determine what constitutes a good plan or satisfactory planning practice. Although there has been some discussion about the use of town planning as a means of positive discrimination in favour of certain groups, a commonly expressed notion is that planning should 'work' for the good of the greatest number. But this kind of utilitarianism leads to classic liberal dilemmas. The introduction of the White Paper on compensation for

those affected by 'planning blight' illustrates this point:

> "Sometimes the state is seen as a juggernaut, putting roads before homes, riding rough-shod over the rights of individual citizens. At other times, the private owner is condemned for 'selfishly' holding up a much needed development. Yet nearly always, the conflict is not between public (or private) right and private (or public) wrong. It is a conflict of right with right - the public's undoubted right to have a new road or school or waterworks and the private person's right to enjoy his home and garden, undisturbed." (H.M.S.O. 1972)*.

Since planners cannot satisfy all the demands of such diverse categories of client, the complaints or criticisms of a plan made by any one cannot necessarily be (and often are not) taken as a measure of 'bad' planning. This diversity of client groups may thus enhance the insulation of local authority officers from criticism and sanction. It may also promote their autonomy from external control where it is unclear who in fact is ultimately employing the professional officers: planners, for example, may legitimately claim to be employed by both the 'general public' and the political party controlling a local council and may counter the criticisms of either one of these by referring to their responsibilities to the other.

One can also argue that the position of local officers within public authorities enhances their autonomy by investing them with a source of authority not available to professionals in private practice. Professional authority is the authority of the expert, and it is the role of the professional association to guarantee to a profession's clients a standard of ability and integrity such that the professional's diagnosis of problems and prognosis are accepted. For the professional in local government, however, the question of authority is more complex since one can identify 'bureaucratic' authority in addition to 'professional' authority.

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* I am drawing, at this point, on an unpublished, undated paper by Bob Evans of South Bank Polytechnic entitled 'Professionalism and bureaucracy: the case of planning'.

Whereas the latter derives from a claim to technical competence, the former derives from the fact that the professional occupies an official position in a politically accountable body. For officers in local authorities, their position in such bodies may thus act as an additional source of authority, supporting them against criticism and enhancing their autonomy from external control even when their professional authority is questioned. For example, when a council is statutorily obliged to provide services which have been executed by its professional officers, it is not always clear whether the basis of the latter's authority in various fields is dependent on statutory obligation or technical competence. In the case of a town planner who prepares plans for an urban motorway through a residential area or a social worker who recommends that a child should be taken into care, the legitimacy of their action may be defended as much by reference to the statutory obligations of the council or the political support of the council as by the technical competence of the officer.

In summary, I have argued that the characteristics of local authorities may enhance the autonomy of professional officers by creating both diverse categories of client and an additional source of (bureaucratic) authority.

In this section I have noted the significance of professional groups in British local government and described how certain features of their position within local authorities enhance the autonomy of officers. In the following parts of this chapter I will attempt to provide a theoretical framework which may be used to inform descriptions of the role of professional officers in policy making.

4.3 The relationship between class forces and the local government bureaucracy

In order to distinguish class from bureaucratic influences and propose a relationship between them I will first examine the abstract nature of marxist theory, then consider Marx's analysis of a state which became relatively independent of class influence and, finally, investigate the development of 'professional' officer groups in British local authorities.

The abstract nature of marxist theory

Marx never expected capitalist class relations to explain all aspects of capitalist society. This was due to the abstract nature of marxist concepts (Gibson, 1981, 11). "Marx was able to grasp historical reality only because he produced a scientific reflection of it in the form of a somewhat idealised and typified inner organisation of real capitalist relations" (Zeleny, 1980, 78). He produced a simplified picture of reality in order to highlight the characteristic features of a capitalist society. Thus, Marx focussed on the economic relationship between capital and labour, not because it was the only significant relationship in capitalist society but because it was the distinguishing aspect of such a society. In order to examine capitalist relations Marx considered that it was necessary to "treat the whole world as one nation, and assume that the capitalist mode of production is everywhere established and has possessed itself of every industry" (1976, 581). Obviously then Marx did not consider that his theory would provide a realistic picture of the world. But despite his readiness to admit this ideal level of

abstraction, "many marxists have attempted to apply propositions developed in 'Capital' directly to concrete capitalist economies" (Gibson, 1981, 17-18). By contrast,I would conclude that because of the abstract nature of marxist theory one should not expect it to explain all aspects of local authority policy formation equally well: to be precise,I suggest that it will explain the pressures and constraints acting on the local government bureaucracy but will not fully account for the way in which that bureaucracy operates.

Having outlined the abstract nature of marxist theory I will go on to use this theory to argue that class relations and the interests of bureaucratic groups in the state constitute external and internal determinants of public policy.

Marx's analysis of an independent state

Marx's aim in his discussion of French politics was to examine the relationship between the 'state' and class relations under capitalism. He showed a particular concern with the French state under Louis Bonaparte because it displayed a 'relative autonomy' from class forces. Marx considered this relative autonomy to be a key feature of capitalist society. In feudal societies, Marx noted, there are direct personal links between the economically dominant interests and the seat of political power - the state. "The political constitution is the constitution of private property ... the life of the people and the life of the state are identical" (quoted in Draper, 1977, 322). Thus, by focussing on and explaining economic class relations one is able to explain the operation of the state. But in capitalist society,

this is not so. Because the economic and political spheres are distinct one cannot necessarily understand the operation of a capitalist state simply in class terms. This theme underlies Marx's analysis of the 'Bonapartist' state.

The rise of the 'Bonapartist' state, according to Marx (1977), followed conflicts amongst the bourgeoisie and a loss of confidence among the French bourgeoisie generally in the ability of its political representatives to promote capitalist development. As Draper points out one of the distinctive characteristics of the capitalist class is that

> "no other ruling class is so profusely criss-crossed internally with competing and conflicting interest groups, each at each other's throat ..."
>
> "This exuberance of internal hostilities makes it more difficult for any individual capitalist to be trusted as executor for the class as a whole" (1977, 323).

And, according to Marx, the 'extra parliamentary bourgeoisie',

> "by its servility towards the President, by its vilification of parliament, by its brutal maltreatment of its own press, invited Bonaparte to suppress and annihilate its speaking and writing section, its politicians and its literati, its platform and its press, in order that it might be able to pursue its private affairs with full confidence in the protection of a strong and unrestricted government. It declared unequivocally that it longed to get rid of its own political rule in order to get rid of the troubles and dangers of ruling" (1977, 306).

But although Marx saw this relatively autonomous state as promoting capitalist development he did not couch his analysis purely in class terms. In the second part of his analysis - relating to the reasons why the state supported the bourgeoisie - Marx introduces an additional non-class aspect and emphasises the independence of the Bonapartist state from class interests. Here Marx emphasises the distinctly non-economic aspect of the Bonapartist state by contrasting

the relationship between Bonaparte and the bourgeoisie before the former's coup d'etat with their relation following it. Before the coup Bonaparte made a speech to the assembled ranks of the bourgeoisie. His threat/promise of a coup was greeted by "stormy applause". But when Bonaparte carried out his promise,

> "the applause ... had its answer in the thunder of cannon, ..., and it was on the house of Mr Sallendrouze, who had clapped most, that they clapped most of the bombs" (1977, 312).

In other words, although the bourgeoisie had supported the rise of Napoleon, the latter did not subsequently act as their 'agent'. He did not act in the manner anticipated or demanded by the bourgeoisie. Marx here implies that the operation of the state cannot be adequately explained in class terms: Bonaparte only supported bourgeois economic domination to promote his own political interests. A mutual dependency existed between the longer term economic interests of capital and the immediate political interests of the dictator. Events took place, therefore, not simply because of the economic logic of capitalism but as a result of the relationship between 'economic' and (specifically) 'political' factors. Engels described the process thus,

> "the new independent power (the 'Bonapartist' state), while having in the main to follow the movement of production, reacts in its turn, by virtue of its inherent independence ... upon conditions and courses of production. It is the interaction of two unequal forces: on the one hand, the economic development, on the other, the new political power, which strives for as much independence as possible, and which, having once been established, is endowed with a movement of its own" (1969-70, 491).

It can be seen that Marx's analysis of the Bonapartist state has two distinct aspects. In the first - which relates to the generation of this state and the constraints upon it - he stresses the influence of economic forces. In the second - relating to the operation of the state within economic constraints - he stresses its political

specificity and refers to the state as an independent force. This kind of distinction is equivalent to the distinction between what I have called external and internal influences on policy. Marx's main concern was to show how class relations promoted and constrained a relatively autonomous state: he was not primarily concerned with explaining the internal character of such a state. But Marx's analysis indicates how the two are related by describing their unequal but mutual dependency. External forces - i.e. capital - depended on state intervention to protect their interests. This dependency allowed the dictator Bonaparte some scope in determining state intervention. He could ignore the demands of particular capitalists and shape state intervention to suit his own interests. But since his position depended on the maintenance of capitalist relations, he was obliged to support some form of capital accumulation.

In some respects Marx's analysis of the Bonapartist state is far removed from the subject of local authority policy making. In many ways Bonaparte was a unique historical figure and local authorities do not operate as dictatorships. But Marx was not highlighting relationships which were peculiar to nineteenth century France. In line with the abstract nature of his theory Marx was drawing attention to features that resulted from a capitalist mode of production. As a result his analysis applies to a particular kind of economic structure not to a certain historical situation. I would argue that since Marx's analysis refers to the economic structure which characterises British society it is relevant to this study of local authority policy making. It suggests that certain influences on local authority policy making originate and are sustained because of the (external) economic structure but operate as a result of both external constraints and internal

factors. The influence of this economic structure has been apparent in the development of many of the tasks now performed by local government in Britain. As Pickvance notes, for example, the fact that it is generally unprofitable for private business to provide a range of goods and services such as low rent housing and mass education and yet they are necessary to sustain productivity has led to the state financing such provision (1976, 21). But it is apparent that while Marx emphasised the importance of economic conditions he did not consider that they would determine precisely how state institutions responded to the need for intervention. He used Bonaparte to illustrate this, referring to the dictator's interests as a source of independent, internal influence. This does not imply however that internal influence within local authorities will necessarily be associated with a particular dictatorial figure. Marx and Engels generalised the analysis of the Bonapartist state by claiming that the bureaucracy of a capitalist state maintained a relative autonomy from class forces. Marx considered the state bureaucracy to be a body with its own particular interests and Engels regarded it as an independent power. The expansion of local government services has been accompanied by a massive growth of bureaucratic groups. The dependency of class interests on many of these services invests the officers responsible for them with some autonomy vis-a-vis class interests. A variety of legislation, for example - resulting from class pressures and guaranteeing the provision by local authorities of services like public housing and education - allows officers to act with a degree of impunity with regard to the demands of external groups. Following Marx's analysis I would argue that the independence of state professions may increase where the class structure, by generating conflict

among class interests, creates a relatively diverse and fragmented number of external pressures. Such fragmentation, I suggest, will reduce concerted pressure on professional officers and allow the latter even to resist fragmented pressures by claiming that they represent the general interests of all external groups and not the particular interests of any one.

None of this implies that the imperatives and pressures generated by the economic structure are equally responsible for creating and sustaining all local government services: the provision of public housing is more a reflection of economic needs and pressures than the provision of parks and recreational facilities. Nor does a stress on the 'structural' causes of various services imply that officers will be immune from class pressures. But the economic structure does allow them to bargain and negotiate with class interests.

I have used Marxist theory to examine the relationship between class interests and bureaucratic influence in local authority policy making. This has led me to suggest that the capitalist economic structure may promote and constrain the independent influence of local officers in policy making. But by outlining the abstract character of such a theory I have also implied that it will not explain specific concrete relationships between class interests and local officers. Marx pointed out that although the capitalist economic structure inevitably generates a relatively autonomous state bureaucracy, the precise degree to which that bureaucracy remained autonomous from class interests varied under different national conditions (see Draper, 1977, 318). I will now attempt to build onto the above structural analysis an account of the relationship between class

forces and professional officers which applies more specifically to the historical development of British local government.

The emergence of professional officer groups within British local authorities

My argument that marxist theory is best at explaining the structural characteristics of a capitalist mode of production does not imply that it cannot be used to pursue any other kind of analysis. Like any good abstraction marxist theory indicates the way in which it is simplifying reality and thus points out how a more complex, concrete picture of capitalist society can be achieved. By focussing primarily on the capitalist mode of production marxist theory implies that other modes of production and the relationship between capitalist and non-capitalist forces must also be considered if a more detailed understanding of capitalist society is to be achieved.

Numerous writers have noted the persistent influence of 'pre-bourgeois' society on the development of a capitalist 'social formation' in Britain (see for example Thompson, 1978). This persistence has been attributed to the fact that the bourgeoisie never formed a ruling as distinct from a dominant class; this allowed the landed interests and aristocracy which ruled feudal society to continue to play a part in governing capitalist society (Anderson, 1974). I will argue that this 'non-capitalist' influence affected the development of the British local government bureaucracy in two ways: first, accelerating its development and second emphasising its autonomy from class forces.

The rising number of industrialists in the parliamentary

Conservative party helped to promote the extensive array of 'social reforms' introduced in Britain during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Beer, 1965, 264). These reforms necessitated the development of an extensive state bureaucracy to implement programmes in the new or expanded areas of 'public health', 'public education', etc. Many of these programmes became, or were later to become, the responsibility of local authorities. As I outlined above, the pressure from industrialists for state intervention and the consequent development of the state bureaucracy is predicted and explained by marxist theory of class relations. But while capitalist relations - apparent in the pressure from industrialists - can be seen as the basic force behind social reform, the introduction of the reforms at this time cannot be explained purely by them. Despite the rising proportion of Tory M.Ps representing capitalist interests around the turn of the century, the Conservative cabinet - the power centre of the party - was dominated exclusively by aristocratic and landed interests. As a consequence the 'aristocratic' values of 'duty' and social responsibility characterised Tory philosophy. These values had two effects: first, the Tory party introduced certain social reforms without any pressure from industrialists or other groups (Beer, 1965, 264); second, the Tory cabinet was particularly susceptible and responsive to industrialists' demands for state intervention. As a result of their paternalistic values the aristocratic and landed interests within the Tory party were able to find common ground with the reformist industrialists. This was based on the notion of a 'moral economy', in which courses of action were supposedly determined by their 'moral correctness' as well as by their

profitability (Corrigan, 1980). In the words of Larson,

> "efficiency in the service of 'moral uplift' became more and more the predominant theme, opening up an area of reconciliation between leading sectors of progressivism and the large industrial corporation" (1977, 138).

Aristocratic values, I therefore suggest, helped to accelerate the introduction and increase the extent of social reforms and by so doing speeded up and expanded the development of the bureaucracy within local government.

I will now argue that aristocratic and landed interests also affected the form of the new local government bureaucracy and, by so doing, the degree to which it has remained independent of class forces in modern Britain.

Marx noted that the new capitalist order created a surplus population as the expansion of capitalist enterprise displaced members of the aristocracy and landed gentry from their positions within the economically dominant class. This surplus population, Marx claimed, 'reaches out for the state offices as a sort of respectable alms, and provokes the creation of state posts" (1977, 321). Similarly, Gramsci (1971, 212) pointed out that a career within the state bureaucracy became a convenient refuge for aristocratic and other non-capitalist interests as capitalism developed: a bureaucratic career provided such groups with both an economic life and a means of continuing in their customary position of authority. As a result, a new 'intermediate strata' drawn from the old ruling class "was rising and asserting itself in intimate connection with the central institutions of the new (capitalist) order" (Larson, 1977, 147).

The colonisation of state institutions by staff drawn from the aristocracy and landed gentry influenced the structure of the emerging local government bureaucracy. The rule of aristocratic and

landed interests had been authoritarian and paternalistic. They assumed a natural right to rule and a knowledge of how best to represent the interests of the ruled. Aristocratic values, by promoting the notion of 'natural leaders' were instrumental in establishing the view that "certain persons are better judges of the interests of others and worthy of being trusted with their protection" (Beer, 1965, 268). This attitude was prominent within the Tory party as it initiated reforms and among the emergent 'intermediate strata' as it formed the state bureaucracy. The prominence of authoritarian and paternalistic values within these two groups encouraged and justified the adoption of a model of independent, altruistic expertise among the new bureaucratic groups. The latter were modelled in other words as 'professions'. The influence of this professional model is apparent in local government today: first, in the absence of 'patronage' positions in the local bureaucracy (i.e. posts allocated by political parties to reward their supporters and ensure that the bureaucracy implements political objectives): second, in the widespread acceptance of the idea that local government professions have a monopoly over the technical expertise required to achieve political objectives; and, third, in the paternalistic and authoritarian attitude prevalant among various groups of local authority officers (see Dennis, 1970, Davis, 1972, Malpass, 1975). I suggest, therefore, that the modelling of the state bureaucracy as a set of 'professions' has exaggerated the independence of local government officers from class interests.

The usefulness of marxist theory: a summary and assessment

I have used marxist theory to establish a distinction between

external and internal influence in local authority policy making. Thus I have suggested that external factors (the forces generated by the economic structure) give rise to an internal, independent influence on policy (a 'relatively autonomous' state bureaucracy). These external forces constrain but do not fully determine the operation of the bureaucracy.

But to say that 'structural' forces give rise to and constrain the independence of the bureaucracy is not sufficient to explain the precise 'concrete' relationship between external and internal forces in a particular society. It does not, for example, explain variations in the relationship between different capitalist countries. In the U.S.A., for instance, the state bureaucracy is tied more closely via political parties to external interests than in Britain because the allocation of numerous key posts is dependent on political patronage. It is therefore clear that a structural analysis, while indicating the general constraints on the independence of the state bureaucracy does not explain what the precise, concrete level of independence will be within these constraints. Because of this I have suggested how a specific historical relationship between capitalist and non-capitalist classes influenced the development of the local government bureaucracy in Britain; to be precise, I have argued that aristocratic and landed interests and values emphasised the independence of that bureaucracy by promoting and justifying a view of independent, neutral professionals. This, I suggest, explains the variation bewteen the U.S.A. and Britain mentioned above. In the U.S.A. the emergent bureaucracy was susceptible primarily to the influence of capitalist interests: it was not shaped by a pre-capitalist

ruling class. As a result, the level of bureaucratic independence in the U.S.A. was pushed by external pressures to the minimum associated with a capitalist economic structure. In Britain, on the other hand, concrete external pressures have tended to push the level of independence towards the upper limit made possible by a capitalist mode of production.

I have thus used both a structural and non-structural analysis of class relations to indicate how the external forces in British society have provided a relatively autonomous local government bureaucracy. But, like Marx, I have drawn a distinction between the forces promoting and constraining a professional bureaucracy and those which determine how it uses its independence. Marxist theory helps to explain the former by emphasising the dynamic of capital accumulation and the pressure of class interests. However while such factors are certainly important,

> "to focus exclusively on them is to leave out of the account other very powerful impulses to state action generated from within the state ... These impulses undoubtedly exist; and they cannot be taken to be synonymous with the purposes of dominant classes" (Miliband, 1983, 62).

In the following section I will change focus to examine the pressures for state action generated from within the state. My aim in particular will be to explain how professional groups in the local government bureaucracy operate within the constraints imposed by external class forces.

4.4 Explaining the internal influence of local authority officers

Local authorities resemble what Weber termed 'bureaucratic' organisations. I will argue that a Weberian model of bureaucracy

can help explain the internal influence exerted by local authority officers on policy making.

Weber's purpose in developing an ideal-type model of 'bureaucracy' was to highlight the internal dynamics of a particular form of organisation; a form which, he argued, increasingly characterised the actual organisation of capitalist society (Weber, 1968, 224). He insisted not only that administrative structures themselves had powerful consequences, encouraging certain activities and inhibiting others, but also that these structures were not simply products of their external environments. As Krygier has noted, Weber claimed that "often there were basic internal administrative reasons for organisation forms, which had little to do with their social, political or economic environment" (Krygier, 1979, 63). Weber's analysis thus opposed the view that political 'superstructures' - which include local authorities - were simply a product of economic 'structures' - such as the relationship between capital and labour: to some extent, he argued, "these things obey their own laws" (1968, 1039).

Weber argued that bureaucracy occurred in practice because it is "from a purely technical point of view capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings" (1968, 223). He claimed that bureaucratic organisations come into being because of a tendency for societies to adopt the most efficient and rational means of administration. And he accepted that a capitalist mode of production reinforced the development of bureaucracies. For my purposes what is most relevant is not Weber's account of the causes of bureaucracy but his analysis of its consequences.

The consequences of a bureaucratic form of organisation derive from its characteristic features. These are: the appointment rather than election of officials; their hierarchical ordering according to a system of rules which apply generally and impersonally; the attribution of offices to office holders on the basis of their technical qualifications rather than social or personal characteristics; the high degree of specialisation of each officer - i.e. their technical competence covering only a limited aspect of the organisation's operation (Weber, 1968, 220-221). Weber argued that these characteristics had two major consequences. First, they made it difficult for non-bureaucrats to control bureaucrats. In the case of local authorities this implies that the representatives of external interests - the politicians - would have difficulty controlling professional officers. The power of bureaucrats resulted primarily from two characteristics of bureaucratic organisations: (a) 'expert', technical knowledge is monopolised by bureaucrats; and (b) bureaucrats can control, to some extent, the flow of information to 'outsiders' (Wright, 1979, 185). As a result of these features,

> "the power of a fully developed bureaucracy is always great ... The political master always finds himself, vis-a-vis the trained official, in the position of a dilettante facing the expert" (Weber, 1968, 991).

The second consequence resulting from the characteristics of bureaucracies, according to Weber, was that they promote a commitment among bureaucrats to the bureaucratic method: officials derive a sense of dignity, 'a calling', from their formal role as technical experts rather than from the goals or ends of the bureaucracy. Bureaucrats, claimed Weber, do not fight for political objectives:

"Rather the good bureaucrat prides himself on demonstrating that 'his sense of duty stands above his personal preference' ... this is the ethos of office" (Weber, 1968, 1404)[1]. In the case of local authority bureaucracies this implies that officers will not operate primarily with regard to the political ends of local parties: they will be mainly concerned with ensuring that their tasks are pursued in a technically 'efficient' way. They will tend, in other words, to see technical rationality as an end in itself rather than as a means of achieving a political end. As a result, whereas the technical expertise of - say - highway engineers is to provide a means of building roads for certain political ends, the construction of roads will tend to become an end in itself for such engineers.

The work of Malpass (1975) and Ravetz (1980) on local government architects and town planners illustrates why the action of professional groups within local government might not simply reflect external forces. In his analysis of public sector housing policy Malpass acknowledges the important influence of broader social forces. But he stresses that local authority architects were more than relays for these forces. Malpass points out that, like many professional groups, architects were able to establish a high degree of autonomy from both local councillors and external groups in determining the manner in which housing development was to take place. He describes how, by employing complex and technical arguments, the architects were able to reduce the influence of councillors and external groups. The resulting autonomy allowed local architects to contribute an 'independent' influence to the policy making process. The distinctiveness of this professional influence is due to the fact that architects' actions were not simply responses to pressure or attempts to

satisfy the interests of external groups. Malpass makes this clear when he comments that in the case of local authority architects different ends have been pursued and "different arguments applied, but the underlying purposes remain the same: the survival and promotion of the group" (Malpass, 1975, 9).

Ravetz' comments on the planning and architectural professions follow the same lines.

> "Both liked to assume supreme responsibility for the environment, and, not wanting to admit that other agents had any legitimate influence, they fought for an extension of their own control"(1980, 229).

The pursuit of bureaucratic group interests was, she suggests, significant in two ways. First, it influenced the mode of policy formation - the tendency toward 'professional authoritarianism' led the professions involved to actively resist the demands of other professions and external groups. Second, it influenced the nature of state intervention.

> " ... the importance of the material environment was at first exaggerated, to make it a proper field for professional control; then as this was imposed the effect actually was to increase the importance of the environment" (Ravetz, 1980, 229).

I have suggested how a Weberian model of bureaucracy may help to explain the independent bureaucratic dynamic underlying local authority policy making. However, since Weber's model is an ideal-type, 'bureaucracy' does not in practice exist in a pure form. Its consequences are not therefore likely to dominate policy formation in local authorities: monopolies of expertise are not total; control of information is not absolute; commitment to technical means rather than political ends is not complete. It is therefore necessary to investigate the extent of bureaucratic procedures and their consequences; as Weber

concludes "it must ... remain an open question whether the power of bureaucracy is increasing in the modern states in which it is spreading" (1968, 991). But the partial development of bureaucracy as a form of power does not imply that it can be ignored. By highlighting the consequences of bureaucracy one can draw attention to determinants of policy which do not reflect external forces in British society. It does mean, however, that in order to produce a more concrete analysis one must also take into account certain features which - although not intrinsic to an ideal bureaucratic organisation - are significant within British local authorities. In other words, just as one cannot explain the precise extent of bureaucratic autonomy in terms of the structural features of the economy, the way in which bureaucratic groups make use of their autonomy cannot be fully explained in terms of the ideal characteristics of bureaucracy. I will briefly describe the 'historical' features of British local government which influence the independence of 'state professions'.

Weber's model of bureaucracy assumes that the features of such an organisation reflect its formal rationality- i.e. the division of labour, for example, is said to be a product of technical criteria. The model also assumes that the organisation will be set up to pursue a relatively coherent set of political goals and - while the model allows that these may change if the political elite are replaced - it expects that the bureaucracy will be designed to pursue a single goal at any one time. It is apparent ,however ,that in these respects the model does not provide an adequate characterisation of bureaucratic groups in British local government. The divisions between departments

and professional groups in local authorities do not primarily reflect technical distinctions: there is no necessary technical reason why highway engineers and planners, for example, should be members of different professional groups or, in many cases, in separate local authority departments. Differences in the technical expertise of professional groups do occur but the distinctions between them reflect mainly the different political pressures responsible for their development. The development of a highway function within local authorities, and hence of highway engineers, was influenced by demands from the road transport lobby - freight haulage firms, for example; planners were influenced by different groups - health reformers ,for instance - demanding that 'free market' forces should not determine land use. In many cases these demands also reflected diverse ideologies - private profit versus public need ,for example. I would suggest that the frequent tensions between these demands and ideologies encouraged the creation of distinct local government departments and bureaucratic groups. Local government professional groups such as highway engineers and planners may therefore be seen primarily as "ideologically-constructed occupations" (Larson, 1977, 227). It is more useful, therefore, to view local authorities as a loose amalgam of such groups, divided by a number of often competing political ideologies, than as a single bureaucratic hierarchy designed to implement a cohesive set of goals.

I have suggested in this section that a Weberian model of bureaucracy can help to explain how professional officers influence local authority policy making when class forces are not significant. By indicating that local authority officers may have interests which

derive from their position within bureaucratic groups rather than their class position, Weberian analysis explains their independent influence on policy making. I am not suggesting that local authority officers are not linked to classes - although, as Wright (1979) points out, their class position may be 'contradictory' or ambiguous. But their primary interests derive from their position within bureaucratic organisations rather than from their position in the 'class structure'. Nor am I suggesting that their interests do not include monetary gain, career advancement, etc. But these are not peculiar to such officers - they are, as Weber notes, "universal human frailties" (1968, 1416). My aim in highlighting interests derived from the characteristics of bureaucracies is to indicate features that distinguish officers from other social groups. It is in this way that I have attempted to show why local authority officers may exert an independent, non-class influence on policy formation.

4.5 Summary and assessment

I have attempted to distinguish between and relate together the influence of class forces and bureaucratic groups in local authority policy making. An examination of Marx's analysis of the Bonapartist state led me to argue that structural features of the capitalist mode of production promote a relatively autonomous state bureaucracy which contributes a distinct influence to policy formation. I then sought to improve the analysis by considering how historical class relations in British society reinforced the independence of local authority officers. Finally, I drew on a Weberian model of bureaucracy to estimate what kind of influence local officers might

exert on policy making when freed from class forces.

I suggest that these arguments and analysis contribute towards the development of a model that may be used to assess the relative autonomy of the state and the influence of local officers on policy. On the basis of my analysis so far two elements of this model can be identified: first, an analysis of how 'structural' and 'historical' class relations generate and constrain the independence of the bureaucracy; and, second, an analysis of how the bureaucracy operates within the pressures and constraints imposed by class forces - a theory of bureaucratic interests. The model is not an accurate description of local authority policy making: class forces are not, for example, the only influence on policy emanating from the general social structure of British society; bureaucratic groups do not only contribute an independent non class influence on policy; nor are they the only source of such influence. But the model may be regarded as an ideal-type in that it emphasises class forces as the most significant influence on local authority policy which arises from the general social structure and highlights local bureaucratic groups as the most important influence that arises within local authorities.

To clarify the model I will first contrast its conception of the relationship between class forces and bureaucratic influence in policy making with three opposing conceptions of this relationship and then compare it against dualist models.

Marxists generally claim that the influence of 'state' bureaucrats can be explained in terms of the class structure of capitalist society. Their argument often begins from a point similar to that of Marx in his analysis of the Bonapartist state. Lenin, for example,

argues that the bureaucracy rather than parliament is the most powerful and important element of the state, not because of some organisational failure, but because of the structural requirements of the capitalist mode of production (see Wright, 1979, 211). Poulantzas has also claimed that the state bureaucracy acts independently of class pressures to fulfill "its function of political organiser of the hegemonic class or fraction" (1975, 301-2). Miliband (1973) uses a slightly different argument: he claims that the state bureaucracy reflects capitalist interests because its personnel are drawn from or influenced by such groups. These accounts of the state bureaucracy differ in one important respect from the model developed in this chapter: they assume that because there is an economic-'structural'-requirement or pressure for a relatively autonomous state bureaucracy, the operation of that bureaucracy will be structurally determined. In contrast, I have drawn on Marx's analysis of the Bonapartist state to argue that this is not necessarily the case: economic conditions may promote and certainly constrain the operation of bureaucratic groups but the dependency of class interests on state intervention invests such groups with a degree of independent power. Having analysed the development of and constraints on bureaucratic independence in economic terms I also, like Marx, indicated that the way in which professional officers use this independence may not be explicable in such terms.

The urban managerialist view suggests that local officers exert an influence on policy making which cannot be explained by reference to the economic system. As I have done, it employs a Weberian perspective to emphasise the bureaucratic interests of officers and so explain the kind of independent influence they exert in policy making.

