RESISTANCE OR REFORM? THE POLITICS OF COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION 1965-1980, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CONSERVATIVE CONTROLLED LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

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ABSTRACT

Part I of the study analyses the development of comprehensive education in England between 1944 and 1960, concentrating on the post-1965 period. The progress of reorganisation and the build up of resistance to that policy are both included. At the end of part I a complex national policy process which operated for this particular issue is examined. Emphasis is placed on the roles of and relationships between individual local authorities, the national local government system, national educational opinion, the party system and central government. Finally the considerable variations in the response of Conservative dominated local authorities and the lack of any clear explanation for these variations is noted.

In part II three detailed case studies of the London Boroughs of Eerton, Richmond and Sutton and a much briefer account of Kingston are presented. These four Conservative dominated authorities displayed a full range of responses to comprehensive reorganisation from full and speedy reform to total resistance. The local policy process which produced these responses in each of the three detailed cases is examined in individual chapters. In the final comparative chapter explanations for the variations between the four authorities are sought using three broad theoretical perspectives. A pluralist explanation sees the variations as a response to different citizen preferences expressed through multiple centres of influence. An elite theory critique emphasises the closed nature of much of the decision-making and suggests that variations may lie in the differing interests or personalities of key individuals. Finally a structural explanation sees the class-related struggle for access to privileged forms
of education in each authority as the decisive determinants of the differing policy responses.
A brief summary of sections from part I and chapter 11 of this study were the basis of an article entitled, 'Intergovernmental Relations and the Limitations of Central Control: Reconstructing the politics of comprehensive education', published in the *Oxford Review of Education*, volume 6, number 1, 1980.
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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

| AASE       | Association for the Advancement of State Education |
| ACC       | Association of County Councils |
| ACE       | Advisory Centre for Education |
| AEC       | Association of Education Committees |
| AMA       | Association of Metropolitan Authorities |
| ANC       | Association of Municipal Corporations |
| CACR      | Central Advisory Council for Education |
| CCA       | County Councils Association |
| CGE       | Campaign for Comprehensive Education |
| CEE       | Chief Education Officer |
| CLEA      | Council of Local Education Authorities |
| DES       | Department of Education and Science |
| ESSC      | Education (Schools) Sub-Committee (Sutton) |
| GLC       | Greater London Council |
| GPDSST    | Girls Public Day School Trust |
| HMC       | Headmasters Conference |
| HMI       | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| ILEA      | Inner London Education Authority |
| KAAE      | Kingston Association for the Advancement of State Education |
| KPA       | Kingston Parents Association |
| LBA       | London Borough's Association |
| LCC       | London County Council |
| LEA       | Local Education Authority |
| MAASE     | Merton Association for the Advancement of State Education |
| NAHT      | National Association of Head Teachers |
| NALT      | National Association of Labour Teachers |
| NAS       | National Association of Schoolmasters |
| NEA       | National Education Association |
| NFER      | National Foundation for Educational Research |
| NUT       | National Union of Teachers |
| PACE      | Parents Action Committee on Education (Kingston) |
| RAASE     | Richmond Association for the Advancement of State Education |
| RPA       | Richmond Parents Association |
| RSG       | Rate Support Grant |
| RWP       | Reorganisation Working Party (Richmond) |
| SAASE     | Sutton Association for the Advancement of State Education |
| SCPASA    | Sutton Children and Parents Association for School Allocations |
| SEA       | Sutton Education Association |
| SEO       | Society of Education Officers |
| SESE       | Secondary Education Sub-Committee (Merton and Sutton) |
| SGFSC     | Schools and General Purposes Sub-Committee (Richmond) |
| SMS       | Selection Makes Sense (Sutton) |
| SOSC      | Secondary Organisation Sub-Committee (Sutton) |
| SSC       | Schools Sub-Committee (Richmond) |
| SSSC      | Special Sub-Committee (Sutton) |
| TES       | Times Educational Supplement |
| UWT       | Union of Women Teachers |
| WHEPA     | Wallington High School for Boys Parents Association |
Between 1965 and 1980 the organisation of secondary education in England underwent a fundamental change. 1965 was not the date at which this change started any more than 1980 heralded a period of complete stability. However it was in 1965 that the central government first clearly articulated its policy of creating a fully comprehensive system of secondary education. Furthermore, in 1980 it was possible, more than at any time since 1965, to say something about the extent to which that policy had been implemented without the fear that the assessment would be out of date by the time it appeared.

In 1965 a bi-partite selective system of secondary education predominated in England. At the end of their primary education most children took an 'eleven-plus' examination. On the basis of the results a proportion, usually the top 20-25% of the ability range, in each local education authority (LEA) were given places in grammar schools while the rest were allocated to secondary modern schools.

In January 1965 over 80% of 13 year olds in state schools in England were subject to this bi-partite system of selection, 61.4% were in secondary moderns, 19.0% in grammar schools. Another 12% of state maintained 13 year olds were in a variety of other schools which were also part of selective systems. However, 262 schools, catering for about 240,000 children or 7.7% of 13 year olds, were recognised by the DES in 1965 as 'comprehensive schools'.

In fact it can be argued that few of these were fully comprehensive schools. A comprehensive school is usually defined by
reference to the method of allocating children to the school. To be fully comprehensive it must meet two criteria. 1. Its intake must be determined without reference to the pupil's ability. The only exception to this is where ability is being used to construct a 'balanced' intake, i.e. one in which the ability range of the school matches as nearly as possible that of the catchment area or authority as a whole. 2. No child from the catchment area of the school can be selected on grounds of ability to attend any other state school (except to construct balanced intakes in those schools).

It is the second of these criteria which is frequently ignored and was not met by most schools in 1965 which were classified as comprehensives. When children from a particular area are selected for a grammar school this clearly affects the intake to any other school drawing on that same population. The grammar school will inevitably 'cream-off' a number of the higher ability children from the population. This leaves a skewed ability range which prevents any other school from being truly comprehensive because its intake will not be drawn from the full ability range available in the area. A 'comprehensive school' which fulfils the first criterion but is forced to compete with a selective school is not fully comprehensive, it is a 'coexisting comprehensive', that is, it coexists with one or more selective schools.

Many of the 262 schools in 1965 were coexisting comprehensives which had been established individually or in pairs within otherwise fully selective systems. Parents were free to choose these comprehensive schools and/or enter the selection process for grammar
school. A few parents of bright children opted for coexisting comprehensives but many more tried for grammar school places in the first instance.

So, in 1965, very few children attended truly comprehensive schools. That year the Labour Government issued DES circular 10/65. In an unusually clear statement of policy aims the Government declared its intention to abolish selection and create a fully comprehensive system of secondary education.3

Fifteen years later the pattern of secondary education had undoubtedly been transformed; but not into the complete nationwide system of comprehensive schools envisaged in the circular. The position in the 1980s is extremely complex. It is not helped by a lack of detailed up-to-date statistics. More importantly the picture is confused by a continued ambiguity, expressed in public and academic debate, over the definition of comprehensive reorganisation. For among those who fail to differentiate co-existing from full comprehensives are many LEAs and the DES. As a result the figures they produce frequently distort the extent of reorganisation.

According to the DES, in 1979 85% of maintained secondary pupils were in comprehensive schools and only one LEA had no comprehensive schools at all.4 However this includes many children in co-existing comprehensives and under this stricter definition many LEAs or parts of LEAs have no fully comprehensive schools. A common source of coexistence recently, is those LEAs who simply classify all their non-grammar schools as comprehensives. This is particularly common where the percentage of selection and the number of grammar schools have been reduced, a practice known as 'super-selection'. A super-selective system is one in which the percentage of children selected
is significantly below that of the traditional bi-partite system. It characteristically results in about 5% of children being selected for grammar school while all other schools are classified as comprehensive. In most of these cases the schools are coexisting comprehensives, albeit with a wider range of abilities available to them than the non-selective schools under the bi-partite system.

As a result of this continued confusion over coexisting and fully comprehensive schools at LEA and DES levels, it is not always possible in this study to maintain a clear distinction. It is often necessary to take DES figures at face value but the reader should be aware that these frequently include both types of school.

It is also clear that the private sector distorts the ability range of pupils available to comprehensive schools. This is particularly clear in the case of places in independent schools which are 'taken-up' by LEAs. Here pupils who would otherwise be in the state sector compete for free or assisted places in selection tests. These are certainly important issues affecting comprehensive schools, but in this study, for clarity and ease of analysis they are kept separate from the main struggle over selection within the state system.

The true picture of reorganization in 1980 is complex and difficult to unravel. A survey in June 1979 revealed that 44 of the 97 LEAs in England still retained grammar schools. Clearly none of these 44 are fully comprehensive. However it is difficult to be more accurate. Some areas within these authorities may be comprehensive while others co-exist. This is particularly true of large county authorities with just a few grammar schools. In addition some LEAs are still in the process of reorganising. Although future intentions are difficult to assess and may change, a follow-up
survey in June 1980 suggested that approximately 25 LEAs had no plans at that time to abolish their remaining grammar schools. Some of these will retain super-selective systems in part or all of the authority, while others will operate with large selective sectors almost indistinguishable from the traditional bi-partite pattern.

In essence the purpose of this study is to explain why there has been such a varied response to the policy of comprehensive reorganisation. Why is it that in 1980 the majority of LEAs in England are, or will soon become, fully comprehensive while at the same time in about a quarter of LEAs selection survives in some form and shows every sign of continuing. In short, why, in the face of the comprehensive issue, did some LEAs reform and others resist?

I. 2 THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE AND IDEOLOGY OF COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

Since the 1950s the comprehensive issue has excited considerable debate among politicians, academics and all those who participate in the education system. Numerous claims, from the modest to the revolutionary, have been made about the harmful or beneficial effects of selection or comprehensive education. It is important for this study briefly to examine these claims in order to assess the social significance of the comprehensive issue.

The Evidence

Many aspects of the debate are, in theory at least, empirically testable and a considerable amount of work has been carried out in this area over the years. One of the most theoretically and empirically sophisticated assessments of the selective system has recently appeared. Origins and Destinations by Halsey, Heath and
Ridge is part of the larger Oxford Mobility Study. It is based on a survey of 8,529 boys born between 1913 and 1952 and sets out to study the workings of the education system in England and Wales.

To a limited extent their findings refute some of the criticisms of the selective system. For example, contrary to the argument that grammar schools simply reproduced the cultural capital passed on to children from their parents, they found that two-thirds of boys who attended grammar schools came from homes with "no tradition of formal academic schooling." And once there they achieved just as well as boys whose parents were educational achievers. In social class terms, using a threefold division between Service, Intermediate and Working Classes, the overall composition of grammar schools showed the working class to be the largest (36.9%), followed by Intermediate (35.7) and then the Service (27.7). The authors concluded that the selective system had "played its part in the diffusion of cultural capital and gave effective educational opportunities to many able working-class children." At the same time this dispelled any claim that grammar schools were middle class institutions in terms of pupil backgrounds. Indeed they found that members of the highest of eight occupational categories (higher-grade professionals, administration, managers and proprietors) diverged most in their educational destinations.

On the other hand they also confirmed many of the inequities and injustices of the selective system. A boy from a service class family was still three times as likely to gain a grammar school place than a boy from a working class family. Even under a meritocratic model which the authors constructed, 14% more
service class boys received a selective education than should have done according to the distribution of IQ scores, while working class boys received 4½ fewer. The authors calculated that there were "around 6,000 boys from the working class who were denied their meritocratic due each year. Furthermore these calculations were based on 'average IQ scores' which, as the authors acknowledged, have been widely criticised as being biased against working class children. Because of the restricted size of the selective sector a further large group of boys who were capable of academic achievements were denied this opportunity. In the 1950 s and 1960 s this wastage of ability was "massive" and even in the 70 s "at least 7,000 boys each year could have obtained A level passes but were not in fact remaining at school long enough to do so". This dropping out at the minimum leaving age was much higher in secondary modern schools, but even in grammar schools it was higher among working class boys. The class inequalities evident for boys at eleven were accentuated at each stage of their educational career until those from the service class were eleven times as likely to reach university as their peers in the working class. Although the grammar school provided opportunities for some able working class boys, those borderline cases allocated to secondary moderns were denied such opportunities. That decision was "of decisive consequence" for those pupils being an important determinant of the length of their school career and subsequent examination success.

Of those boys in grammar schools between 1954 and 1970, 90.5% stayed on past the minimum leaving age and 81.5%
obtained at least one O'level. In secondary moderns the corresponding figures were 20.4 and 10.7%. Finally although grammar schools were not dominated by boys from any one social class, the population of secondary modern schools was made up of 65.7% working class, 28.7 intermediate and only 5.6% service class children.

However there is as yet little evidence to suggest that comprehensive schools will do much better in actually breaking down class barriers. Ford in her study was very pessimistic about comprehensives promoting social integration and found evidence that the middle classes were still reaping disproportionate benefits. Halsey et al, followed Kerokhoff in comparing the British selective system with the effectively comprehensive system in the U.S.A. They found the systems almost identically meritocratic and wrote, "Comprehensive reorganisation, we may conclude, will do little to increase (or reduce) equality of opportunity between the social classes". In general terms the 1970s witnessed a growing pessimism particularly associated with the work of Jencks and Bowden, about the chances of change in the school system making any major contribution to reducing inequality. Indeed the change from the neo-Marxists such as Bourdieu and Bowles and Gintis is that the role of ANY education system in a capitalist society is to reproduce and legitimise the inequality necessary for that economic system.

In this sense comprehensive reform could be seen simply as improving the efficiency and legitimacy of the system without disturbing these essential inequalities.
Certainly, even the most ardent comprehensive supporter would admit that there has been no dramatic transformation in the distribution of achievement or the social climate of schooling in Britain in the last fifteen years. Nevertheless, although not confirming any of the more extravagant claims, there is still some evidence that the comprehensive system will make a modest impact on educational opportunities and justice.