But it fails to provide an adequate theory of the sources of and limits to managerial power and independence. By contrast, I have suggested that the origins of and constraints on the independence of local officers can be explained in two ways: first, by examining the structural features of a capitalist mode of production; and, second, by examining how class relations specific to British society affected the development of the local government bureaucracy.

I argued in chapter 3 that dualist models suffered from three weaknesses: first, they did not include a temporal distinction and could not therefore consider whether the structure of local authorities (the division of tasks and ideologies of local officers, for instance) were a product of historical class influence or a result of characteristics particular to such authorities (the interests of officers for example); second, they assumed that because an independent mode of policy making was caused by economic forces its consequences could be explained in the same terms; and third, they related internal and external influences to different categories of policy and involved only one, economic, level of analysis. By contrast, my alternative model includes a temporal dimension; does not attempt to explain the consequences of bureaucratic independences in terms of its causes; and distinguishes between external and internal determinants of policy by using two levels of analysis - first, an analysis of the relationship between the economic structure and a particular political form (the state bureaucracy), and second, an analysis of how political forms operate within the constraints imposed by the economic system.

The relationship between class forces and bureaucratic influence posited above implies a multi-theoretical analysis in which theories are hierarchically related. Marxist theory provides an explanation of the structural and historical class forces which give rise to and constrain the independence of local officers. A Weberian theory of

bureaucratic interests is used to explain how officers influence policy within the constraints imposed by class forces. The relationships between the theories is hierarchical because the second is located within the theoretical framework provided by the former.

One of the aims of this research is to consider the effect of systems of political management - such as a 'hung' administration - on the influence of local authority officers in policy making. In the next three chapters I will both elaborate the relationship between class forces and professional officers proposed above and develop the model outlined here to take account of systems of political management.

Chapter 5

Class pressures, professional influence and local politics in Cheshire County Council

5.1 Introduction

I have argued that both external pressures on state institutions and internal dynamics of local authorities will influence local policy making. I have also suggested that class forces and groups of professional officers may constitute sources of these external and internal determinants. I emphasised that local authorities may display a relative autonomy from class forces because of the independent influence of professional interests. I will pursue these themes in this chapter by examining several developments in Cheshire County Council between 1945 and 1977. My argument will be: first, that a focus on external pressures cannot explain the relatively high levels of expenditure and service provision by Cheshire County Council during this period (section 5.2); second, that examining class relations following the second world war can nevertheless help one to explain the development of professional groups within the County (section 5.3); third, that high levels of expenditure and services reflected the influence of professional interests within the authority (section 5.4); fourth, that the presence in the County Council of a Conservative group with a large and stable majority emphasised the influence of professional groups in policy making (section 5.5); fifth, that the introduction of a corporate management-type procedure to Cheshire was an attempt by local and non-local interests to reduce the independent influence of professional groups and testifies to the importance of the independent influence exerted by professional officers on the development of high

levels of expenditure and services (section 5.6); and that the outcome of these reforms illustrates the continuing influence of professional interests on policy making (section 5.7). The final section (5.8) summarises these arguments and assesses their contribution to the model of local authority policy making developed in the previous chapters.

5.2 Explaining expenditure and service provision by Cheshire County Council

Cheshire County Council has become known for its relatively high levels of expenditure and service provision. Between 1974 and 1978, for example, the Cheshire rate precept was never less than fifth highest of the English shire counties and, on three occasions, Cheshire was placed second in the 'rates league'. By the end of 1978 it was, at 79 pence in the pound, 10 pence or 14% above the average. In a report commissioned by the North-Western branch of the C.B.I., P.A. Management Consultants emphasised that, 'Cheshire has become a relatively expensive County for ratepayers' (1979, 12).

In 1979 the County Treasurer prepared a paper detailing the reasons for Cheshire's level of expenditure[1]. While noting numerous factors - such as the rising proportion of school-age children and old people in the County's population - he concluded that it was due, at least in part, to the above average levels of service provided by the county. This can be seen in the area of social services for example. The numbers of people qualifying for and requiring the attention of social service fieldworkers rose in Cheshire during the 1970s at a faster rate than the population of the county as a whole - mainly as a result of the rise in the numbers of elderly people. But the

number of 'clients' did not rise at anywhere near the same rate as the numbers of fieldworkers - 21% (P.A. Management Consultants, 1979). In this case the improved quality of service provision has entailed extra expenditure in the form of fieldworkers' salaries. The relatively high levels of expenditure and provision also occurred in other services provided by the County Council. Figure 5.1 shows that in the years 1974-75 and 1977-78, for example, Cheshire's expenditure per head of population was also above the average for English Counties in services like planning, education, highways, fire protection and libraries and museums. P.A. Management Consultants emphasised that Cheshire's expenditure levels were not due to the 'inefficient use' or 'bureaucratic mismanagement' of resources. This, together with the County Treasurer's comments, indicates that in Cheshire the above average levels of expenditure are a result of the above average standards of service provided by the county council.

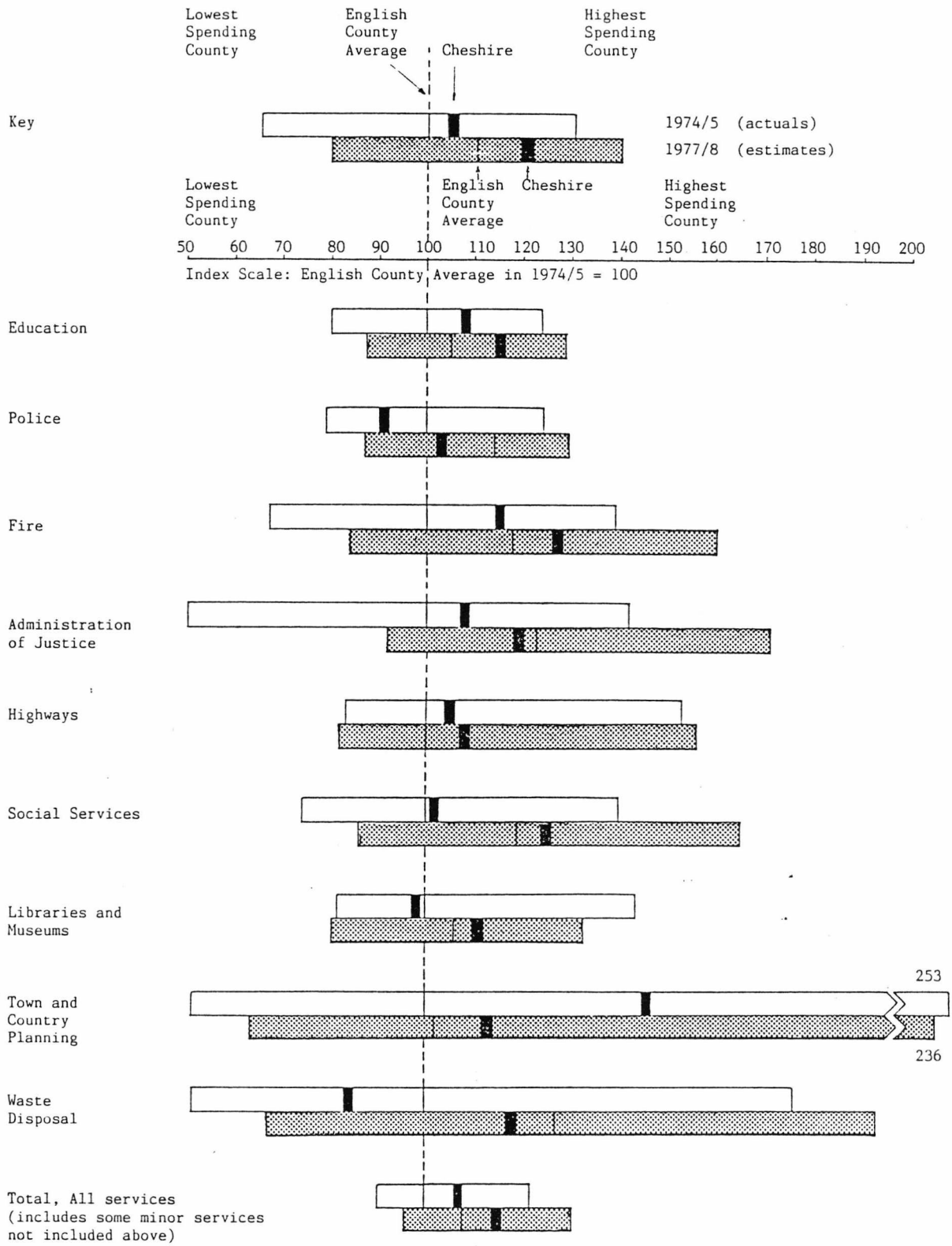
I will now argue that these trends in Cheshire's expenditure and service provision cannot be attributed to the 'needs' of the county, pressure from local or non-local interests or to the political 'colour' of the council. In other words, I will be suggesting that popular explanations of local authority policy - which emphasise external determinants - do not adequately explain the levels of expenditure and service provision by Cheshire County Council.

Figure 5.2 shows the variation between the expenditure of certain local authorities predicted on the basis of needs and their actual expenditure in 1975-76. The authorities shown constitute extreme cases of 'overspending' and 'underspending' according to this measure. 'Needed expenditure', based upon the Rate Support Grant formula, is that amount required by a local authority to provide levels of service

Figure 5.1

Rate and grant-borne expenditure per head of population by Cheshire County Council on selected services, 1974/5 and 1977/8

(on constant price basis)



Source: Cheshire County Council, 'Report Back 1977-78'

Figure 5.2 English and Welsh local authorities with the most extreme levels of under- and overspending in 1975-76

The extreme underspending authorities

	Budget estimate expenditure	Assessed spending needs	'Underspend'
	£/head	£/head	£/head
		Shire counties	
Lancashire	133.57	149.47	15.90
Cornwall	136.19	147.35	11.16
Hereford & Worcestershire	145.95	154.91	8.96
		Metropolitan districts	
Salford	183.28	207.49	24.21
Wolverhampton	180.73	199.00	18.27
Sefton	176.48	189.86	13.37
Bolton	179.37	192.44	13.07
Bury	154.86	167.62	12.75

The extreme overspending authorities

	Budget estimate expenditure	Assessed spending needs	'Overspend'
	£/head	£/head	£/head
		Shire counties	
West Glamorgan	171.21	152.37	18.84
Cheshire	170.23	152.33	17.90
Mid Glamorgan	173.58	156.76	16.82
Dorest	149.45	134.96	14.49
Bedfordshire	172.20	161.33	10.87
		Metropolitan districts	
Newcastle	243.70	210.25	33.45
Wakefield	199.42	176.73	22.69
Doncaster	201.71	183.83	17.88
St. Helens	185.54	169.55	15.99
Barnsley	190.47	176.86	13.60

Source: Jackman and Sellars (1978)

in line with other authorities throughout the country. It can be seen that according to this criterion Cheshire can be classed as an 'overspender' since its actual expenditure is greater than its (assessed) necessary expenditure. In fact, Cheshire in 1975-76 was a particularly striking overspender - with only one other authority in England and Wales overspending to a higher degree.

A second explanation of high levels of council spending and service provision emphasises the role of pressure on an authority. Byrne (1982), for example, suggests that high levels of service in fields like education, housing and social services are caused by 'popular' pressure. It is difficult to accurately define 'popular pressure' but some attempt must be made in order to estimate its significance in Cheshire. It certainly includes pressure exerted on an authority through local elections. But, as Cockburn (1977) has shown, electoral pressure is not a sufficient measure since 'informal' channels - such as 'community action' - may be used to influence policy making. In addition, one must also take into account pressures which policy makers anticipate as potentially effective. This is obviously difficult since it involves something which has not occurred. However, I suggest that the industrial militancy of the local working class may be used as a measure of whether local policy makers raise expenditure and service provision in response to anticipated external pressure. I will now examine these three measures of 'popular pressure' - i.e. electoral pressure, 'informal' pressure and working class militancy - to argue that it does not explain Cheshire's levels of expenditure.

Figure 5.3 shows the party composition of Cheshire County Council between 1949 and 1981. Until the 1970s the Conservative group enjoyed an overall majority - and a substantial majority over the main

Figure 5.3

Cheshire County Council: party composition 1949-1981

Date of Election	Conservative	Independent	Liberal	Labour
1949	61*	15	10	6
1952	62*	12	5	13
1955	60*	12	5	14
1958	56*	15	8	19
1961	58*	16	9	15
1964	51*	19	4	24
1967	58*	21	3	16
1970[1]	73*	14	3	19
1973	31*	6	1	29
1977[2]	56*	2	-	9
1981	28	1	7	35

Sources: Lee J.M. (1963, 233)
Lee J.M. et al. (1974, 200)
Office of the Chief Administrator, Cheshire County Council

* Indicates the party in control.

1 The size of council was reduced from 109 seats to 67 seats by the 1972 reorganisation of local government.

2 The 1981 election left no party with an overall majority and party political differences have since prevented the formation of a stable coalition.

opposition Labour group. Until 1981 they were the controlling party. The above average levels of expenditure and rising quality of services provided by Cheshire between 1949 and the mid-1970s thus coincided with a period in which the Conservative group dominated the council without any effective electoral threat. Jones (1975, 31) provides evidence that Conservative-led councils generally "tend to be reluctant to spend public money and emphasise the need to keep rates low". Labour councils, on the other hand, are in the main more ideologically committed to providing high levels of service in fields such as housing, education and social services and therefore more willing to raise expenditure. (Boaden and Alford (1969) also provide evidence of this difference between Labour and Conservative councils.) Cheshire's Conservative group was composed mainly of councillors representing ratepayers (from the suburban fringes of Manchester and Liverpool), small businesses, farmers and other landowners. Clearly then, 'electoral pressure' is not responsible for the County's high levels of expenditure and services: one would expect it to lead to 'low-spending' rather than 'high-spending' policies.

The most concerted 'informal' pressure on the County Council during this period of rising expenditure came from groups representing ratepayer interests. The North-Western branch of the C.B.I. commissioned the above mentioned report from P.A. Management Consultants because of their long standing concern "about both the steady increase in the county rate precept and the burden that rate payments are inflicting upon member companies (1979, 1). If informal pressure was having any affect it was tending to hold down the County's expenditure. Again, therefore, I suggest external pressure does not account for the County's high levels of expenditure and services.

Finally, the working class in Cheshire were not militant prior to or during the period when expenditure and service provision was rising. The County had relatively few industrial disputes. For example, during the period 1968 to 1973 it had the lowest number of days lost through strikes and stoppages in the North-Western region (Smith, Clifton et al, 1978,118). It seems unlikely, therefore, that the Conservative County Council was expanding services because it feared that popular dissatisfaction might cause an electoral defeat.

I have argued that popular pressure did not cause Cheshire County Council's levels of expenditure and services between the 1940s and 1970s. But it is not the only kind of pressure that a local authority may experience. Another pressure sometimes cited as a cause of levels of service provision is the issuing of 'advice' from central government - in the form of circulars which offer 'guidance' to local authorities on policy. Central government may also provide incentives to raise local authority spending. I would dismiss these influences as an explanation of Cheshire's relatively high levels of expenditure and service provision for three reasons. First, statutory instruments, circulars and advice notes between 1945 and the 1970s generally defined minimum levels of service provision. Authorities such as Cheshire were not obliged to spend more and provide a better quality of service than that required by legislation. Second, as Griffith (1966) points out,central government is in a better position to set limits on local authority expenditure than to boost it. Third, during the late 1960s and 1970s the government "imposed measures to control public expenditure and divert resources from authorities like Cheshire to the cities" (Cheshire County Council, 1978, 4). One

might expect this trend should have led to reduced expenditure in authorities like Cheshire. In fact, as Figure 5.4 shows, Cheshire has made up for the loss of non-local funds by increasing the proportion of its revenue gained from local sources.

Evidence provided by Jackman and Sellars (1978) also supports the claim that popular theories of local government policy do not explain Cheshire's levels of expenditure and service provision. Jackman and Sellars attempt to explain why some authorities spend more than others by including a number of possible explanatory factors in a regression analysis. The factors are:

a) the number of people living in low income households in a local authority's area,

b) the proportion of an authority's revenue coming from non-local sources (most importantly, in the form of the Rate Support Grant),

c) the level of household rates,

d) the political party in power.

These are described as 'discretionary' factors since, unlike 'needs' factors, local authorities are not compelled (by statute) to adjust their expenditure and services according to them.

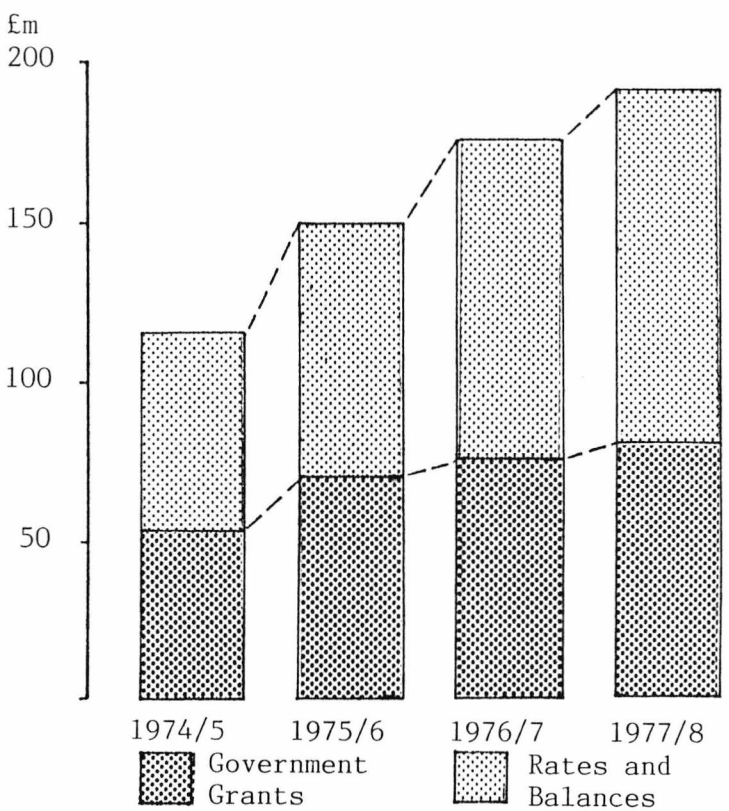
The 'discretionary factors' are potentially significant for the following reasons:

a) low income households are assumed to be more hostile to rate rises. Thus, the higher the proportion of a local electorate classed as low income households the less likely a council will be to sanction rate rises;

b) the more a local authority is able to rely on non-local sources of income the more it is likely to spend;

Figure 5.4

Changes in the proportions of Cheshire County Council's local and non-local sources of revenue between 1974/5 and 1977/8



Source: Cheshire County Council, 'Report Back 1977-78'

c) when councils must consider the electoral consequences of rate rises they will be deterred from raising rates where domestic rateable values are already high (since the higher the rateable value of a property, the more a rate increase will translate itself into a substantial increase in a household's bill);

d) as previously mentioned, Labour councils tend to spend more than Conservative authorities even after taking account of differences in spending needs.

Figure 5.5 summarises Jackman and Sellars' findings. It lists those authorities whose spending is most below or most above their estimated needs, and then goes on to adjust needs for the four factors - low incomes, total rateable value (an inverse measure of the level of government grant), domestic rateable value per household and political colour. If a council remains among the 'under-' or 'overspenders' when these four 'discretionary' factors are taken into acount then one can deduce that its spending patterns cannot be fully explained by the features considered, and must be due to other factors.

For my purposes the important result is that when 'discretionary' factors are taken into account Cheshire County Council remains a significant 'overspender': in fact it becomes the highest overspending county. Jackman and Sellars' evidence supports the argument that Cheshire's high level of expenditure and services is not simply due to externally defined 'needs' or to external (local and non-local) pressures. In the next section I will argue that one can only understand Cheshire's levels of expenditure and service provision from 1945 to the mid-1970s by taking into account an internal influence on policy making - the interests of the authority's professional officers.

Figure 5.5

The local authorities where expenditure is most clearly not caused by 'needs' or 'discretionary' factors

'Needs' factors only (unadjusted)	Needs adjusted for low incomes	Needs adjusted for low incomes and for total rateable value	Needs adjusted for low incomes and domestic rateable values per household	Needs adjusted for low incomes and politics
The most extreme underspending authorities				
		Shire counties		
Cornwall	Hereford and Worcestershire	Hereford and Worcestershire	Hereford and Worcestershire	Durham
Hereford and Worcestershire				Hereford and Worcestershire
		Met. districts		
Salford	Salford	Salford	Salford	Salford
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton	Bury	Oldham	Wolverhampton
Sefton		Oldham	Wolverhampton	
Bolton		Solihull	Liverpool	
Bury		Wolverhampton		
The most extreme overspending authorities				
		Shire counties		
West Glamorgan	Cheshire	Cheshire	Cheshire	Cheshire
Cheshire	West Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	West Glamorgan	West Glamorgan
Mid Glamorgan	Dorset	Dorset	Dorset	Dorset
Dorest	Northamptonshire	Mid Glamorgan	Mid Glamorgan	Mid Glamorgan
Bedfordshire	Clwyd	Northamptonshire	Buckinghamshire	Gwynedd
		Met. districts		
Newcastle	Newcastle	Newcastle	Newcastle	Newcastle
Wakefield	Wakefield	St. Helens	Wirral	St. Helens
Doncaster	St. Helens	Wakefield	St. Helens	Wirral
St. Helens	Doncaster	Doncaster	South Tyneside	Wakefield
Barnsley	South Tyneside	Trafford	Wakefield	South Tyneside

Source: Jackman and Sellars (1978)

5.3 The development of professional influence in local authorities after the second world war

I shall later argue that the interests of local government officers had a significant effect on the development of various policies in Cheshire County Council between 1945 and the mid-1970s. In this section I shall outline the class pressures and other factors underlying the development of professional groups in local authorities after the war and so illustrate the link between the particular (i.e. local) internal influence of professional officers in Cheshire and general (i.e. non-local) external forces operating in post-war Britain.

Following the second world war the form and content of local government policy formation was altered with the introduction of a number of major reforms by the Labour government. The 1944 Education Act, the National Health Service Act (1946), the Town and Country Planning Act (1947) and the Fire Services, Children's and National Assistance Acts (1948) gave new functions to county councils and promoted the importance of their traditional duties.

The election of a post-war Labour government committed to the implementation of major reforms was largely a reflection of working class influence. Addison (1977, 232) notes the importance attached by the war-time coalition government to social surveys. These showed that the vast majority of people in Britain expected some return for their war-time sacrifices. The need to meet such expectations was felt by Conservative as well as Labour politicians. Speaking for the then dominant reformist element of the Conservative party, Quentin Hogg warned the House of Commons that, "if you do not give the people social reform they will give you social revolution" (quoted in Addison, 1977, 232). This may have been rhetoric but it indicates

the breadth of support for reform. And acceptance of the need for reforms stretched beyond political parties. Thompson (1984) describes the 1945 Labour victory as 'profoundly symbolic' for many interest groups and suggests that it

> "perceptibly altered social relations in the whole county. Bankers and shareholders, property-owners, newspaper magnates, industrial employers - all were on the defensive and were minding their manners in a quite uncustomary way for a long while".

It is apparent that working class pressure played a significant part in generating and expanding many local authority services after the war. This does not mean, however, that the subsequent development of reform programmes is explicable purely or primarily in terms of the representation by the state of working class interests. There are a number of reasons for this. The first lies in the nature of the demands and pressures exerted on central government by the working class: they were both <u>vague</u> and <u>moderate</u>. Drawing on G.D.H. Coles' 1942 survey of (mainly working class) 'consumers' of welfare services, Harris points out that,

> "witnesses gave expression to what were obviously in many cases deeply-felt specific grievances against the existing system; but, in spite of hopeful prodding from the prophets of reconstruction, there was little coherent conception of what should take its place" (1983, 214).

The demands which were clearly expressed - for jobs and social security - were radical in so far as these modest needs had never been adequately met in Britain but at the same time they were "the very reverse of revolutionary" (Addison, 1977, 248). Addison (1977, 276) points out that, 'The trade union movement and the Labour Party were controlled on the eve of the war by a generation of leaders who were essentially moderate social patriots'. The men leading the labour movement were more interested in reforming capitalism in favour of

working class interests than in representing labour in a class struggle with capital. They were opposed to free market capitalism, but were not essentially anti-capitalist. For this reason the labour movement was sympathetic towards capitalist demands in the development of reform programmes. The idea that post-war reform should be a boost to the economy - by providing building contracts for example - as well as a response to working class demands - to provide homes - reflected this sympathy.

The vague and moderate demands and pressures exerted by the working class thus made it possible for other groups to influence the form and content of local authority reform programmes. As Gough (1979) notes, for example, reform programmes incorporated capitalist as well as working class demands: they represented a 'post-war settlement' between class interests.

While it is important to see the development of various local government services as a reflection of capitalist as well as working class interests I will also argue that their form and content cannot be fully explained simply by reference to class relations. In chapter four I argued that class pressures on the state may generate bureaucratic groups and that such groups may modify policy or intervention in accordance with their own particular interests. The sheer scale of the reforms generated by class interests ensured a significant rise in the numbers of local authority bureaucrats: new or greatly expanded occupational groups - teachers, doctors and others - were required to staff the programmes. A consequence of class pressures on the state was therefore the creation of various groups within the local government bureaucracy with their own interests. As a result, one must take into account 'bureaucratic' as well as class interests

if one is to explain local authorities' implementation of the reform programmes.

I also argued that the precise extent to which the state bureaucracy was able to remain autonomous from class interests - and so exert an independent influence on policy or intervention - will vary with specific historical conditions. To fully explain the extent to which professional officers in Cheshire County Council were able to independently influence policy making one must, therefore, look beyond the class pressures in post-war Britain and examine the precise context in which they occurred.

I would suggest that two factors in post-war Britain tended to emphasise the independent influence of professional groups in local authority policy making. The first was the stress placed on staffing the new local government bureaucratic groups with independent, 'professional' experts; a consequence, as I argued in the previous chapter, of the past influence that aristocratic and landed interests had on the shape of the state bureaucracy in Britain. Keynes for example, an influential but typical member of the political elite responsible for setting up the post-war state bureaucracy, favoured a system based on groups of experts. The expectation - and consequence - was that such groups would be relatively insulated from external pressures and 'vested' interests by their claims to neutrality and expertise. The widespread adoption of this model influenced the 'professionalisation' of local government and so tended to emphasise the autonomy of local government officers from pressures and constraints imposed by class interests.

A second factor which further promoted this autonomy - and thus also helps to explain why professional interests came to play an

important part in local government policy making - was the pattern of national party politics during the post-war period. In the 1940s the Conservative Party was obliged, as a result of working class expectations, to integrate some of labour's most important demands into its own philosophy. As in Disraeli's time, the Conservative Party once again became the advocate of reform rather than the defender of laissez faire capitalism. The Conservatives therefore became committed to many of the reforms then associated with the Labour Party - greater state control/management of the economy, the provision of social security and welfare, the achievement and maintenance of full employment. As a result, 'the convergence of the two main parties which had begun in 1940 was largely completed in the late 1940s'(Addison, 1977, 275). This does not imply that party-political differences were non-existent - for example, the Conservatives considered management of the economy to be a more important priority than (Labour's emphasis on) the development of a health and welfare system. But the considerable convergence which did occur increased consensus on many questions regarding reform and the phenomenon of 'Butskellism' became the political norm[2]. I would argue that because the need for reform was not a matter of party disagreement, the development of local authority programmes tended to become the preserve of local professional officers. The inability of politicians to portray reform as a party political issue made it easier for officers to insist that the issues associated with it were of a technical rather than political nature and therefore the responsibility of professional groups not political parties[3]. Thus, the pattern of national politics also helps to explain why local officers in Cheshire County Council were able to exert an independent influence on policy developments after the war.

In this section I have begun to examine the determinants of Cheshire County Council's high levels of expenditure and service provision between the mid-1940s and mid-1970s by examining how class pressures and other factors tended to create a local government bureaucracy characterised by 'relatively autonomous' professional groups. I will now go on to indicate how the post-war development of professional groups within Cheshire County Council affected the authority.

5.4 The development of professional influence in Cheshire County Council between 1945 and 1977

As with most local authorities, the post war legislation introduced to implement the reform programmes increased the duties and, hence, bureaucratic staff of Cheshire County Council. In 1924 there were 27 'senior administrators, 94 'clerks' and 150 'advisors', 'inspectors' and 'visitors' working for the authority. By 1959 the total number had risen to 1,402 (Lee 1963, 125). For example, after the 1944 Education Act,

> "the size of the county education department was greatly increased. In 1947 a group of advisors to the Director was appointed. Former teachers became experts who toured the county giving advice in their subjects to teachers employed by the County Council. A professional service had been established." (Lee, 1963, 127)

For the reasons I outlined in the previous section - the bulk of work involved, the design of the system around professional experts rather than politicians - it became apparent that "the Council would have to rely more on the professional expert" (Ibid.). Councillors were more often obliged to let officers take decisions or to decide policy on the basis of 'technical' (i.e. professional) arguments. As a result, where legislation allowed for local discretion, policy

was more likely to be determined according to the criteria favoured by officers than by local party ideologies. This meant that external interests could no longer expect to influence policy making simply by exerting pressure on councillors.

The 'professionalisation' of Cheshire County Council's bureaucracy also closed off some other avenues used by external interests to influence the authority. Before the post-war expansion of Cheshire's bureaucracy, local notables such as landowners and businessmen were informally involved in council affairs (Lee 1963, 213). The 'openness' of the authority to such influence was due in part to the fact that before the war officers had generally been employed in the 'private sector' prior to their appointment with the council. As the number of public administrative posts increased after 1945 more of Cheshire's officers were appointed internally - that is, from within the authority - or were appointed from other local authorities. The link between officers and local interest groups therefore became more tenuous.

The distancing of councillors and local interests from policy making was also reinforced by the formation of officers into professional associations such as the Cheshire Surveyors Association. These consolidated ties between officers and acted as "a sounding board for professional opinion" (Lee 1963, 132, emphasis added). Officers, in other words, tended after the war to distinguish themselves from councillors and external interests and to seek one another's advice and approval for action. As Lee states,

> "many questions were settled 'at officer level' without bringing in too many outsiders, and the whole procedure of interdepartmental discussion among the officers was greatly facilitated by the building of County Hall in Chester" (1963, 143)[4].

In the area of education, for example - the major 'spending department' - "the bulk of the County Council's capital development programme was planned 'at the officer level', with regular consultations between the Departments of Education, Architecture and Planning" (Lee, 1963, 152, emphasis added). The ambitious programmes of service expansion planned by officers entailed a rapid rise in Cheshire's expenditure which councillors found difficult to control. In the case of the education committee for example, the committee "had little choice of action but to accept the recommendations made by its officers" (Lee 1963, 153). As a result, by the time the expenditure implications came to be considered

> "the Finance Committee and the Council itself were unable to find many opportunities for altering the estimates as they were presented to them. The degree of manoeuvrability was limited by previous policy decisions which had committed the County Council to certain regular items of expenditure" (Lee 1963, 144).

The link between high levels of expenditure and services and the influence of professional officers in Cheshire is supported by the data shown in Figure 5.1. This indicates Cheshire's per capita spending on various services relative to the national average in the financial years 1974/5 and 1977/8. It can be seen that in most cases above average levels of expenditure occur in services associated with the development of strong professional groups in the post-war period - education, social services, planning and highways. With the exception of the fire service, functions which are not represented by strong professions within 'County Hall' have below average levels of expenditure - waste disposal for example. Alt's (1971) evidence also supports the argument that the pattern of Cheshire's expenditure reflects the influence of the authority's professional groups. He found that the dominance of Conservative groups on local authorities

was generally associated with high expenditure on the police service, as a result of their emphasis on 'law and order'. But in 1974/5 and 1977/8 Cheshire County Council's expenditure on its police force was substantially less than the English county average.

This does not imply, however, that officers in Cheshire simply embarked on a process of 'empire building'. I would argue that the notion of empire building tends to be vastly over-emphasised as an explanation of the operation of bureaucratic groups. Wildavsky has suggested that, generally,

> "the notion that administrators go round telling each other or believing in secret, that the purposes for which they request funds are not valid, but that they want the money anyway in order to advance themselves and build empires is not worthy of consideration" (1979).

Wildavsky's judgement is too extreme; empire building does occur. But I would argue that it is a relatively minor feature of professional action in Cheshire. A more plausible explanation can be gleaned from the study of policy making in Cheshire by P.A. Management Consultants (1979). As I noted earlier, it concludes that bureaucratic inefficiency or malpractice (such as empire building) did not cause the authority's high levels of expenditure. On the contrary, it stresses that

> "overall we have been impressed by the professionalism and enthusiasm of the managers we have met ... Their dedication and loyalty does them great credit" (1979, 74).

I would therefore suggest that the influence of professional officers in Cheshire was more a reflection of their commitment to their tasks than a consequence of empire building.

I have argued in this section that the high levels of expenditure and service provision in Cheshire reflected the growing influence of professional groups in policy making. But, since the development of professional groups after the war occurred throughout local government,

this does not explain why Cheshire had higher levels of expenditure and services than almost any other county authority. I will now argue that Cheshire's relatively high expenditure and standards of service can also be attributed to the system of political management within the County Council.

5.5 Political stability and professional autonomy in Cheshire County Council

Councillors in Cheshire encouraged officers to adopt a policy making role in the 1950s and 1960s: it became clear that officers

> "were to be encouraged to speak out on behalf of their departments and not merely to provide information for the chairmen of their respective committees".

As a consequence, "Cheshire's officials have never been shy in debate" (Lee 1963, 136). I would suggest that the relatively high levels of expenditure and services were due to the unusually large degree of influence exerted by officers over policy matters as a result of this 'encouragement' by councillors. I will argue that this was due to the large, stable majority enjoyed by the County's Conservative group between 1945 and the mid-1970s.

The single most striking political feature of Cheshire County Council between the 1940s and the 1970s was the Conservative group's domination of the Council (see Figure 5.3). In 1963 Lee commented that,

> "Cheshire County Council since 1937 had never been forced to depend upon a balance between two evenly balanced parties. Conservative predominance made it possible to entertain very different views about political leadership from those held in adjacent county boroughs where changes of party control were possible" (1963, 174).

Once nominated, Conservative candidates had little problem being elected and,once elected, were likely to be re-elected indefinitely.

Not only therefore was the Conservative Party faced with no effective opposition within the council chamber, but Conservative councillors faced no real threat of electoral sanction from their constituents. As a result the level of organised party activity undertaken by the Conservative groups was low. Party group meetings were rare and badly attended. It can even be argued that Conservative councillors participated in council affairs primarily as individuals rather than as part of a party group. Sir John Boynton, a former chief executive of Cheshire County Council, pointed out that "because there was no opposition they (councillors) tended to look at things in a non-political way"[5]. According to Sir John Boynton the absence of party organisation was to the benefit of the county's officers:

> "If you've got ideas and you've got some capacity to persuade people ... it is easier to do this where you have stable political majorities who don't have to bother about the opposition, because they tend to judge your (i.e. officers') policies then in a totally independent way".

It was easier for officers to convince councillors of the validity of their proposals where councillors acted as individuals rather than as members of a party group.

The tendency for councillors to act in a 'non-political' way was reinforced by the attitude of officers to external pressures. Officers were inclined to take into their confidence those councillors who thought on a 'county basis'. By contrast, they were unwilling to co-operate with those who confined themselves chiefly to advocating the causes of local interest groups (Lee 1963, 142). The ability of officers to control the flows of information made many councillors reluctant to pursue the role of 'advocate' lest it should provoke a hostile response from officers. Councillors therefore tended to look <u>inwards</u> to officers rather than <u>outwards</u> to local groups.

The absence of an effectively organised Conservative group also reinforced departmentalism within the authority (i.e. the tendency for departments to act independently of each other in pursuit of their own objectives). Green (1981), writing about the role of party groups in Newcastle City Council, noted that party groups can provide a counterweight to departmentalism, introducing a political dimension to policy formation which cuts across departmental boundaries. Such a counterweight was lacking in Cheshire. Councillors operated primarily as members of departmental committees. I would argue that, lacking a 'party' role, and serving for long periods on such committees, many councillors were easily socialised into the world of 'professional' groups. Councillors' actions reflected, to a large extent, their orientation towards the debates and issues which occurred within various 'professional' occupations - most often nationally. Councillors in other authorities may also have been orientated towards such debates and issues but the absence of party politics combined with the political stability of Cheshire made the authority's councillors unusually susceptible to 'socialisation'. As a result, the various professional groups in Cheshire became the focus of policy making to an even greater extent than was the case in other local authorities.

The high degree of influence exerted by officers in Cheshire between 1945 and the mid-1970s does not imply that councillors were not involved in policy making: certain leading councillors formed a policy making elite with the chief officers. But these councillors acted mainly to support officer-led initiatives not to form policy. This 'inner ring' of Conservative councillors was characterised

by its deferential attitude to the authority's officers. As Lee points out,

> "the quest to identify an elite in county government depends upon a distinction between councillors receptive to expert advice ... and those untutored in the new professional skills who were principally concerned with the defence of certain interests. What really distinguished the 'inner ring' ..., apart from their receptiveness, was their ability to keep officers informed of possible difficulties. The leading members of the council and the chief officers formed a kind of ministerial party which was often required to take action against some of their own councillors" (1963, 190, emphases added).

A certain kind of councillor involvement in policy making thus increased the ability of professional officers to pursue their own initiatives. By cultivating links with councillors who were 'receptive' to their views officers could more easily overcome opposition to their initiatives, even from Conservative councillors. Sir John Boynton supported this argument: while emphasising the advantage to officers of a 'non-political' council he also stressed the importance of involving councillors in officer-led initiatives. What officers wanted, he said, was "politics with a small p", not party politics.

The ability of officers to form a small policy making elite with a few councillors receptive to their views was made possible by the large and stable Conservative majority. Leading councillors could afford to exclude members of their own party and other parties from the 'inner ring', knowing that their own positions and the overall strength of the Conservatives vis-a-vis the other parties were secure.

I have indicated in this section how the Conservative group's large and stable majority encouraged councillors to take a 'non-political' view of policy making, allowed officers to form a policy

making elite with a number of councillors and, as a result, emphasised professional influence on policy. I would therefore conclude that it was this 'ministerial' system of political management in Cheshire County Council which accounted for the development of unusually high levels of expenditure and service provision by the authority after the second world war. The large and stable majority of the Conservative group made it possible for professional officers to exert an unusual degree of influence in policy making and thus allowed them to develop more ambitious programmes than other authorities.

5.6 The emergence of local government reorganisation and reform as a reaction to professional influence on policy making

In this section I will argue that the attempts by central government to introduce 'corporate management' procedures to local government were aimed at reducing the influence of professional groups on policy making. Corporate management is based on the idea that it is more 'efficient' to control the use of an authority's resources according to authority-wide or 'corporately' planned goals than on a fragmented (departmental) basis (see Bains (1972) and Stewart (1983) for statements and justifications of the procedure.) One of its main effects, therefore, is to shift decision making power from a local authority's departments - and hence away from the major professional groups - towards a small central management team composed of leading councillors and chief officers. I will argue that one of the objectives of central government in promoting corporate management was to reduce the influence of professional groups in policy making. I will again focus on Cheshire County Council, examining first, the attempt by central government to promote corporate management and its affect in Cheshire and, second, the attempt by local ratepayer interests to promote corporate management within the authority.

The introduction of corporate management procedures to Cheshire County Council: the influence of non-local forces

The reform of local government has been a subject of continuous debate throughout the twentieth century but in the late 1950s and 1960s this debate became particularly active. In 1964 the government appointed the Maud and Mallaby Committees to enquire into the organisation and staffing of local authorities. Shortly after, in 1965, Crossman, the then Minister for Housing and Local Government, used the proposed re-organisation of local authority boundaries and functions to again raise the issue of administrative reform. In a speech to the Association of Municipal Councils he lectured local councillors and officers on the need for reform. He also announced the formation of a new Commission - subsequently chaired by Maud - to make proposals for the reorganisation of local government. Crossman made clear that the Commission was to take into account the question of administrative efficiency as well as geographical boundaries (see Crossman 1965).

Before this commission reported the Maud and Mallaby Committees reached similar conclusions. The Maud committee, for example, suggested that

> "the separateness of the (local authority) committees contributes to the separateness of the departments, and the professionalism of departmental staff feeds on this separateness" (1967, Vol 1, para 224).

At the end of the 1960s, the Bains Committee was also appointed to make detailed proposals on the 'management structures' of local authorities. Like Maud, the Bains Report identified the 'professionalism' of local authorities as a problem and advocated a reduced role in policy making for the professional groups which had developed in the 1950s and 1960s.

> "It must be recognised that at senior levels, particularly in the larger authorities, management skills are as important as professional skills and appointments to senior positions should be made on this basis" (1973, 6, emphasis added).

Bains proposed the adoption of a corporate management system in local government within which new 'management' skills would replace old 'professional' skills as the focus for an authority's system of policy formation.

To understand why departmentalism and 'professional' skills became identified as a major problem in the 1960s one must judge the consequences of professional influence on policy making in the light of pressures acting on central government.

In Cheshire the major consequence of the post-war drift to what may be termed a professional mode of policy formation was the development of ambitious programmes of service expansion and a concomitant rise in expenditure. Strong autonomous departments became the foci of policy formation, making it more difficult for those interests favouring expenditure restraint to exercise influence over policy. The period during which professional influence was encouraging the expansion of local services, raising local government expenditure and making central control of local policy more difficult, coincided with increased attempts by central authorities to determine the distribution and amount of public expenditure. In the 1950s and early 1960s such attempts at 'national planning' had only limited effects on local authorities. But increasingly in the 1960s and 1970s, with the onset of economic 'crisis' and the increasing priority given to financial considerations (later codified in the doctrine of monetarism), central government became more concerned with rising public expenditure. Various techniques were imported from the business world which promised

to make public expenditure more predictable and controllable. (See Hambleton 1983, 161 for a summary of the main techniques that became popular at a national level.) As expenditure by local government constituted a substantial and rising proportion of total public expenditure during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s this inevitably meant that central government had to introduce measures to control local expenditure. The National Comunity Development Project (1976) describes how central government's increasing concern with local expenditure led to attempts at 'rationalising local government'.

In this context one can appreciate central government's advocacy of corporate management. If local resource use was to become more susceptible to the financial priorities of central government the autonomy of local departments and officers had to be undermined. Corporate management, by promoting a more centralised system of policy formation, promised to do this. (See Navarro 1978 for an explanation of similar developments in the National Health Service.) Thus, as Dearlove suggests,

> "the study of the reorganisation of local government has to be undertaken as a study of the struggle to counter its relative autonomy from dominant interests and the state in order that closer links might be reasserted between economic and governmental power" (1979, 245).

The cumulative effects of central government's advice, reports and so on became apparent in Cheshire during the 1960s. The threat of reorganisation made professional officers in Cheshire more sympathetic to the idea of introducing some form of corporate management system. Crossman's 1965 speech to the Association of Municipal Councils was apparently intrumental in bringing about this change of attitude. According to Sir John Boynton, then chief clerk of Cheshire and a major advocate of corporate management, before Crossman's speech

local government reorganisation "seemed a bit remote".

> "It wasn't until Crossman disbanded (the boundary Commission) and set up a new Commission to look at the whole structure that Cheshire got worried ... The fact that we then were clearly under threat as a county ... greatly strengthened my hand".

As a result of this new 'external threat' Boynton found it easier to introduce a more corporate mode of policy making. He argued that Crossman's warning of the need for local government reform enabled him to convince Cheshire's councillors and officers that "our only hope of surviving is to show that we are one of the most efficient, forward-looking authorities in the country". The need to adopt reforms in order to increase their chance of surviving greatly reduced the antipathy of departments to a corporate system. Various reforms were introduced, beginning in 1965 with the 'simplification' of the committee structure, designed to allow councillors more opportunity to develop a policy making role[6].

Boynton's attempts to introduce corporate management to Cheshire were also aided by the publication of the report of the Bains Committee in 1973 (Bains 1972). A copy of the report was sent by the Secretary of State for the Environment to all members of the new council of Cheshire. In a foreword to the report, the minister, Peter Walker, suggested to councillors that it contains 'a wealth of practical advice' and urged the adoption of its proposals.

> "If every newly elected member and every newly appointed officer of the new authorities studies this report carefully and sees that those suggestions appropriate are applied to the work of his new authority then local government in the future is going to be far more efficient and effective than ever before" (1972, vii).

Once more the 'advice' from central government helped Boynton to overcome the traditional opposition of Cheshire's service departments to centralised forms of administration. The main recommendation of

the report was accepted and Cheshire established a Policy and Resources Committee, together with the officers equivalent - a chief officers management team. A corporate planning unit was also established as part of the Finance Department - a location which made apparent the relationship between the new system of administration and the priority to be given to expenditure control. By 1974 the newly reorganised county of Cheshire had established the main elements of a corporate management system - partly in response to the 'advice' of central government.

I have argued that the non-local pressures on Cheshire County Council to adopt a corporate management type system in part reflected a reaction against professional influence. But pressures from local interests were also significant in promoting the move towards corporate management in Cheshire and these were also to some extent a reaction to the influence of professional officers.

The introduction of corporate management: the influence of local interests

I have pointed out that the main advocate of corporate management in Cheshire, and the person within the administrative structure most responsible for its development, was Sir John Boynton. His appointment to the position of county clerk in 1964 was unusual. Traditionally, the clerk was appointed internally - the customary procedure being to promote the deputy clerk. But in Sir John's case the appointments committee went ouside the authority in their search for a suitable officer[7].

The criteria employed by committees of appointment are seldom made explicit. Sir John considers that the major reason for his appointment was his support for corporate management procedures[8]. To understand why the appointments committee was concerned with corporate

management and was obliged to look outside the authority for a new clerk one must consider three things: the nature of the interests represented on the appointments committee; the policy making structure of Cheshire at the time; and, the implications of a corporate management system.

The composition of appointment committees varies depending on the seniority of the posts being filled. In the case of the selection of the new clerk - the most important officer in an authority - Cheshire's committee was composed of leading members of the council and chaired by the then chairman of the council, Sir Wesley Emberton. Leading councillors, and Emberton in particular, made it known to Boynton at his interview that they wished to change the administrative structure of the authority. One can suggest why they did by comparing the changing political character of the council with the county's pattern of policy at that time.

The creation of new electoral divisions in the county in the mid-1960s (to reflect the growing population in the suburban fringes of Liverpool and Manchester) changed the political character of the ruling Tory group. The new divisions were composed primarily of ratepaying owner-occupiers. The number of councillors representing constituents who expected the council to control rates therefore increased. This new body of councillors representing ratepayers sought to make the Council's expenditure in fields like education and planning a major issue (Lee et al. 1974, 114-115). Leading members of the Conservative group were therefore under some pressure to institute reforms that would increase political control over decisions involving departmental expenditure.

The rise of a professional mode of policy making in the late 1940s and 1950s had resulted in a system of strong departments that formed the centres of policy formation. Such a style was not peculiar

to Cheshire. But Sir John Boynton emphasised that the county was 'particularly fragmented ... Nobody in Cheshire had made any attempt to pull the whole thing together and it seemed to me to need it much more than many other counties". The extent of departmental autonomy and its consequences was evident in the major spending departments. In the case of the education department, for example, Boynton found that it was really 'a little county council within a county council' with the chief officer deciding questions of policy. The education department expends the bulk of the county's resources - 67% in 1977/78 for example. Its autonomy therefore meant that the major area of local resource use was beyond the influence of councillors attempting to control expenditure. If councillors representing the interests of ratepayers were to increase their control over county expenditure they needed to reduce the autonomy of departments within the authority. 'Corporate management', with its emphasis on centralised, non-departmental policy making, promised such a reduction.

For these reasons, I would argue, the appointments committee did not want a clerk in the traditional mould; they required someone to reform the policy making structure rather than just administer the existing one. According to Boynton, the committee were obliged to look outside the county for such a clerk because they considered Cheshire's existing officers to be unwilling or unable to promote reform.

I conclude that the appointment of John Boynton and subsequent moves towards corporate management in Cheshire resulted in part from the attempt by ratepayer interests to reduce the influence of professional groups in policy making. By shifting power away from the main 'spending' departments - education, social services, etc. - to

the central 'administrative' departments - finance, for example - councillors representing ratepayers expected to gain more influence within the authority.

In this section I have argued that some of the major changes taking place in local government generally and Cheshire in particular during the 1960s and 1970s were a reaction to the growing influence of professional officers on policy during the 1950s and 1960s. Central government used the proposed reorganisation of local government as an opportunity to encourage the introduction of 'management' reforms within local authorities. In Cheshire, local 'ratepayer interests' also used the climate created by the proposed reorganisation and reform to introduce similar changes. In so far as these changes aimed to reduce the influence of professional groups over policy making - and, in particular, over expenditure decisions - they testify to the important role these groups had come to play since the post-war period and their independence from local and non-local political control.

5.7 The influence of professional interests on the reorganisation and reform of Cheshire County Council

I have argued that the development of high levels of expenditure and service provision by Cheshire County Council reflected the independent, internal influence of professional groups on policy. These groups developed primarily as a result of class pressures at a national level and their subsequent influence on policy making in Cheshire was reinforced by the political system within the County Council. To understand how and why Cheshire's levels of expenditure and service provision came about one must, in other words, take into account both external and internal factors and the relationship between them. In this section I will emphasise that one needs to take both external and

internal factors into account to explain the effects of local government reorganisation and reform on the activities of Cheshire County Council. My argument will be that although external pressures (via central government and from local interests) determined the broad shape of reorganisation and reform, the interests of professional officers influenced the precise impact of the pressures. To develop this argument I will first examine the investment policy of Cheshire County Council between 1959 and 1972 and then describe the operation of the corporate management system during 1975 and 1976.

The investment policy of Cheshire County Council from 1959 to 1972

I have argued that it was not until Crossman's speech in 1965 to the Association of Municipal Councils and the appointment of the Maud Commission that Cheshire took positive steps to initiate a reform of its 'management structure'. This does not imply, however, that the continuous debate and proposals regarding reorganisation had no effect before this date. The Local Government Act 1958 established a 'boundary' commission to consider reforming local government in a number of 'special review areas', based on various conurbations. Manchester and Merseyside were among the conurbations considered and parts of Cheshire bordering these conurbations became designated special review areas. The designation of several parts of the county as review areas caused alarm among councillors and officers. Substantial sections of the county were at risk of being lost to metropolitan authorities based on Merseyside and Manchester. The alarm of Cheshire's councillors and officers was caused by two things. First, many Conservative councillors, who at that time were part of a council with a strong majority, would find themselves members of a

minority opposition in the potential metropolitan councils. Second, the county stood to lose some of its most lucrative areas of rate income[9]. This potential loss of income, I would argue, explains the opposition of Cheshire's officers to reorganisation. By the early 1960s Cheshire's departments had embarked upon extensive - and expensive - programmes of service development which depended to a large extent on revenue provided from the wealthy review areas[10]. The designation of areas of the county as parts of new authorities based on Merseyside and Manchester would, therefore, have seriously threatened the programmes being developed by professional groups in Cheshire.

Cheshire's initial reaction to the threat of boundary changes indicates the way policy formation in the county reflected professional interests. Shortly after it became apparent that certain parts of the county might be lost in a boundary review, the County Treasurer, with the full support of the council, changed the authority's investment plans. In the financial year 1958/9 he introduced a policy whereby the authority would no longer finance capital projects out of revenue funds in the special review areas. The policy was never made official or publicly announced and was never declared defunct. It is therefore difficult to know how long it operated. However, since the loss of what were known as the 'Dangerous Areas' remained a risk until plans for reorganisation were finalised in 1972, one might assume that the policy operated for approximately twelve years. For this period, therefore, the amount of investment in certain parts of the county was reduced. The policy did not imply any benefit for many of the local politicians who gave it their support as it did not increase the chances of the 'Dangerous Areas' remaining part of Cheshire[11]. The policy did not, in other words, reflect political

objectives or party politics. It arose primarily because the authority's departments would not invest resources in areas which might not remain under their control. I would therefore conclude that the investment policy of the authority between 1959 and 1972 reflected the way in which professional interests responded to the external pressures for reorganisation.

Corporate management in Cheshire during 1975 and 1976

The external pressures from central government and local ratepayer interests led, as I noted above, to the implementation of various corporate management procedures. As part of a corporate management approach the Finance Department introduced a new budgeting system in 1974/5. The success of the new system was vital if changes were to be made in the traditional (departmentally dominated) system by which resource use was determined. Because of its significance I will describe in this section the form and effect of the new system of budgeting during the financial year 1975/6.

The development in the 1950s and 1960s of strong professional departments in Cheshire ensured that the objectives of officers played a relatively large part in determining the level of rates demanded. It was to this mode of policy formation that Cheshire's new budgeting system was opposed. The notion that 'resource' considerations - i.e. the amount of expenditure (in particular, rates) the Council was willing to use on services - should play a greater part in determining departmental policy was evident in the new system.

> "The basis of the new system was to be a budget forecast, indicating the total of expenditure already committed as a result of past decisions, together with <u>expected income</u>" (Howick 1978, 49. Emphasis added.)

'Expected income' was to be estimated by determining in advance of departmental demands the authority's rate precept. The system therefore implied a shift in the balance of power away from the professional groups in the major service departments to the ratepayer interest represented in the council. But I will argue that the system failed in practice and that this failure reflected the ability of the main spending departments to resist a challenge to their established dominance of policy formation.

Formally the full council was responsible for the budget but in reality it was the responsibility of a sub-committee of the Policy and Resources Committee. The 'Budget Sub-Committee' consisted of the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition, the chairman and vice-chairman of the Finance Committee and the vice-chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee. These last two posts were held by the chairman of the Education and Social Services Committees - the council's biggest fields of expenditure. Several members of the sub-committee were therefore far from independent of the major departments.

From its start the ability of the new system to control expenditure was impaired by its focus on 'incremental' expenditure, i.e. expenditure over and above that already committed. As the bulk of the authority's expenditure fell into this 'committed' category, the new system was unable to question most of the expenditure made by the county. The sub-committee was also willing to pass any expenditure bids it considered necessary for the continuation of existing programmes. The success of the new budget system depended above all on the ability and willingness of the sub-committee to question officer definitions

of 'necessary' expenditure.

As the budgetary cycle proceeded it became clear that the process of departmental bidding caused the defined level of available resources to be revised upwards. This ability of the departments to alter what was supposed to be a pre-determined budgetary total marked the continuance of the old-style system; in other words, departmental pressure still influenced rate demands.

The outcome of the budgetary process reflected two things. First, councillors did not have sufficient information to assess departmental definitions of necessary expenditure; and, second, even when such information was available councillors were unwilling to seriously question officer definitions of necessary expenditure. These factors, I will argue, reflected the influence of professional interests in the authority. I will examine each in turn.

As part of the new budgetary system, the corporate planning unit was to provide the budget sub-committee with the information it required to assess departmental claims for resources. But, Howick notes,

> "As the relationship between the individual departments and the unit was distant ..., the unit had little detailed knowledge, and even less intuitive appreciation of substantive policies" (1978, 54).

The major service departments thus handicapped the new budgetary system through their ability to keep the corporate planning unit at 'arms length'.

An appreciation of the attitude of the budget sub-committee to the information they did receive from professional officers is also relevant. The sub-committee declared that it was not willing to reject expenditure claims if, by so doing, services would be 'seriously damaged'. But the sub-committee was prepared to accept the definitions

of 'serious damage' proposed by officers from the main spending departments (Howick 1978, 52). Although the evidence to the sub-committee seemed 'unsystematic, impressionistic and emotionally charged', it was willing to accept expenditure claims on this basis (Howick 1978, 54). It appears, therefore, that councillors, despite their intention of controlling expenditure through the introduction of corporate management, in effect still allowed professional officers to keep the upper hand in policy making.

I have argued in this section that to understand the causes of local government reorganisation and reform and their precise effects on Cheshire County Council, one must take into account both external and internal factors. Pressure from central government generated reorganisation and, together with the influence of local ratepayers interests, prompted the introduction of corporate management procedures, but the interests of professional groups within Cheshire County Council determined precisely how these changes affected the authority.

5.8 The significance of professional influence on the levels of expenditure and service provision by Cheshire County Council: a summary and assessment

I began by arguing that a focus on the 'needs' of the county - defined by legislation and by measures such as the Rate Support Grant - and on pressures from councillors, local interest groups and central government cannot fully explain the development of high levels of expenditure and service provision by Cheshire County Council between 1945 and 1977. To explain the latter one must focus not only on these external factors but also on determinants of policy which are internal to the authority. I developed this argument by first drawing attention

to the post-war settlement between classes, the past role of aristocratic and landed interests in shaping the development of a 'professional' bureaucracy and the pattern of national party politics. These external factors gave rise to a comprehensive range of public services and promoted an extensive array of professional groups within local government. While this helped to explain the development of professional influence throughout local government I have also shown that the relatively high levels of expenditure and service provision by Cheshire County Council reflected the unusually important part played by the authority's professional groups in policy making. This resulted from the large and stable majority enjoyed by the local Conservative party between the early 1940s and early 1970s. To finish I will consider the implications of this finding for the model of local policy making developed in chapter four.

I argued that a model should take into account both external influences (class forces) and internal influences (professional interests). My analysis of Cheshire County Council supported this by showing both how external pressures promoted local government services and professional groups and how the latter influenced policy. But it also indicates that the precise extent of internal, professional influence in an authority will depend on the system of political management. The effect of the system of political management cannot necessarily be taken as a proxy for the influence of local external interest groups represented within it. In Cheshire, the stable and large majority of the Conservative party tended to support the production of policies which did not reflect the interests of the groups represented by that party: the system of political management emphasised policies involving high expenditure and large rate demands whereas the main groups

represented by the Conservative party - property and land owners - favoured low rate demands. For this reason one must consider the system of political management as an independent influence on policy.

I conclude, therefore, that a model of policy making should be capable of explaining: (a) the external, class pressures on an authority; (b) how, if at all, they generate internal, professional interests; (c) how the system of political management affects the influences of external groups and professional officers on policy; and (d) what determines the way officers influence policy when they can operate independently of external pressure. My analysis of policy making in Cheshire relates mainly to the first three of these subjects. I will finish this chapter by considering its implications for the fourth.

Professional officers often represent external interests through their influence on local intervention. For example, in so far as professional groups in Cheshire were implementing services in the fields such as education, planning and highways they were helping to ensure that the County fulfilled its statutory obligations. These obligations were primarily a consequence of class pressures on the state - in particular on central government - following the second world war. Professional groups may have been developing services to fulfill their own particular interests but in doing so they were helping to ensure that these past pressures continued to be represented through local government. But I have argued that it may not be possible to explain all aspects of local government activity - such as levels of expenditure and service provision in terms of the representation of present or past external pressures. The influence of professional groups, in other words, does more than simply represent external pressure: it is in this sense that I have argued that professional groups, in pursuing their interests, exert an independent, internal influence on policy.

To understand this kind of influence, one must understand the interests of professional groups.

In chapter four I drew on a Weberian model of bureaucracies to estimate the interests of local government officers. I suggested that their interests,derived from their position within such organisations, would be to defend and promote the 'ethos' of their office and the body of skills, expertise or procedures which distinguished it from other 'offices' and groups inside and outside the organisation. As with all groups, the way local government professions act will be influenced by pecuniary considerations; but the above interests will also prompt a commitment to the tasks with which they are associated. My examination of policy making in Cheshire offers some support for this hypothesis: P.A. Management Consultants, in their research on the causes of Cheshire's high levels of expenditure and services, drew attention to the 'loyalty, dedication and enthusiasm' of the authority's professional officers.

There are, however, two features of this 'evidence'. The first is that it can be interpreted in two ways. One may argue, as I have done, that it indicates how the characteristics of bureaucratic organisations invest officers with particular interests; but an alternative interpretation is that the commitment of Cheshire's officers is a continuing effect of the 'welfare state' ideology generated during the period of post-war social reforms. If the first interpretation is accepted, then the commitment of officers can be taken as evidence that they can exert an independent (internal) influence on local policy. If the second is accepted, then the effects of such commitment on the levels of expenditure and service provision by Cheshire can be seen simply as evidence of how past external pressures

may become internalised within local authorities and continue to influence policy making. Examining the ideology of local officers in Cheshire does not indicate which of these two interpretations is most appropriate in this case. On the one hand, officers occasionally argue that services should be developed as a means of ensuring or moving towards a 'socially just' society. One can say, therefore, that their ideology is similar to that used in the post-war period to justify the development of services in fields like education, housing and social services. But this may simply be a coincidence: the evidence does not demonstrate a casual link. If, on the other hand, the ideologies of Cheshire's officers were nothing more than a consequence of external influences during the post-war period one might expect their commitment to grow weaker over time - particularly as ideologies favouring expenditure restraint and the privatisation rather than development of 'public' services have become more prominent. But the commitment of Cheshire's officers to service development seemed strong when P.A. Management Consultants reported in 1979. I conclude, therefore, that the evidence tends to support the interpretation I have favoured - that the commitment of local officers is due mainly to the characteristics of their present position within local bureaucracies.