Despite the pessimistic quote above, Halsey et al. do suggest that at least comprehensive reorganisation should reduce the rigidities and arbitrary injustices of the selective system. And there is other mildly encouraging evidence. A study by Neave found that open sixth forms and exam entry policies in comprehensive schools are increasing the number of working class children staying on beyond the minimum leaving age, and he predicts that this will eventually increase the proportion of working class children entering universities. This is consistent with some of the earlier findings in studies by Miller, Eggleston and others, which were summarised by Hoyle as indicating that, "comprehensive schools are more successful than segregated schools of all types when considered together in inducing the desire for longer school life amongst their pupils." If these developments are confirmed this would be likely to improve working class opportunities for, as Halsey et al. concluded, "Access to the sixth form has been a crucial point of social selection in the period we have studied. It is here, taking the educational system as a whole, that departure from
meritocracy and consequential wastage of talent has been at its maximum". 28 Similarly Boudon has claimed that the 'branching points' in the education system, of which entry into sixth form is one of the most crucial in Britain, are where many inequalities are generated. 29

Finally, although in the rest of this study the internal policy of comprehensive schools is not considered, it is clear that such schools are more likely to operate forms of mixed ability teaching. The evidence on the effects of this is varied but on balance in Britain and the U.S.A. it tends to support the view that mixed ability teaching marginally improves the achievement of lower ability children without adversely affecting higher achievers. 30

The Ideological Debate

Although it is possible to present a considerable amount of empirical evidence such as that above in an attempt to resolve the debate, there remain three problems.

1. Even the most sophisticated research is based on certain methodological assumptions. There have been several attacks on the findings of studies in this area. Although none of these pinpoint 'objective errors' in the research, much of the methodological dispute is itself fundamentally ideological, for example the use of particular social class classifications.

2. Although the Oxford Mobility study provides considerable data on the selective system, it is much too early to be able to carry out a comparable study of the comprehensive system. As Halsey et al. are at pains to point out,
We cannot hope to resolve the arguments for and against comprehensive schools. Quite apart from the ideological issues involved, the data and indeed the realities of the British education system do not yet permit a proper assessment of comprehensive reform in Britain, selective grammar schools still exist in considerable numbers and many of the comprehensive that currently exist still show the stigma of their grammar or secondary modern predecessors. Another generation will have to pass before we can embark on any thorough evaluation. 31

The selective system which they studied has been replaced in many parts of the country by forms of super-selection and co-existence. It would be wrong to assume that Halsey et al's findings are necessarily applicable to this new form.

3. In the last analysis, no matter how much evidence is produced and how indisputable it is, many of the issues in the debate remain essentially ideological.

The ideological debate is not simply dichotomous. Although the two extreme positions in the debate are essentially diametrically opposed there are at least three clearly articulated intermediate positions which have been held. These five positions represent not only ideological stances in the debate, but actual policies which have been pursued. There follows a characterisation of these five positions and policies.

1) Traditional selection

Children of different abilities and aptitude have different educational needs. These are best catered for in different
institutions. Those children able to benefit from an advanced academic education should be educated together in a grammar school by teachers best able to provide this type of education. An objective form of selection, such as the eleven plus examination, ensures that those who most deserve and are best able to make use of a grammar school education are the ones who receive it. Selection is essentially meritocratic and ensures equality of opportunity.

At the same time a less academic, more practical and vocational education is better suited to the aptitude and future needs of the mass of children. As Pentock writes, "An excessive concern for opportunities may well be against the true educational interests of children of lesser, though still of good, ability....Their satisfactions may spring out of a fuller exploitation of such cultural possibilities as form part of their world rather than an attempt to afford them 'opportunities' via an unpalatable higher culture they cannot really assimilate." 32

A comprehensive school subjugates individual ability in the name of equality. The most able children are not stretched and do not receive the special attention and expert tuition available in a grammar school. Their academic as well as moral, cultural and behavioural standards are 'dragged down' by the less able.

Finally selection of around 20% rationally satisfies the needs of an advanced technological society for increased skills and training at the top.

ii) Selection with upgraded secondary moderns

The grammar schools have proved themselves as institutions of academic excellence and must be retained, but the education
of the rest of the population must be improved to offer equal opportunities and iron out the harsher aspects of selection.

The grammar schools must be retained because only they can offer opportunity to the able child from a deprived background and environment. No matter how good the neighbourhood comprehensive school is, it inevitably reflects the deprivation around it. The grammar school provides a ladder of opportunity for the able child to climb out of his poor educational environment. Thus the grammar school is essential for an open, mobile society. As Musgrove recently put it:

"If a think-tank had been established to consider how the recent spectacular advance of the manual working class in competition with the upper classes could be halted and preferably reversed, it could hardly have failed to recommend the sovereign remedy - the dissolution of the grammar schools."

Nevertheless there are problems with selection and the secondary modern school as it first developed. These can be ameliorated by replacing rigid, impersonal selection methods with a more flexible system including teachers' assessments, some guided parental choice and internal, less formal tests. Procedures for transfers between modern and grammar schools after eleven can be introduced. At the same time resources are equalised and the same courses and examinations made available for the top ability groups in secondary modern schools as exist in grammar schools. Secondary moderns are enlarged so as to provide viable and successful sixth forms. In these ways
selection becomes less rigid and the opportunities provided in each type of school more equal.

iii) Co-existence and Super-selection

Improving the secondary moderns is not enough because, particularly in more deprived areas, they will never have enough higher ability children to offer the range of courses, the expert tuition or the encouragement of academic peers available in grammar schools.

However this can be achieved without 'destroying' the grammar school. First it is possible to establish a few coexisting comprehensives within an otherwise bi-partite selective system. These schools will attract some high ability children who choose a comprehensive rather than a grammar school. It will also attract higher ability children who just fail to get into the grammar school. Alternatively comprehensive schools may be suitable for particular geographical areas such as sparsely populated rural areas or new residential areas such as council estates or new towns.

Finally it is possible to create systems of super-selection and co-existence. By keeping only the best grammar schools and reducing the percentage of selective pupils they become 'centres of excellence' for the high flyers who will benefit most from an intense academic environment. At the same time the remaining schools can become 'comprehensive' with a good range of abilities including several pupils who would have been in grammar schools under the bi-partite system. Thus the advantages of a comprehensive
system can be achieved while retaining the best grammar schools.

iv) Comprehensive reorganisation if the conditions are right.

A 'good' comprehensive system is the best system in the long run. However the selective system or forms of coexistence are better than a 'bad' comprehensive system and may be preferable in the short term until certain conditions are met. These conditions may include any or all of the following. Comprehensive schools should not be too large, large schools are impersonal and cannot cater for the individual. All schools in a comprehensive system should be of equal status and facilities. No school should be on split-sites or on inadequate or inappropriate sites. All teachers should receive in-service re-training before teaching in a comprehensive for the first time. All schools should become comprehensive at the same time.

v) Rapid and full comprehensive reorganisation

All systems of selection are unjust and perpetuate or exacerbate inequalities. Full reorganisation should be pursued vigorously. The apparent equality of opportunity offered by a selective system is illusory. Although there are no legal or financial barriers to gaining a grammar school place, selection rewards children not simply on the basis of objective ability but, in part, because they possess certain socially transmitted educational and cultural attributes and certain economic advantages.

Fedley, for example, writes, "None of the tests conceived and tried over the course of sixty years can satisfactorily
distinguish natural talent from what has been learned. Heredity
and environment are too closely entangled to be clearly identified.
This means that children from literate homes, with interested and
helpful parents, have an enormous advantage over children from
culturally poor homes where books are unknown and conversation
is either limited or unprintable. He emphasises the
cultural deprivation experienced by some children. Other
social scientists have referred to the cultural discontinuity
faced by the working class child in a middle class education
system where they lack the appropriate 'cultural capital' to
succeed. Furthermore, the differential costs and benefits
involved in a grammar school education for children and parents
at different positions in the class structure affect motivation,
aspirations and therefore achievement and staying-on rates.

The injustices of any selective system are particularly
acute because of the need for a precise cut-off point. Where
this cut-off point will come is largely arbitrarily determined
by the number of grammar school places which are available
in each LEA. This produces geographical inequities. Furthermore,
no system of selection is accurate enough to eradicate errors
within what is often a very large grey area of pupils on the
borderline between the different types of school.

Borderline decisions are important because the different
types of school offer different opportunities and experiences,
whatever selective system is used. Under the bi-partite system
many children who are capable of advanced academic work are
wrongly assigned to secondary modern schools where that work is not available.

This wastage of ability makes the selective system particularly inefficient for the needs of modern society which requires a large proportion of the population to become qualified and trained. In any case, as Carol Benn argues, "the grammar school was failing in...providing sufficient manpower for certain specific professions and faculties - most notably the scientific, mathematical and technological." 37 This was partly because it was tied to a traditional academic curriculum.

By contrast the comprehensive school is more flexible and provides a greater choice of courses. It does not make major irrevocable decisions about what type of education a child will receive at an early age. Any pupil capable of advanced work can be given that opportunity at any time within her school career.

In addition a comprehensive school benefits less able children because the presence of higher ability pupils in the same school, and particularly in the same classroom, aids their achievement.

Bi-partite selection is also socially divisive. It exacerbates inequalities by labelling some children successful and able to benefit from higher studies and other children failures and less able. This labelling process becomes something of a self-fulfilling prophecy as it influences the expectations of children and teachers which in turn has an impact on actual achievement. In the process it also legitimises inequality in society "by giving individuals educational aspirations strictly tailored to their position in the social hierarchy." 38
Even though Halsey et al found that grammar schools do recruit many working class pupils, as the authors acknowledged, "the grammar schools may have served more to assimilate the working class boys into middle class life and culture than to break down class boundaries." 39

Super-selection may be less wasteful of ability but it is likely to be more divisive. The opportunities and experiences available in a super selective grammar school will still be considerably different from those in coexisting comprehensives. The latter will still be starved of the brightest children while the former will provide an even more distinctive academic education. Furthermore super-selective grammar schools will be socially far more exclusive and confer disproportionate benefits on an already privileged elite. Even more than the bi-partite system, such an arrangement deserves the castigation which Tawney delivered in the 1930's against the division between fee paying and state financed schools.

"It is educationally vicious, since to mix with companions from homes of different types is an important part of the education of the young. It is socially disastrous, for it does more than any other single cause, except capitalism itself, to perpetuate the division of the nation into classes of which one is almost unintelligible to the other." 40

The comprehensive school at least avoids such acute divisions and at best actually promotes greater understanding, social integration and equality.

**Subjective significance**

This ideological debate has been at or near the forefront of
British politics throughout the last fifteen years. It was taken up by the two major political parties who in general have opposed each other vigorously over the issue. In 1969 a study by Kornberg and Freasure claimed that at the Parliamentary level, party differences were greater over this policy issue than any of nine other major issues tested. It has also been the subject of intense overt conflict in local politics. Sanders, in his study of Croydon, found that councillors ranked it as one of the most important policy issues they had dealt with. Newton in Birmingham concluded that it was "unique in recent local political history for the amount of interest and activity it aroused." In these places as elsewhere a number of pressure groups have been particularly involved in the issue locally and nationally. In addition it has generated considerable intra-party conflict, particularly within the Conservative Party. In fact the degree of open political conflict over this issue must rank it among the most overtly controversial policies in England since the war.

Although there are doubts about the macro-level objective significance of comprehensive education there is another dimension, its subjective significance. While liberals like Jencks and neo-Marxists like Bowles and Gintis might doubt the significance of comprehensive education as an agent of change in society, it seems clear that in England large numbers of people believe it is significant. The intensity of the ideological debate suggests that even at the macro level people believe comprehensive reorganisation will have an impact on society as
a whole. However, at the micro level there is an even clearer sense in which people are affected by and concerned with this policy.

Decisions on the organisation of secondary education have a clearly recognisable effect on the everyday lives of large numbers of people. They may affect which school a child attends, where that school is, how the school is organised, which courses a child follows, who will teach her, how she will be taught, what exams she will take, whether she will enter the sixth form, who her friends will be and many more factors which may influence her life. Most parents appear to care intensely about their children’s education. For the pupils themselves, schools provide significant experiences and occupy a large part of their lives. Looking back, it would be hard to find an adult who would not claim that their schooling had had an important influence on them. In recent years a wide range of phenomenological research has highlighted the significance of schooling for individuals’ achievement, behaviour and aspirations. A study by Rutter argued strongly that schools do make a significant difference. Even Jencks, who is often crudely quoted as arguing that schools don’t matter, is at pains to deny this. He clearly states,

“Some schools are dull, depressing, even terrifying places, while others are lively comfortable, and reassuring. If we think of school life as an end in itself rather than a means to some other end, such differences are enormously important. Eliminating these differences would not do much
to make adults more equal but it would do a great deal to make
the quality of children's (and teachers') lives more equal.
Since children are in school for a fifth of their lives, this
would be a significant accomplishment. 46

In England in 1980, children in neighbouring education
authorities may be educated in fundamentally different education
systems. These differences may affect children in any of the
ways described above. They may also affect the future lives of
those children and the type of society they live in. It seems
important to ask why those differences exist.

I.3 COMPREHENSIVE REORGANISATION AND POLITICAL PROCESSES

POLICY ANALYSIS

The majority of political scientists concerned with analysing
the workings of the British political system adopt an essentially
institutional approach. They provide increasingly sophisticated
analyses of the different components of the political system
and the pattern of relations between them. Recently however,
there has been an increasing interest in and demand for the use
of policy studies of the political system. 47 Policy analysis
is not only able to show the system in operation but it reveals
what difference particular political processes make. By relating
these processes to the outcomes which they produce, political
scientists are better able to assess how the system functions.
As a major policy issue comprehensive reorganisation provides
important material with which to analyse the workings of the
political system in England.

It has been pointed out that to concentrate entirely on
those policies which generate open political conflict is not
sufficient for gaining a full understanding of the operation of the political system. Many of the most significant issues may not produce such overt conflict while those that do may have a limited impact of people's lives. However, the struggle over comprehensive education was both overtly political and involves significant social consequences. As such it is a policy issue which enables the investigator to ask some of the most basic questions in politics, who gets what, why, how and with what consequences?

Such a salient political issue has inevitably attracted the attention of many social scientists. Several of these have focused to some degree on the political processes involved. However this study differs in three important respects from the existing literature. First the focus and level of analysis is quite different from most of the work in this area. Secondly, there is a more systematic approach to the structure of intergovernmental relations involved in this policy area. Thirdly the primary research data presented in the second part of the study is handled in a more consciously theoretical manner.

Focus and level of Analysis

There is a substantial literature which treats in some depth the politics of comprehensive reorganisation. However, much of this is not explicitly concerned with the operation of the political system but mainly with describing the development of the policy. Those studies with a more obvious political science orientation frequently focus on the role of particular
actors in the policy process. Kogan for example looks at
Parliament and national pressure-groups, Fenwick devotes
most attention to the teachers organisations, Parkinson
studied the Labour Party and David the role of education
officers.