This leads me to discuss a second feature of the evidence from Cheshire concerning the influence of professional officers on policy making. It indicates how external pressures and a system of political management may give rise to an independent, professional influence on local policy making. But it does not show in sufficient detail how the interests of professional groups are derived from their position within a local authority; nor does it illustrate precisely the

processes by which these interests generate particular policies. In the following chapter I will attempt to strengthen my analysis by examining how the interests of one professional group affected particular policies in Clwyd County Council.

Chapter Six

The influence of corporate managers on the 'industrial development' initiatives of Clwyd County Council

6.1 Introduction

Clwyd County Council came into being following the 1972 reorganisation of local government. The authority's boundaries encompass an area of North Wales formerly covered primarily by the County Councils of Denbighshire and Flintshire. The most striking change to occur in the area in recent years is the rapid decline of industry and consequent rise in unemployment. Because Clwyd is relatively dependent on primary and manufacturing industry the county has been particularly vulnerable to economic recession. Since 1980 in excess of 11,700 jobs have been lost in manufacturing alone - mainly as a result of the closure of the British Steel Corporation's steel-making plant at Shotton. Unemployment in Clwyd has consistently been the highest of any Welsh county and among the highest in the United Kingdom[1]. Figure 6.1 illustrates the rise in unemployment in the county during the 1970s and relates it to trends in Wales and Britain.

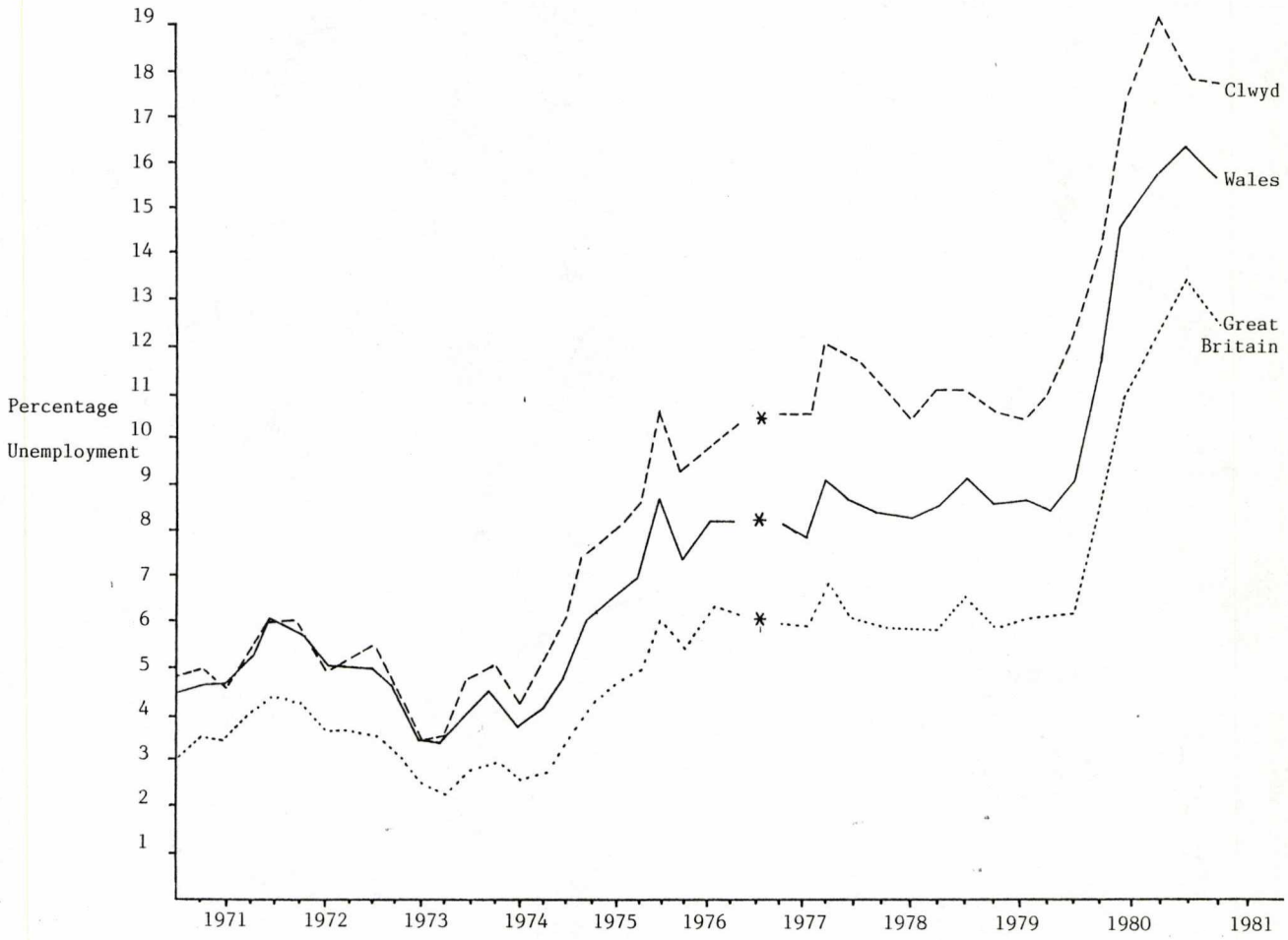
This pattern of economic decline is not unique to Clwyd and, as Miller and Miller note,

> "the impact of the current recession has placed increased burdens on local authorities and generated pressures from both the public and politicians for councils to offer some form of solution to the problems of their local economy" (1982, 153).

Like many authorities, Clwyd County Council has implemented various industrial development initiatives to offset the economic decline of the area. Economic recession and the pressures it generates have undoubtedly played a major part in stimulating these initiatives. But I will

Figure 6.1

A comparison of percentage unemployment in Clwyd with Wales and Great Britain



* Owing to an industrial dispute in the Department of Employment figures are not available for the period October 1976 to December 1976

Source: Clwyd County Council: Annual Abstract of Statitistics 1982

argue that such external factors do not fully explain the industrial development initiatives of Clwyd County Council. I will suggest that the interests of corporate managers and their relationships with other professional groups in the authority also shaped the industrial development initiatives.

No single political group on Clwyd County Council has an overall majority. This has given rise to what I will call a system of political 'power-sharing', a system of political management that differs from the one party system which characterised Cheshire County Council between the 1940s and 1970s. By focussing on Clwyd, I will thus be able to examine how a system of political power-sharing affects professional influence on policy making. This will allow me, at a later stage, to compare the systems of political management in Cheshire and Clwyd and draw some general conclusions regarding the relationship between such systems and professional influence in local authorities.

In the following section (6.2) I will describe the evolution of Clwyd's corporate management system and the concommitant development of a new professional group of corporate managers. Section 6.3 outlines the County's industrial development activities. Section 6.4 notes how the influence of corporate managers caused both the 'Corporate Management Unit' and the 'Industrial Development Division' to be located within the chief executive's office and assesses the consequences for the county's industrial development initiatives. In section 6.5 I argue that the influence of corporate managers can be explained in terms of their interests as a professional group and their relationship with other professional groups in the authority. Following this (in section 6.6) I argue that the system of political power-sharing promoted the autonomy of professional groups from political control and so emphasized their influence on the county's economic initiatives. Section 6.7 summarises the chapter and assesses these arguments.

6.2 Corporate management in Clwyd County Council

Since 1974 Clwyd County Council has employed a 'corporate management' system of policy making. This system is intended "to plan and co-ordinate the policies and programmes of the County Council on a corporate basis" (Clwyd County Council 1981, 4). It thereby entails a style of decision making which includes, but is not based on, the various service departments: its object is, primarily, to reduce departmentalism. It has led to the creation of a new professional group of 'corporate managers' to administer the system. The County Council is regarded as having a relatively sophisticated corporate management system (see, for example, The Corporate Planning Journal, June 1978).

As in Cheshire County Council, the initiation of a corporate management system by Clwyd County Council was caused by local and non-local factors. When plans for local government reorganisation were finalised in 1972 many of the councillors and officers who were expected to staff the new authority of Clwyd decided to make a 'clean break' with the traditional patterns of management in local government. The reason for this is unclear. A corporate manager suggested however that officers and councillors could not unanimously agree to any system that resembled either Flintshire's or Denbighshire's (the two counties from which Clwyd was primarily composed). It was therefore decided that the new county of Clwyd should have an organisational structure which was markedly different from any used by the old authorities which Clwyd was to replace. By employing a corporate management system, councillors and officers sought to ensure that the new council of Clwyd would not be seen as a continuation of either Flintshire or Denbighshire.

But to explain why local councillors and officers chose to employ a corporate management system as the basis for policy making in the new

county one must also examine the influence of non-local factors. I would argue that, as in Cheshire, the 'advice' of central government on the reform of local government - and in particular, the recommendations made in the Bains Report - encouraged Clwyd's new councillors and officers to adopt a corporate approach. Adopting such an approach promised not only a 'break with the past' but also allowed the new county to employ a fashionable and 'approved' system of policy making.

Mervyn Phillips, Director of Administration in the new authority, was the main force within the county responsible for promoting and shaping the corporate management system. He recruited a staff of fifteen to form a corporate management unit which, under the direction of the ex-deputy treasurer of Flintshire County Council, reported to a 'Policy, Finance and Resources' committee. The new corporate managers were drawn from a variety of backgrounds - mainly local government administration, accountancy and specialisms such as 'research' and computing. Although most of these officers possess degree-standard qualifications a major factor in the selection of officers has been their 'commitment' to the corporate approach. In addition to this corporate management unit, a 'Team Unit' (later called the Chief Officer's Management Team) - drawn from senior officers in the major departments - was intended to promote inter-departmental co-operation on the officer side. Finally, six 'Area Teams' (covering areas corresponding to the District authorities in Clwyd), each containing staff from various departments at County and District level, were established to link the activities of the District Councils with policy making by the County Council.

In its early days the corporate management unit set out to produce a system which would indicate how available resources should be allocated

according to established priorities. Corporate managers were not at this time concerned with determining either the level of resources available or the priorities of the authority. The system was based on the principle that "there is a difference in the degree to which each of the activities of the spending committees contributes towards the achievement of the council's goal and key objectives and that those activities which make themost significant contribution have the greatest claim on resources" (Clwyd County Council 1981, 40). Figure 6.2 lists the authority's goal and four key objectives. The contribution of each activity to the 'corporate' goal and objectives was to be assessed on the basis of recommendations made to the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee by the Chief Officer's Management Team. All activities were to be 'banded' according to their contribution to one or more of the four key objectives. The criteria used to 'band' the activities were:

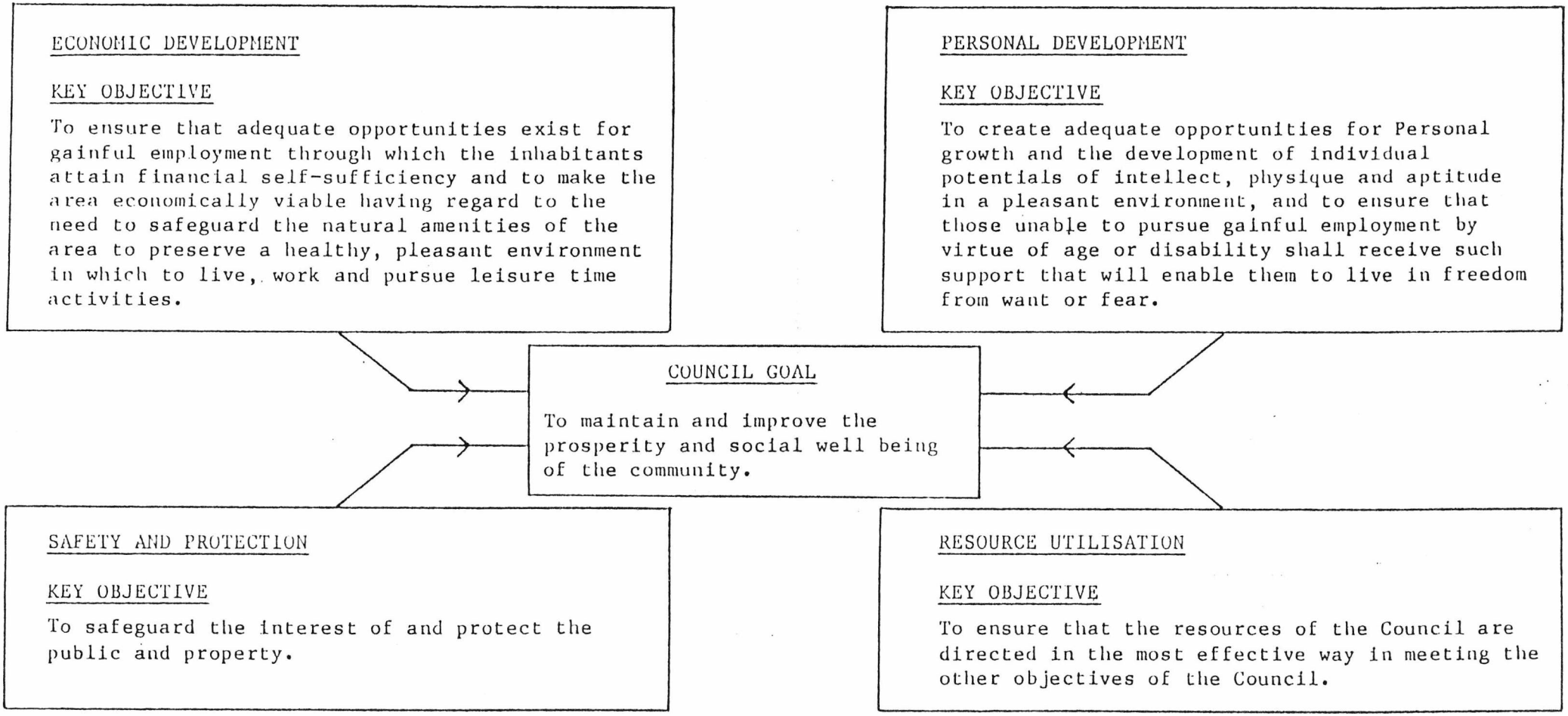
Band 1: is the activity regarded as fundamental or crucial to the attainment of the key objectives?;

Band 2: is the activity regarded as directly contributing to but not fundamental to the attainment of the key objectives?;

Band 3: is the activity regarded as making an indirect contribution to or supporting other activities in the attainment of the key objectives?

In 1981, for example, the Careers Advisory Service of the education department was considered as a Band 1 activity with regard to the Economic Development objective; Secondary schools were allocated to Band 2 in respect of the same objective; and Adult Day and Evening Classes were allocated to Band 3. On this basis, where a choice existed with regard to the distribution of resources, the system indicated what decision should be reached with regard to the above mentioned activities - priority would be given to the Careers Advisory Service and only then would funds be

Figure 6.2 The goal and four key objectives of Clwyd County Council



Source: Clwyd County Council 1981, 41

allocated to secondary schools and then to Day and Evening Classes.

The success of the corporate system depended on two things: first, establishing in detail what each department did and the resources it used; and, second, assessing how each departmental activity contributed to the various objectives. With regard to the first requirement, beginning in 1975 each department was required to set out annually both its priorities, policies and practice and the resources it employed (in terms of staff and expenditure). This information was to be used by the corporate management unit to formulate 'Position Statements'. With regard to the second requirement, the position statements formed the basis for policy review until 1982, since when a new approach based on specific 'Performance Review' documents has been used.

In formal terms the corporate management system has followed this pattern since its inception. But in practice it has undergone a significant change which is not readily apparent from its institutional form. In explaining the present work of the corporate management unit a corporate manager said that,

> "We ourselves have accepted that even the word corporate is not really appropriate ... The (corporate management) unit has been redesignated the 'Policy Planning Unit' because we accept that there is no way at the moment or in the foreseeable future that we are going to break down the barriers of individual departments and I must admit there's a lot of argument as to why we should do that ... By and large each service block needs to operate on its own, to manage its own service with the professional ability that's needed."[2]

The new emphasis on 'policy planning', which emerged gradually during the 1970s, marked a new role for corporate managers within the policy-making system of the authority. Formerly corporate managers were concerned only with ensuring that resources were allocated effectively and efficiently within a given level of resources and set of priorities. Latterly, they have increasingly sought to define the 'problems' to be

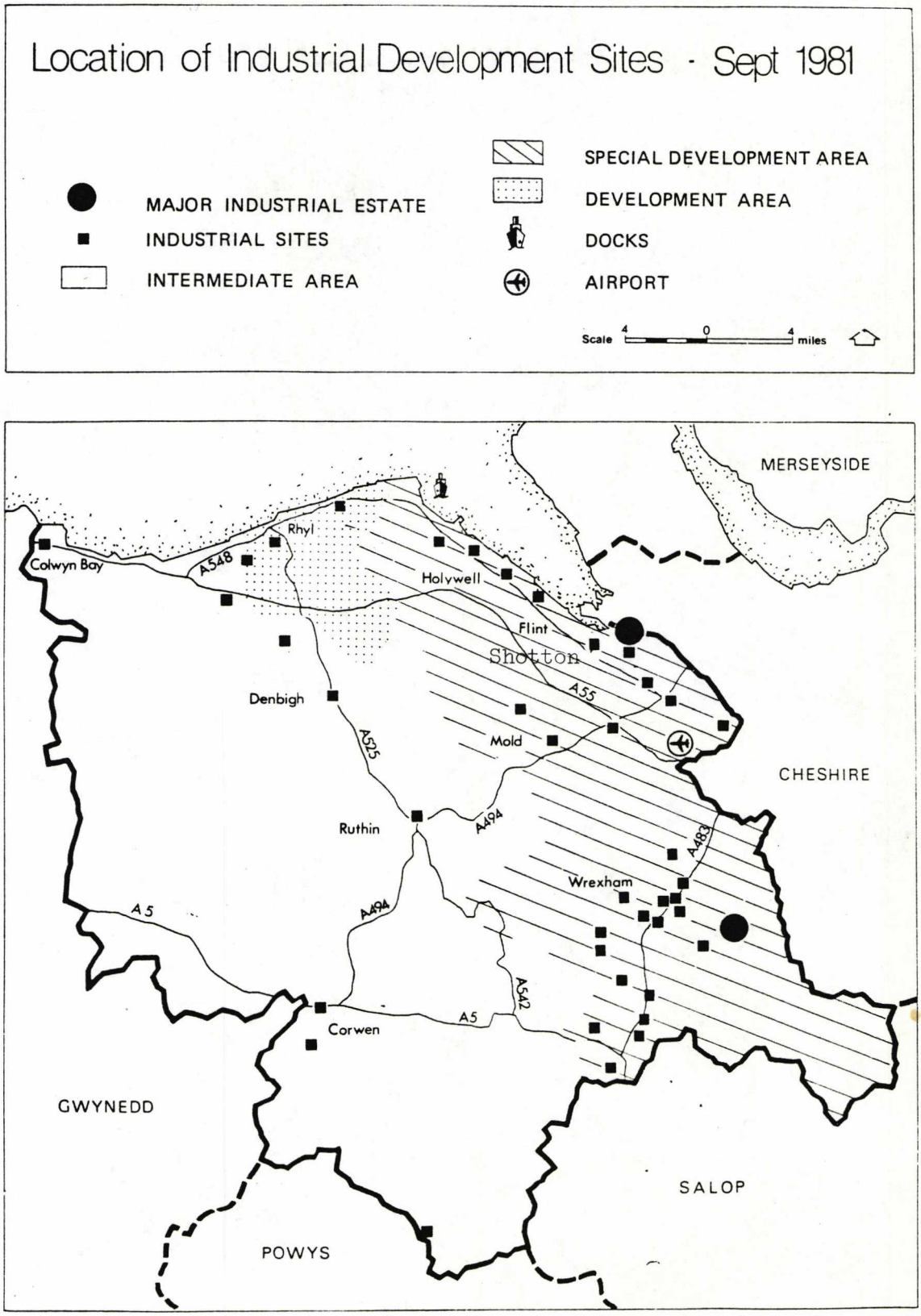
tackled by the authority and the manner in which it should attempt to solve them. I will illustrate this new role by describing how corporate managers shaped the industrial development programme of Clwyd County Council. Before doing so I will briefly outline Clwyd County Council's 'Industrial Development' activity.

6.3 The industrial development initiatives of Clwyd County Council

State aid to firms in Clwyd comes from a variety of sources. Much of the county is covered by Intermediate and Development Area status and in 1979 the Shotton travel-to-work area became a Special Development Area (see Figure 6.3). Financial and other incentives are therefore available from central government to encourage industrial development in the county. The European Economic Community make grants available for the same purpose. Various district authorities in Clwyd also have industrial development initiatives. These include advertising and marketing schemes (intended to attract 'footloose' industry), the provision of sites for new industry and the dissemination of information in response to enquiries from established and prospective businesses.

The current industrial development initiatives of Clwyd County Council can be traced back beyond the formation of the authority to 1971 when the former Flintshire County Council established an Industrial Development Division. Originally the Division consisted of one officer, answering the queries of firms and petitioning public bodies (including British Steel) to help offset the area's economic decline. The Industrial Development Division of Flintshire County Council was part of the chief executive's office and when Haydn Rees, the chief executive of Flintshire, was appointed to the same position in the newly formed Clwyd County Council, the Division was transferred to the new chief executive's office.

Figure 6.3



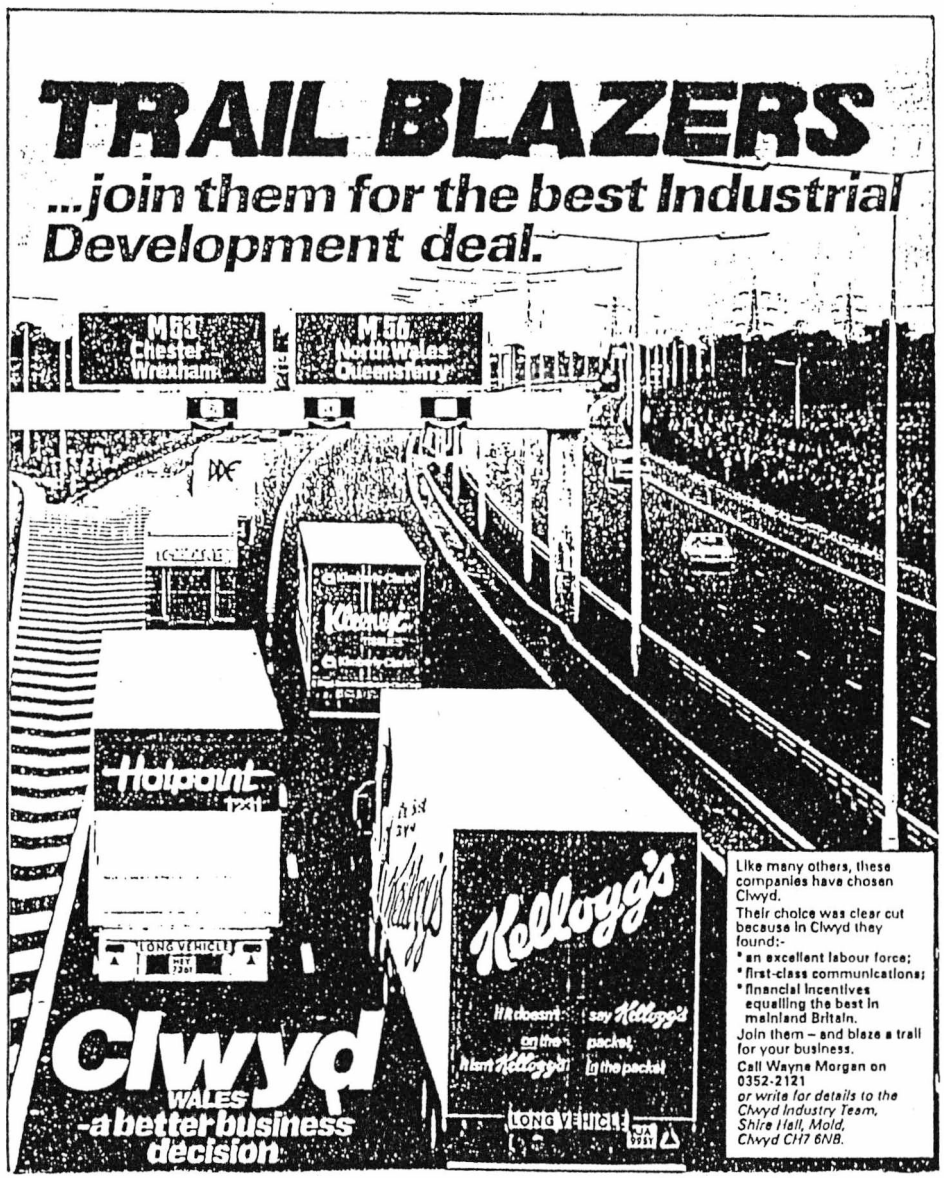
Source: Clwyd County Council Annual Abstract of Statistics 1982

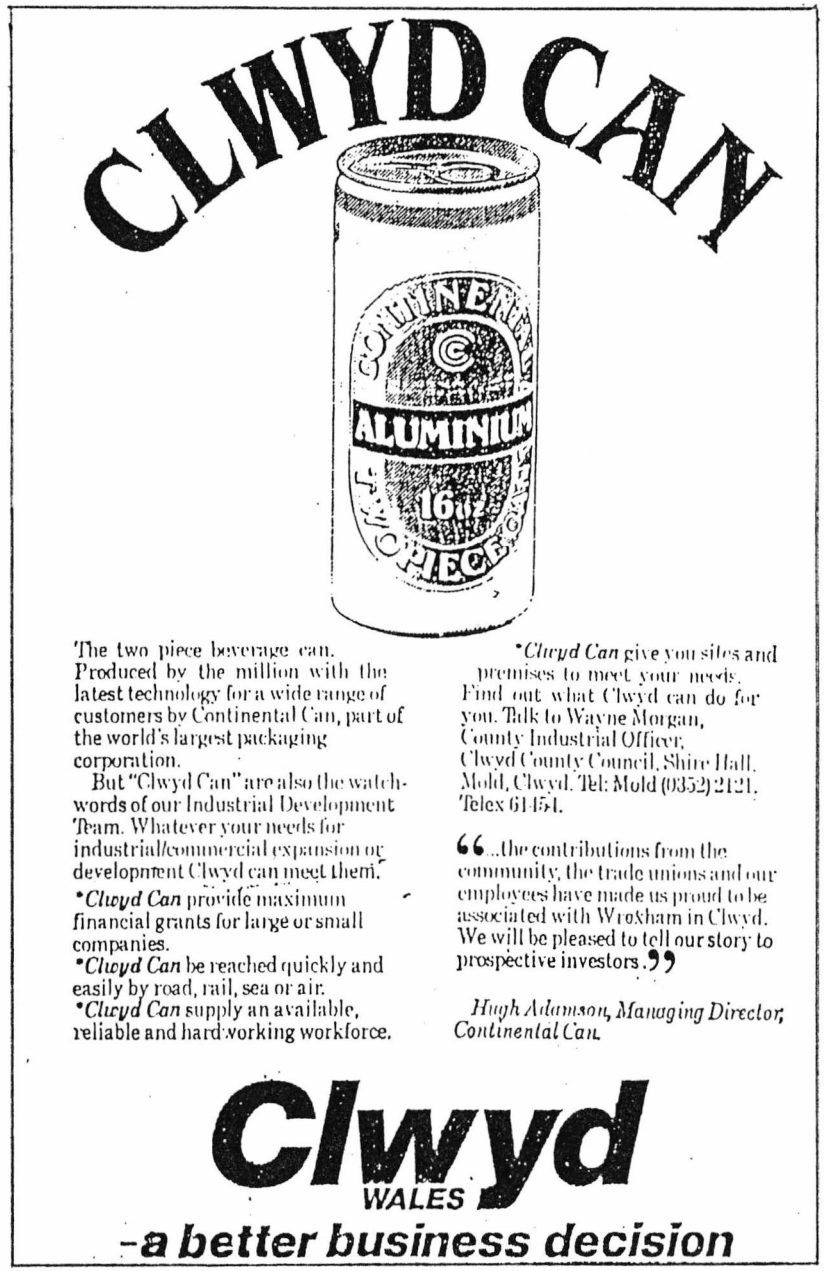
The chief executive acted as the chief officer responsible for the Division.

Since 1974 the Industrial Development Division (otherwise called the I.D.D.) has grown substantially and now has a staff of sixteen, fifteen of whom have been appointed from the 'private sector' (the head of the Division, for example, was previously a chemical engineer and a business manager). The Division is involved in three main areas of activity: a) sponsoring the development of industrial-, commercial- and tourism-related sites and projects (for example, by obtaining finance from the EEC, via the Local Government Act 1972 and from other sources). Figure 6.3 shows the industrial development sites established in the County by 1981; b) marketing ,business advisory services and advertising campaigns to attract industry to the area. Figure 6.4 shows two examples of the advertising used; and, c) ensuring that the educational and training facilities and courses in Clwyd are co-ordinated with the needs of industry - through a series of industry/education 'forums', for instance. The I.D.D. devotes most time and effort to the second of these three: staff are mainly involved in planning and executing advertising campaigns or meeting with firms to persuade industrialists to develop in Clwyd[3].

The Industrial Development Division absorbs a relatively small proportion of the authority's budget. The Policy, Finance and Resources Committee - from which the budget of the Division is drawn - accounted for 11% of the authority's revenue expenditure in 1980/81. Of this, only 1.77% was allocated to the Industrial Development Division. In terms of capital spending, the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee is again in receipt of approximately 11% of the total budget of which 6.52% was allocated to the Division (although this rose considerably in 1981/82 to about 20%). The Policy, Finance and Resources Committee also administers a 'Relief of Unemployment' Fund. Some of this fund is used to

Figure 6.4 Examples of the advertisements used by Clwyd's Industrial Development Division





protect and develop industry rather than to relieve the social effects of unemployment (see Clwyd County Council 1981, 48 (d)).

It is notoriously difficult to establish the effects of local authority industrial development initiatives (Camina 1974). An industrial development officer in Clwyd claimed that the County's initiatives were creating jobs. But no study has been undertaken to support this claim and the officer concerned admitted that the Division did not itself know precisely what effect it was having on industrial development in Clwyd. And, like many local authorities, Clwyd is more concerned with the numbers rather than with the type of jobs created by its initiatives. Estimating the effects of industrial development initiatives simply in terms of job numbers provides an extremely crude way of assessing such measures. For example, although the Industrial Development Division assists small businesses (with advice and 'nursery' factory units, for instance), employees in this sector are often paid less, work in poor conditions and have less secure employment than workers in medium and large scale firms (Miller 1981, 89). This does not imply that the County Council should channel all its efforts towards attracting big businesses to the area: in rural areas, for example, a number of small businesses may create a better geographical spread of jobs and cause less environmental damage - in terms of pollution, loss of amenity, etc. - than one large company. It is clear, however, that research should be done to establish the effects of Clwyd County Council's industrial development initiatives.

But I am not concerned here with establishing the precise consequences of these initiatives. My aim will be to show how and why corporate managers affected the shape of Clwyd's industrial development activities.

6.4 The link between corporate management and Clwyd County Council's industrial development initiatives

I have noted that the corporate management unit and industrial development division are bothpart of the chief executive's office. I will explain why this arrangement exists and how it has affected the industrial development initiatives.

Before 1977 the corporate management unit was the responsibility of the director of administration - Mervyn Phillips. In 1977 Phillips - the chief advocate of corporate management in the authority - was appointed chief executive and he immediately took the corporate management unit with him to the chief executive's office. This meant that the industrial development division - which was already part of the chief executive's office - became more closely linked to the 'corporate managers' within the authority (i.e. to the officers of the corporate management unit and the new chief executive).

The original location of an industrial development division in the chief executive's office of Flintshire County Council - and hence its similar position in Clwyd - occurred by default: the county planning officer in Flintshire refused to accept responsibility for the industrial development programme and the chief executive was therefore obliged to include it within his office. However, with the appointment of Phillips as chief executive and the relocation of the corporate management unit within his office, corporate managers became more influential within the chief executive's office. The link between the Industrial Development Division (the I.D.D.) and the chief executive's office was then maintained for a different reason: the new chief executive and corporate management unit endorsed and defended the link. The emergence of a positive link between the corporate managers (the most influential of which was the chief executive) and the I.D.D. is illustrated by a 'disagreement'

between these officers and the planning department regarding the most appropriate location of the I.D.D. within the organisational structure of the authority. The reluctance of Flintshire's county planner to take responsibility for industrial development had given way by the mid-1970s to demands by Clwyd's planners that the I.D.D. become part of the planning department. Whether the chief executive's office or the planning department should have responsibility for the I.D.D. thus became an issue. The corporate managers and the chief executive recommended that the industrial development programme should not become the responsibility of the planning department. The chief executive had, for example, rejected the conclusion of an internal report on the organisation of the authority which recommended relocating the I.D.D. within the planning department. I will examine why the chief executive adopted this position in the next section. The outcome of the dispute was that the I.D.D. remained part of the chief executive's office and, hence, remained closely associated with the authority's corporate managers. The important point to note is that the chief executive - the main 'representative' of corporate management in the authority - is reputed to have played an important part in bringing about this outcome. According to industrial development, planning and corporate management officers, the chief executive's ability to reject the proposed move of the I.D.D. to the planning department was decisive in ensuring that the Division remained part of his office. The dispute between corporate managers and planning officers thus illustrates the positive link between corporate managers and the I.D.D.

In the rest of this section I will indicate how the link between the corporate managers and the I.D.D. influenced Clwyd's industrial development initiatives; first, by explaining how the location of the I.D.D. within the chief executive's office has affected these initiatives and,

second, by estimating how the County's initiatives would have differed had the I.D.D. become the responsibility of the planning department.

The significance of the I.D.D.'s location within the chief executive's office

The link between the chief executive's office and the I.D.D. was important for three reasons. First, the chief executive's office in Clwyd is generally acknowledged among officers to be an important focus of power in the authority and any policies associated with it are given extra weight. Thus, simply by being part of the chief executive's office, the I.D.D. enjoyed a privileged status. Second, the I.D.D. enjoyed some advantage in inter-departmental bargaining and conflicts: because it was part of his office, the chief executive acted as the representative of the I.D.D. on the chief officer's management team. As the chief executive was the most influential member of this team (according to officers from various departments) this gave extra weight to the I.D.D. in the formation of policy, freeing the Division, in the words of an industrial development officer, of 'interference' by other departments. Third, because of his close link with the I.D.D., the chief executive assumed responsibility for several matters concerning the Division - for example, he determined that the I.D.D. was staffed by personnel drawn from the 'private sector' rather than by officers from public sector professions. This was somewhat unusual; public sector planners are commonly used to staff local authority industrial development units (see the Association of District Councils 1982).

The possible consequences of a link between the I.D.D. and the planning department

Officers from the corporate management unit, the I.D.D. and the planning department considered that without the influence of the chief executive the I.D.D. would have been relocated as part of the planning department and composed more of planning officers than of staff drawn from the private sector. I will argue that if the county's planners had been responsible for the I.D.D. the industrial development initiatives would have differed in certain ways. This can be seen by examining a conflict of views between officers in the I.D.D. and the planning department concerning the extent and form of Clwyd County Council's role in the field of industrial development.

Both industrial development officers and planners in Clwyd regard unemployment as a major social problem. But they differ in what they think the County Council should do about it. Essentially, planners are less enthusiastic about County Council involvement with industrial development. In its most extreme form this 'planning' view considers that industrial development is the responsibility of central government (through 'regional' policy), not local authorities. According to a senior planner, 'The whole industrial development activity in local authorities is rather suspect in national terms'. This view appears to be contradicted by the attempt of the planning department to take responsibility for the I.D.D. But one must appreciate the context within which planners operate in Clwyd: the planning department has been, and is, under pressure from both the chief executive and councillors to relax restrictions on development. The above-mentioned planner admitted that his department had sought responsibility for industrial development primarily as a means of relieving this pressure, not because the planners

had suddenly become supporters of industrial development. Another senior planner considered that the planning department was still dominated by planners who were more intent on controlling development than promoting it. It seems likely, therefore, that if the I.D.D. was part of the planning department planners would have attempted to 'get away with' as little rather than as much industrial development as possible.

A difference between the attitude of planners and industrial development officers to the legislative framework within which local authorities produce industrial development policy supports this. In general, development officers looked on legislation as something to be either used or overcome in their efforts to attract firms to Clwyd. Possibly because of their private sector background, industrial development officers showed little respect for legislation that might inhibit their task. And I.D.D. officers did not consider legislation to be a major constraint on their work: in the words of one I.D.D. officer, 'if you want to do something, you can do it' - the task of officers, in his view, was simply to find ways round obstacles posed by legislation.

This attitude corresponds to what Young et al. (1980) term a 'high orientation to power', where officers think they possess a high degree of influence. The power orientation of officers may not necessarily reflect their actual power but, as Young et al. point out, where doubt exists regarding the constraints posed by legislation and/or where discretion exists as to how legislation may be used, the power orientation of officers can affect their actual performance in the development of policy. Thus, for example, an I.D.D. officer characterised the techniques of the I.D.D. staff as 'unusual and innovatory' - and certainly the forceful lobbying of firms and other public agencies involves a different set of skills from that normally found among local authority

officers. A senior industrial development officer regarded such 'unusual and innovatory' methods to be indispensible to the main aim of the I.D.D. - the attraction of industry. But, significantly, planners tended to regard them with less enthusiasm and respect: one senior planner saw them as 'unprofessional' (i.e. unethical/unacceptable) and another considered them to be 'a lot of bullshit'.

By contrast, planners in the authority seemed to have a lower 'orientation to power'. When asked about their role, planners tended to define their powers and duties in terms of the legislation relating to 'Town and Country Planning'. Whereas Industrial Development officers either ignored legislation or sought to use it to promote their tasks, planners turned to legislation as a method of defining their tasks.

There is considerable uncertainty as to the legislative restrictions on local authority involvement with industrial development: the question of council's actions being ultra vires is often raised. In addition, the attitude of parties at Westminster to local economic initiatives has been ambiguous. But in recent years "central government has become worried by local authorities' growing desire to intervene in their local economies" (Miller and Miller 1982, 153). I would argue that, given the lack of direction offered by the legislative framework and the seeming ambivalence of central government to local initiatives, planners were more likely to adopt a conservative stance regarding the role of Clwyd in the field of industrial development. Planners, in other words, would not have attempted to acquire or use the ('unprofessional') techniques currently used by I.D.D. officers since these were not prescribed by legislation or encouraged by central government. This means, essentially, that marketing exercises and advertising campaigns - the major devices used by the I.D.D. to attract industry - would not have been such a

significant part of any industrial development programme orchestrated by the planning department. Planners would, therefore, have produced a more cautious and limited industrial development programme.

The views of planners and industrial development officers also differed with regard to the most appropriate form of industrial development. The main concern of planners in the authority has been to control land use and restrict development on 'greenfield' sites. But firms often prefer such sites, since problems of congestion and conversion of (often inappropriate) buildings are more easily avoided. The objective of industrial development officers on the other hand has been to encourage as many firms as possible to locate or relocate in Clwyd. This has led industrial development officers to promise greenfield locations to prospective firms without consulting the county's planners. At the moment the industrial development officers seem to be winning the argument as firms are developing on greenfield sites; according to a senior planner, mainly because the I.D.D. has the support of the chief executive. If the I.D.D. were located within the planning department this 'locate anywhere' policy would almost certainly have been less prominent.

The different characteristics of staff in the I.D.D. and planning department also lends weight to the argument that the planning department would have pursued a different industrial development programme. The private sector background of the I.D.D. staff, together with their marketing/advertising expertise and pro-development attitude, contrasted with the public sector background and development control attitude of planning officers in the authority. These characteristics of I.D.D. officers were, according to a senior industrial development officer, significant in two ways: first, they gave I.D.D. officers a better ('insider's') understanding of industry and its 'needs'; second, they

helped overcome the adverse image held by many industrialists of public sector bureaucrats - industrialists were more likely to look favourably on officers who had private sector experience and 'spoke their language'. Whether or not these claims are correct, it does seem that the private sector background of I.D.D. officers makes the I.D.D. more sympathetic and responsive than the planning department to the 'needs' or demands of business. As evidenced above with regard to the location of new industry, the authority's planners tend to adopt a more critical attitude to 'free market forces'. They also tend to extract more concessions ('planning gains') and impose more conditions on industrial developers than I.D.D. officers[4].

A senior planning officer also emphasised the significance of the differing 'skills' in the I.D.D. and planning departments.

> 'Industrial development is really a marketing exercise ... they (industrial development officers) have got to advertise, wheeler-deal and generally fiddle about in order to get things on the ground in Clwyd'.

He considered that the planning department could not pursue the kind of programme promoted by the I.D.D. because planners did not possess the appropriate 'skills': in essence, he concluded, 'planners are not good salesmen'. It seems doubtful, therefore, that planners would have been capable of pursuing the marketing and advertising strategies favoured by the I.D.D.

In this section I have argued for the significance of the link between corporate managers and the industrial development programme of Clwyd County Council. Corporate managers - in the corporate management unit and in the guise of the present chief executive - have emphasised the council's role in industrial development. By ensuring a link between the chief executive's office and the I.D.D. and so preventing the planning department from assuming responsibility for industrial development, by

representing the I.D.D within the chief officer's management team and by determining that I.D.D. staff should be drawn from the private sector, corporate managers have influenced both the extent and form of the industrial development programme. The planning department, I have argued, would have adopted a more cautious stance towards the involvement of the authority with industrial development and would have been unwilling and unable to apply the marketing and other techniques used by the I.D.D. to attract industry.

6.5. The interests of corporate managers as a determinant of Clwyd's industrial development initiative

Much of the literature on local authority economic initiatives displays one or both of the following characteristics. First, it explains the development of such initiatives as an inevitable response to economic conditions and the pressures they generate. Marxists, for example, often assume that local authorities are obliged to assist local business in order to smooth the path for capital accumulation (see Benington 1976, for instance). Second, it tends to describe, rather than to explain, the precise form of local economic initiatives (see, for example, Joint Unit for Research in the Urban Environment 1981). This often reflects the 'policy-orientated' nature of the literature: it is designed, primarily, to provide information to local policy makers on the range of initiatives pursued by local authorities and on the powers available to them.

There is no doubt that the development of local economic initiatives is related to the changing needs of industry, levels of unemployment and other economic conditions. Following a relatively low level of activity during the period of economic expansion and low unemployment in the 1950s and 1960s, local authorities have increasingly promoted measures designed

specifically to counter economic decline and rising unemployment (Miller 1981, 83). External economic forces do, in other words, affect local economic initiatives. External factors - such as the statutory framework within which authorities operate - also constrain the way they respond to economic decline, limiting the finance available for economic initiatives and encouraging them to use funds to subsidise rather than compete with private business, for instance. But, external forces and constraints do not fully determine whether and how local authorities develop economic initiatives. Some local authorities do not develop economic initiatives even though they are faced with economic conditions similar to authorities with such initiatives (Miller and Miller, 1982, 153). And despite the constraints placed upon local authorities, the precise form of local economic initiatives varies considerably (see the Association of District Councils Survey 1982).

I have argued that Clwyd's economic initiatives were influenced by the link between corporate managers and the Industrial Development Division. To understand why this link emerged - and, hence, to explain the precise form of Clwyd's industrial development initiatives - one must examine the interests of corporate managers and the relationships between professional groups in the authority.

The success of the corporate management system depended on support from the service departments within the authority. But such support has never been wholehearted and was occasionally withheld. The Area teams (formed in 1973) ceased to meet after eighteen months due to suspicion from departments within the authority and Districts in the County about their purpose (Corporate Management Journal 1978, 3). And the corporate management unit has not yet obtained the detailed information from departments necessary for the review and assessment of departmental

practice (Clwyd County Council, Policy, Finance and Resources Committee 1981, 4). A corporate management officer cited lack of co-operation from departments as the reason why such information was not obtained:

> 'at every stage we've said to chief officers ... "identify areas in your department where you feel 'performance review' could be helpful" and surprise, surprise, nobody's come up with one.'

Similarly, the chief officer's management team has not ensured co-operation from the departments. The same corporatemanager observed that

> 'people in the chief officer's management team are supposed to leave their departmental hats outside the room when they go in but they're bound to take them in'.

Whether all departments have been equally reluctant to co-operate with corporate managers is not known. The above-mentioned corporate management officer did not single out particular departments as more or less co-operative. But differences in the attitude of various groups of officers to the corporate system did exist. Industrial development officers seemed most sympathetic to the system, possibly reflecting the extent to which their policies required the co-operation of other departments such as education - with respect to the industry/education 'forums' - and planning - regarding land-use and development. Planning officers expressed more antipathy towards the corporate managers, possibly because the corporate system impinged on aspects of policy making associated with planning departments; e.g. co-ordination of land-use, transport, employment and other County activities. Officers in the social services department expressed no marked sympathy or antipathy towards the corporate system.

It is difficult to estimate the extent to which a corporate management system has actually formed the basis of policy making in Clwyd. As mentioned earlier, a corporate manager considered that "there is no way

at the moment or in the foreseeable future that we are going to break down the barriers of individual departments". This seems to indicate that policy making occurs to a large extent on a departmental rather than corporate basis. However, the fact that the education department has co-operated with the industry/education forums suggests that some matters are pursued corporately. The 'banding' of departmental activities in terms of corporate objectives encourages departments to develop in certain directions but since the authority must fulfill various statutory obligations the main service departments are to a large extent guaranteed funds. Corporate managers, in other words, cannot in many cases veto funds indefinitely and departments may therefore refuse to co-operate on a corporate basis in the knowledge that they cannot be severely penalised.

My intention here is not to evaluate the success or failure of the corporate system but simply to indicate the difficulties experienced by Clwyd's corporate managers in implementing the system. I will argue that the lack of co-operation from departments encouraged corporate managers to take direct control of the Industrial Development Division; and, as a consequence of this, they began to stress unemployment as a 'problem' to be tackled by the authority.

I would argue that the reluctance of departments to pursue corporate priorities explains why corporate managers (mainly through the chief executive) resisted the attempt of the planning departments to take responsibility for the county's industrial development programme. According to a corporate management officer, the chief executive considered the industrial development function to be 'too important' to be left to the planning department. This attitude seems to indicate a mistrust of the planning department's ability or willingness to undertake a task that is central to one of the four corporate objectives - promoting the economic

development of Clwyd. The general reluctance of departments to pursue corporate priorities has, in other words, prompted corporate managers to take more direct control of at least one area of policy - industrial development. By retaining the I.D.D. within his office the chief executive could maintain what an industrial development officer described as an 'exceptionally close link' with the county's industrial development programme and was able to act as the chief officer of the I.D.D. (The present senior officer in the I.D.D. has only the status of a deputy chief officer.) I would therefore conclude that the interests of corporate managers in maintaining a corporate system and fulfilling some effective role within Clwyd led to the close link between industrial development and the chief executive's office.

In this respect the chief executive's office was becoming more like the departments in the authority - taking responsibility for a particular activity. The Bains Report - upon which much of Clwyd's corporate system was modelled - recommended that the chief executive's office should not take responsibility for any of an authority's 'services'. By including both the corporate management unit and the I.D.D. within his office the chief executive was in effect building up another department within the authority. It seems that the interests of corporate managers led them to act very much as any other department and reinforce the departmentalism of the authority. This, together with the statement from a corporate manager that 'we've learned to live with (departments) rather than counter them', appears to indicate an attitude of 'if you can't beat them, join them'.

The reaction by corporate managers to the lack of co-operation from the departments also affected the County's industrial development initiatives in a second way: it led corporate managers to emphasise the area's

economic decline as the major problem facing the authority and to stress the importance of the industrial development initiatives.

The economic decline of the area had been recognised as a 'county council problem' before the development of corporate management in Clwyd County Council: the existence of an I.D.D. in Flintshire County Council and its transfer to Clwyd County Council signified the authority's acceptance of a role in the field of industrial development. But as Becker notes, the institutional recognition of problems tends toward their perpetuation. The logic of their occupational situation leads professional actors to 'articulate a double claim as to the (increasing) magnitude of the problem and their success in dealing with it' (1966, 13). As the link between industrial development and corporate managers has strengthened, the latter have emphasised unemployment as a phenomenon to be tackled by the County Council. For example, though the four key objectives of the authority are supposedly of equal status, a corporate manager claimed that 'at the moment the burning need is seen as employment'. I would suggest that corporate managers placed a particular emphasis on unemployment as a County Council 'problem' partly as a result of the process described by Becker. This in turn reinforced the call for a response through industrial development.

The emphasis on unemployment as a problem and on industrial development as a response also reflects the nature of corporate ideology. A basic premise of corporate management ideology is that 'every problem 'contains' a solution' (Young et al. 1980, 39). As a result 'the philosophy of corporate (and latterly inter-corporate) planning stresses activism and intervention' (ibid, 80). Corporate managers are not unique in this respect but this attitude helps explain why unemployment was considered amenable to remedial action by the council. Corporate management ideology in other words also helps to explain why the County Council responded to economic decline in Clwyd.

I have argued that the interests of corporate managers in implementing a corporate system led them to develop close links with the Industrial Development Division and to emphasise unemployment as a 'local authority problem'. As these developments affected Clwyd's economic initiatives I would conclude that the interests of corporate managers partly determined these initiatives.

6.6 Political 'power-sharing' and professional autonomy

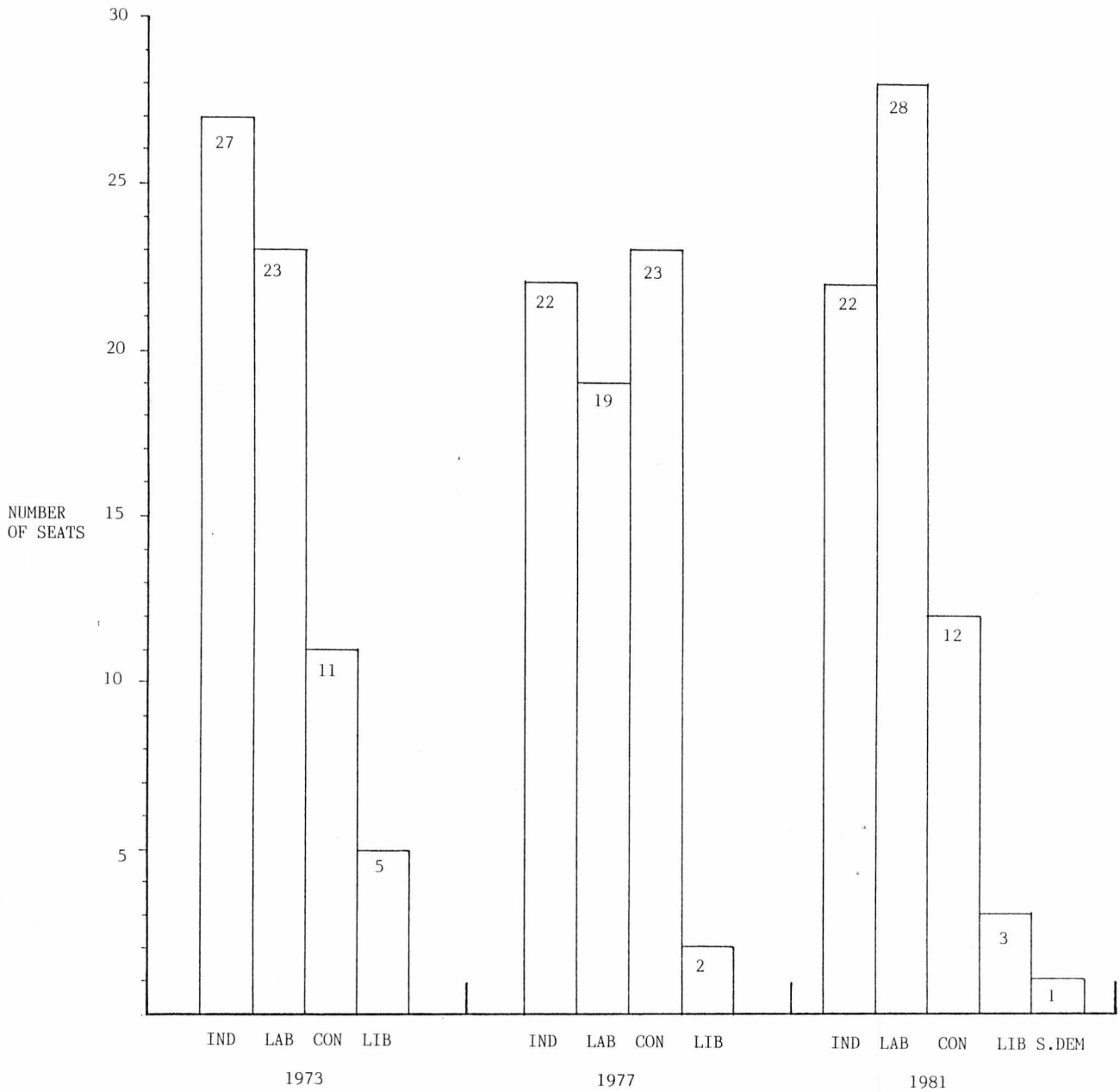
In this section I will describe the system of political management in Clwyd County Council and explain why it emphasised the influence of professional interests on policy making.

From the first elections in 1973 no single political party has enjoyed an overall majority on Clwyd County Council (see Figure 6.5). In many authorities where such an electoral pattern occurs the largest single party forms an administration but is often prevented from developing policy initiatives by the combined opposition of the other parties. However, rather than operating as a 'hung' authority, Clwyd County Council is characterised by a system of political power-sharing: the main groups - the Conservatives, Labour and the Independents - conduct business on a co-operative basis. This involves sharing out committee posts (including chairs) so that all parties participate equally in the authority's affairs.

As a result of this arrangement party-political organisation and conflict in Clwyd is relatively low. Party groups do not often meet and party-political disputes have generally been limited to the question of the level of the county's rate precept. On many subjects, such as the issue of comprehensive education, which elsewhere have provoked party conflicts, a political consensus prevails in Clwyd (Corporate Planning Journal 1978, 23).

Figure 6.5

CLWYD COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS



Source: Clwyd County Council: Annual Abstract of Statistics 1981-82

The emergence and maintenance of a 'non-political' council in Clwyd is due to three things. First, no party has ever been in a position to dominate the other parties in the authority. The difficulties of governing without a clear majority have deterred the various parties from attempting to introduce 'one party rule'. A history of mutual dependence and co-operation among the parties rather than one of domination and conflict has been the norm on the council. Second, Clwyd County Council has consistently possessed a relatively large proportion of 'Independents'. Such councillors are traditionally reluctant to adopt party-political systems (Grant 1977). Finally, the system of power-sharing is enhanced by the fact that Clwyd is unlikely in the foreseeable future to have a party with an overall majority. The county is well-balanced in terms of relatively 'safe' constituencies and the apparent inevitability of minority rule seems to encourage parties to co-operate.

I will argue that, by reducing the level of party-political organisation and conflict, the system of power-sharing has promoted the role of officers in policy making. A corporate manager considered that

> "(officers) were fairly lucky in Clwyd in that no one political party dominates ... We feel it's been very much to our advantage ... There has been more room for officer-led initiatives."

I would suggest three reasons why the system of political power-sharing promoted the autonomy and influence of professional groups in Clwyd County Council. First, initiatives such as the development of a corporate planning system were less likely to fall victim to party-political conflicts since they were not associated with party politics. In many authorities where party politics prevail a change in the ruling group can lead to the alteration of policies as a new administration may seek to undermine initiatives sponsored by its political opponents. In Clwyd the system of power-sharing insulated officer-led initiatives from such political 'interference'. Second, councillors were reluctant to question officer-initiatives when political conflict might ensue as a

result. Since no single party could expect to gain an overall majority, councillors in Clwyd were resigned to the need to maintain a power-sharing system of political management. In order to avoid political disputes that might threaten the system, Clwyd's parties tended to play down political differences. As a result, councillors were limited in their ability to influence policy and intervention: they needed to ensure that their policy proposals and criticisms of intervention were not interpreted in terms of party politics. This had two effects: it reduced the involvement of councillors in policy formation, leaving officers with more freedom to develop policy; and it affected the 'style' of political involvement in policy formation - since councillors were wary of provoking political disputes, they tended to employ 'non-political', technical arguments to justify and criticise intervention. The emphasis on technical arguments automatically shifted the supposed holders of technical expertise - the officers - to the centre of the policy making stage. Finally, the lack of party organisation and the consequent 'constituency' orientation of councillors made it more difficult for the latter to question officers on certain policy issues. The relatively low level of party organisation and party political conflict encouraged councillors to adopt a 'constituency' rather than party orientation. According to a corporate management officer, members were 'interested chiefly in issues which affected their 'patch''. This allows officers to monopolise any issues which come to be defined as general 'county' matters. The very existence of a county council implies that some form of county-wide perspective should be adopted in policy making. But the constituency orientation of councillors, together with the general claim of officers to be representing the interests of the area as a whole, allows

officers to more easily claim to be the legitimate policy makers on 'county-wide' issues. Bulpitt notes a similar effect in his analysis of a political system similar to that of Clwyd County Council. The lack of party organisation and conflict in what he terms a 'bi-partisan' political system reduced the role of parties in policy making: 'policy innovations originated among the officials or in the committees of Council' (1967, 74).

I have indicated how Clwyd County Council's system of political power-sharing promoted professional influence on policy making. A planner summed up the consequences of this system of political management for officers by declaring that 'one thing we never get here is political intervention'. But it is important to note that the low level of party politics in the Council did not mean that conflict and competition between professional groups was also absent. The system of political power-sharing meant that conflicts between professional groups formed the basis on which issues were decided. In the words of the above-mentioned planner, 'we're dealing with internal politics here you see, politics between officers ... not party politics'. I would therefore conclude that the main effect of Clwyd's system of political power-sharing was to increase the autonomy of officers and so emphasise the significance of professional interests and relationships as determinants of policy.

6.7 The influence of corporate managers: a summary and assessment

I have argued that the interests of corporate managers influenced the industrial development initiatives of Clwyd County Council. This does not imply that external pressures played no part in promoting such initiatives. Many councillors and officers were acutely aware of the rising number of unemployed people in the area and supported any measures that

promised to alleviate the problem. But to assume that economic decline automatically determined the precise actions of the County Council is to indulge in a functional explanation. I would conclude that external pressures can only partly explain the County's economic initiatives. By referring to the interests of and relationship between professional groups in the authority I have drawn attention to the active processes which shaped the County Council's response to economic decline and rising unemployment. These professional interests and relationships may be regarded as internal determinants of the industrial development initiatives since they arose within the authority and not as a result of pressures generated by the wider social structure[5].

I have also drawn attention to the system of political power-sharing in Clwyd. Although this differed from the system I examined in Cheshire, it also promoted the autonomy of professional officers from political control and so emphasised their influence on policy making.

To finish I will assess how this analysis of policy making in Clwyd builds on my earlier analysis of professional officers. In chapter five I examined the general influence of Cheshire County Council's professional groups on the authority's levels of expenditure and provision. I argued that professional influences seemed to reflect the commitment of local officers to service development. In this chapter I have shown that professional groups do not act as a cohesive whole by focussing on corporate managers and examining their relationship with other professional groups in the authority. I suggest that the way corporate managers reacted to the lack of co-operation from the main service departments in Clwyd, and later redefined their role, indicates how and why professional officers influence policy when they are not subject to the constraints imposed by local parties, central government and other sources of external pressure.

Because the service departments could not be relied upon to work towards 'corporate' objectives, corporate managers retained the Industrial Development Division within the chief executive's office. By retaining direct control over the I.D.D. the chief executive - the chief advocate of the corporate system - could more easily ensure that the economic initiatives were not 'hampered' by the planning department. The influence of the corporate managers was not, in other words, a case of 'empire-building'; rather it was due to their commitment to the achievement of corporate objectives. By retaining responsibility for the I.D.D. corporate managers sought to ensure that the Division contributed affectively to the achievement of one of the authority's corporate priorities - promoting the economic development of the area.