Only a few studies make any attempt at an overall analysis
of policy-determination. Most of those that do have since been
overtaken by events. In fact only one of the detailed accounts
goes beyond 1972. Partly as a result of this, these studies
can only provide a partial analysis. The emphasis is almost
always on the development of comprehensive reform and they are
particularly weak in describing the build up of resistance and
the survival of selection. This resistance began in the 1960s
but it is largely with hindsight that the importance of the 1965-
70 period in this respect becomes clear. The local studies are
similar, mainly focusing on LEAs which successfully reorganised
and which were predominantly under Labour control.

This study is primarily concerned with why and how policy
developed in the way that it did and what the implications of
this are for understanding the political system. To do this
effectively involves studying the complete range of policy
responses. As a result several of the areas not covered by existing
studies become important. The analysis has a long time scale
and is brought up to 1980. It is concerned with the build
up and continuation of resistance as much as the progress of
reorganisation. At the local level it focuses particularly on
Conservative controlled LEAs, including those that continue to
operate selection.

The Structure of Intergovernmental Relations

A further weakness in the existing literature is the failure to analyse explicitly the structure of intergovernmental relations and the complexity of the policy system. In most of the local studies, with the chief exceptions of Saran, 56 and James, 57 the central government is treated largely as an exogenous influence - or even excluded altogether. 58 Other non-local sources of influence are rarely specified.

At the same time the national level studies frequently suffer from what Hill calls a 'top-down' bias. 59 That is a tendency to concentrate on central government policy-making and see LEAs mainly as implementors of that policy. This is particularly noticeable in those studies in which the historical narrative is broken up into periods corresponding with changes in the party control of central government. 60 Not all studies suffer in this way and Rubinstein and Simon provide a particularly good 'bottom-up' analysis. 61 However, even here the structure of the relationship is not specified and often appears as a simple two-way flow of influence between central government and individual local authorities.

In this study a more complex structure of intergovernmental relations is specified and applied in order to reveal the dynamic interaction between the tiers of government. As part of this the overall national policy process is examined in the light of the
fact, emphasised by Sharpe, 62 that central government is largely a non-executant arm of government. Thus the development of reorganisation is traced through the experiences of LEAs. In addition a wide-range of potential non-local sources of influence are recognised, not just central government. The complex policy system which determined reorganisation at the national level is analysed in part I of this study. From this it becomes clear that to understand why such variations in policy exist requires an in-depth study of individual LEA decision-making. This is undertaken in part II but within the context of the national developments already specified.

**Theoretical approaches to policy determination**

Most of the existing literature is overtly atheoretical. It neither uses nor confronts any particular view of how policy is determined. This study adopts a more theoretically conscious approach. This is particularly true of the major research element of the study, found in part II. Here case studies are examined from four LEAs which responded in different ways to the reorganisation issue. Three broad theoretical perspectives are used to analyse the evidence from these studies. These perspectives are pluralist, elitist and structural. Although each covers a wide range of theoretical and empirical work there are certain distinctive characteristics which are associated with all studies within that general perspective.

A pluralist approach recognises the existence of multiple centres of influence over political decisions. Power is widely dispersed among a number of competing groups.
individuals. Decisions are made by politicians who are responsive to the wishes of ordinary citizens. This responsiveness is achieved primarily through elections, political parties and pressure group activity. These input processes are the central focus of research and policy is explained largely in these terms.

An elitist perspective on the other hand sees power concentrated in the hands of a few individuals in top positions in society. The masses have no important political influence. Political power is concentrated in the hands of party leaders and senior bureaucrats who are largely insulated from popular pressure. In making policy political elites will be guided by their own interests and those of other elites with whom they have strong informal links and usually a common social background.

Structural approaches question the actor-orientated assumptions of both pluralist and elitist theories. Structuralists argue fundamentally that actors in the political system are constrained by the ecological, political and economic structures within which they operate. Decision-makers are not faced with unlimited choices and their behaviour is largely conditioned by circumstances over which they have little or no control. It is structural factors which guide their decisions and largely determine policy. There are a wide variety of perspectives adopted by structuralists ranging from those political scientists content to identify 'background variables' which correlate with policy to marxist and neo-marxist theorists who argue that class conflict fundamentally constrains and determines all political actions.

These theoretical approaches will be examined in more
detail later in the study and applied to the primary data collected in part II. The purpose of adopting a wide theoretical base for the study is to provide as full an understanding of policy as possible. The danger of a study which is carried out and presented atheoretically is that whatever the intention it might be implicitly and unconsciously dominated by one particular theoretical perspective. Being unaware of this, the student would fail to identify the assumptions which underlay the approach and might produce a distorted one-dimensional picture. This is because different perspectives frequently demand different methods of investigation, focus on different aspects of the problem and produce different findings.

Dunleavy argues that, "Much research which adopts no explicit theoretical position in fact rests extensively on pluralist assumptions about the state in liberal democratic societies". This seems to be true of many of the decision-making studies of comprehensive education. Nationally they focus on political parties, Parliament or pressure groups. Locally they stress the role of the chairman of education committee, the party leadership or local pressure group-activity.

In this study, by explicitly acknowledging the different perspectives and drawing on their methods and analyses, it is hoped that a more complete view of the policy process will emerge. The use of theoretical pluralism is advocated in order to avoid the dangers of atheoretical pluralism.

1.5 THE ORGANISATION OF THE ANALYSIS

Part I of the study focuses on the overall national
development of comprehensive reorganisation. Chapter 2 outlines the complex policy system involved and describes the main features of its component parts. Chapters 3-6 analyse chronologically the development of reorganisation from 1944 to 1980. In chapter 7 some conclusions are drawn about the operation of the policy system and how far this level of analysis can explain the variations in policy response which are uncovered. Although some of the determinants are discernable it is clear that in-depth studies of LEA decision-making are necessary particularly to explain variations among Conservative dominated LEAs.

In part II, these local studies are reported. Chapter 8 begins by examining the methods associated with different theoretical perspectives. It goes on to explain why and how the particular case studies and research methods used were chosen. Finally it provides a general introduction to the local political process. Chapters 9-11 report the three main case studies carried out in the London Boroughs of Merton, Richmond and Sutton. In each case a chronological analysis is used and preliminary explanations for the response to reorganisation are explored. In chapter 12 a briefer account is given of reorganisation in one other London Borough, Kingston. Chapter 13 provides a comparative analysis of these four case studies in an attempt to construct general explanations for the differences in policy response. First a pluralist explanation, then an elitist critique and finally a structural explanation is offered for the variations in policy. The compatibility of these alternative approaches is briefly discussed in a short concluding section.
Footnotes to Chapter 1

1. The main focus of this study is England. The education systems of Scotland and Northern Ireland have followed quite different patterns. Although Wales has been subject to most of the same regulations and adopted a broadly similar pattern of education to England, the traditions and particular circumstances of Wales place it in a slightly different position with respect to comprehensive education. However, up until 1970 the DES statistics of education were compiled for England and Wales together. As a result some of the figures used refer to both countries while others refer to England only. This is made clear in the tables and the text.


6. In June 1980 I carried out a brief telephone survey to follow up Geddes study. Using Geddes raw data (kindly made available to me) I telephoned all those LEAs without firm reorganisation plans for all their grammar schools. I spoke to officers in the education department and asked them about the situation. Although a few were evasive or were genuinely unsure it was clear that at least 19 and probably nearer 26 or 27 had no immediate plans for abolishing their remaining grammar schools.


9. Halsey, op. cit. p.199

10. Ibid, p.212

11. Ibid, p.62
12. Ibid., p. 52
13. Ibid., p. 209
14. Ibid., p. 209
15. Ibid., p. 200
16. Ibid., p. 184
17. Ibid., p. 212
18. Ibid., p. 107
19. Ibid., p. 53


22. Halsey, op. cit., p. 172


25. Halsey, op. cit., p. 213


29. Boudon, op. cit.

31. Halsey, op. cit., p. 10

32. G.H. Pantook, Education and Values, Faber and Faber, 1965, pp. 150-1 Quoted in Halsey, op. cit., p. 10

33. P. Musgrove, School and the Social Order, John Wiley and Sons, 1979, p. 114

34. R. Pedley, The Comprehensive School, Penguin, 1969 p. 15


36. See Lacey, op. cit; Jackson and Marsden op. cit.; and the work of Boudon, op. cit.


39. Halsey, op. cit., p. 203


42. P. Saunders, Urban Politics, Penguin, 1980, p. 262


45. K. Rutter et. al., Fifteen Thousand Hours, Open Books, 1979

46. Jencks, op. cit., p. 256


50. M. Kogan, Educational Policy Making, Allen and Unwin, 1975


56. Saran, op. cit.

57. James, op. cit.

58. See for example, P.M. Ribbins and R.J. Brown, 'Policy-making in English Local Government' in Public Administration, vol. 57, summer 1979.


60. Fenwick, op. cit.; Parkinson op. cit.; Pedley, op. cit; and R. Saran, 'The politics of educational policy-making,' in The Open University, The Control of Education in Britain, Course E222, Unit 6, The Open University Press, 1979. all suffer from this to some extent.

61. Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit.

Chapter 2 THE COMPLEX EDUCATIONAL POLICY PROCESS

Part I of this study analyses the overall development of comprehensive education in England, concentrating on the period between 1965 and 1980. This chapter outlines the education policy system describing the structure, functions and procedures of its main component parts. Although each part is examined separately it is clear that there is extensive interaction and overlap between them creating a complex policy system.

In describing the structure of this system and its main components the emphasis is placed on those aspects which have received less attention elsewhere and which are particularly important and relevant to the development of the comprehensive policy. 1

2. THE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES AND THE SCHOOLS

The LEAs

Although many of the details of LEA decision-making can wait until the second part of this study, it is important to start by understanding their role in the national policy system. LEAs are the executors of education policy, local or national. They establish and maintain schools and run the public education system from day to day. The 1944 Education Act defined most of their present powers and duties. It required them to provide three levels of education, primary, secondary and further. The 1964 Education Act permitted them
to bridge the primary/secondary divide with 'middle schools'.

Within certain restrictions LEAs are free to determine the organisation of schools within these levels. At the secondary level, for most of the period since 1944, this included the freedom in law to decide whether or not to operate a selective system. Thus LEAs ultimately determined the progress of comprehensive reorganisation.

The 1944 Act established 129 LEAs for England. They were all either counties or county-boroughs. The only other authority which in some cases had control over the decision on selection was the excepted district. This was a form of delegated administration for non-county boroughs and urban districts permitted under the 1944 Act. There were 44 excepted districts initially, this was later reduced to 30. In the statistics presented in this part of the study excepted districts are included within the figures for the county as a whole.

There have been two major changes in the number of LEAs since 1944. The 1963 London Government Act created 20 new outer-London boroughs as LEAs and turned the old London County Council (LCC) into the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). They took up their responsibilities as education authorities in 1965. The 1972 Local Government Act changed local government in the rest of England. On May 1st 1974, 39 non-metropolitan counties and 36 metropolitan districts (the lower tiers of 6 metropolitan counties) became LEAs, making a total (including London) of 96 LEAs in England.

In general the London change created more and smaller LEAs while the 1972 Act created fewer and larger LEAs. The
1974 changes also took educational responsibilities away from areas most often under Labour control (the county boroughs) and gave them to areas more often under Conservative or independent control (the counties).

The post-war period has seen a fairly dramatic rise in the party political control of local government and a decline in the number of seats won by independents. The rural counties were the last education authorities to change in this respect. Between 1964 and 1974 there were just 13 counties (9% of LEAs) in England under continuous independent control. The 1974 changes marked the end of all but two of these. In fact many of the independent councils had been little different from those under Conservative control. Independents frequently joined forces with Conservatives, at first in 'anti-socialist' coalitions and later moved under the Conservative label.

Party dominated LEAs have almost all been under either Labour or Conservative control. However, despite the apparent parallels with Parliament's essentially two party system, many LEAs have been effectively dominated by just one party. Between 1964 and 1974, 34% of LEAs were under continuous or dominant, Conservative or Conservative plus independent control. This Conservative dominance was particularly marked in counties, where they controlled over half the LEAs throughout this period. At the same time 3% of LEAs were under continuous or dominant Labour control. That left 49% of LEAs which were not dominated by any one party. Dunleavy has
calculated that post-1974 LEAs accounting for 75% of the population of England and Wales are likely to be dominated by a single party. 4

Evidence suggests that local elections are overwhelmingly determined by the national standing of the parties. 5 As a result a common pattern in those LEAs which do change hands has been for local control to swing against the party in power in Westminster in the period between general elections when the Government is frequently unpopular. This, together with the high proportion of Conservative dominated LEAs, had an important influence on the progress of comprehensive reorganisation.

The Schools

LEAs own, maintain and control the majority of secondary schools in England. All these schools are required by law to have a governing body which is appointed by the LEA. The governing body has limited powers and duties, the most important being the appointment of the head and senior teachers. The internal policy of these schools is largely in the hands of the head teacher. But all decisions on the educational character of these schools and the role they play in the local education system are controlled by the LEA.

However, there are secondary schools which do not fit into this pattern. Almost one-fifth of secondary schools are voluntary schools (See table 2.1.). They are owned by voluntary bodies or foundations but are maintained by the LEA and are part of the state maintained sector. There are three types of voluntary status.
Voluntary controlled schools, as their name implies, are effectively under the control of the LEA and little different from LEA schools. The buildings are owned by the foundation but the LEA bears the full cost of maintaining the school. In return the LEA appoints two-thirds of the governors, most of the teachers and determines the school's intake. The foundation only retains some limited control over the appointment of the head teacher and religious instruction in the school.

Voluntary aided schools retain greater independence and receive rather less financial aid. The LEA continues to be responsible for the running costs of the school but only a proportion (albeit a large proportion - 80% since 1967) of the cost of improving and maintaining the school buildings is met from public funds in a grant from the DES. As a corollary the LEA appoints only one-third of the members of the governing body which retains control over the appointment of teachers, a large part of what is taught and the intake of pupils to the school.

Special agreement voluntary schools are similar to those with aided status except that the LEA appoints the teachers. There are far fewer schools of this status.

The importance of voluntary schools for this study is that the governing bodies of aided and special agreement schools, through their control over the intake of pupils can refuse to participate in the reorganisation plans of LEAs.