The subsequent attempt by corporate managers to extend their role to include the definition of priorities also reveals something about the actions of state professions. Having taken responsibility for industrial development they began to emphasise unemployment as the major problem to be tackled by the authority. The redefinition of their role can be seen as an attempt to invest themselves with the authority to make this claim. To some extent this new role and the emphasis on economic development reflects an attempt by corporate managers to protect and promote their position in the authority when faced with difficulties in operating the corporate system. But I would again argue that it cannot simply be interpreted as a deliberate attempt at empire-building. Although corporate managers found it difficult to gain support from the departments there is no evidence that their position within the authority was threatened. When Phillips was appointed chief executive their position was in fact strengthened, yet this was the point at which a positive link emerged within the chief executive's officers between the corporate

managers and the I.D.D. I would therefore argue that they redefined their role and began to emphasise economic development as a consequence of their link with the county's economic initiatives. Corporate managers did not cultivate the link as a means of redefining their role in the authority.

My analysis of Clwyd therefore suggests that the actions of corporate managers were primarily a reflection of their commitment to the tasks for which they were responsible. Their commitment to implementing corporate priorities led them to assume control of the Industrial Development Division and having become associated with this division they developed a commitment to promoting the authority's economic initiatives. I would describe this commitment as the basic interest or dynamic underlying the independent influence of corporate managers.

Although corporate managers formed a distinct group of officers there is no reason to assume that they differ fundamentally from other officer groups. The above mentioned interest is a product of the logic of their organisation position. Since other professional groups in local authorities are in a similar organisational position I would assume that a similar interest, and the dynamic it generates, is common to all groups of local officers.

I have so far emphasised how external pressures may promote professional groups within local authorities and how such groups may contribute an independent, internal influence to local policy making. I have also explained how two different systems of political management reinforced the influence of professional officers on policy. In the next chapter I will explain how external pressures and the system of political management within which officers operate may constrain their independence.

Chapter 7

Explaining the extent of professional autonomy: the cases of Cheshire and Clwyd

7.1 Introduction

The relative influence of class forces and professional interests on policy and intervention will depend on the autonomy enjoyed by professional officers. In this chapter I will consider two issues: first, whether the extent of professional autonomy can be explained simply by examining the external pressures and constraints acting on local officers; and, second, whether the extent of professional autonomy varies more markedly between different fields of policy (as the dualist models imply) or with different systems of political management.

In chapter five I argued that the post-war settlement between class interests resulted in various pieces of legislation which prompted an expansion of professional groups in local government and paved the way for officers to play a greater role in policy making. In section 7.2 I will illustrate how the financial and legislative framework within which officers work also constrains their autonomy by examining policy making in the field of industrial development. I have also argued that a system of political management operates as an independent variable, promoting the influence of professional interests in policy making even when the external interests contained within it would be expected and are attempting to constrain the actions of officers. It follows, therefore, that the ability of professional officers to independently influence local policy and intervention will depend not only on their autonomy from external forces but also on the particular system of political management within which they operate. In section 7.3 I will describe how in 1981 Cheshire County

Council changed from a 'ministerial' to a 'hung' system of political management and outline the general effect of this change on the authority's officers. By focussing (in section 7.4) on the effects of this change on Cheshire's industrial development initiative I will argue that a system of political management may act as a constraint on professional autonomy which cannot be explained in terms of the external interests and relations represented in local party politics. Section 7.5 addresses the issue of variations in professional autonomy. After briefly outlining how the literature on professions generally deals with this question I examine the claim made by dualist models that determinants of policy and intervention vary most significantly between different fields of policy. This entails a comparison of the relative influence of professional interests and external pressures on policy making in the fields of industrial development and social services. I will argue that the relative influence of class forces and professional interests varies more significantly with different systems of political management than between various various fields of policy. The final section (7.6) summarises the main themes of this chapter.

7.2 General constraints on professional autonomy

Much of the literature on professional groups has emphasised socialisation as a determinant of professional action (e.g. Merton et al. 1957, Becker et al. 1961). Adopting a functionalist perspective, Merton and his colleagues claimed that the education and training of professionals ensured their subsequent conformity to various norms and values. This institutionalist approach stresses the role of past influences on behaviour. Interactionists such as Becker also stress socialisation as a constraint on professionals: but they emphasise how a professional's present social situation moulds norms and values. While socialisation may restrict the

independent influence of professional officers, I would agree with Wrong (1961) that its importance has been exaggerated and that other factors may be more significant in constraining the actions of professional officers in local authorities - e.g. the need to fulfill statutory duties. To support this argument I will describe how the financial and legislative framework within which officers work may constrain them regardless of their norms, values and attitudes. This will be illustrated by reference to the industrial development initiatives of Cheshire County Council and Clwyd County Council.

The financial and legislative framework may constrain the influence of professional interests on policy and intervention in three ways. First, by setting limits on the aspects of policy making and intervention in which local officers may be involved. For example, in the field of industrial development the creation of 'Enterprise Zones' reduces the ability of local planning officers to restrict development in certain areas. Similarly, Special Development Orders (such as the one used by the Secretary of State for the Environment to promote development on a site at Vauxhall Bridge, London in 1981) can prevent local officers from influencing land use. Second, the sources of local authority finance constrain the actions of officers. Local government incomes come mainly from central government grants - e.g. the Rate Support or Block Grant - and local rates. Two basic factors limit the levels of this income. The government grant is calculated to allow local authorities to provide standard levels of services throughout the country. Rate income is limited to the level of rates local councillors are willing to endorse - although central government is now also intervening to fix rate income.

The effect of financial constraints on local officers was evident in Cheshire County Council. I noted in chapter 5 how officer groups in

Cheshire developed ambitious service programmes from the 1950s onwards in the fields on highways, planning, education and social services. These programmes involved above average levels of service provision and required higher levels of expenditure than was deemed 'necessary' according to the formula used to calculate the Rate Support Grant. As a result, Cheshire County Council became more dependent on local rates as a source of finance for the service programmes[1]. This placed a constraint on the officers responsible for the programmes since rate levels had to be acceptable to the ruling Tory group on the Council. The need to protect the local rate base was also one of the factors responsible for the development of an economic initiative by the County clerk in the late 1960s. Sir John Boynton began a series of meetings between officers and local businesses to look for ways of assisting industrial development, partly, he claimed to protect an important source of rate income. (I shall discuss this initiative in more detail later[2].)

Even when finance from local rates is forthcoming legislation may impose a third constraint on local officers by placing restrictions on the use of finance. For example, section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits local authorities to undertake actions deemed to be in the interests of their area but limits the level of finance they may employ for this purpose to that available from a 2p in the pound rate levy. This legislation affected Cheshire County Council's industrial development initiatives by preventing the authority from obtaining sufficient funds to generate a significant amount of industrial development through <u>direct</u> investment (e.g. by making grants to business or through the provision of infrastructure). Officers were therefore obliged to recommend that the authority used its funds to attract and speed up private investment:

> "Having regard to the scale of the employment promotion problem ... expenditure on the catalyst role may seem more appropriate and direct

> investment approached with caution." (County Treasurer's Report to the Industrial and Employment Committee 1 October 1981; 1)

The limited availability of funds also prompted officers to suggest that the Council's industrial development activity should involve "no duplication or competition with other public or private sector projects" (Cheshire Economic Development Office, 22 May 1982, 2).

The pervasive constraints imposed by legislation can also be seen in the doctrine of ultra vires. Whereas an individual may lawfully do anything which is not expressly forbidden by law, a local authority cannot do anything that is not expressly authorised by law. Anything which is not so authorised is deemed to be beyond the powers (in Latin, ultra vires) of the authority and thus illegal (Giffiths 1976, 9). The weight of the doctrine is often brought to bear on local authorities through the work of District Auditors, who are concerned not only with the financial rectitude of local expenditure in the traditional accounting sense but with its legality (Stanyer 1976, 221). What constitutes illegal use of funds is often unclear and this broadens the influence of the ultra vires doctrine by deterring officers from pursuing policies which may be illegal. In the case of Cheshire County Council's industrial development programme, for example, the County Treasurer argued that the authority should not become involved with merchant banks in the leasing of land and properties because he feared such involvement "could result in action on the part of the District Auditor".

I have argued that the financial and legislative framework within which local authorities operate is a major constraint on the actions of professional officers. It is a general or non-local constraint as it applies in the same way to all local authorities. The framework can also be seen as an external constraint since it is primarily a reflection

of forces and pressures generated by the wider social structure - e.g. the influence I described in chapter five of class interests on the development of legislation on local government services following the second world war.

The financial and legislative framework does not represent the only constraint on the actions of local officers: local interest groups may also put pressure on officers (either directly or via local parties and councillors). Many marxists also argue that the class structure imposes constraints on councils and their officers that cannot be observed in the financial and legislative framework or in the actions of local parties and pressure groups. These invisible constraints are often referred to as the necessary functions of the 'local state' in assisting capital accumulation and reproducing class relations (e.g. Cockburn 1977). For my purposes, the important point to note is that these are external constraints on local officers - i.e. they are produced by the wider social structure in which local authorities operate. I will now go on to argue that external constraints do not fully explain the degree of autonomy experienced by local officers.

7.3 Constraints on professional autonomy: the significance of a change in Cheshire County Council's system of political management

I will argue that a local system of political management may impose constraints on professional autonomy which cannot be explained in terms of the wider social structure. This will involve, first, outlining how Cheshire's system of political management changed in 1981 and, second, examining how this change affected policy making and intervention in the field of industrial development.

In chapter 5 I described how the large and stable Conservative majority in Cheshire County Council between the 1940s and 1970s promoted the

autonomy of professional officers: leading Conservative councillors were encouraged to form a policy making elite with the chief officers and allowed the latter to shape policy and intervention. In brief, the size and stability of the Conservative majority reduced party politics and favoured professional autonomy. Cheshire's 'ministerial' system of political management altered in 1981 as a result of two developments. First, there had been an increase in the level of party politics during the 1970s. This occurred for two reasons. An increasing number of Conservative councillors, concerned with the rising level of the county's rates, were anxious to see their party take a political stand on the issue of council expenditure. The reorganisation of the County's boundaries in 1972 resulted in the addition of a number of large urban centres which increased electoral support for the Labour group and this also promoted party politics. In the 1973 elections, for example, a Conservative majority over Labour of 54 was cut to 2 (see Figure 5.3). In response, the Conservative group became more organised and began taking a 'party political' line on many issues. Cheshire County Council thus became what Bulpitt (1967) terms a 'partisan' or 'positively political' authority: party organisation (e.g. group meetings to decide policy) and discipline (e.g. the use of whips) increased; the majority of patronage positions (e.g. committee chairs) were distributed on party political lines. A clear distinction was therefore apparent between the ruling Conservative group and the Labour opposition. The declining number of uncontested seats in county elections in the 1970s is indicative of this rise in party politics: in 1970, 37 seats were uncontested; in 1973, five seats remained so; by 1977 the figure was two and in the 1981 election only one seat was uncontested[3].

Despite the rising level of party politics the ministerial system of political management prevailed until the 1981 council elections. At that

point the party politics within the Council combined with a second factor - the absence of a party with an overall majority - to produce a 'hung' system of political management. The election gave Labour 35 seats, the Conservatives 28, the Liberals 7, and the council was completed by one Independent. Labour formed an administration but hostility among the parties made Cheshire County Council a hung authority. Labour, as the largest group, had the right to form a 'ruling' administration but the combined strength of the opposition groups was sufficient to impair its power to implement policy. As the Labour leader of the council pointed out (Jeuda 1982, 12), "there was never any contemplation of a coalition or formal pact by any group" and so no party was capable of forming an effective administration.

The chief executive has stressed that "the distinguishing feature of a hung council is a 'highly charged' political atmosphere (Wendt 1983, 6). Party politics impinge on all aspects of the authority's affairs and, in the words of the Labour leader, "the political tension has provided many consequential problems for the management of Council business" (Jeuda 1982, 8). I will focus on the consequences of Cheshire's hung council for professional officers.

The position of Cheshire's officers in a hung authority

The present leader of the council suggested that "for those officers with long experience in Cheshire, as a result of one-party rule with relatively limited political 'interference' which had characterised Cheshire, ... the (1981) election results were very much a shock to the system" (Jeuda 1982, 9). This 'shock' was due to a change in the autonomy of professional officers which accompanied the Council's new ('hung') status. The

previous 'ministerial' style of administration depended on the existence of a large and relatively stable political majority. As we have seen, this ministerial system favoured officers: the leading Conservative councillors in the authority - the 'inner ring' - were receptive to officer 'advice' and willing to act almost as representatives of professional groups in the face of political opposition to officer initiatives. With the election of a hung administration the ministerial system was no longer feasible since, with no group holding a clear or safe majority, all parties and councillors could influence policy.

The change from a ministerial to a hung system of political management had significant consequences for officers. According to the chief executive,

> "all parties have an effective influence on decision-making and therefore need and can command an 'equal' relationship with officers ... (The officers) can be called on by all parties to assist them in playing their part in decision-making" (Wendt 1983, 2).

The new system of political management confronted officers with a dilemma: should they try to remain aloof from close involvement with the parties and risk losing influence in policy-making, or should they become embroiled with the parties and risk being caught in the 'minefield' of party politics. As Game and Skelcher point out, in hung authorities such as Cheshire,

> "Officers can quite easily feel themselves trapped between Scylla and Charybdis. On the one hand they may be reluctant to involve themselves, even when asked to do so, in giving advice on the implications of an explicitly partisan document like a manifesto, particularly if the party in question is currently in opposition ... But on the other hand, they will be even more apprehensive of the consequences of a manifesto - often with major staffing as well as cost implications - becoming adopted as full council policy <u>without</u> their prior advice and indeed without their even knowing what alternative policies may have been considered" (1983, 32).

In response to this problem officers took the novel step of preparing, on their own initiative, a document which in fact dictated the rights of councillors in relation to 'the official machine'. The salient points of

the 'statement on Conventions Governing the Relations Between the Political Parties Represented on the Council' are:

a) all parties are entitled to obtain written factual information; but information supplied to committee chairmen will not necessarily be distributed elsewhere,

b) all parties are entitled to a separate official briefing on committee agendas,

c) all parties can request confidential briefings on matters of policy which are, or may be coming, before the Council, and

d) all parties can obtain factual information from officers for the purposes of drafting press statements.

These 'Conventions' were agreed by each of the party leaders in 1982 and, although not approved by full council, govern the relationship between professional officers and political parties in the authority.

The chief executive suggests that from the officers' point of view the Conventions have 'clear benefits':

> "members are likely to be better briefed before committee and council discussions, and decisions likely to be better informed ... Officers too will have a more informed idea of political thinking and indeed an opportunity to be involved in its evolution" (Wendt 1983, 4).

The stress on briefings and the selective provision of information ensures that the 'advice' of officers continues to play some part in policy making. In this respect I would suggest that the Conventions can be seen as an attempt by officers to ensure that in Cheshire's present 'highly charged political atmosphere' parties do 'forget' about officers and get on with policy making themselves.

I would suggest that, in general, the change to a hung authority in Cheshire imposed new pressures on officers. The breakdown of the ministerial system and the development of a highly charged political atmosphere meant

that officers found it difficult to maintain their former level of autonomy. I will now illustrate how a hung system changed the policy making role of professional officers by examining the development of the County's economic initiative.

7.4 The effect of a hung system of political management on policy making and intervention in the field of industrial development

In the latter part of the 1960s Cheshire's County Clerk/Chief Executive played a major role in the County's industrial development initiative. Soon after his appointment in 1964 the clerk, Sir John Boynton, organised a series of meetings between leading firms in the county and senior officers from various departments in the authority. According to Sir John, the aim of these visits was to

> "ask (firms) a series of questions to which we ought to know the answers as the local administrators: How many staff do you employ? ... Where do they come from? ... Have you any labour shortages? ... What's your product mix? ... How much comes by rail? ... How much goes out by rail? ... Have you any transport problems? ... Are you getting the right sort of people out of school? ... Is the further education service giving you what you want? ... . So gradually I was trying to build up a picture of the major employers, and major ratepayers too."[4]

In this way Sir John hoped to ensure that the County Council's departments assisted local business wherever possible.

According to Sir John, his initiative met with a favourable response from both local firms and county officers. With respect to local firms, he suggested, the effect of the meetings was immediate: "their eyes were opened to the importance of the county council - what it could do for them - and to the fact that if they had a problem, there was someone who'd come and see them". He also claimed that the positive response extended to the main professional groups employed in the County Council. Since County spending partly depended on rates paid by local firms, officers had a

vested interest in maintaining the health of Cheshire's economy. In addition, at a series of seminars organised in the late 1960s and early 1970s Sir John pointed out to officers that changing demographic and economic circumstances meant various departments would have to find new 'markets' for their services. He emphasised that, "we were going to have to get used to organising the County Council and the county for a period of decline. We weren't going to have a big capital programme". In the case of education, for example, by pointing out the falling demand for nursery and primary education, Sir John hoped to persuade officers that devoting resources to colleges of further education was in their own best interests.

For my purposes, what is significant about the industrial development initiative in the 1960s and 1970s is that it was primarily an officer-led initiative. The chief executive, with the cooperation of the main officer groups in the authority's departments, promoted closer links between the authority and local business. Councillors played little part in the initiative: they were not involved in either the meetings with local firms or the seminars with departmental officers. This pattern of officer-led policy formation can be contrasted with policy making following the election of a 'hung' council. I will argue that officers were unable to prevent an increase in what they saw as political 'interference' in policy making.

The decline in professional autonomy following the election of a hung council was apparent in the field of industrial development. Sir John Boynton retired in 1979 and was replaced as chief executive by Robin Wendt. Like Sir John, Wendt was eager to develop the economic initiative. The formation of a Labour administration in 1981 gave a new political impetus to this initiative. Drawn primarily from the areas worst affected by unemployment, Labour councillors were eager to support

any policies which promised to save or create jobs.

In 1981 the new chief executive and the Labour administration established the Cheshire Economic Development Office (CEDO) to organise the County's economic initiatives. Prior to the formation of CEDO these measures had been implemented on a departmental basis: for example, the planning department had provided an information service to local firms; the valuers department was responsible for buying, selling and leasing County Council land and property which was suitable for development. The chief executive considered that this separation of responsibilities hampered the County's efforts at job creation. He explained to officers the need to coordinate activities in various departments which had some bearing on industrial development. CEDO's task, inter alia, was to ensure that the County Estates department, the planning department, etc. worked as a 'team'. The establishment of CEDO as a separate unit also reflected another factor. In many local authorities the planning department is responsible for coordinating economic initiatives. But Cheshire's county planning officer was reluctant to take responsibility for the economic initiatives. In his view, if the planning department became too involved with industrial development it could not fulfill its prime function of development control[5]. The chief executive did not consider that any other departments were suited to implement the industrial development function and was, therefore, further encouraged to establish CEDO as a separate unit.

The chief executive, anxious to ensure that the new unit did not become bogged down in inter-departmental politics, assumed direct responsibility for CEDO. The connection between the chief executive and CEDO gave the latter extra 'muscle' inside the authority and reinforced in the minds of councillors and officers the importance of the county's industrial development initiative.

An industrial development officer summed up the change in policy making that followed the 1981 election in the following terms:

> "Probably up to the last election (1981) I think it was the officers who developed the sort of liaison and promotion role ... After the last election, when you started getting the Liberal and Labour councillors, they (councillors) have become more involved in setting the direction. Up to then members tended to tag along with most things; now there is more councillor involvement in policy direction. I think it was probably true to say that pre-the elections last year (1981) it was more officer-led and officer dominated. ... Pre-last May, for most committees I would think that 85% of their time was taken up by officers actually making presentations and speaking whereas now, certainly in the Industry and Employment Committee, there is very little presentation and relatively little officer participation. ... They (councillors) have been more involved in the document that goes to committee so they don't need a presentation".

The effects of the increased political involvement in policy making were evident in the operation of CEDO. Because the Labour administration were closely involved in the formation of the unit CEDO became defined by the parties as a political initiative. This immediately affected the staffing of the organisation. The chief executive wished to staff CEDO predominantly with private sector expertise. But the hostility of the Conservative and Liberal parties to what they regarded as a Labour initiative led them to block the chief executive's proposal. The Conservatives and Liberals were reluctant to oppose the formation of CEDO since failure to support the County's attempts at employment creation could have been politically damaging. But they insisted that CEDO be staffed by officers temporarily seconded from departments within the authority. According to an officer of CEDO:

> "The secondment idea I think was very much related to the life of the council. Because the council is now unstable (since the Conservatives are no longer guaranteed a majority) secondment for a two year period gives a chance for a new council to abandon CEDO if they don't like it".

This infringment of the chief executive's autonomy was in sharp contrast to the experience of his predecessor in the field of industrial development policy. It was apparent that, following the election of a hung administration, councillors were not as willing to 'tag along' with officer-led

initiatives.

The 'political' influence on the staffing of CEDO had two major implecations. First, it ensured that public and not private sector 'expertise' was to influence the county's economic initiatives. The significance of the distinction between public sector and private sector 'expertise' was outlined in chapter 6 in relation to the staffing of Clwyd County Council's Industrial Development Division. Briefly, in the case of Cheshire I would suggest that the use of public sector staff had a number of effects. Certain 'skills' which are not common in the public sector and that featured so prominently in Clwyd's I.D.D. - marketing and advertising, for example - were not as well represented in Cheshire. Officers in CEDO were likely to be less sympathetic than in Clwyd to the demands and needs of local firms. In addition, firms were more likely to associate CEDO with the popular image of the council as a bureaucracy and so be detered from dealing with the unit.

A second consequence of the political decision to second CEDO's staff was that inter-departmental tensions were imported to the unit, producing conflicts between different sets of professional officers on its staff - e.g. between planners and valuers. An example of this conflict within CEDO concerns the issue of how the unit should use resources available to the County. Planners in the unit advocate that the authority should concentrate on the areas of greatest unemployment. The difficulty of attracting firms to such areas (because of urban decay, poor services and inappropriate buildings) means that a relatively high amount of County funds must be used for every job created. The valuers in CEDO oppose this idea, stressing that the authority should aim to maximise its return on public investment by allocating funds to areas where it is easiest to attract firms and create jobs - i.e. those parts of the county where unemployment

is lowest. The selection of unemployment 'blackspots' as top priority areas for investment indicates that the planners approach has been adopted. An officer in CEDO emphasised however that the planners were successful only because they had the support of the Labour group:

> "the present Labour/Liberal coalition supports a 'non-market' approach. And this gives the 'non-market' faction within CEDO (the planners) leverage over the valuers".

He also stressed that, as a consequence of the link between CEDO's investment policy and the support of the Labour group, a change in the political 'colour' of the council was "highly likely" to tip the balance in favour of the valuers approach and therefore to cause a change in the allocation of industrial development funds throughout the county.

The important point to note from this example is that the conflict between planners and valuers was not decided on the basis of relationships between officers; e.g. which professional group was the most powerful or had the support of the chief executive. CEDO's investment policy reflected the influence of the Labour group and was likely to change if it is opposed at any time by the Conservatives and the Liberals. The policy, in other words, primarily reflects political interests and relationships rather than professional interests and relationships.

The consequences of the change to 'political' policy making can also be illustrated by considering the fortunes of CEDO's major initiative, Cheshire Economic Promotions Limited (CEPL). CEPL was formed in 1981 to allow the county a more "influential" and direct role in the development of the area's economy. Although 'staffed' by county councillors and officers from CEDO, CEPL was set up as a company formally separate from the County Council to avoid public expenditure controls introduced in 1981 by central government. It was 'loaned' £2 million as an initial fund to make grants and loans or develop sites. But, in the words of an officer involved

with CEPL, it "became a bit of a political football". At a council meeting in March 1982 the Conservative and Liberal parties combined to veto the loan of £2 million - only twelve months after they had agreed to it. This effectively put the company out of business and it has now been abandoned. A major plank of the county's industrial development initiative has thus been removed as a result of the increased involvement of political parties in policy making. The tendency for policy to change relatively quickly because of the political instability of Cheshire's hung council makes it difficult for CEDO to develop any long term initiatives. According to one of the unit's officers the future of CEDO itself is now in jeopardy.

The brief history of Cheshire's industrial development initiatives shows how a hung council can constrain the policy making influence of professional officers. An officer-led initiative which began with the meetings between officers and local firms, became subject to party politics following the change to a hung political system and the autonomy of professional groups declined markedly. It is important to note however that the loss of professional autonomy cannot be explained simply in terms of party rivalry. Party politics had been increasing in Cheshire throughout the 1970s but it was only after the 1981 election that it had a marked impact on professional autonomy. Sir John Boynton pointed out for example, that throughout the 1970s party organisation and conflict was increasing,

> "but it didn't have any enormous impact. It was something you had to take account of and maybe something would take a couple of times to go through rather than going through first time".

Before 1981, in other words, professional officers still maintained considerable discretion in policy making. But following the 1981 election no party had the power to delegate responsibility to officers without the support of at least one of the other political groups. I would conclude,

therefore, that the level of professional autonomy in Cheshire was determined by two factors - the extent of party politics and the size of the various political groups on the council. The effect of Cheshire's system of political management on professional autonomy after 1981 reflected a particular combination of these two factors - conflict between the parties and the absence of a party with a clear majority. Since the decline in professional autonomy resulted from this combination and not just from the influence of party politics, I would argue that the constraints imposed on officers by a hung system cannot be explained simply in terms of the external interests represented by local parties.

7.5 Variations in the autonomy of professional officers

I have described how the autonomy of professional officers involved in Cheshire's industrial development initiative declined following a change from a 'ministerial' to a hung system of political management. In this section I will consider whether professional autonomy varies significantly on any other basis.

The subject of variations in professional autonomy and influence has not been widely considered. Most literature on local authority officers emphasises either the autonomy and power enjoyed by officers (for example, mangerialist studies like Dennis' 1970 and Davies' 1972) or the constraints imposed on them by economic and political systems (for example, marxist studies such as Benington's 1976 and Cockburn's 1977). Literature on the professions often recognises variations in occupational autonomy, but in ways which, I will argue, are not very helpful. 'Trait' theories, which claim that different occupations experience varying degrees of autonomy, treat a relatively high level of autonomy as a defining characteristic of professional groups (see for example, Greenwood 1957). A variation of

trait analysis focusses specifically on changes experienced by particular occupational groups. Theories of 'professionalisation' claim that particular occupational groups may become professional, inter alia, by gradually increasing their autonomy from external control (see, for example, Vollmer and Mills, 1966). Within this perspective much of the local government bureaucracy - planners, social workers, teachers, etc. - is seen as a collection of professionalising groups, gradually acquiring the various traits associated with 'professions'. Wilensky (1964) suggests that such groups will accumulate traits in a strict logical sequence: an increase in occupational autonomy follows and is dependent on the acquisition of certain other traits - the establishment of a training school and professional association, for instance. This analysis implies a general and inevitable drift toward professional status, a theme summed up by Goode (1960, 902) with the phrase "an industrialising society is a professionalising society".

In spite of its emphasis on change, the professionalisation thesis, together with other versions of trait analysis, tends to be fundamentally ahistorical: little attempt is made to establish the space and time dimensions of the suggested developments in occupational groups (Johnson 1972). The logical succession of traits is emphasised but the perspective directs attention away from investigations of whether occupational changes (in autonomy, for example) are related to changing social conditions.

The dualist models I examined in chapter three claim that the determinants of policy - such as professional interests - will vary most significantly between the economic spheres of production and consumption. Despite the problems with these models, this suggests a basis on which professional autonomy may vary which is more clearly related to the wider social structure within which officers work. I will therefore consider whether professional autonomy varies significantly in the way the dualist

models imply. This will involve contrasting a field of local policy making related to production - industrial development - with one relating to consumption - social services. Since industrial development has been extensively discussed in chapters 6 and 7 I will only present here an account of policy making in the field of social services, drawing again on developments in Cheshire and Clwyd, before comparing the extent of professional autonomy in the two fields.

Policy making in social services

The social services departments in the county councils of Clwyd and Cheshire have experienced similar developments: large scale reorganisation in the early 1970s following the Seebohm report; a subsequent move back towards specialised social workers during the 1970s; and a change of emphasis which is presently occurring from the provision of residential facilities (e.g. old peoples' homes) to the provision of 'community care' (e.g. home helps). Each of these developments represented a change in policy on how social services should be provided and affected the services received by local 'client' groups. It is therefore important to understand what caused the developments. I will consider each development in turn.

The Seebohm report and the reorganisation of social services

The Seebohm Committee was set up to make recommendations on the reorganisation of services in the areas of health and welfare. The committee was dominated by the managerial groups involved in health and welfare - primarily social workers and the National Institute of Social Work, the

staff college of the social work occupation (Sinfield 1969, 41). The Seebohm report (1968) proposed that various services be reorganised into single 'social services' departments, staffed by 'generic' social workers and made responsible to local (county) authorities. This was the basis of the subsequent reorganisation in 1970. Describing events at the time, Sinfield (ibid) commented that "the composition of the committee cannot but heighten anxiety that a major function of the report has been to strengthen the position of the (social work) profession and its administrators". The Seebohm Committee justified the proposals by referring to the increase in co-ordination, efficiency and saving of resources which would result. But perhaps the crucial reason for organisational change which was never made explicit in the report was that "social workers in the new departments would be able to throw off the shackles of control by other professions, particularly the teaching and medical professions" (Forder 1978, 134).

A senior social work officer in Clwyd County Council supported this explanation. Each of the former departments concerned with social services, he claimed, "saw themselves as the 'Cinderella' of local government". They were the smallest departments in local authorities and experienced difficulties in competing with the larger departments for resources. None had a chief officer, equivalent in status and power to other service departments such as Highways and Education. By integrating the health and welfare services within a single department a professional elite helped, he argued, to create a more powerful social services department. And at the same time, as an officer in Cheshire noted, the Seebohm reorganisation "helped to submerge the differences between various occupational specialisms within social work and create a more unified professional group".

But if the reorganisation helped to ensure that social services got a larger share of local resources it also encouraged pressures on social

workers. An officer in Clwyd identified two kinds of pressure. First, he suggested, "by 'advertising' ourselves we invited criticism". Second, for the same reason, more 'clients' became aware of the services to which they were entitled and demands increased. I will argue that these increased pressures, in combination with the interests of social workers, promoted a move away from the 'generic' style of social work inspired by the Seebohm report.

Mounting pressures and the return to specialised social work

Prior to reorganisation social workers specialised in different fields - as child care officers or health visitors, for instance. With the development of generic departments these specialisms no longer determined the tasks of social workers. Officers were expected to perform (or be capable of performing) the wide variety of tasks now undertaken by a single social services department. This 'generic' style placed considerable burdens on social workers: each officer was required to act as an 'expert' when dealing with numerous and very diverse 'cases'. The inability of social workers to live up to these expectations was reflected, on a number of occasions, in well-publicised 'errors or judgement'. (The Maria Caldwell case was perhaps the most widely noted example.) Although such cases were often sensationalised by the media, officers in Clwyd and Cheshire considered that the development of a generic style had made it difficult for officers to respond adequately to all the demands made on them.

According to a social work officer in Cheshire County Council, a generic style also contributed to a tendency for social workers to respond to problems and demands on an ad hoc basis. Generic social workers, he argued, do not have the time or expertise to investigate the causes of problems.

As a result,

> "we are forced too often into responding to crises ... We've responded to the problem as it's arisen and patched but we've never really gone through it to see how it arose"[6].

I would conclude, therefore, that the adoption of a generic style of social work adversely affected the 'services' available to 'clients'. It is important to note, for my purposes, that the problems resulting from inadequate expertise and a reactive style of social work were attributable to the professionally-inspired generic approach.

The mounting criticism of social workers' expertise prompted calls from within the profession for a return to specialisms. In Clwyd, doubts about the generic approach were expressed as soon as six months after reorganisation. An officer responsible for the system declared that "no one was saying to me 'I don't want to be a generic social worker': what they were beginning to say was things like, 'can you give me more child care cases'". And in Cheshire social workers also became reluctant to proceed with the generic style of working. According to a senior social work officer, "we became very quickly a generic service in Cheshire but one of the changes I see now coming back is the way the profession has moved to saying 'really, you've got to start developing specialisms'".

Clwyd social services department has now moved back to a system of 'biased' case loads: each social worker concentrating on one of three major fields - mental health, child care or the elderly. Cheshire has also returned to specialisation, with a different principal officer for the disabled, the elderly and child care and further specialisms within each of these areas - for example, fostering officers in the child care services.

The increasing emphasis on 'community care'

Community care involves the use of 'community-based resources' such

as relatives, neighbours and home helps rather than residential facilities such as children's homes. Both Clwyd and Cheshire have placed more emphasis on community care in recent years.

The shift to community care has been advocated by most social workers as problems with residential services became more widely recognised. The basic criticism is that removing 'clients' to residential facilities does not solve, and often prolongs or exaggerates, 'problems' - borstals, for example, may encourage youths to re-offend. In Cheshire, support for community care has been almost unanimous from within the social work profession. The main exception has been opposition from staff in residential facilities who risk losing their jobs as a result of greater use of community-based resources. These staff are generally less qualified and enjoy less status and influence within the social work profession and their opposition is not therefore particularly effective.

The main constraints on shifting the balance of services towards community care in Cheshire and Clwyd seem to be 'political' and 'bureaucratic'. An officer in Cheshire claimed that councillors were often reluctant to close residential facilities or allocate resources to community care because "members like to see tangible results". In Clwyd, the system also of corporate budgeting/discourages a switch from residential to community care. Any savings made as a result of such a change would go into a corporate rather than departmental fund. The chances of the social services department being able to regain such savings were therefore dependent on the outcome of inter-departmental bargaining and the setting of corporate priorities. The risk of losing resources, a social services officer suggested, discouraged the department from changing its present balance between residential and community care[7].

Cuts in the budgets of the social services departments of Cheshire and Clwyd in recent years have played a major part in overcoming these political

and bureaucratic obstacles. Since community care is cheaper than residential care the social service departments in Cheshire and Clwyd have sought savings by switching to community-based services. For example, home helps, meals on wheels and health visitors have become more significant in the care of the elderly.

Before comparing the significance of state professions in the fields of social services and industrial development I will summarise the influence of professional interests on developments in social services.

The developments in social services I have discussed reflect an interaction between the interests of officers in what became the social work profession and external pressures acting on social services departments. The Seebohm report was influenced by the interests of occupational groups associated with social work. Professional interests were thus significant in shaping the formation of social services departments, in promoting the rise of a more unified profession and in encouraging the use of generic social workers. The consequent 'publicising' of social services, together with the problems associated with generic social work, increased pressure on social service departments (in the form of increased demand for services and increasing criticism of social workers). In this respect, although the return to specialisms in social work was promoted by external pressures, one must recognise the part played by professional interests in prompting those pressures.

By contrast, professional interests had little to do with generating the financial pressures that are stimulating the change to community care. But the development of community care was not an inevitable consequence of financial cuts. I would suggest that without professional support for community care, the social services departments of Cheshire and Clwyd would have responded to cuts in their budgets differently: given the political

and bureaucratic factors favouring the use of residential care it seems likely that the response would simply have been retrenchment to protect residential facilities (by reducing staffing levels and places in children's and old peoples' homes, for example) rather than a positive switch of resources to community care. I would therefore conclude that professional interests influenced the way Cheshire and Clwyd responded to external pressures for financial cuts.

A comparison of professional influence in social services and industrial development

The dualist models lead one to expect that external pressures will be a more significant determinant of social services policy than of industrial development policy and, hence, that professional interests will be more influential in the field of industrial development than in the field of social services. Intuitively, however, one might expect the reverse. Client groups in social services such as 'the elderly' and 'the handicapped' possess little economic or political power and are relatively fragmented and inarticulate compared with groups in the field of industrial development such as businesses. One might expect, therefore, that external groups in the industrial sphere would more easily command the attention of local authorities. But my research reveals no clear difference between the significance of professional interests and external pressures in the fields of industrial development and social services.

In Cheshire the industrial development initiative was originally officer-led, prompted by the interests of the chief executive and departments in maintaining the economic health of the county. There was no significant pressure from central government, businesses or unions for such an initiative.

Professional interests became a less significant determinant of policy when the change to a hung political system made party politics more influential. In Clwyd, the rapid economic decline of the area played a greater part in the development of a local economic initiative but professional interests helped both to emphasise the need for such an initiative and to influence its form. In both Cheshire and Clwyd the financial and legislative framework within which officers worked constrained their influence. However, by influencing the staffing of Clwyd's Industrial Development Division, the interests of corporate managers determined precisely how much this framework constrained industrial development policy.

Social services policy has also reflected a combination of professional interests and external pressures. Professional interests influenced the 1970 reorganisation of social services, fuelled external demands for and criticisms of social services and affected the policy responses both to these pressures and to the financial cuts in social services budgets.

I have suggested that the relative influence of professional interests and external pressures on local intervention does not vary significantly between different fields of policy. But my research has indicated how professional autonomy declined markedly following a change from a ministerial to a hung system of political management in Cheshire. I would therefore conclude that the relative influence of professional interests and external pressures on policy and intervention varies more significantly with different systems of political management than between different fields of policy.

7.6 Summary and assessment

I have emphasised how the financial and legislative framework within which local officers work may constrain their autonomy. This framework

constrained Cheshire's officer-led industrial development initiative by limiting both the availability and use of finance. The ultra vires doctrine was particularly significant in this respect, discouraging officers from pursuing certain courses of action. The constraints imposed by the legislative framework indicate that the autonomy of professional officers from local political control does not necessarily imply that officers can act independently of all external forces.

I have also described how the election of a hung authority in Cheshire further constrained the autonomy of officers involved with the industrial development initiative. This cannot, however, be seen as another external constraint on professional autonomy. Local party politics became more prevalent in Cheshire during the 1970s but did not significantly reduce professional autonomy since the overall Conservative majority on the Council allowed the ministerial system of management to be preserved. The turning point was the 1981 election, after which no party had an overall majority. Party conflict then prevented any party from continuing the ministerial style of political management and professional autonomy declined markedly. This suggests that the effect of local conflicts on professional autonomy will depend to some extent on the relative size of the parties on a council. The extent of professional autonomy is not therefore determined simply by external factors such as legislation and local political conflicts. One must examine the system of political management within an authority to explain the precise extent of professional autonomy. Since this system cannot be reduced to the political conflicts between local parties (and the interests they represent) I would argue that it constitutes an internal determinant of professional autonomy. The extent of professional autonomy therefore reflects a combination of external and internal determinants.

I then considered the claim made by dualist models that internal and

external influences on policy making vary most significantly between different fields of policy. By comparing policy making in the fields of industrial development and social services and examining the position of officers before and after the election of a hung council I have argued, in contrast, that professional autonomy varies more markedly between different systems of local management. I conclude, therefore, that any model making an ideal type distinction between professional interests and class relations as determinants of local authority policy should emphasise the distinction between systems of political management rather than fields of policy.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

8.1 Summary

The research presented in this thesis began as an investigation of two subjects: first, the claim made by dualist models that the determinants of state intervention vary between the spheres of 'production' and 'consumption'; and, second, the influence of different systems of political management on local authority policy making. It has also included two further topics: an examination of how and why professional officers influence local authority policy making and an analysis of the relative autonomy of the local state from class forces. Finally, I have also investigated the idea that a multi theoretical approach may be required to explain local authority policy making and state intervention generally.

One of the initial problems confronting social research is deciding what level of abstraction is useful and necessary to investigate particular subjects or issues. This is largely determined by the way in which the research topic is defined. If the research is investigating the role of class forces in state intervention then the project is usually developed by drawing attention to the class structure. If, on the other hand, the subject involves the influence of professional officers on local authority policy making the analysis is normally pitched at a lower level of abstraction, concerning the activities of particular groups in concrete institutions. It can be seen that the subjects dealt with in this research span different levels of analysis. The concerns with 'the state', 'class forces' and 'state intervention' and the 'spheres of production and consumption' obviously

relate to a more abstract level of analysis than the investigation of how professional officers influence local authority policy making. And the analysis of local systems of political management refers to a level of abstraction somewhere between these two. There is obviously some correspondence between the subjects discussed on these various levels of abstraction. But concepts at one level of analysis cannot simply be translated into concepts at another: e.g. the state, as well as being a concrete set of institutions and groups, is also a "condensation" of class relations (Poulantzas 1978, 164). On the other hand, conceptions of class, state and spheres of production and consumption do not adequately encapsulate the complex processes involved in local authority policy making. I have argued in this thesis that it is necessary to work at more than one level of analysis to investigate both relatively concrete subjects like the influence of professional groups on local authority policy making or more abstract issues such as the relationship between the state and class relations.

As a starting point I assumed that marxist class analysis provides the single most useful perspective on state intervention and local authority policy making and then proceeded to examine how it might be improved.

Marxists have tended to apply abstractions such as class forces and state intervention directly to explain empirical cases of local authority policy making. As a result, attention is drawn away from questions of how class relations come to be represented in the activities of local authorities. Furthermore, the possibility that local authorities and professional officers independently influence intervention as they convert abstract class forces into concrete outcomes is generally dismissed. Castells, for example, claims that studying the outcomes of state intervention for class interests is sufficient to

explain the 'institutional processes' whereby public policy is produced (1978, 95). Marxist analyses tend to assume that because public policy has class consequences it is necessarily and solely determined by class forces: and this in turn leads them to assume that the consequences of state programmes indicate their causes. For example, Castells' analysis of state intervention, as Batley notes, focusses on the content of intervention and only rarely extends to an examination of the 'procedures of intervention' (1982, 99). The impact of marxist analysis on the new urban sociology of the 1970s has encouraged many authors to focus on 'politics' and neglect 'policy making' (Flynn 1983, 18). While the two are undoubtedly related, I have argued that 'institutional processes' - and in particular, the activities of professional groups - have an independent influence on policy making and that, as a result, public policy and intervention cannot simply be explained in class terms.

Many marxists acknowledge the difficulties involved with analyses that seek to explain policy making and intervention in terms of the forces and relations deriving from a capitalist mode of production. By recognising the 'specificity of the political' and the 'relative autonomy' of the state, authors such as Castells and Poulantzas have attempted to develop a more complex analysis of state intervention. But the problem with these concepts is that they remain simply descriptions rather than explanations of policy making and intervention. For example, with regard to the notion of a relatively autonomous state, Duncan and Goodwin point out that "all that is distinguished by the term is a certain room for manoeuvre within constraint" (1982, 160). With reference to Poulantzas' work, Clarke concludes that while such concepts raise important questions about class analysis "the

weakness of his work is that he does not provide the means even to resolve them" (1977, 25). This is due, I have argued, to the unwillingness of marxists to go beyond a class analysis. Instead of examining ways of building on class analysis the tendency has been to advocate more detailed analyses of the class determinants of policy (see, for example, Goodwin 1981). By contrast, I have attempted to show that the weaknesses of marxist theory can best be resolved by recognising its limitations and combining a class analysis of state intervention with theories at other levels of abstraction.

In chapter two I argued that a multi-theoretical model of local authority policy making might be useful by examining and comparing different theories of state intervention and local government. I drew a distinction between theories which saw local authority intervention as a response to societal pressures or needs, and theories that emphasised how local authority intervention developed independently of societal influence. I argued that these contrasting emphases mainly reflected the different foci of attention of the two kinds of theories. Those emphasising the role of societal influence - which included marxist, pluralist and elite theories - are theories of the social structure and attempt to explain how political institutions and activity fits into such a structure. Those emphasising the independence of political institutions and activity - weberian-inspired organisation and managerialist theories - are primarily concerned with explaining how the internal form of local authorities - e.g. the organisation of tasks, the characteristics of groups within them - influence their activity. This distinction between society-centred and state - or local authority - centred theories can be seen as a distinction betwen different levels of analysis. The first set of theories is analysing how the social

structure generates political forms such as local authorities and influences their activity. The second set deals with how political forms translate abstract structural forces into concrete intervention. But both sets of theories generally fail to appreciate the distinction between structural forces and political forms. Society-centred theories therefore overemphasize the extent to which local authority activity simply reflects external pressures while state-centred theories over-exaggerate the independence of the institutional processes of policy making from such pressures. I concluded that analysis of local authority policy making could be improved by combining a theory of the external social structure with a theory of the internal dynamics of political institutions.

In chapter three I developed this idea by examining dualist models since these are based on a distinction between responsive and independent modes of policy formation. I argued that they fail to distinguish clearly between external and internal determinants and do not provide an adequate explanation of why the internal organisation of local authorities exerts an independent influence on intervention. The weaknesses of dualist models stem from the fact that their distinction between internal and external determinants of policy is not based on a distinction between different levels of analysis but on a distinction between policy making in the spheres of 'production' and 'consumption'. This is clearly derived from a single level of analysis, relating to the economic structure of society, and does not involve a distinction between economic and non-economic determinants of policy. The different determinants of policy have, in other words, a common, economic, cause. The dualist models do not see the relationship between economic structure and political forms as problematic:

the latter simply reflect the former, and different political forms or modes of policy making are due simply to divisions in the economic structure[1]. Since the dualist models are only distinguishing between different aspects of the economic structure they can only indicate different external or economic determinants of local authority policy and intervention. The models do not, in other words, progress beyond an ahistorical analysis of the class structure to consider the historical relationship between economic forces and political institutions. They cannot therefore be used to investigate how institutions such as local authorities come to represent economic forces and, in so doing, exert an independent influence on public policy and intervention.

In chapter four I began to develop an alternative model of local authority policy making based on a distinction between the class structure and the state bureaucracy. I argued that a distinction between economic forces and political forms was particularly relevant in the analysis of British government as one of the characteristic features of a capitalist society is the separation of economic and political spheres. I described how capitalist class relations made it difficult for individual capitalists to maintain political rule directly. This, together with the ability of the state to perform tasks which are unprofitable for private capitalists but advantageous for capital accumulation, invests the state bureaucracy with some power to determine intervention. But the dependency of the state bureaucracy on capital accumulation as a source of public funds ensures that it cannot promote intervention which seriously threatens a capitalist mode of production.

I also argued that the autonomy of the British state bureacracy is not simply a product of the structural features of such a mode. It is partly a reflection of the way in which the aristocratic and

landed interests that dominated British government during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries responded to the growing pressures from industrialists for state intervention. These interests helped to mould the expanding state bureaucracy into a collection of professional groups and propagated the view that if the bureaucracy was to operate in a neutral and altruistic way it must act independently of external demands. This did not ensure that the bureaucracy necessarily acted in such a way: but the widespread acceptance of the 'professional' model, inside and outside government institutions, tended to emphasize the extent to which the bureaucracy was capable of independently determining intervention. The role played by such historical class relations helps to explain why the state bureaucracy does not take the same form and display the same autonomy from class interests in all societies with a capitalist mode of production.

This structural and historical analysis of the professional state bureaucracy in Britain established a direct link between questions of the state's relative autonomy from class forces and the role of professional officers in local authority policy making.

I therefore suggested that marxist analysis, as a theory of structural and historical class relations, could be used to explain the development of and constraints on a relatively autonomous state bureaucracy. But I argued that such a theory was not designed to explain how the state bureaucracy operates within the constraints imposed by the class structure. The weberian model of bureaucracy also suggests a reason why the state bureaucracy may act independently of external pressures. It claims that the technical characteristics of bureaucracies - in particular, the ability to control information, their monopoly of expertise and the complex division of tasks - will make it difficult for external interests to retain

control of the state bureaucracy. But I suggested that in relation to the above mentioned class factors, this was a minor determinant of bureaucratic autonomy. The weberian model is more useful in the analysis of the consequences rather than the causes of such autonomy. The strength of the weberian model derives from its focus on how the characteristics of bureaucracies influence the activity of bureaucratic groups. These characteristics instill such groups with a commitment to the tasks for which they are responsible and lead them to claim a monopoly of expertise with respect to their tasks. It is for this reason that bureaucratic groups have an interest both in defending the fields of policy with which they are associated and in developing policy in a way which supports their claim to exclusive competence for those fields. Weberian analysis can thus help to explain how professional groups influence policy making within the constraints imposed by class relations.

I then attempted both to substantiate this distinction between class relations and professional groups and consider how different systems of political managment affected policy formation by examining various features and policies of Cheshire County Council and Clwyd County Council.

In chapter five I used the model of class pressures and professional interests to help explain how and why Cheshire County Council developed high levels of expenditure and service provision after the second world war. I began by arguing that Cheshire's high levels of expenditure and services cannot be explained in terms of either the external pressures on the authority from central government or local interests, or the needs of the area - e.g. stemming from the demographic structure. I drew attention instead to the expansion of professional groups within the local government bureaucracy and described how they became an important influence on policy in Cheshire. These groups were able to exert a

degree of independent influence on local intervention for three reasons: a 'market' for their services was guaranteed by legislation and did not depend on their responsiveness to external pressure; the model of independent professional experts was accepted inside and outside local government; and, finally, because of the sheer volume of administration involved in fields such as education and the ability of officers to control information. The increasing influence of professional groups in policy making occurred throughout local government and fuelled a general expansion of local government expenditure and services. A model of class pressures and professional interests can, therefore, only partly explain the levels of expenditure and services in Cheshire. I went on to argue that Cheshire's particularly high levels of expenditure and services were due to the County's system of political management. This reinforced the autonomy of professional officers. The large and stable Conservative majority on the Council between the 1940s and 1970s reduced first the extent and later the effect of party politics. It also allowed an 'elite' group of Conservative councillors to form a 'ministerial' system of political management in which professional officers were often allowed to develop policy.

I then proceeded in chapter six to provide a more detailed discussion of the interests of professional groups and examined the way in which they come to influence particular fields of policy and intervention. This involved an analysis of the role of corporate managers in the development of Clwyd County Council's job creation initiatives. I argued that the influence of Clwyd's corporate managers in this field of policy was primarily a consequence of their characteristics as a bureaucratic group and of their relationship with other such groups in the authority.

The actions of corporate managers reflected a commitment to the tasks for which they are responsible. Their first task was to develop a corporate system of decision making geared towards the achievement of corporate objectives. The reluctance of the main service departments to co-operate with such a system led corporate managers to maintain close links with the authority's industrial development initiative as a means of achieving corporate priorities. As they assumed responsibility for the industrial development initiative corporate managers began to emphasize economic development as the most important of the corporate priorities. I argued that this again resulted from the tendency of professional groups to display a commitment towards the tasks for which they are responsible.

In explaining why the interests of corporate managers in Clwyd influenced the industrial development initiative I also drew attention to the system of political management within the authority. Because no party had an overall majority they initiated a system of political power-sharing. This system resulted in a low level of party politics and the corresponding lack of party organisation made it difficult for individual councillors to censure officers. Both of these factors promoted the autonomy of professional officers.

In chapter seven I used cases of policy making in Cheshire and Clwyd to discuss the major constraints on professional autonomy. I also considered how such autonomy varied under systems of political management and in different fields of policy. I began by describing how the financial and legislative framework within which officers work constrained professional autonomy in the field of industrial development. This framework limited the funds available to officers and placed restrictions on their use of public funds. The case illustrates that while legislation helps to promote and sustain professional groups in local

government it also restricts their autonomy. I argued that the financial and legislative framework is the major non-local constraint on professional autonomy. It is also an important channel through which class pressures become represented within the state and thus constrain professional officers. At a local level the pressures arising from party politics can be seen as the most important way in which class relations affect professional autonomy. But I went on to argue that an authority's system of political management, rather than simply its pattern of party politics, determines the precise extent of professional autonomy in any local authority. This was argued by describing how an increase in party politics in Cheshire during the 1970s did not significantly reduce the autonomy of county officers until the Conservative group lost its overall majority at the 1981 election. The case shows that the effect of party politics on professional autonomy is not simply dependent on the extent of party politics in a council. Its effect on professional autonomy depends somewhat on the relative size of the parties in a council. If the extent of professional autonomy was simply dependent on the extent of party politics then one would have expected it to decline markedly in Cheshire during the 1970s, as party organisation and politics intensified. But in fact professional autonomy was not significantly reduced until after the 1981 election because the persistence of an overall Conservative majority up to that date allowed the "ministerial" system of political management to be maintained. This system helped to insulate officers from pressures within political groups (e.g. the increasing number of Conservative councillors demanding greater control over expenditure) and conflicts between parties. After the 1981 election the ministerial system broke down. As a result, even though the extent of party politics did not change significantly, its effect on policy making

was substantially increased.

It can be seen that the absence of a party with an overall majority from the county councils of Cheshire and Clwyd had opposite effects. In Cheshire it exaggerated the influence of party politics and so reduced professional autonomy. In Clwyd it led to a system of political power sharing which promoted professional autonomy. To understand this paradox one must take into account the recent 'political histories' of the two authorities. The election of 1981 - following which no party held an overall majority in Cheshire - had been preceded, particularly since the late 1960s, by increasing levels of party organisation and politics in the county. In addition, before 1981 Cheshire had been dominated by a single party. Councillors in the county were accustomed therefore to operating in a political framework of one party rule. There was no experience of operating in a council where no party held an overall majority. The tradition of 'adversary politics' encouraged Cheshire's parties to continue with a 'partisan' political system after the 1981 elections. The prevalence of adversary politics in a situation where no party held an overall majority resulted in a hung council and a reduction in professional autonomy. Clwyd County Council, by contrast, has little tradition of party political conflict, no experience of one party rule and little prospect of any one party gaining an overall majority. In this situation parties were both willing and able to play down party-political differences and adopt the system of power-sharing which promoted professional autonomy.

I would suggest that a number of general conclusions follow from my examination of professional autonomy and systems of political management in Cheshire and Clwyd. The influence of a system of political management on professional autonomy cannot necessarily be deduced by examining the

extent and content of party politics in an authority. The influence of local parties (and, hence, of the interests they represent) will depend on the way in which party politics, the relative size of the parties and the 'political history' of an authority combine to promote or constrain the autonomy of professional officers. Four potential combinations of these factors can be envisaged. These are set out in figure 8.1. First, professional autonomy will tend to be relatively significant where a single party (Labour or Conservative) has enjoyed a long-term, stable and sizeable majority, regardless of the extent of party politics. This was the case in Cheshire County Council between the 1940s and 1970s when a large and long-term Conservative majority promoted a 'ministerial' system of political management. Second, professional autonomy will not be as significant in authorities where no party possesses an overall and stable majority and party politics is prevalent. This was the case in Cheshire County Council when the 1981 election resulted in a hung system. Third, when no party possesses an overall majority professional autonomy will be enhanced if party politics is limited. This was the case in Clwyd County Council where a power-sharing system prevailed. Fourth, where one party possesses an overall but unstable majority and party politics is prevalent the level of professional autonomy will depend on the political history of the authority: if the controlling group previously enjoyed a stable majority and employed a ministerial system of political management, professional autonomy will remain relatively high where the former ministerial system is maintained. I would expect such an outcome when the political leadership of the controlling party remains the same since, by maintaining the 'traditional' system of political management, a small 'inner ring' of councillors continue in a privileged position vis-a-vis other politicians. This was the case in Cheshire during the 1970s. Labour electoral gains began to threaten the

Figure 8.1 The influence of different systems of political management on the autonomy of professional officers

System of political management	Relative size of parties	Level of party politics	Level of professional autonomy	Example
Ministerial	One party with an overall and stable majority	High or low	High	Cheshire up to the 1970s
Hung	No party with an overall majority	High	Low	Cheshire after 1981
Power-sharing	No party with an overall majority	Low	High	Clwyd
Unstable	One party with an overall but unstable majority	High	High if preceeded by Ministerial system Low if preceeded by hung system	Cheshire during the 1970s

Conservative majority but leading Conservative councillors preserved the ministerial system and thus helped to insulate officers from the rising level of party political conflict in the authority. If an unstable majority and high level of party politics has existed over a long period or was preceded by a system in which councillors and parties were accustomed to playing a major role in policy making (in a hung system, for example) then one can imagine that professional autonomy will be relatively low. I shall call this fourth potential combination of party size and party politics an 'unstable' system of political management.

I finished chapter seven by considering the claim made by dualist models that independent and responsible modes of policy making - which I have associated with the influence of professional interests and class relations on intervention - vary most significantly between the spheres of production and consumption. I compared policy making in the fields of industrial development and social services and argued that the relative significance of professional interests and class relations did not vary significantly between them. Having previously noted that professional autonomy declined markedly with the change from a ministerial to a hung system of political management I concluded that professional autonomy varies more significantly with different forms of political management[2].

8.2 Theoretical and practical implications of the research

It has been widely acknowledged that because social reality cannot be grasped in its complex totality we must attempt to understand it by constructing simplified representations or models of it (for example, by Pickvance 1984, 30). The main issue in modelling is how much

simplification or abstraction is necessary and useful. I have developed a model which is intended to help explain three related issues. First, whether determinants of public policy and intervention vary systematically. Second, what determines the way professional officers influence local authority policy. Third, what are the causes and consequences of the local state's relative autonomy from class forces. I have argued that a model dealing with these questions must have three elements and that failure to include any one will lead to an over-simplified representation of reality. The first element of the model is an analysis of structural and historical class relations. This is required to explain the relationship between economic structure and political forms - such as local authorities and their professional groups. More specifically, it can help to explain why professional autonomy develops and how it is constrained. This provides a general indication of the extent of professional autonomy. To explain the precise level of autonomy experienced by officers, and, hence, the extent to which they independently influence policy, one must introduce a second element to the analysis - an examination of systems of political management. The first two elements explain the extent of professional autonomy. But a third is required to explain how officers make use of their autonomy. This involves an examination of the interests of and relationships between professional groups.

I have also proposed that different theories may be used to help explain these three elements: a marxist theory to explain the first; a theory drawn from the community power and political science tradition to explain the second and urban managerialist analysis to explain the third. For convenience I shall refer to this as a trifocal model of policy making.

I have used the empirical research to propose a general model of

policy making in a way which assumes that the findings from Cheshire and Clwyd are not particular to these authorities. I will now contrast the proposed trifocal model with several others relating to the above mentioned issues.

The first contrast is with the marxist model of professional influence and state autonomy. Two differences can be noted. First, it suggests that professional autonomy is dependent on a system of political management as well as the class structure[3]. Second, it suggests that the way in which professional groups use this autonomy will be determined by their own particular interests rather than by the 'needs' and pressures generated by the class structure. The proposed model claims, in other words, that class analysis will not be sufficient to explain the relative significance of class relations and professional interests as determinants of policy and intervention. Poulantzas (1979, 67) claims that one cannot remain within a marxist framework and assert that the state acts independently. But I would argue that, while the model attempts to go beyond a marxist framework in its account of state independence, it does not abandon such a framework. By distinguishing between the determinants of professional autonomy and the effects of such autonomy on intervention one can acknowledge the significance of class relations without insisting that all determinants of state intervention are derived from them.

The claim that my model is compatible with marxist analysis can be supported by comparing it against the criteria outlined by Jessop for assessing the adequacy of a marxist theory of the capitalist state. Jessop argues that :

> "a marxist theory of the state will be considered adequate to the extent that a) it is founded on the specific qualities of capitalism as a mode of production, b) it attributes a central role to class struggle in the process of capital accumulation, c) it establishes the relations between the political and economic features of

> society without reducing one to the other or treating them as totally independent or autonomous, d) it allows for historical and national differences in the forms and functions of the state in capitalist societies, and e) it allows for the influence of non-capitalist and non-class forces in determining the nature of the state and the exercise of state power" (1977, 353-4).

I would argue that the model meets these criteria. With respect to a), b) and c),I have traced the relative autonomy between class relations and state professions to the characteristics of the capitalist mode of production and to the pressures generated by class conflicts. With respect to d), I have argued that historical class relations particular to Britain influenced the 'professional' form of the state bureaucracy. And with respect to e), I have referred to the influence of aristocratic and landed interests in shaping this kind of bureaucracy and also emphasized the role of professional interests in policy making.

The proposed model also differs from the urban managerialist model in two ways. First, urban managerialism claims that the sources of professional autonomy lie within the 'technical' characteristics of bureaucratic organisations and that the constraints on that autonomy arise in the external social structure or 'ecological system'. By contrast, my model suggests that the causes of and constraints on professional autonomy are due mainly to the external economic structure and systems of political management within which bureaucracies operate. Second, the urban managerialist thesis forms the basis of conceptions of the technocratic and corporatist state. Notions of a technocratic state are based on the premise that the development of an independent state bureaucracy marks the advance from a capitalist to a post-capitalist society in which the technical expertise of 'managers' will replace class conflict as the main determinant of state intervention (see Dahrendorf 1957). By contrast, my model suggests that the development of relatively independent professional groups occurs as an integral part of capitalist society. Corporatism suggests that the state is an independent force

which acts in partnership with dominant interest groups. While the proposed model does not rule out such a possibility it does not imply any trend or tendency to corporatism. The development of high levels of expenditure and services by Cheshire County Council, for example, did not occur in partnership with dominant external interests. State professions must ultimately rely on the private sector for resources. But as there is no guarantee that professional interests will coincide with the interests of dominant groups (except on the basic issue of maintaining economic development) it cannot be assumed that the professionalisation of the state implies a trend to corporatism.