Most voluntary schools are denominational.
### Table 2.1 Voluntary Secondary Schools in England and Wales, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Controlled</th>
<th>Aided</th>
<th>Special Agreement</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. of E.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Religious</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Religious</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Vol.</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Vol Sec Schools</td>
<td>958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Maintained Sec Schools</td>
<td>5148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vol Schools as percentage of all maintained sec schools</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Church of England schools are often voluntary controlled while Roman Catholic are exclusively of aided or special agreement status. In these cases the diocesan authority concerned is usually involved in reorganisation negotiations. This may cause delays and occasionally disrupt schemes but in the end most have agreed to some form of reorganisation to fit in with LEA policy. However, there are a number of voluntary secondary schools which are not denominational. (24% in 1971)
These are primarily controlled schools but about one-third (8% of all voluntary secondary schools in 1971) are aided foundation grammar schools. They are particularly common in and around London. These foundations frequently wish to retain the selective character of their schools. One step further removed from LEA control were the direct grant grammar schools. These were independent schools which received a grant from the central government. In return the schools were required to offer a minimum of 25% of their intake each year to LEA pupils. A further 25% of places were 'reserved' for the LEA but these places would have to be purchased by the authority. In 1975 there were 174 direct grant grammar schools in England and Wales, catering for about 1.4% of secondary pupils. Fifty-five of these schools were Roman Catholic. In September 1976 the Labour Government abolished the direct grant for any new pupils.

Independent schools are entirely owned and maintained privately deriving their income from fees and endowments. They are subject to central government inspection and schools must meet certain minimum standards if they are to be registered. Schools of a higher standard can apply to be 'recognised as efficient' by the DES. About half the independent schools in England are 'recognised'. The Public Schools Commission calculated that in January 1967 6.4% of secondary pupils in England and Wales were in independent schools. Most independent secondary schools take in pupils at the age of 13. In addition there are preparatory schools
catering for pupils up to 13, some of which are attached to secondary independent schools.

The Commission estimated there were about 1,300 independent secondary schools and 1,800 preparatory schools in England and Wales. Only 288 of these schools were defined as 'public schools'. These were the schools which belonged to either the Headmasters' Conference (HMC), the Association of Governing Bodies of Public Schools or the Association of Governing Bodies of Girls' Public Schools. The HMC schools are generally regarded as the most prestigious.

Another organisation, the Girls Public Day School Trust (GPDST) is relevant for this study. Founded in 1872 it administers 23 independent girls schools, most of them direct-grant schools at one time. Two of the LEAs studied in detail in part II contained GPDST schools.

Independent schools recruit mainly from a narrow social strata. Halsey et al found that two-thirds of the pupils at HMC schools were from the service class while only 6 percent were working class. Direct-grant school pupils were over half service class and only 16 percent working class. 9

The only direct connection between the independent sector and LEAs occurs when the latter decide to purchase places at independent schools. This was permitted under the 1944 Act and became quite common. In 1971 for example, 57 LEAs in England were paying fees for children in independent schools. The numbers involved were usually small, the average
for the country was 0.5% of secondary pupils. This included a small number of pupils in independent special schools.

In making and implementing education policy for their area therefore, LEAs may be constrained by those schools over which it has less than total control. This proved important for the progress of comprehensive education.

2.2. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Powers of the Minister

The 1944 Education Act established the Ministry of Education. In 1964 it became the Department of Education and Science (DES). The Minister of Education, or from 1964 the Secretary of State (also known as 'the Minister') is required by the Act to, "secure the effective execution by local authorities, under his control and direction, of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive education service."

As indicated above, much of the specific duties for providing such a service are given to LEAs. However, the Minister has at least three types of resources which he can employ in order to set and pursue national policy objectives. These resources are authoritative, financial and legal. The authoritative resources have no specific powers behind them but derive from the Minister's position at the head of the education service and the overall responsibility given to him in the quote above. It includes in particular the use of circulars and administrative memoranda to inform, advise or encourage particular actions from LEAs. Rhodes points out
that, "The circulars issued by central departments can have no specific statutory basis but they can also be seen as legitimate interventions and as a means of central supervisions." In addition the Minister can make use of his national standing to issue statements, express opinions and make general announcements. This may be done through Parliament, press conferences or speeches and depends largely on the media for dissemination. Finally the DES may exert some influence over LEAs through the collection, analysis and reporting of information. The department is responsible for a number of research projects and conferences, and publishes a variety of literature relating to education.

The financial resources relate to the Minister's control over the level, distribution and use of funds for the education service. From 1966 to 1980, the level of LEA recurrent expenditure financed by the central government was determined in negotiation over the Rate Support Grant (RSG), in which the DES plays a part. The RSG provides the central government with a general control over the level of spending of LEAs. On a similarly broad level the DES also controls the overall supply of teachers to the education service. However, neither of these powers allows central government to determine the use of these resources by LEAs.

Control over capital expenditure does provide more scope for DES influence over LEAs. Control over expenditure on building and improving schools has been used as a specific weapon in the reorganisation struggle. Until 1974 school
building programmes were divided into major and minor works according to a varying cost criteria (in 1973 minor works were those costing less than £40,000). In neither case did central government provide any of the money but the minister's approval was needed before LEAs could spend any of their own funds (derived from rates or more usually loans) on school building.

The minor works allocation was simply divided up by the DES among all LEAs who were then free to choose how they spent the lump sum allotted to them. In the major programme approval was required for each individual project. LEAs drew up and submitted a list of major projects in order of priority. Until 1968 this was organised on an annual basis but in 1969 a three year rolling programme was introduced. Using demographic data and local reports from H'Is the DES decided which, if any, of the projects to approve. In this they frequently overrode the priorities specified by LEAs.

In 1973 as a result of financial strains, particularly in the building industry, approvals were suspended. A new three year programme began for 1975-6 in which one lump sum allocation was made for major and minor works for each LEA. The authority was free to decide how much of the allocation to spend (in recognition of the financial restraint being exercised by some LEA's) and on which projects. Although this implied less central control, the major projects list
still had to be approved at each stage of the three year programme and this left considerable room for negotiation and influence. Once the building programme has been allocated, loan sanction to LEAs is normally automatic.

The Minister's legal resources derive from the 1944 Education Act and subsequent amendments and interpretations of it. They provide a number of regulatory and supervisory powers over LEAs and schools.

One of the most important for this study is the power to approve, modify or reject proposals from LEAs to establish new schools or cease to maintain existing schools. The 1968 Education Act widened this to include the approval of any significant change in the character of a school. Section 13 of the 1944 Act required LEAs to publish notices containing any such changes proposed. The public are then given two months to send objections to the minister about the changes, after which time a decision is made. This effectively has given ministers the power of veto over comprehensive reorganisation schemes devised by LEAs.

Sections 68 and 99 of the 1944 Act give the minister the power to direct LEAs to act or not to act in a particular way. Section 68 can be invoked if the minister decides that an LEA is acting 'unreasonably'. This is not such a strong weapon as it sounds because the legal definition of unreasonable is very narrow and the courts have required the minister to provide clear and specific evidence of any such unreasonableness. Section 99 is used when an LEA defaults on its statutory duties and an order from the minister under this section
directing them to comply can be enforced through an application for mandamus from the courts. Neither of these powers are used very often. The minister also sets certain minimum standards and general regulations and can instigate inspection of LEAs.

The other major amendment to the 1944 Act came in 1976. This provided the Minister with specific powers relating to LEAs and comprehensive education and will be discussed in detail below. ¹⁴

The Organisation of the DES

For the purposes of this study it is necessary only to describe those features of the DES which deal with schools and have responsibility in an area important to reorganisation policy. ¹⁵

The internal organisation of the DES has changed several times since 1944. Currently the department is divided into 17 branches, three of which are directly concerned with schools. Prior to 1972 there was only one schools branch. The new 'Schools Branch I', like the old schools branch, is responsible for the organisation of maintained schools in England. This includes the building programme and the establishing or closure of schools. It is divided into ten territorial teams, each responsible for a number of LEAs and headed by a territorial principal. Three other branches, Teachers, Architects and Building, and Finance, and a Planning Unit were also concerned with aspects of reorganisation.

Each branch is headed by an Under-Secretary and there is also a Deputy Secretary above them who is responsible for schools.

Reorganisation plans were initially handled by the territorial
teams with the junior minister closely involved. Only controversial cases would involve the Secretary of State. In such cases contact between LEAs and the DES could take the form of a deputation from the LEA to meet the Secretary of State or the junior minister. Meetings between the officers of an LEA and the department were not uncommon in such cases.

However, communication is usually at a distance, by telephone or letter. The territorial principal and the chief education officer are often in contact. But a closer relationship usually builds up between LEAs and their HMI and between the HMI and the territorial principal.

HMIs

Although nominally independent as appointees of the Crown as Regan notes, "HMIs are, in practice, the department's professional territorial force." In personnel and function they are a classic example of overlap between tiers in the educational policy system. They effectively work for the DES, they are appointed to serve in particular LEAs within specified regions of the country and their unit of investigation is the school. Furthermore they are nearly all ex-teachers. There were between 250 and 300 HMIs concerned with school inspection during the period of this study. Apart from a small headquarters staff they are organised into eight regional divisions for England.

HMIs are no longer 'inspectors' in the usual sense of the word. Their main role today is giving advice and passing
on information. They act primarily as intermediaries between the DES on the one hand and LEAs and the schools on the other. They collect and dispense information on a two-way basis, keeping the DES informed of developments in the schools and LEAs in touch with the current thinking within the DES. They played an important role in reorganisation. Their reports and local knowledge, were often vital aids to the territorial teams in the DES, in assessing the feasibility of reorganisation plans and the urgency of major building projects submitted.

Cabinet, Parliament and the National Parties

Although the Secretary of State's powers over LEAs are limited, ultimately they can be extended in the same way as they were established, by legislation. Between 1944 and the start of the 1979-80 Parliament there had been 18 education acts.

All post-war Ministers for Education have been members of the Cabinet. At times this post has had a relatively low status within the Cabinet hierarchy. However, with a recent line-up which includes Edward Boyle, Anthony Crosland, Margaret Thatcher and Shirley Williams it is clear that much depends on the individual and the priorities of the particular Government. Between 1944 and 1980 twenty individuals have held the post, making the average tenancy of the office under two years, a relatively short period.
### Table 2.2

**Occupation of MPs 1945-74**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Lecturers</th>
<th>Teachers+ Lecturers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 2.3

**MPs and Cabinet Ministers educated in Public Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>M.P.'s 1945-74</th>
<th>Cabinet Ministers 1970*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Cabinets immediately before and after June 1970 General Election.

Parliament's influence over education, as other policies, is restricted. Nevertheless, there are strong parliamentary links with other parts of the educational policy system. As Table 2.2 shows, a large proportion of Labour MPs are either teachers or lecturers by profession. Taken together they represent the largest occupational category for the recruitment of Labour MPs. The number of lecturers showed a particularly dramatic increase from 1966 onwards. The presence of many teachers and educationalists in the Labour Party takes on an institutional form in the Socialist Education Association, formerly the National Association of Labour Teachers.

On the other hand Table 2.3. shows that experience as the recipients of state education is limited as a result of the high proportion of MPs who were public school educated.

It is also worth noting that over the same period, 25% of Conservative MPs and 45% of Labour MPs had prior local government experience. 17

As representatives of local constituencies MPs frequently became involved, at the periphery, in the comprehensive issue. Kogan calculated that 286 questions were asked in the House of Commons on comprehensive education between 1964 and 1971 and that 62% of these concerned local issues. 15 In addition MPs frequently received deputations and contacted the Secretary of State on behalf of their constituents or the LMA.
There is also a select committee on education and science, although it has not touched the obviously controversial issue of reorganisation.

Both major parties in Parliament have back bench committees on education. Outside Parliament the parties have research departments which deal at times with this issue. "Then the party is in opposition this may be the source of future policy planning.

There are a number of institutional contacts between national and local parties. The one which is most policy orientated is the annual party conference. Both major party conferences always include an education debate. However, less formal contacts are also maintained and meetings between senior members of local party groups in LEAs and the party's national spokesman on education are not uncommon, particularly over reorganisation.

2.3. OTHER MEDIATING INSTITUTIONS.

Despite the importance which must be attached to the direct interaction between LEAs and the central government, the structure of intergovernmental relations in the policy system is not simply a two-way relationship. There are other important mediating institutions.

The National Local Government System

Dunleavy in his study of the diffusion of high rise housing policy among local authorities showed the importance
of the 'national local government system' and of the interaction between local authorities. 20

Dunleavy defines the national local system as, "the complex web of inter- and supra-authority relations" which together define the national role and state of opinion in local government as a whole. 21 Other writers have used the phrase 'the local government world' to refer to much the same thing. 22 Although it is partly informally constituted and therefore difficult to specify, it is important to try to analyse some of it's constituent parts.

At its most basic it refers to the knowledge by members of one local authority of what is going on in the others. It includes a variety of types of meetings or communications between elected members and officials. There may be small informal meetings between individuals, visits by members of one authority to another, large scale conferences or formal organisations of which the authorities are members. Neighbouring authorities are particularly likely to interact regularly and usually keep each other informed of all major policy decisions. There are a number of annual conferences at which representatives of LAs meet each other. These include specific educational conferences, for example the North of England Education Conference, the local government conferences of the two major parties and the annual conferences of the main local authority associations.
These associations are undoubtedly the most influential institutionalised form which the national local government system takes. Until 1974, the main associations which had some dealings with education were the County Councils' Association (CCA), the Association of Municipal Corporations (AMC) representing boroughs, a separate London Boroughs Association (LBA) and the Association of Education Committees (AEC).

The AEC represented all education committees except ILFA. It was the only association to represent an individual local government service. It was run by an elected executive committee of 40 representatives from the LEAs, including 12 chief education officers. Sir William (later Lord) Alexander was general secretary of the AEC from 1944 until its demise in 1977. This occurred as a result of local government changes of 1974. At that time the CCA and AMC were replaced by the Association of County Councils (ACC) representing non-metropolitan counties and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA) representing metropolitan counties and districts and the London Boroughs. The CCA and AMC had (and the LBA continued to have) an education committee but these committees were not as active or influential as the AEC. This caused considerable resentment and when the new associations were set up they formed a joint Council of Local Education Authorities (CLEA) and advised members to withdraw from the AEC. The AEC struggled on for three more years but eventually collapsed.
Since 1974 the new associations have become more clearly politically controlled than before. The CCA is invariably Conservative dominated while the AEA is usually, but not always, under Labour control. The AFC and the CLEA, have been less overtly political.