The difference between the proposed model and dualist models concerns the explanation of the distinction between external and internal determinants of policy and intervention. In the dualist models the distinction is derived from a contrast between the spheres of production and consumption; i.e. between two aspects of the economic structure. I have made an external-internal distinction by distinguishing between determinants of policy which derive from the economic structure and those which are specific to political institutions; i.e. between economic and non-economic determinants of intervention. In addition, and related to this, I have argued that the relative influence of external and internal determinants varies more markedly with systems of political management than between fields of policy.

The proposed model also differs in one further way from most models of state intervention. This difference can be explained by outlining a distinction made by Pickvance (1984) between models implying 'universal' and 'relativist' patterns of social determination.

Universal models assume that a particular kind of event or outcome - say high levels of local authority expenditure and services - will always

be produced by the same pattern of causes. In relativist models the pattern of causes is expected to vary depending on the particular circumstances surrounding each occurrence of the event; i.e. high levels of expenditure and services may have different patterns of causes in different authorities.

Although various models - such as marxist and urban managerialist - propose different explanations of any particular event they are generally universal models since they imply that if an event is repeated it will have the same pattern of causes. My model implies, however, a relativist pattern of social causes or 'plural causation'. Plural causation is said to occur where any particular event, such as high levels of professional autonomy, can be brought about in different ways[4]. If one refers back to figure 8.1 it can be seen, for example, that a high level of professional autonomy may be caused by two systems of political management; a ministerial system - i.e. where one party has a large and stable majority - or a power-sharing system - i.e. where no party has an overall majority and the level of party politics is low. Similarly, a particular feature of local intervention such as high levels of expenditure and services may be due to more than one system of political management. I argued that Cheshire's high levels of expenditure and services up to the 1970s resulted from class pressures (which promoted professional groups), a system of political management (that emphasised the autonomy of Cheshire's professional officers) and the interests of such groups (which favoured service expansion). But this particular combination of the three elements is not the only one that might lead to such an outcome. One can imagine another local authority where an 'unstable' system of political management constrains professional autonomy, where political

pressure rather than professional interests may become the most significant determinant of expenditure and service provision. This may occur in an 'unstable' authority where the election of a Labour group with an overall majority is preceded by a history of party involvement in policy making: because a) unstable majorities, I have argued, tend to encourage parties to maintain an established system of policy making - so, in this case, reducing professional autonomy; b) Labour groups generally support service expansion; and, c) an overall majority would allow a Labour group to implement a policy of service expansion.

It is important to note that although the proposed trifocal model acknowledges plural causation it takes a hierarchical form and its various elements are not of equal importance. Class relations form a framework within which relatively autonomous state professions develop, systems of political management fix the precise level of professional autonomy and professional interests determine policy within the constraints imposed by the previous two factors. This hierarchical framework does not imply that elements lower down the hierarchy - e.g. professional interests - have no influence on those at a higher level - e.g. class relations, but only that the overall direction of influence is downward. For example, in affecting Cheshire County Council's levels of expenditure and services, professional interests affected the interests of various classes (most obviously, those 'consuming' the services). And in Clwyd, corporate managers, by influencing the staffing of the industrial development division (with 'private sector' business skills rather than public sector planning ideas), helped to ensure that the I.D.D. was more sympathetic to business needs and demands than it might otherwise have been. But the hierarchical structure sets out an ordering of the elements in which class relations are a more important determinant of intervention

than professional interests.

While the hierarchical framework indicates the relationship between the elements and the prevailing direction of influence between them it does not specify precisely the significance of each. For example, while class relations are seen as a more important determinant of local intervention than professional interests, the hierarchical framework does not indicate how great is the difference in their importance. I would argue that it is not possible to settle this matter by reference to empirical research. For example, while I have shown that professional interests can affect local industrial development initiatives, it may be difficult to evaluate the significance of such influence in an objective way. On the one hand, one might argue that because industrial development involves only a small proportion of any local authority's budget and staff, it is of minor importance. On the other hand, it may be argued that industrial development initiatives by local authorities have an important symbolic value - either (depending on one's viewpoint) paving the way for a new balance between private business and the 'public' interests of local 'communities' or helping to legitimise the activities of local authorities and deflect pressure for jobs from private employers to local councillors[5]. If one subscribes to the first view then the influence of professional interests on industrial development policy can be dismissed as of minor political importance. If one favours the second, the influence of professional interests will be considered to have more important political consequences. My feeling is that how one decides on the precise significance of class relations and professional interests as determinants of policy will ultimately reflect a value position and cannot be determined objectively. The position I

have argued is that, while class relations are more significant than professional interests as a determinant of policy, marxist theory has underestimated the independent influence of professional officers.

I will now draw on the above discussion concerning the theoretical implications of this research to consider its practical implications.

The study of policy making as a means of assessing and improving public intervention - generally referred to as 'policy analysis' - has tended to assume a technical character. The focus is on factors such as division of tasks within government and questions of power and interests are ignored or relegated to a distinct category or 'politics'. In this perspective the achievement of political objectives depended on the technical structure of local government. The task of policy analysis has been to ensure that the structure is working 'effectively' and, if it was not, to explain how it could be altered. The 'new urban sociology' of the 1970s (see Zukin 1980 for a brief description) rightly criticised the technical emphasis in policy analysis by drawing attention to the influence of the wider social structure on policy and intervention. In this perspective, altering the internal structure of local government would not help to achieve policy objectives unless such changes were associated with reforms in the wider social structure. My research suggests that neither of these positions provides an adequate basis on which to consider how political objectives can be assisted by reforming the internal structure of local government. I will argue that both traditional policy analysis and new urban sociology are inadequate in this respect because they fail to appreciate the significance of professional interests in policy making. Studies in both schools have seen the division of the government bureaucracy into levels and departments as a problem requiring reform. I will briefly outline the views of each school on this feature of government to illustrate their weaknesses.

Policy analysis has generally regarded the extensive division of tasks between levels and departments of government as excessive, arguing that it duplicates work and makes coordinating the efforts of government in the pursuit of political objectives difficult. The problem is seen essentially as a technical one and the issue is what degree of 'differentiation' is necessary and what techniques can be introduced to improve 'integration' (see Greenwood et al. 1975). But my research showed that attempts to reform the departmental structure and system of policy making in Cheshire and Clwyd by introducing corporate management were stifled by professional groups. Even where state professions do not prevent reforms they may, in the process of developing and implementing them, modify them in an attempt to represent their own interests. For this reason it is likely that any attempt to reform the local government bureaucracy may fail or have unanticipated effects if it is phrased purely in technical terms and ignores the significance of professional interests.

Writing from a marxist perspective, Friedland et al. (1977) regard the division of the state between levels and departments as a problem for a different reason. They claim that it fragments pressure on the state and so ensures that state intervention remains biased toward capitalist interests. Since this is explained in terms of the class functions of the state, the implied solution involves reforming the class structure of society. The difficulties of achieving such a reform often mean that class analyses of local government induce a degree of political fatalism. By locating the source of the problem and its solution in the basic structure of society such analyses ignore the possibility that to some extent the structure of the bureaucracy is a product of the groups within

it. As a result, they do not appreciate that certain improvements are practicable within the existing pattern of class relations. A number of Labour councils have increasingly realised that worthwhile reforms can be achieved by changing the internal structure of the local bureaucracy (see Seabrook 1984 for an account of how Walsall District Council 'decentralised' a large proportion of their officers and staff from the town hall to a number of area offices). Even when class analysis does not inhibit attempts at reform, the measures it proposes may fail because they do not attach sufficient significance to the interests of professional groups[6].

My research does not imply that professional interests will necessarily inhibit the achievement of political goals. The part played by officers in expanding Cheshire's services shows that professional interests were compatible with the attempts of Conservative and Labour governments during the 1940s and 1950s to develop public housing, education and social services. But the interests of state professions do not coincide systematically with the interests of political groups of the Left or Right. Professional autonomy may, as it did in Cheshire, promote services and so favour the consumers of those services. But it may also, as in Clwyd, produce economic initiatives which are sympathetic to the needs of private business instead of initiatives which seek to gain greater control over the local economy (through equity sharing schemes, for example). In such a case, professional autonomy may infringe the interests of the local workforce by ensuring that employment remains susceptible to the vagaries of the private market. Since the consumers of local services also have an interest in stable employment (either personally as employees or through their reliance on a wage earner), I would argue that professional autonomy can have contradictory effects which make a long term, comprehensive political

strategy difficult to pursue. Professional autonomy must therefore be reduced to increase the 'political rationality' of policy making and intervention.

As Weber (1968, 1417) points out, for the political direction of the state bureaucracy to be effective, mechanisms must exist which hold bureaucratic groups accountable for the political results of their work. Weber suggests that the efforts of state bureaucrats may be better matched to the objectives of political groups by ensuring that the top administrators are thoroughly trained in the 'art of politics'. In the context of local government this might mean linking professional groups more closely to political parties by developing patronage positions (as is increasingly the case at the level of central government, in 'Quangos' and among nationalised industries; see Edelman 1975a,b). Knowing that their positions are tied to the fortunes of political groups, local officers may be more conscious of the need to temper their professional interests according to political objectives. How far these patronage positions extend throughout the local government bureaucracy and whether all parties should be entitled (in power and opposition) to teams of professional advisers, are issues requiring attention in any system of this kind. But a patronage system is not the only mechanism that might be used to improve the accountability of the local government bureaucracy. Innovations may be possible without changing the existing staff as in the case of the system of decentralised offices developed by Walsall.

Given the complexity of local government it does not seem likely that any one solution will be universally applicable. The mechanisms required to promote professional accountability may vary depending on systems of political management, the policy issue at hand and the political and professional interests involved[7].

These are only tentative suggestions and my aim is simply to note a subject area which should be investigated by anyone interested in the quality of local democracy.

To finish I will discuss some theoretical and practical implications of my research. It indicates, first,the advantages of developing multi-theoretical models with a hierarchical structure to help explain public policy making and intervention; second, the need to consider plural causation; third, the importance of focussing on the internal dynamics of government institutions - and in particular on systems of political management and the interests of professional officers - and, finally, that since the influence of professional officers on local authority intervention is not determined simply by class relations, reforms to the state bureaucracy, and hence changes in intervention, can be achieved within the existing class structure of British society.

The idea that any single theory is sufficient to explain public policy and intervention is increasingly questioned. But although the era of 'grand theory' is drawing to a close, multi-theoretical approaches have been slow to develop. And their development is hampered by a reluctance - a reaction to grand theory - to elaborate theoretical models of any sort. While a degree of scepticism is undoubtedly justified as a guard against unnecessary or over-complicated theorising, the path away from grand theories should lead, I suggest, towards the establishment of better theoretical models rather than to theoretical nihilism. One must applaud authors such as Cawson and Saunders, despite the problems I have mentioned concerning their work, for their efforts at developing multi-theoretical models of public policy making and intervention. Such efforts, however, remain rare and a great deal of work has still to be done before an adequate alternative to grand theory is

found. The research in this thesis - and the model of local policy making and intervention I have proposed - indicates how a multi-theoretical approach can assist our understanding of the role of professional officers in local authorities. But the proposed model has implications for the application of such an approach to other subjects: to be precise, I suggest that the hierarchical arrangement of theories outlined above may aid our understanding of both more general issues, such as the relationship between the economic and political spheres of society, and concrete questions, such as the distribution of local authority expenditure between different fields of policy and intervention. The research thus challenges anyone wishing to progress beyond grand theories to consider how hierarchical theoretical models might be developed to explain various aspects of public policy making and intervention.

The research I have undertaken in this thesis also presents a challenge to those engaged in campaigns against the replacement of elected metropolitan councils with appointed boards and the defence of local services against expenditure cuts and privatisation. I have argued that the interests of professional officers do not necessarily correspond with those of any particular class (capital or labour) and group (council house tenants, ratepayers, etc.). In the longer term a reform of the local bureaucracy may be required to ensure the achievement of political objectives, but more immediately the challenge is to consider whether and how state professions can help defend metropolitan councils and local services. I will briefly consider whether professional officers have an interest in joining with other groups to counter attacks on local government.

Although the abolition of the metropolitan councils involves the removal of one tier of elected government many of the professional officers currently employed by them may simply be transferred to work for the

subsequently appointed boards. The removal of the councils does not appear to seriously threaten the jobs of professional officers or their part in service provision (since the proposed boards must employ many of the officers presently working for the metropolitan authorities). I thus doubt that state professions will actively resist the abolition of the councils or support a campaign for their restoration.

Public expenditure cuts and the privatisation of local services do, however, threaten the jobs of state professions. I therefore expect that on this basis alone an alliance between the 'managers' and'consumers' of services may be possible in resisting cuts and privatisation. But even when the jobs of professional officers are not at risk they may still share a common interest with their 'clients' in maintaining local services. If, as I have argued, state professions tend to display a commitment to the tasks for which they are responsible one can expect them to oppose measures which threaten services. None of this implies that the interests of professional officers and the consumers of services are the same, but in the short term at least there may be a sufficient coincidence of interests to warrant cooperation between them.

Various problems and issues must be considered in any attempt to construct such an alliance. First, the existing divisions between local services have created conflicts of interest among different state professions (e.g. between local architects and planners) and among groups within local communities (e.g. council house tenants and public transport users) concerning, for example, the allocation of public expenditure between services. These must be overcome if an alliance - based on a common interest in defending services - is to be effective. The second issue relates to the longer term consequences of an alliance between local officers and community groups. The possibility exists that in cooperating with local

authorities, community groups will become 'incorporated' and this may hamper attempts at reforming the local bureaucracy. Alternatively, an alliance based initially on a defence of existing services may encourage a new relationship between officers and 'clients' which involves the latter more closely in decision making affecting the production and distribution of services. It is essential that attempts to resolve these and similar issues are quickly made. Only then can we estimate whether and how an alliance between professional officers and community groups can help defend and possibly improve local government.

Appendix

The research method

Beginning with Liverpool City Council I contacted six local authorities. All had industrial development programmes; some were 'hung' councils, others were not. In each case I requested interviews with councillors and officers connected with specified departments: industrial development, highways, planning and social services in the case of County authorities; and industrial development, planning and housing in the case of Districts . I also offered to meet with representatives of each to discuss and elaborate my research proposals. I under-estimated, however, the measures required to gain confidence and cooperation of the authorities. The five authorities that replied (Liverpool did not) requested more information regarding the substance of the research, confirmation of my credentials and more indication of the purpose of the research. But the five were not equally willing to assist me. Two emphasised that help in the form of interviews would be limited because their staff and councillors could not spare much time. This discouraged me from pursuing further contact with these councils. In retrospect, I consider that these two councils may have changed their attitude had I persevered: other councils and their staff often became more helpful after personal contacts had been developed. But as Cheshire and Clwyd proved adequate for my purposes I did not feel obliged to win the support of the two 'uncooperative' councils.

Information on policy making and intervention by Cheshire and Clwyd came primarily from three sources: interviews with officers, documents produced by the authorities and studies made of Cheshire or Clwyd by Lee (1963), Lee *et al.* (1974), Howick (1978), P.A. Management Consultants

(1979) and The Corporate Planning Journal (1978).

I began with the intention of interviewing officers and councillors but only, in fact, interviewed officers. There were two reasons for this. First, I was told by Cheshire and Clwyd (and several other of the authorities I initially contacted) that councillors were extremely busy and interviews with them would be both more difficult to arrange and of shorter duration than meetings with officers. Second, I was primarily concerned with estimating the extent to which officers acted independently of political control and how they influenced policy when acting with such independence. Numerous studies have emphasised that professional officers tend to insist that they act simply in response to local politicians (see for examples Newton 1976 and Dearlove 1974). I have assumed that officers can therefore be expected to understate the extent to which they act independently of councillors. This led me to conclude that statements made by officers which implied professional autonomy from political control and indicated that officers had power to determine policy were likely to be true. (If I had been attempting to examine cases of local officers responding to councillors then, following the same logic, I would have needed to check their testimony against that of councillors.) For this reason I considered that while interviews with councillors may have been interesting, they were not crucial to my research. I therefore felt that an attempt to overcome the above mentioned problems in arranging interviews with councillors was not worthwhile. (I also used other methods to estimate the accuracy of the statements made during interviews, and these are listed later in this appendix.)

I was not always free to choose which officers to inverview and some restrictions were placed on the number of interviews conducted. These conditions applied primarily to research in Clwyd County Council. An

officer from that authority's corporate management unit was assigned to arrange interviews and provide information for me. I was required to approach departments and officers via this corporate management officer and he selected interviewees on the basis of lists of subjects I wished to discuss. As the officer concerned regarded each interview as an information gathering exercise he was reluctant to arrange interviews with more than one or two officers in each department (since in his view, I was likely to receive duplicate sets of 'facts'). In Cheshire, by contrast, I was encouraged by the chief administrative officer to contact departments and particular officers myself. It should be noted that the involvement of this corporate management officer in selecting interviewees may have affected the information and opinions provided during certain interviews in Clywd. The corporate manager was a member of the chief executive's office and through him the chief executive remained aware of my research. As the interviewees knew thatthe chief executive's office was involved in selecting them for interview they were occasionally hesitant in discussing certain subjects involving the chief executive and his office. (One planning officer, for example, asked for no record to be kept of his discussion of such subjects.)

Twenty interviews were formally arranged and conducted with officers and one ex-officer of the two authorities. These were supplemented by various informal meetings - preceeding or following arranged interviews, during lunch and so on. The formal interviews were as follows.

In Clwyd County Council:

The Chief Executive;

The head of the Industrial Development Division;

A further officer from that Division;

The head of the Corporate Management/Policy Planning Unit;

A further officer from that Unit;

The Deputy Chief Planning Officer (two interviews);

The head of the County's Structure Plan Team;

The Deputy Chief Officer of Social Services;

An officer leading one of Clwyd's Social Services 'Area Teams'.

In Cheshire County Council:

The County Planner;

The Chief Administrative Officer;

Two officers from the Highways department;

The research officer for the Social Services department;

An officer leading one of Cheshire's Social Services 'Area Teams';

Two officers connected with the County's industrial development programme;

A former Clerk/Chief Executive of the County.

The interviews lasted between three hours thirty minutes and forty-five minutes and were normally approximately two hours in length.

The accuracy of the information gathered during interviews was gauged in a number of ways. First, by considering the position of the interviewee within the authority and estimating his interests with regard to the subjects discussed. (All the interviewees were male.) Second, checking the testimony of interviewees against both information gathered from other interviews and documentary sources. This does not imply that the testimony of interviewees was necessarily considered relevant or accurate if it conformed to documentary sources or was duplicated by other officers. Similarly, accounts were not necessarily considered inaccurate simply because they failed to correspond with such sources or were

contradicted by other officers. Where necessary I used an estimate of the interests of the officers involved in interviews as a check on any deliberate or unwitting distorted descriptions of events and relationships. My doubts as to the accuracy of particular statements and the reasons for such doubts are shown in the relevant chapters.

The interviews were often followed by correspondence which allowed me to clarify points made during interviews and permitted interviewees to pass on other information.

Documents published under the auspices of either local authority were useful mainly as a source of information regarding the staff and finance devoted to various services. In many cases they were extremely bland, giving a picture of a single entity - 'the local authority' - forming policy in a coherent and technically rational way. They became more interesting and useful when read in the light of information gathered from interviews. Such information allowed me to appreciate that official documents are often the product of the internal conflicts and compromises between groups within an authority.

Internal documents - unpublished records of meetings and reports by officers to committees, for example - proved a more fruitful source of information than published documents. Such restricted information was more easily obtained after interviews.

Footnotes

Chapter 1

1 The importance of establishing close personal links with local authorities - and, hence, the need to focus on only a few councils - is illustrated by the results of a recent survey. A postal questionnaire was distributed to a large number of authorities, requesting information on the policies of each in a number of fields. All the authorities questioned refused to disclose facts about policies despite their statutory obligations to do so. Some authorities ignored their obligations in as many as eight of the twelve policy fields for which information was requested (quoted in The Guardian 14 February 1984).

2 Appendix 1 describes how I contacted various authorities, outlines the requests I made to each and summarises their responses. It also lists the main interviews I conducted in Cheshire and Clwyd and indicates how I evaluated the accuracy of the information gathered.

3 The phrase 'local authority policy' describes courses of action (or inaction) which an authority's councillors and officers are not obliged - by, for example, legislation - to undertake. It should be noted that this definition does not imply that the policies of a local authority

can be reduced to the goals and strategies of councillors or officers: the definition allows that while local intervention may be attributed to councillors or officers it is not necessarily intended by or known to them.

Chapter 2

1 It is important to note that Mills' characterisation of the marxist position was made before the concept of a relative autonomy between economic and political levels and between the state and the capitalist class was made popular by structuralism. His description now only applies to one (more traditional) marxist conception of the relationship between the dominant economic class and the political elite - instrumentalism.

Chapter 3

1 It is important to guard against a possible confusion here. Cawson, Offe and Saunders might suggest that in reality all policy is a product of the combined and reciprocal influence of internal and external factors. This may be so but it is irrelevant to our characterisation of the models. The crucial characteristic of the models is the distinction between the state on the one hand and 'market' forces and social pressures on the other as qualitatively different influences on policy formation. We are concerned, above all, with considering the validity of this distinction not with an assessment of the manner in which each

of the models uses it. A recognition that internal and external influences interact does not mean that the internal/external distinction is not being made - the very idea of mutual and interacting influences implies more than one source of influence.

2 I also suggest, as Whitt (1980) argues, that the ability of capitalist groups to act cohesively and rationally in pursuit of their long term interests is commonly under-estimated.

3 As Pickvance notes (1980, 451), in most cases the increase in council revenue due to the higher rateable values brought about by redevelopment are compensated for by cuts in the Rate Support Grant. This does not apply, however, to councils such as Croydon whose property wealth is greatest since they do not receive the 'resources' element of the RSG.

4 Saunders himself notes, apparently without considering the reasons, 'the commitment of Croydon to a low rate policy' (1979b, 303).

Chapter 4

1 Although I am drawing here on Weber's analysis of bureaucracy, Marx also refers to a tendency for state bureaucrats to act in accordance

with the formal characteristics of their position - i.e. as if they are simply technical experts who represent the general interests of society.

> "The spirit of bureaucracy is therefore the 'formal spirit of the state'. Thus (the bureaucracy) makes the 'formal spirit of the state' or the real lack of spirit by the state into a categorial imperative. Bureaucracy counts in its own eyes as the final aim of the state. Because it makes its formal ends into its content, it enters into conflict everywhere with its 'real' ends." (1977, 31)

The difference between Marx and Weber on this subject lies in Marx's claim that the state has 'real'ends derived from its structural relationship to the capitalist class. In Weber's model the formal role of the bureaucracy is not seriously constrained by any structural role of the state.

Chapter 5

1 The reasons why the Treasurer prepared this paper are unknown. However, it was prepared during a period in which the County Council and the North-Western branch of the CBI were engaged in what the latter described as "a well-publicised disagreement" about the proposed 1979/80 County budget. The Council were also aware that the CBI had commissioned P.A. Management Consultants to conduct a 'Value for Money' study of the County's expenditure. I suggest, therefore, that the Treasurer's report was prepared as a response to potential charges of inefficient and wasteful expenditure.

2 The term Butskellism is used to denote the absence of party political conflict or disagreement on various subjects. It was first used to describe the manner in which the Conservative Party continued the policies of the Labour Party when Butler succeeded Gaitskell as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1951.

3 This characterisation of the post war state in Britain has parallels with analyses of the 'New Deal' era in the U.S.A., where the initiation of major reforms greatly expanded the state bureaucracy in organisations like the Tennessee Valley Authority (see Selznick 1966). But, as I pointed out earlier, the U.S. state bureaucracy is more closely linked to political parties.

4 Lee points out (1963, 143) that the siting of the new County Hall at Chester was also a reflection of the influence of officers. The building and its location 'was to some extent a monument to the fact that most of the leading officials preferred to live in or near Chester rather than in or near Crewe where until 1957 all the regular committee meetings were held'.

5 Unless otherwise specified all quotes and comments from Sir John Boynton are taken from an interview conducted by me in February 1983.

6 A detailed account of this reform can be found in Lee et al. 1974.

7 Sir John Boynton had previously been deputy clerk of Berkshire County Council.

8 Sir John Boynton's view is based on conversations with members of the appointments committee following his selection.

9 The review areas accounted for 60% of the county's increase in domestic rateable value between 1961 and 1971 (Lee et al. 1974).

10 Central government subsidies to offset the loss in rateable value would not have allowed the development of such ambitious programmes, as they were calculated only to permit the provision of a standard level of service throughout the country. They would not therefore have begun to offset Cheshire's loss in rate income until average (rather than above average) levels of service were at risk.

11 In fact, it was more likely to have adverse consequences for local councillors representing constituencies in the special review areas. By partially depriving their constituencies of capital investment the policy increased the possibility of an adverse reaction from the affected electorate.

Chapter 6

1 In February 1981 21,470 persons in the County registered as unemployed - 16.2% of the county's workforce. In certain areas within Clwyd this percentage is substantially higher. Since 1981 male unemployment has risen to over 19% with an increased proportion in the 20-54 age range.

2 Unless otherwise stated all comments from officers in Clwyd are taken from interviews conducted by me.

3 One can gain an impression of how Clwyd's industrial development programme compares with initiatives by other councils from the survey by the Association of District Councils, Review of local authority assistance to industry, and from the Joint Unit for Research in the Urban Environment, A Review of Local Economic Initiatives in the United Kingdom, August 1981. Details of selected local initiatives are also provided in the Local Economic Development Initiatives Services, prepared by the Planning Exchange Glasgow.
A general guide to the statutory powers and resources available to local authorities is given in Financial Resources for Economic Development, England and Wales prepared by CIPFA, INLOGOV and Planning Exchange Glasgow and Young et al. (1980). Miller (1981, 83-91) also provides useful reviews of literature relating to local authority economic initiatives.

4 This sympathetic attitude of industrial development officers to the 'needs' and demands of private business is summed up by the IDD's current advertising campaign to attract firms to Clwyd. The advertisements (as can be seen in Figure 6.4) assure potential investors that 'whatever your needs for industrial/commercial expansion or development Clwyd can meet them' (Financial Times, 25 March 1983).

5 I have previously emphasised that the influence of central government was the main external force promoting corporate management in Cheshire. Since this pressure was aimed at all local authorities I have assumed that it was the main external pressure responsible for the adoption of a corporate system in Clwyd County Council. The main aim of central government in promoting corporate management was to control departmentalism - and ultimately departmental expenditure. The influence of Clwyd's corporate managers on the County's industrial development programme cannot therefore be understood in terms of the objectives of central government.

Chapter 7

1 If the programmes had simply provided average levels of service any loss in rate income would have been compensated by an increase in R.S.G. (to ensure that average levels were maintained). But as many of Cheshire's programmes during this period involved above average levels of services any loss in rates would not be compensated by the

R.S.G. until average levels of provision were jeopardised.

2 The dependence of services on income from rates may also have encouraged those officers involved with expanding services to support or at least to not undermine the growth of population and industry in the county - since an increase in private property entailed a potential increase in the rate income on which service development depended.

3 Again, this trend was not peculiar to Cheshire County Council. Game and Skelcher suggest that the "spread and intensification of party politics is probably the single most far-reaching and undisputed change in local government" since its 1972 reorganisation (1983, 29).

4 All views, comments and quotes attributed to Sir John Boynton are again from the interview conducted by me in February 1983.

5 Unless otherwise stated all views, comments and quotes attributed to professional officers are taken from interviews conducted by me during 1981 and 1982.

6 The recent 'Barclay' Report (Barclay 1982) on the organisation of the social services reached the same conclusion (see chapter 3 of the report).

7 This illustrates one of the problems with Clwyd's corporate system: the corporate fund was intended to provide a pool of resources to help achieve corporate priorities, but it also hindered the achievement of these priorities as departments were unwilling to adjust their activities to meet corporate priorities where they risked 'losing' resources to the corporate fund.

Chapter 8

1 Saunders' (1983) latest model attempts to extend the dualist models by distinguishing three modes of policy making - 'corporatist', 'professional' and 'pluralist'. Saunders adds the professional mode to take into account the influence of state professions on policy making. But it is difficult to understand how this third mode relates to the other two since the distinction between the modes is still based simply on a distinction between production and consumption. I would argue that Saunders' latest work is in fact a confusion of two kinds of models. The first suggests that modes of policy making are simply reflections of the economic structure. (It is this model which accounts for the corporatist and pluralist modes.) The second claims, as I have done, that in generating political forms the economic structure gives rise to new determinants of policy. These derive not from the economic base but from the internal characteristics of those political forms. (It is this model which underlies the identification of a professional mode.) Since the corporatist and pluralist modes on the one hand and the professional mode on the other, relate to different models they

cannot be ranked as three elements of the same model.

2 This conclusion supports my earlier claim that the distinction between the economic structure and the political form of a capitalist society will be a more significant indicator of independent and responsive modes than the division between production and consumption.

3 This implies that even if party politics is treated simply as the 'politics of class' a focus on class relations will not be sufficient to explain the precise extent of professional autonomy.

4 Plural causation is not therefore the same as multiple causation: although the latter indicates that a phenomenon has a number of causes it implies that the same combination of causes are responsible for all cases of the phenomenon. (See Pickvance (1984) for a discussion of plural causation and its implications for models of social phenomena.)

5 The significance of local economic initiatives is an issue being debated throughout local government at the moment (see Wintour 1982, Bovaird 1981, Massey and Miles 1983 and Mawson 1981).

6 Lenin, for example, discovered that social reforms often failed or were difficult to pursue after the Bolshevik revolution because the communist leadership had failed to appreciate that their implementation depended on the cooperation of the state bureaucracy.

7 For example, in a hung council the inability of local political groups to represent the interests of external groups by developing a comprehensive political programme is due to a certain relationship among the parties. Since the problem is unrelated to the issue of professional autonomy, linking professional groups more closely to political parties would not make it easier for any political group to effectively represent its supporters. In a hung council, a 'decentralised' bureaucracy may be more appropriate as a means of increasing the influence of local groups in policy making.

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