All these associations, but particularly the AFC and CLEA, present a forum for the discussion of issues common to LEAs. They provide an opportunity for regular contact and the collection and dissemination of information about LEA policies and problems. The AFC's journal, *Education*, also plays an important role in this respect. The Associations also represent LEAs in their dealings with central government and on national bodies concerned with education. They have a statutory right to be consulted on teachers' salaries and the fixing of the RSG and a traditional right to be consulted on all major policy issues in education. This consultation is more than merely cosmetic. Given the dependence of central government on LEAs for the implementation of all education policies, their co-operation is important. The AFC under Lord Alexander was a particularly strong advocate of local control of education. Regan claims that "For three decades Lord Alexander was probably the most powerful single voice in the educational world." 23

The Professions

The educational professions are closely associated with the national local government system. However as
independent institutions they are separate and important potential sources of influence on the actions of central and local government. There are three main professions involved in the educational policy system: teachers, education officers and local inspectors and advisers.

Teachers, unlike many professions, do not have a single professional organisation. Indeed some teachers belong to no organisation at all. The membership of the main teachers associations in 1971/2 is shown in Table 2.4.

The largest is the National Union of Teachers (NUM). It represents over half of all primary and secondary teachers, with primary teachers in the majority. There are also a relatively large number of head teachers in the union and particularly on the national executive committee which runs the union between conferences. The second largest is the National Association of Schoolmasters (NAS) which grew dramatically in the 1960s and now represents a majority of male teachers. In 1967 the Union of Women Teachers was formed with the help of the NAS and in 1976 was amalgamated with it to form the NAS/UTT.

The Joint Four Association is a federation of the Association of Assistant Mistresses and the Association of Assistant Masters (amalgamated in 1978), and the Incorporated Association of Headmasters and the Head Mistresses Association (also amalgamated in 1978). The Joint Four traditionally represented mainly grammar school
Table 2.4 Membership of Teachers Unions and Associations
England and Wales, 1971-2

a) Primary and Secondary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union or Association</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUT</td>
<td>188,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Four</td>
<td>56,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWT</td>
<td>14,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAHT</td>
<td>16,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAT</td>
<td>4,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>334,400</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Secondary School Teachers only

Men

- NAHT: 4.6%
- Joint Four: 26%
- NAS: 36%
- NUT: 20%
- Other, including non-unionised: 7.4%

Women

- NAHT: 22%
- Joint Four: 36%
- NUT: 4.8%
- UWT: 5%
- Other, including non-unionised: 9%

Notes:
- Figures and proportions are approximate, complicated in particular by dual membership.

Source: R. Perman 'The State of the Unions' TBS 1/12/72
teachers, although recently its membership has become more diverse.

The National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) is an offshoot from the NUT and often shares membership with it. It represents the overwhelming majority of head teachers and as such is a particularly important member of the local policy system.

All these groups have national and local organisations and are widely consulted by governments at both levels. Nationally the NUT is particularly active, getting involved in broad educational policy, carrying out research and taking a position on many major areas of social and economic policy. Between 1964 and 1974 there were always either four or five NUT sponsored MPs in Parliament (one or two Conservatives and 3 or 4 Labour). In addition many more MPs are NUT members. In 1964 there were 57, all but one in the Labour Party. 25

The NAS is a rather more insular member-orientated union concentrating on salaries and conditions. Nevertheless in the early 1970s it joined the NUT in becoming a member of the TUC. It maintains a special relationship with one MP from each of the three main parties in Parliament.

All the teachers associations maintain a local organisation in each LEA. A LEA-teachers consultative machinery exists in each LEA for regular liaison and is usually organised along union lines. The same applies to the system of teacher representatives on the education committee. 26 This is a statutory right and provides teachers with direct access to one of the key decision-making arenas.
The local branches come together at the annual conferences which make policy. The Secretary of State frequently addresses one or two of these conferences particularly the NUT conference. Teachers also frequently come together on a non-union basis, both within LEAs and nationally, at conferences, in-service training courses and numerous other meetings.

All the teachers' groups nationally took up positions of some kind on the comprehensive issue. Locally they were always consulted and usually extensively involved in the drawing up of the detailed schemes of reorganisation. The extent of their influence remains to be analysed but at the outset it is clear that the lack of organisational unity presents important constraints on their role.

Education Officers are the professional administrative staff of LEAs. They are almost exclusively recruited from the teaching profession. Career promotion can be achieved by moving between LEAs as well as within them. The most senior post in the profession and the head of each LEA's educational administration is the Chief Education Officer (CEO), or sometimes called the Director of Education (DoE).

In the 1970s when corporate management techniques were introduced in many local authorities, education officers fought harder than almost any other administrative profession for the independence of their service. Nevertheless as a professional organisation it probably
does not have the strength or prestige of, for example
town planners or architects.

Almost all education officers are members of the
Society of Education Officers (CEO). It was formed after
the amalgamation of the Society of Chief Education Officers
with the Society of Education Officers. The Society is
run by an executive committee between annual conferences.
It is also organised into regional groupings of LEAs.

CEOs in particular, regularly meet each other
formally and informally. They are also involved closely
in the national local government system, particularly in
the ABC.

Education officers were inevitably important in the
comprehensive issue. They were in the front line preparing
plans for LEAs consulting with local groups and receiving
information, advice and directives from the central government
as well as through the national local government
system. As
a unified profession education officers might be expected
to have a powerful nationalising and homogenising influence
on policy. As a relatively small profession, they are able
to exchange ideas and information easily. One CEO
interviewed by Kogan remarked, "In a job as responsible
as that of a CEO, you are always thankful for a dialogue
with people who are doing the same job and consequently
the very fact that these (the education officers and local
authority associations) are arenas where you can discuss
the problems helps a great deal, but also, the conference
of, for example, all the Greater London CEOs, did affect to an extent the way of things in one's own borough because one gets ideas from one's colleagues. Also, when we discussed issues on a general level, we did agree that in certain areas......we would keep a more or less general standard throughout." 27 However, Johnson and Dunleavy point out that professions which are exclusively employed in the public sector, as education officers are, may become employer orientated, develop a 'localism' and lose some of their autonomy. 28

LEA advisors and inspectors may be subject specialists or general inspectors. They are the members of the education department who liase most closely with individual teachers. They are all ex-teachers themselves. They may play an important role in discussions on the staffing implications of re-organisation. They also have their own national association.

Other Sources of Educational Opinion

Apart from those institutions centrally concerned with operating and controlling the education system there is a wide range of expert opinion on education which has potential influence on policy nationally and locally. The most important sources of that opinion, for this study at least, are educational pressure groups, the media, educational quasi-governmental agencies and the higher education sector.
Pressure groups and the media

As well as the largely 'protective' pressure groups representing the professions and the local authorities, there are a number of 'promotional' pressure groups which operate in the national policy system. Most of the groups which have been involved in the comprehensive debate are relatively recent arrivals.

The Confederation for the Advancement of State Education (CASE) began in the early 1960's as a local parent pressure group in Cambridge. It has expanded to over one hundred local associations (AA3Es) and the national confederation. Its membership is overwhelmingly intellectual, middle class and numbers around 10,000. Its main concerns are the rights of parents to be consulted and represented in educational decision-making. Since 1965 it has taken a consistently strong pro-comprehensive line nationally and in most of its local associations.

The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) is another consumer group opposed to selection. It is a single national organisation with a much smaller membership than CASE. It concentrates on research and acting as an advice centre. Its chairman for many years was Dr. Michael Young.

The Comprehensive Schools Committee or, as it became known, the Campaign for Comprehensive Education (CCE) was formed in 1965. It collects and disseminates information and has been one of the strongest promoters of full re-organisation. It is a national organisation with a full time staff. One of its most active and best known members is Caroline Benn.
The National Education Association (NEA) was formed in 1965 to coordinate the efforts of parents in several LEAs in campaigning for the retention of grammar schools. It has a number of local branches in LEAs.

The Black Paper Group are not part of a formal organisation but nevertheless, operated as a pressure group. Its members are the authors and editors of a number of articles published by the Critical Quarterly Society in five 'Black Papers' between 1969 and 1977. Although the group does not hold a unified position it generally expresses a concern at what it sees as a decline in educational standards. The blame for this is variously placed on 'progressive' teaching methods, student militancy and the demise of the grammar school. Its two most prominent individuals are Dr. Rhodes Boyson, headmaster and Conservative Minister and Brian Cox, Professor of English at Manchester University.

These groups have used a variety of strategies to make their demands known and attempt to influence national policy. They include lobbying or building up contacts with MPs and councillors, contacting or being consulted by ministers, senior councillors and officials, publishing research reports, mounting campaigns and issuing statements. The emphasis depends on the particular group and the issue. CASE became a legitimate group to be consulted by the DES on certain issues. The CCE built up such an expertise that LEAs went to them for information.

All pressure groups wish to publicise their campaigns
and as well as the Black Paper Group, others in this area have their own means of communication. ACE publishes a magazine called There and CBP publish Comprehensive Education. Although these have a wider circulation than simply members, all the groups, including the Black Paper writers, depend on other media for a wider audience.

The press and television are important collectors, disseminators and creators of educational information and opinions. All leading newspapers have an education correspondent. The Times Educational Supplement (TES) probably reaches the widest range of educationalists and decision-makers.

Quasi-Governmental Agencies. The number of quasi-governmental agencies in all spheres of policy has increased dramatically since the war and education is no exception. In education they have mainly been advisory and research bodies.

The 1944 Education Act specified the creation of an important statutory quasi-governmental agency, the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) (CACE). Its membership was made up of "persons who have had experience of the statutory system of education", and its role was to advise the minister "upon such matters connected with educational theory and practice as they think fit and upon any questions referred to them by him." CACE was in existence until 1967 and produced a number of influential reports including the Crowther Report in 1959 on the
education of the 15 to 18 age group, the Newsom Report in 1963 on children of average or less than average ability and the Flowden Report in 1967 on primary schooling.

There are other standing advisory committees which report to the minister regularly. These include the Schools Council on the Curriculum and Examinations (formed in 1964 to replace the Secondary Schools Examination Council). Other committees are set up ad hoc, including the Robbins Committee which reported on higher education in 1963.

The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is controlled by a management board consisting of representatives of the teachers, local authorities, colleges of education and the DES. It sponsors a wide range of research some of which is prompted by these bodies, including a number of studies relating to selection and comprehensive education.

Quasi-governmental agencies are particularly interesting components in the policy system because they are frequently made up of representatives from the other main components. For example the Flowden committee included academics from several university disciplines and from teachers training colleges, head teachers, other teachers, UCAS, a local inspector, the editor of New Society, members of ACE and AASE, former chairmen of LEA education committees and other councillors, plus officials of the DES and H'TAs. Sir William Pile, permanent under-secretary at the DES from 1970-76, wrote of all the educational advisory bodies,
"In the discussions that take place in these bodies in the preparation of a major report, it is frequently the representatives of the local authority or teachers' associations, or individual chief education officers or teachers, who make major contributions." 37

The reports, findings and recommendations of these bodies are widely disseminated and discussed throughout the educational world. Sir William Pile, writing specifically of the CACEs, was in no doubt that, "These councils have had an immense influence on educational policy and practice in this country." 38

The higher education sector. The universities, polytechnics, teacher training colleges and colleges of higher education play a number of quite distinct roles within the secondary education policy system. They have a systematic influence in at least three respects. Departments of education in these institutions are responsible for training all secondary school teachers and providing courses for education officers. The universities control one of the main public examination systems (the General Certificate of Education, GCE) and are represented on the other (the Certificate of Secondary Education). Finally entry into higher education is the goal of a significant proportion of secondary school pupils.
Additionally, higher education provides an arena for research and discussion of education policy. A number of major research projects concerned with aspects of selection and comprehensive education have been carried out by academics since the war. Most of these were financed by central government through the DES, the NFER or another quasi-governmental agency, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC). Some of these projects were undertaken specifically for advisory committees or councils.39

Research and ideas are published in books, academic journals or official reports. There is no doubt that at least some of this reaches the decision-makers. Weaver, a former long serving civil servant at the DES describes how as an official, "You will do your best through books, journals and research articles to keep abreast of the development of expert thinking on the subject."40 The TES often reports the more significant findings for less academic educationalists and the popular media pick up some research and (sometimes rather crudely and inaccurately) disseminate it to a wider audience.

One specific link between government and academics comes through the use of advisors by ministers. Croalland for example consulted a 'think-tank' regularly and A.H. Halsey became a close personal advisor.

Academics also have links with some of the main pressure groups discussed. The Black Paper Group is the clearest
example but ACE and the CCE were actively supported by academics. Brian Simon, Robin Pedley and Dennis Warsden for example, were members of CCE and all published books which were at the same time academic and campaigning works. 

Finally research and the development of educational ideas influenced the content of teachers and education officers' courses and therefore fed into the local government system.

2.4. THE WIDER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

It is important to emphasise that all these roles operate within a changing social and economic context. At this stage it is useful to describe briefly some interrelated aspects of that context.

Demographic Change

Education policies are clearly influenced by changes in the size of the school age population. In post-war Britain the birth rate has gone through four main phases. Between 1944 and 1947 it was rising (the post-war baby bulge), it then declined up to 1955, rose again between 1955 and 1964 and then began to fall. To the surprise of many people the post-'64 decline continued right through the 1970s and only began to show a slight upturn again in 1979. These trends begin to affect the primary schools after a lag of five years, and secondary education after a lag of eleven years. This does not mean that the school population necessarily follows movements in the birth rate. Education policies and individual decisions on the length of schooling
clearly contribute to the total number of children in schools. In addition the migration of families within the country as a whole creates differential effects on LEAs. In general the period since the mid-60s has seen a move away from the inner cities to the suburbs and new towns.

Changes in the school population have a number of consequences for reorganisation. It affects the number of school places required and therefore whether any major building will be necessary. This may influence which pattern of reorganisation is most suitable. In particular a decline in the school population can have important effects on the viability of individual schools. The falling secondary school population which began in the late 1970s for most authorities (but had been underway for some inner city areas well before this) forced a number of authorities to reconsider the size and sixth form provision of their schools.

**Economic and Financial Constraints**

Public expenditure on education rose in money and real terms every year from 1950 to 1979. Table 2.5 shows that until 1976 educational expenditure was also increasing as a proportion of national income. However within these figures there are considerable variations in the rate of increase from one year to the next. The DES and others in education have some influence over how much is made available for the service. However, they have little influence over the total amount of public expenditure.
Table 2.5 U.K. Public Expenditure on Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>National Income (£m.)</th>
<th>Educational Expenditure (£m.)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>11,857</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>15,511</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>20,798</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>28,674</td>
<td>1585</td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>39,487</td>
<td>2532</td>
<td>6.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>83,060</td>
<td>6561</td>
<td>7.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>96,676</td>
<td>7340</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Education is one of the heaviest spending services and in time of financial stringency it almost inevitably suffers. The mid 1960s and the years from 1973 onwards were, on the whole, periods of restraint in public expenditure during which education bore at least its share of cut-backs. At the time of writing in 1981 it seems likely that over the next few years educational expenditure may decline in real terms for the first time since the war.

Even in times of expansion a considerable amount of educational expenditure is required simply to keep the service running. Over 85% of expenditure is recurrent and much of the capital expenditure is determined by changes in the school population. As noted some of this is the result of deliberate policy such as the raising of the school leaving age (16-18), but much of the expansion of the late 1950s and 1960s was to meet the increasing birth rate (and some of the deceleration in expenditure at present is justified...
by those responsible on the grounds of the declining school population). Thus capital expenditure has been consistently dominated by the need to provide 'roofs over heads'. The only periods in which any significant extra capital expenditure was permitted were the late 1950s and early '60s and the late '60s and early '70s.

The effect on reorganisation was considerable. Most LEAs had to reorganise using existing buildings and resources. Not until 1976 was any money allocated specifically for this policy. Some LEAs with rising school populations were able to embark on major building programmes and the extra funds made available for ROSLA were used for reorganisation in some areas. However, there was never any question of the change to comprehensives being an opportunity for extensive re-building.

The Structure of the Economy and Society

The number of pupils staying on at school and the resultant demands on resources may be due to wider social and economic forces than simply Government policy or a rising birth rate. It is also influenced by changes in the nature of the economy and society.

From 1945 to the mid 1970s Britain experienced almost continuous economic growth during which the structure of the economy and society were transformed. Goldthorpe shows that the development of Britain as a modern technological society has seen a rapid expansion of the
'service-class' of professionals, technicians, administrators and managers. "Because of this expansion," he writes, "there is in fact no possibility of service-class positions in present-day British society being largely confined to men of service-class origins: rather some substantial degree of 'recruitment from below' has been made inevitable." Golithorpe also shows that an increasing proportion of that recruitment was achieved directly through education.

A number of writers have argued that this period is one in which education has expanded in response to the needs of the economy. For example, Pile argues that, "A technologically advanced society requires from the educational system a greatly increased output of qualified scientists and technologists, and of supporting technicians. It also requires many more people with a high level of general education for managerial positions in industry and commerce, the professions, the apparatus of central and local government and the arts, and a higher degree of literacy, numeracy and general adaptability, at all levels, to enable people to cope with what has been described as 'the universal upgrading of jobs.'" 44

The precise relationship between education and the economy remains complex and controversial but what seems clear is that change in one influences what happens in the other. For much of the time the reorganization debate took place within the context of an expanding higher education sector and an increasing demand for educational qualifications.
Success in public examinations and entry into higher education were seen as crucial to social mobility and economic progress by the professionals, politicians and parents involved in education. In the later period economic growth slowed and the link was again made, this time with the education system being held partly to blame for declining economic fortunes. Therefore, the changes analysed in this study must be seen as inextricably linked to the actual or perceived shifts in the social and economic structure of society and the role of education within it.

The purpose of this chapter has been to outline the basic configuration of roles in the educational policy system and the context within which they operated. The following five chapters will examine how this policy system functioned in relation to comprehensive reorganisation. Although the main focus of the study is the period after 1965, chapter 3 provides a relatively brief analysis of the development of comprehensive education up to that date. This is necessary not only to place the post-1965 period in context but to understand the policy dynamic which had developed in the early years and which had a profound influence on later events. Chapter 3 relies heavily on previously published studies, although the data is presented and analysed in a distinctive way and most of the statistical analyses are new. Chapters 4 - 6 augments existing studies with data obtained from systematic surveys of the Times Educational Supplement and Education; other
media sources, government publications, *Hansard*, material produced by political parties and pressure groups, and some original research. These chapters cover the period from 1965 to 1980. They are presented chronologically, although the trends examined do not necessarily fit precisely within the dates given and there are inevitable overlaps. Nevertheless each chapter does represent analytically distinct phases of the development of comprehensive reorganisation. Chapter 7 summarises the findings from these chapters in terms of the functioning of the educational policy system outlined above and provides a lead into the second part of the study.
Footnotes to Chapter 2


2. Cornwall and Heligow have remained under independent control.

3. The data on political control of LEAs used throughout this study was obtained partly from data collected by L.J. Sharp and Ken Newton for their studies of expenditure decisions by local authorities see for example K. Newton, Urban Political Economy, Frances Pinter, 1981. Their data was then updated beyond 1974 and extended to include London using the Times and The Greater London Council, London Borough Council Elections, G.L.C., various years, as the main sources.


6. The figure was originally set at 50% in the 1944 Act, see D.F. Regan, op. cit., pp. 44-45.


11. Education Act 1944.

13. See pages 189-190

14. Pages 190-192

15. See File, op. cit; or DES, How the DES is Organised, HMSO, 1977


18. Kogan, op. cit., p. 224


21. Ibid., p. 105

22. Rhodes, op. cit.

23. Regan, op. cit., p. 29

24. Perman's figures for the NFT differ significantly from those in Kogan, op. cit., p. 103. Perman's seem more accurate when checked with DES figures. Kogan may have included Scottish teachers or part-timers although this is not clear.

25. Kogan, op. cit., p. 112

26. For more details see pages 254 and 257-8


28. J. Johnson, Professions and Power, Macmillan, 1972; and Dunleavy, Urban Political Analysis, op. cit., p. 111


31. Dunleavy, Urban Political Analysis, op. cit., pp. 102-3

32. Education Act 1944


37. File, op. cit., p. 39

38. Ibid., p. 37

39. See for example, Fifteen to Eighteen, op. cit.; Half our Future, op. cit.; Children and their Primary Schools, op. cit.; Higher Education, op. cit.


42. See Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, Demographic Review, HMSO, 1978


45. See for example the 'standards issue', pages 178-181
3.1. THE 1944 EDUCATION ACT AND TRI-PARTISM

In 1939 England had a diverse range of educational provision. At one extreme, for a small proportion of the population (probably around 5% then as now) there was a well developed, if variable, system of private education which at the top end provided good opportunities of entry into university. However, for the mass of the population there were only state elementary schools up to the minimum leaving age of 14. These elementary schools were free, being financed from the rates. Almost two thirds of them were by then organised into a junior and senior section with eleven the usual dividing age. About 80% of elementary school children left the education system at 14.

Between these extremes was a jumble of secondary schools. There were private grammar schools usually run by foundations, which provided at least 25% of their places free in return for receiving a grant from the central government. There were LEA secondary schools which charged fees but also offered a certain number of free places. The proportion of LEA free places varied. Forty-seven per cent of the 470,000 pupils in such secondary schools in 1938 had free places. However this figure was calculated from some very low proportions at one extreme while at the other Durham County Council, a Labour controlled LEA, offered
all their places free. These places were allocated according to success in competitive examinations. Also among the LEA secondary schools were a few technical schools providing more 'applied' courses. These catered for about 3% of the age group. Apart from the level of education provided, the secondary schools were superior to elementary schools in money spent per pupil, teachers salaries and teacher-pupil ratios.

Criticisms of this system were numerous and for several years discussions about a new education act had been underway in many circles. It took a war, as it had in the past, to bring these discussions to fruition. As well as defining the new relationship between the Ministry and LEAs described in Chapter 2, the main provision of the 1944 Education Act was the establishment of the principle of 'secondary education for all' financed from public funds. A division between primary and secondary education at the age of eleven was written into the statute and the school leaving age was to be raised to 15. LEAs were then given one year to submit to the Minister of Education development plans for putting into effect the provisions of the Act. The Act itself did not specify how the new secondary sector was to be organised.

The Tri-Partite System

At first sight the development plans produced by LEAs revealed considerable variations in response to the Act.

Table 3.1 summarises the results of a survey of these
proposals carried out by Thompson and published in 1952. It shows a number of combinations of schooling in the LEA plans. However one principle underlay almost all of these, a three way differentiation of secondary education. The proposals revealed an overwhelming acceptance of the need to provide three distinct types of education which could be summarised as academic, applied and general. Children were to be allocated to one of these three types according to the results of examinations taken at the age of eleven.

The main variations between the plans came from the decision about whether to provide these distinct educational programmes in three separate types of school or to house two or three of them together within one school (known as a bi-lateral or multi-lateral school respectively).

Furthermore even this limited variety proved to be an exaggeration. "When LEAs began to implement their plans many of the bi-lateral and multi-lateral schemes never came to fruition. The overwhelming majority of LEAs actually developed the three institutions on separate sites creating grammar, technical and modern schools, or just grammar and modern schools (the applied education being either ignored or subsumed within either or both of these schools.)"

This was no surprise. A tri-partite pattern was frequently advocated in Westminster and Whitehall throughout the period of discussion leading up to the Act. The Board of Education document of 1941, 'Education after the War' and the White Paper, 'Educational Reconstruction' which
Table 3.1  Types of secondary schools and schemes proposed in development plans required by 1944 Education Act

(Sample of 111 LEAs, 15th)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Types of Schemes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tri-partite only</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tri-partite and Bi-lateral</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixtures of Tri-partite, bi-lateral, Multi-lateral or</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comprehensives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-lateral or comprehensive only</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>Types of Schools</th>
<th>% of all schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary Modern</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar-Technical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technical-Modern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bi-lateral</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar - Modern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bi-lateral</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multilateral/Comprehensive</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

followed in 1943 clearly advocated such a system. The latter stated quite explicitly that there should be "three main types of secondary...to be known as grammar, modern and technical." Furthermore the final wording of the Act required LEAs to provide schools catering for different abilities and aptitudes and in the Commons debate Butler confirmed the Government's belief that the tri-partite system could best do this.

The immediate actions and pronouncements of the post-war Labour Government followed the same trend, confirming and extending the essential bi-partisan consensus which had developed over the Act itself. Circular 73 issued in December 1945 asked LEAs to include details of the amount of accommodation allocated to each of the three types of school. The Ministry pamphlets 'The Nation's Schools' and 'A Guide to the Educational System of England and Wales' published the same year advocated and then assumed the dominance of tri-partism.

However it would be wrong to regard these central government statements as crucial influences on policy. First it is clear that in many respects tri-partism was merely a development of the existing structure of education in most LEAs. Secondly the sources of support for such a policy in central government were much the same as those which influenced most LEA actions. The immediate determinants of the consensus in central government policy and the justification
for most LEA practices lay in the support of educational opinion nationally.

One of the most visible expressions of such opinion came from the reports of advisory committees. Three reports stand out in particular. The Hadow Report in 1926 was the product of the Consultative Committee to the Board of Education. 10 It is generally credited as the first official advocate of secondary education for all and suggested a clear split between the primary and post-primary sectors at the age of eleven. In considering the form of education after the age of eleven it heavily stressed differentiation and proposed at least five types of school. When the same Committee produced the Spens Report in 1938, the idea had been refined. 11 All post primary education was to be classified under secondary regulations and there were to be three types of school grammar, modern and, a particular emphasis of this report, technical. The final Report worth noting was published in 1943 just as discussions on the new Act were reaching a crucial stage. The Norwood Report came from the Secondary Schools Examination Council, the forerunner of today's Schools Council. 12 It confirmed the trend of the previous reports and suggested that there were broadly three types of pupil, those "interested in learning for its own sake", those whose "abilities lay markedly in the field of applied science or applied art" and those who could deal "more easily with concrete things than with ideas." 13
There is little doubt that these reports and others in a similar vein were influential in shaping the future of secondary education. The question remains, why did they reach these conclusions? Although they consulted widely it is clear that one area of educational theory and research was particularly influential, that of psychology.

From the beginning of the century psychologists had begun to focus increasingly on the nature and measurement of mental capabilities. By the 1920s a coherent body of theory existed which argued that general intelligence was innate, fixed and measurable. The Hadow Committee was the first to acknowledge that their conclusions were heavily influenced by these theories. They heard evidence from a number of psychologists including Cyril Burt, probably the foremost academic in this field. He told the committee that by the age of ten there were at least three clear differences in intellectual capacity among children and that before they reached twelve they should be separated out accordingly.

The Spens Committee was told by psychologists that intelligence tests had by then been considerably refined and could accurately predict a child's ultimate intellectual capacities at the age of eleven.

The Norwood Report was less overly influenced by these ideas and was strongly criticised by Burt.
Nevertheless the prevailing acceptance of psychological theories and the conclusions of the two previous reports were clearly reflected in their argument that there were "three types of mind" which required different types of schooling.

In fact the Norwood Report's findings were far more heavily influenced by the existing pattern and practices of LEAs. The Committee relied on, "the experience accumulated during the development of secondary education in this country." Their conclusions about the types of mind were based on the "rough groupings...(which) have in fact established themselves in general educational experience." 20

A similar influence was evident in the Spens Report which related their recommendations for a tri-partite structure to the existing grammar, technical and senior elementary schools. 21 Furthermore Rubinstein and Simon write that the Hadow Report's proposals for five types of schooling, "were, in fact, all in existence in various parts of the country.... The report reinforced existing developments which had taken place in response to social trends and political pressures." 22

While psychologists were already working on the measurement of intelligence in the early part of the century it was often at the invitation of LEAs that they became closely involved with school examinations. The scholarship system necessarily raised the issue of selection
tests and following criticisms of bias in some cases, LEAs often called on psychologists to help design more objective examinations. Cyril Burt for example was appointed to the LCC in 1922 as an advisor. Once the practice of consulting psychologists became accepted this encouraged further work in the discipline. Between the two periods 1918-34 and 1935-51, Fenwick estimates that research in educational psychology almost trebled. Between 1918 and 1943 over 15% of all theses submitted for higher degrees in education in British Universities were on intelligence tests. Designing these tests became a major industry and as Fenwick notes, "In this way educational psychologists come to have something of a vested interest in the perpetuation of the concept of general, fixed, innate intelligence," and he might have added, in a selective system of secondary education.

The influence of the discipline on LEAs was not confined to designing tests. As educational psychology began to "swamp" university departments of education, their influence on teachers' training inevitably grew, and following their work became essential to many administrators. More important to administrators however, and part of the reason psychologists were brought in in the first place, was keeping the education service functioning. After the War with a new Education Act to implement, an increase of 400,000 pupils due to the raising of the school leaving age, and little money available immediately for new
building in most areas, "it is not surprising" as Rubinstein and Simon note, "that many local authorities tended to concentrate on immediate necessities, accepting the structure that had developed and abjuring any idea of radical change." 27

"In the light of the existing lay-out of schools", the Ministry regarded it as "inevitable.....at the outset to think in terms of the three types." 28 This structural explanation for the dominance of the selective system is given added weight by its ability to account for the failure of the technical school to get properly established in many areas. In the first place there were very few technical schools already available in the system. Secondly they were the most expensive of the three types to develop because of the need for laboratories and workshops. According to Thompson's survey of LEA development plans the main reason given by LEAs for adopting tri-partite or bi-lateral schools were "ease and economy". 29

Finally while there were few pressures for radical change in most LEAs, there was considerable support for the tri-partite system as an extension of the pre-war structure. Most teachers were used to the differentiated pattern already in existence and grammar school teachers had a strong vested interest in maintaining their position in particular. As for the Labour Party, many of their leaders locally were the products of the scholarship system and had been early advocates of opening up the grammar schools to all children. Labour controlled LEAs such as Durham were proud to have been the forerunners of a secondary system which rewarded ability rather than wealth.
A clearly articulated alternative to the selective tri-partite system adopted by most LEAs did exist. The idea of a common school for all children in an area, irrespective of their abilities, is an old one, even in Britain. However, the specific demands for all secondary education to be provided in one type of school can be traced back to the 1920s.

In discussing the origins of the common secondary school it is important, but not always easy, to distinguish between multilaterals and comprehensives. Much of the pre-war debate did not question the idea of three types of education but focused on whether there should be inter or intra school differentiation. Most multilateral schools which were included in the post-war development plans followed the tri-partite structure but housed the three 'departments' under one roof. The term 'comprehensive school', which came from the USA, was generally used to refer to schools which were not divided into distinct departments according to ability. However, most comprehensive schools even today divide children into streams according to ability for some subjects at least and offer different courses to different streams. It is clear from this that the two ideas, although distinct, were often linked together and were quite close in practice. Many multilaterals evolved quite smoothly into comprehensives and
some plans for the former became the latter once established.

Given this, it is legitimate to regard the multilateral cause as the precursor of the comprehensive although the distinction should be noted.

Most bi-lateral schools were not in this tradition. They were often grammar-technical or modern-technical schools designed simply to avoid having separate technical schools and they remained an essential part of a selective system. Even those bi-laterals which combined grammar and modern schools tended to remain more clearly differentiated for a longer period.

There was considerable enthusiasm for the multilateral school from a number of sources in the 1920s and '30s. Among the teachers' organisations the Assistant Masters, in particular and also the Assistant Mistresses and Headmistresses made favourable comments. And, more cautiously, the Joint Four endorsed experimentation in this field. The NUT and NAS also expressed some interest from elementary school teachers in these ideas. Bridging the gap between the professions and the politicians the National Association of Labour Teachers (NALT) were strong advocates of multilaterals nationally and locally. Some local Labour Parties, particularly in London, were strong supporters. In 1938 the Labour Party Conference endorsed the idea of experimenting with multilaterals in certain areas and throughout the 1940s rank and file conference opinion became increasingly favourable towards extensive reorganisation. In 1942 The TUC also approved
multilateralism. 35 There was also intellectual and academic support. This tended to go furthest in advocating a genuine comprehensive idea. 36

However, while supporters for the common secondary school clearly existed, they were no match at a national level for the forces supporting tri-partite selection. Psychologists were dominant in the academic field, the early enthusiasm of a few teachers leaders was not matched by the rank and file or the next generation of leaders and in the Labour Party there were far fewer advocates in Parliament than in the party outside or among certain local party groups.

Nevertheless the PLP could claim some credit for the fact that the tri-partite structure was not written into the '44 Act. Multilaterals were not outlawed and in the debate on the White Paper preceding the Act Butler stated his hope that "more than one type of secondary education may from time to time be amalgamated under one roof." 37

That the idea of the multilateral and comprehensive school found some sympathy within the national local government system at this time is reflected in the development plans summarised in table 3.1. Some 29 LEAs included proposals for some combination of these and other schools and two proposed to develop exclusively comprehensive or multilateral systems. However it is important to realise that many of these plans were over-ambitious and even fanciful. Many bore no relation to what actually took
place and were quickly forgotten. A few were pursued seriously, although often not on the scale originally envisaged.

A London County Council committee first suggested developing common schools in 1934 and the full council approved a plan in August 1944, two weeks before the Act came into force. The full London development plan included 103 comprehensive schools. The first purpose-built comprehensive in the country was opened in London at Kidbrooke in 1954. London remained a pioneer of comprehensives but by 1956 only 14 of the 103 planned were in existence. The first comprehensive school of any type was established in Westmoreland in 1945. Middlesex, Coventry and the West Riding of Yorkshire also made some progress in the early 1950s.

These innovations were little more than tentative and limited experiments at this time, nevertheless they represented the beginning of the comprehensive movement in practice. Although a national debate about the multilaterals continued sporadically throughout the war and immediate post-war period, it was weak and ineffective. As a result the explanations for these early innovations are nearly all to be found locally.

The professions were one source of influence at this level. First was the concentration of radical teachers and Labour Party educationalists in particular areas, London and Middlesex being the clearest examples.
Radical education officers were not so clearly identified politically but were those prepared to challenge the accepted beliefs about psychological theories and propose different schemes. The clearest example of the influence of a CEO was in the West Riding where the development plan prepared by Alec Clegg specifically rejected the tri-partite theory. There were other areas where officer influence may have been important and one explanation for the failure to realise the ideas in several of the development plans may be that officers wrote the plans and then could not find the political support to implement them.

There were also a number of local structural influences on these decisions. If one of the main reasons for adopting the tri-partite system was the inherited structure of schooling, then the case for radical change would be stronger in areas where this structure did not exist on that pattern. One example of this was in the war torn areas of London and Coventry where major re-building was necessary and LEAs could consider a new system free from some of the constraints of the old. Another example which occurred particularly in the 1950s was in expanding towns and cities where new council estates or new towns were built. These areas required a school system and were not inhibited by the presence of vested grammar school interests. Finally there were some areas which simply did not have the usual pre-war pattern. Some rural areas had not developed senior
elementary schools, as Hadow had recommended, and had no technical schools either. Here bi-laterals and multi-laterals had a simple economic appeal, particularly in the more sparsely populated areas, eg: Westmoreland and Staffordshire. (Economic reasons were also important in Wales where Anglesey became the first fully comprehensive LEA in 1952).

Plans which included comprehensive or multilateral schools in areas where they represented the least challenge to the existing tradition were generally regarded favourably by central governments of both parties. However there were other areas which wanted to develop comprehensive schooling but were prevented by central government. These LEAs were either blocked by lack of money or the Minister's refusal to sanction the establishment of new schools concerned. The most common reason for Ministerial rejection appears to have been an objection in principle to plans involving the reorganisation of existing grammar schools. However, this was not always stated explicitly and a number of other reasons were given. Some schools did not meet Ministry requirements for the size of schools or the building facilities used. The post-war Labour Ministry was only prepared to accept multilateral or comprehensive schools if they catered for about 1,600 pupils; anything less was regarded as not viable educationally. A school of that size inevitably required large buildings but the Ministry were also not keen on amalgamating existing schools for this purpose. The only alternative was for
a new purpose-built school but here LEAs often ran into financial difficulties. Funding for new schools was not available until the early 1950s and even then, priority went to war-damaged areas.

It was the Labour Ministry which began what was to become a long tradition of central interference with LEA comprehensive plans. They rejected a proposal for five comprehensive schools in the North Riding in 1948 and a year later turned down proposals from Middlesex. In each case existing grammar schools would have been re-organised.

For most of this period Governments of both parties displayed a similar policy. Ellen Wilkinson, the first Labour Minister showed little enthusiasm for comprehensives and strongly defended the tri-partite system. Her successor George Tomlinson was more sympathetic and approved several individual comprehensive schools but did nothing to positively encourage their development. The Tory Minister Florence Horsborough was willing to allow limited experiments also but refused to allow one of the LCC proposals to go ahead, despite Tomlinson's previous approval of it. Sir David Eccles who took over in 1954 had a number of clashes with LEAs over this issue, in particular Manchester and Swansea.

These LEAs were under Labour control and by this time (1955) the issue was becoming more clearly party political. Nevertheless the policies of post-war Labour and Conservative Governments had been remarkably similar. A pamphlet issued
by the Labour Minister in 1947 (replacing an even stronger one) which laid down the basic tri-partite policy was still being issued by the Conservative Government in 1957. That policy, based on selection at eleven, was dominant by then. The few experimental comprehensives that had been developed were entirely due to the efforts and particular circumstances of innovating LEAs and in no cases interfered with existing grammar schools. The position at the end of 1956 is summarised in column A of table 3.2.

3.3. 1957-65 FROM EXPERIMENTATION TO ESTABLISHED SCHEMES: SELECTED UNDER ATTACK

Column B of table 3.2 helps to illustrate the change which took place during the next eight years leading up to the declaration of national policy on comprehensive reorganisation in July 1965. Several more LEAs had comprehensive schools in operation during the 1964-65 school year and there had been a move from just one or two schools to more substantial schemes. These included large numbers of schools spread throughout the authority, such as in London, and concentrations of comprehensives to cover particular areas within LEAs. If we look further at the number of LEAs which were considering comprehensive schemes, or in some cases had already approved them, before the circular arrived the increased acceptance of comprehensives becomes clearer. In January 1965 the DES figures showed that 49 of 165 LEAs in England and Wales had at least one comprehensive school in operation, but the Department also claimed there
Table 3.2. Comprehensive School provision in LEAs in England 1957 and 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number or proportion of Comprehensive schools in LFA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of LEAs</td>
<td>Jan. 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - under 25&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25&quot; or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( + Includes Leicestershire which was officially categorised as 'other schools', not comprehensive.)

Sources: Ministry of Education, Statistical Returns, No. 8 HMSC, 1957; DES, Statistical Returns, No. 8., HMSC, 1965
were at least 32 more LEAs which were 'known to be making plans'.

The existence of one or two schools in an LEA in the early period often signified little more than a decision to experiment on precisely that scale. However, by the early '60s these were more often the first stages of implementation of a slow, but nevertheless moving, programme of extensive reorganisation. It is clear from table 3.3 that party politics was by no means the dominant determinant of the state of reorganisation at this stage. Although by the end of this period the Labour Party nationally were committed to full reorganisation and large numbers of Labour controlled LEAs were embarking on or considering reform, the build up from experimentation to more extensive schemes involved a cross section of authorities. While in some cases the explanation for the progress made was the ideological commitment from local Labour Groups made in the previous period (London and Middlesex in particular), the spread of comprehensive schooling as an important educational concept had much wider influences.

At the broadest level it stemmed from experiences in existing schools. A Ministry circular in May 1946 specified that only grammar schools could take the main external examinations used at that time, the School Certificate. When the GCE exam system was introduced in 1951 it was intended for grammar school pupils only. However, from the early '50s an increasing number of secondary moderns encouraged their pupils to stay on and take the examination, as table
Table 3.3: Political Control 1955 to 1964 of LEAs in England with comprehensive schools in 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive schools</th>
<th>Political Control</th>
<th>1 or 2</th>
<th>2 - 25&quot;</th>
<th>Over 25&quot;</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Conservative+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1x</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Independent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Labour</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Conservative+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority Labour</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divided</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ Conservative with Independent support included
+ Leicestershire, see Table 3.2.
N.B. Divided control means equal periods of Labour and Conservative and/or periods of no overall control

Source: Ministry of Education, Statistical Returns, No. 8 HMSO, 1965. Election data, see note 3, chapter 2, page 74

Table 3.4: Secondary Modern Pupils entered for GCE exams 1955 - 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O level</td>
<td>7,334</td>
<td>8,571</td>
<td>10,986</td>
<td>16,444</td>
<td>19,407</td>
<td>21,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 shows. Considering only just over a half of the grammar school pupils were passing these exams \(^4\) it came as quite a shock when a number of secondary modern pupils achieved good results and in a few cases went on to higher education. It implied a criticism of the reliability of selection and intelligence testing which was to be confirmed elsewhere.

At the same time reports of the early comprehensive schools began to appear. They generated interest and discussion and were generally very favourable. Many of the early comprehensives were purpose built with generous facilities and well qualified staff. LEAs like London were usually eager to open up the schools to visitors from the media, the ministry or other LEAs. The staff were not only well qualified but often strongly committed to comprehensive education and became salesmen for the new schools. Headteachers could be particularly influential within their own LEA and outside if they had a wider recognition in educational circles.

Teachers in primary and secondary modern schools were experiencing some of the problems of selection at first hand. As criticism of the system grew the teachers' association began to debate the issue again. The post-war leadership began to change and display an increasing interest in and support for comprehensives. This was particularly true of the NUT who were the first to make efforts to attract the small but increasing number of comprehensive school teachers. They were given official
recognition within the union in the early 1960s and the first comprehensive school teacher was elected onto the national executive in 1960. Although NUT members were still divided on the issue, the leadership was showing strong support for comprehensive reorganisation by the end of this period in, for example, their evidence to the Plowden Committee. Meanwhile new recruits to the profession were being exposed, during their training, to a more critical view of selection which posed important questions about the link between the education system and society.

Academic research into education, particularly from sociologists, began to focus on the selective system and its relationship with the structure of society. Beginning in 1953 and continuing into the 1960s, a number of studies revealed the inequities and wastage of the selective system. One of the key findings was the close relationship between social class and success in the eleven plus examination. Children of middle class and upper working class parents predominated in the grammar schools while the vast majority of secondary modern pupils came from working class homes. Researchers suggested that the eleven plus was operating to the disadvantage of working class children and as a result the selective system was perpetuating and exacerbating class inequalities. It was possible to show that at similar ability levels, working class children were less likely to receive a grammar school education than their middle class counter-
Furthermore many children who were clearly capable of more advanced work were leaving at the minimum school leaving age. The inequalities of opportunity were compounded by the variation in grammar school places from one LEA to another. Sociological and psychological research was also more directly critical of intelligence testing and emphasised the influence of environmental factors on IQ scores. Studies showed that IQs did change, often quite significantly, and that grammar schools tended to increase IQ scores while secondary moderns impaired children's scores. This was later linked with theories about the relationship between pupil and teacher expectations and performance and suggested there were damaging effects in labelling some children failures. It became clear that selection was bound to be unfair and inaccurate at the margin. An NFER study found that an average error of 12 was inevitable in the eleven plus tests.

In the same way that advisory committees had fed the views of psychologists into the decision-making arena, they did much the same job for sociology in the 50s and early 60s. The Early Leaving Report used a survey to show the relationship between social class and educational performance and emphasised the role of home background in determining progress. The Crowther Report of 1959, commissioned three substantial surveys. Tests administered to army recruits revealed a clear class and school bias in ability groupings. Although the Newsom Report carefully avoided the issue of selection, its
stress on the importance of social factors in determining achievement was implicitly a further attack on intelligence testing. The same was true of the Robbins Report, which employed a wealth of statistical data. It recommended a vast expansion of higher education and represented an attempt to tackle the wastage of ability which many claimed was the product of selection.

The influence of sociology fed more directly into the education system through its increasing dominance in education departments often at the expense of educational psychology. It was not only teachers who were subjected to their theories and evidence. The best and most ambitious of education officers kept a close watch on these developments.

One of these was Stuart Hasen, CEO of Leicestershire. He was increasingly critical of eleven plus selection and proposed a two-tier quasi-comprehensive scheme to replace it. The idea was not entirely new. Robin Pedley, one of the main writers on, and advocates of, comprehensive education suggested a two-tier structure in a 1956 publication and the Labour Party had discussed the idea. In addition some existing comprehensive schools, for example in Birmingham, had organised themselves internally into lower, middle and upper schools. The Leicestershire Plan, as it became known, turned secondary modern schools into 11-15 'high' schools and created a new 14-16 intake for the grammar schools. Children choosing to stay on to 16
or later were allowed to transfer at 14 to the grammar school while the remainder stayed on in the high schools.

The significance of the Leicestershire Plan was twofold. First it could make full use of existing buildings and did not require a large financial outlay. As a result it could be implemented almost immediately, as it was, in a small area of the county. Secondly it did not need to create large schools in order to provide an academically viable sixth form in the grammar schools. Finally Leicestershire was a Conservative controlled LEA and was received favourably by local politicians and endorsed by the Ministry as an interesting experiment. All three of these factors were to be significant in the rapid period of expansion of reorganisation in the 1960s and early '70s.

As the number of LEAs adopting comprehensive schools increased LEAs were no longer making these decisions in isolation. Discussion of comprehensives in the national local government system was increasing and LEAs contemplating reform had a number of operating schemes to observe. Reorganisation was clearly a useful aid to professional recognition and advancement for education officers. Rubinstein and Simon summarised the position within the national local government system in 1962 as follows:

"The actual number of comprehensive schools was still relatively small, but the significant factor... was not so much the number of schools that had been established
as the example that had been set, at a time when it was becoming more and more difficult to maintain confidence in the process of selection. In particular, the success of the Leicestershire plan provided a new perspective. Other authorities now began to think not merely of establishing the occasional comprehensive school, within the limitations still officially laid down, but of reorganising their whole provision for secondary education on fully comprehensive lines."

This brings into focus the reaction of central government, who were clearly affected by these developments. The immediate response of the Conservatives to the attack on selection was to counter-attack. A 1958 White Paper called for the development of advanced courses in secondary moderns while stating the determination to resist changing the grammar school. There were attempts to improve selection procedures and facilitate earlier transfer between schools after eleven. However as the attacks continued and LEAs (including some under Conservative control) showed an increasing willingness to consider the comprehensive alternative, their attitude slowly changed.

The early 1960s saw the birth of two middle class parental pressure groups, CASE and ACE, who vigourously opposed selection. Although there is little evidence of direct public pressure influencing local decisions, the Tories could not fail to be aware of a growing band of disquietened middle class parents who had fallen foul of
the selection lottery. The media were swift to take up individual cases of injustice and publicise the subsequent successes of eleven plus failures. 64

By the time Edward Boyle became Minister in 1962 the groundswell of opinion for comprehensives among many LEAs was clear. In 1963 and 64 several county boroughs, particularly in the North began planning extensive schemes. Boyle, who in any case was more liberal than his predecessors, was inclined to be more favourable towards plans even if they involved reorganising grammar schools and were mainly from Labour authorities. There appears to be a certain amount of confusion on this point. Several writers imply that the 1951-64 Conservative Government never approved any changes involving the reorganisation of grammar schools, notably Pedley, Pellaby, Fenwick and Saran. 65 However, apart from Leicestershire, which was not officially recognised as comprehensive, several Welsh counties and parts of the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire, Westmorland and other English counties had abandoned selection by 1964 and that year Boyle approved the first full LEA comprehensive scheme in England in the County Borough of Bradford. 66 Boyle also approved an unusual plan in the West Riding which involved bridging the gap between primary and secondary education. This pioneering LEA proposed a 'middle school' for children aged between 9 and 13 and Boyle approved the scheme even although it required an amendment to the 1944
Education Act (passed in 1964).

As precise details of Government approved schemes are not available, the extent of grammar school reorganisation at this stage remains unclear. However it does seem that Boyle at least was prepared to accept such schemes in certain cases. This change of mood is well captured in this speech by him, made in 1963. "I certainly would not wish to advance the view that the tri-partite system should be regarded as the right and normal way of organising secondary education, compared with which everything else must be stigmatized as experimental." 67

Although the Labour Party in opposition made an early commitment to comprehensives in 1952, enthusiasm and interest in the issue remained low throughout most of the 1950s. By the end of that decade there was still considerable equivocation among the leadership about the extent and strategy of reorganisation and over the future of the grammar school. Nevertheless as the 1964 election approached, the commitment to reorganisation by some means and in some form had become firm Labour policy. One source of such views was ideological; an uncompromising belief in the abolition of all forms of privileged education and their replacement by a system of common schooling. However this left wing, rank and file view, which had the strong support of the NALT and included the abolition of private education, had remained steady throughout the period in opposition. It was on the right of the party and particularly among the leadership that the
significant changes had taken place. The reluctance of many Labour MPs to support full reorganisation stemmed in part from personal loyalties to the grammar school. It was undeniable that grammar schools had been responsible for the upward mobility of many working class children and it took a lot to persuade some of those who had benefitted in this way that the inequities of selection as a whole outweighed these individual successes. One of the factors which probably helped to bring about this conversion was the nature of the struggle within the Party between left and right at this time. The Bevanites on the left favoured an industrial strategy involving large scale nationalisation in an attempt to wrest control of the economy from the capitalists and create a genuine socialist society via clause IV of the Labour Party constitution. However, the social democratic wing of the party, including Gaitskill and Crosland argued that the party should concentrate on social reforms to harness the forces of capitalism and redistribute the products to create a more equal society. If the latter view was to prevail it was clear that some radical reforms were needed and in the field of education comprehensive reorganisation seemed a more likely political prospect than the abolition of public schools.

Another crucial factor was the increasing focus on the wastefulness as well as the inequities of the selective system. Following on the findings in the Crowther Report, Harold Wilson took up the issue of the link between education and the economy. He argued that selection was holding back potential ability and therefore technological development.
The secondary moderns were not turning out pupils with the level of education and training required by an increasingly sophisticated technological society. In 1960 still only 1 in 8 secondary modern pupils sat public examinations and a very high proportion left school at fifteen. Wilson proposed comprehensive reorganisation as a weapon for economic growth as well as widened opportunities.

In the late '50s opinion polls began to show an increasing awareness of and support for comprehensive schools. In 1958 fifty-nine per cent of respondents in a Gallup poll had heard of comprehensive education and of these, 58% thought it a good idea and only 19% disliked it. A year later 49% of all respondents said they "would like to see the 11+ exam discontinued" as against 42% who would not. As the election approached the Labour Party pushed the issue forward and made it a major plank in their manifesto.

Whether the increasing enthusiasm among the Labour leadership nationally influenced local Labour groups to produce reorganisation plans before the election is doubtful. If anything, the influence was working in the opposite direction. Many Labour groups were not only more inclined to grasp early the trend towards comprehensives than the Conservative groups but also than the national Party leadership. The acceleration in reorganisation proposals and discussions as the election approached was probably more a
result of local Labour victories than the change in national commitment. In 1964 Labour controlled 65 of the 129 LEAs in England, an increase of 38% since 1960/1.

It is also unlikely that the national Labour victory in that year added much extra impetus initially. Those LEAs keen to reorganise were already making plans and the others would wait for an official Government statement. Labour was now in power committed to a policy of reorganisation, but as Fenwick notes, that policy had been "at first almost totally rejected by the party leadership (and) .... was pressed on them from below." 74

It could be argued that a national policy on comprehensive education effectively began as soon as Labour was elected, their 'stance' on the issue having been expressed during the campaign. However the Government issued no instructions to LEAs before July 1965, although a general statement of the policy was made by Michael Stewart in January 1965 and an amendment to an Opposition motion was passed which approved continued progress towards reorganisation. 75

The nine months between the election and the circular provide a good illustration of the momentum and continuity from this early period into the period which is the focus for this study.

During this time a number of LEAs approved plans for full comprehensive schemes, most of which had been initiated in the later years of the Conservative Government. Some of these schemes were the subject of considerable local opposition, not always from Conservatives but from the
grammar schools involved, for example in Liverpool, Bristol and Manchester. 76 The Secretary of State was asked to consider several of these plans and the objections to them. Although he dealt with most of these his general attitude was to discourage any attempts to rush through reorganisation schemes. Liverpool were told to delay their plans by at least a year 77 and Stoke had details of their scheme rejected. 78 Stoke's plan was to create separate sixth form institutions, an idea which had originally been proposed by the CEO in Croydon in the early 1950s. It was clear that LEAs were keen to get on with the reforms but the Labour Government was biding its time and preparing to launch its own initiative.

There is no doubt that the influences, pressures and conflicts which operated in the post-circular period were already present in early 1965 and were themselves the product of a complex policy process which had been evolving at least since the war. Selection was under severe attack and comprehensive reorganisation had begun to establish itself as a viable alternative within local government and wider educational circles. Increasingly LEAs were thinking in terms of extensive reorganisation schemes rather than the earlier experiments. Although the Conservative Government had dealt with some plans involving grammar schools the bulk of these were left for Labour to handle. The momentum of
reform was well under way but the crucial clash with grammar school interests had hardly begun.
Footnotes to Chapter 3


3. Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit., p.22

4. Ibid., p.74

5. Major education Acts have frequently followed wars, eg: the Fisher Act of 1918. Musgrove has suggested that these education Acts including 1944, should be seen as 'truces' between the various competing interests in education. See J.W. Musgrove, 'A model for the analysis of the development of the English educational system from 1860', in P.W. Musgrove, *Sociology, History and Education*, Methuen, 1970.


7. Ibid., op. 6, 9-10, quoted in Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit., p.28.

8. Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit., p.31


13. Ibid., pp. 3 and 6, quoted in Fenwick, op. cit., p.20
14. For example, Consultative Committee to the Board of Education, *Tests of Educability*, HMSO, 1924; and *The Primary School*, HMSO, 1931.


24. Ibid., p. 31.

25. Ibid., p. 31.


28. Ibid., p. 35.


32. Ibid., pp. 34-35.


34. Ibid., chapter 3.


37. Ibid., p.28

38. Fenwick makes the mistake of confusing plans with schemes actually in operation. He seriously misquotes Thompson on this. Compare Fenwick, op. cit., p.7 and Thompson, op. cit., p.20

39. See Griffiths, op. cit., pp.31-33

40. Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit., p.45

41. For a detailed account of Middlesex see R. Saran, Policy-making in Secondary Education, Clarendon, 1973


43. Hansard, 17th June 1965, written answers 99-100


45. Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit., p.56.

46. For example Margaret Miles, headmistress of 'ayfield Comprehensive School in London.

47. Fenwick, op. cit., pp.113-115

48. NUT, 'First things first', Memorandum to CACE, 1964. See Fenwick, op. cit., p.121


52. See F.W. Vernon, Secondary School Selection, Methuen, 1957

53. The pioneering work in this area was in the USA, R. Rosenthal and L. Jacobson, Pygmalion in the Classroom, Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, 1957. Taken up in Britain by Pedley, op. cit., 1963.


59. Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit., cite a number of articles by Pedley in Education at this time, see p.64.

60. Parkinson, op. cit., p.73.

61. See Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit., p.82.

62. Ibid. p.87.


64. See Education 8/10/4 and Benn and Simon, op. cit., pp.49-50


66. Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit., pp.84 and 86-7

67. Education, 12/7/63.

68. Parkinson, op. cit., chapter 5.


70. For Wilson's famous 1963 speech see Saran, op. cit., p.32 and Parkinson, op. cit., p.83. These ideas on the link between education and economic growth were given academic support by economists such as J. Vaizey, The Cost of Education, Allen and Unwin, 1958.
71. Rubinstein and Simon, op. cit., p57.; Halsey, op.cit., estimates the staying-on rate for secondary moderns for those born between 1943 and 1952 as 20", in grammar schools during the same period it was 90", see p.107.


73. Ibid. pp.522-523.

74. Fenwick, op. cit., p.128.


77. Ibid., pp.132-133

78. Ibid., p.133
4.1 CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICY: 10/65, 10/66 AND ALL THAT

On July 12th 1965 the DES issued circular 10/65. It was a clearly articulated statement of central government policy. It contained a definite goal, the procedure which the implementing agencies (LEAs) were to follow in order to reach this goal and guidance as to the forms which policy could take.

The circular began, "It is the Government's declared objective to end selection at eleven plus and to eliminate separatism in secondary education .... The Secretary of State accordingly requests local education authorities, if they have not already done so, to prepare and submit to him plans for reorganising secondary education in their areas on comprehensive lines." They were given one year to submit these plans. The plans were to include long term proposals for reorganising the entire LEA and short term details for implementing these plans. This was to begin not later than September 1967. LEAs were to consult closely with teachers and keep parents well informed. The guidance which the circular contained consisted of comments from the Secretary of State on six main patterns of comprehensive reorganisation. The broad types, which encompassed a number of more minor variations, and the Minister's opinions on them are summarised in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1 Patterns of Comprehensive Reorganisation included in Circular 10/65.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number in Circular</th>
<th>Name used in this study</th>
<th>Description of age range and transfer arrangements</th>
<th>Secretary of State's attitude in Circular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>All-through</td>
<td>11-18</td>
<td>Most favourable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Two-tier</td>
<td>11-13/14, 13/14-18</td>
<td>Favourable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Two-tier Interim Parallel</td>
<td>11-15/16, 13/14-18 (only those intending to stay on transfer to upper school)</td>
<td>Disliked, only to be permitted as transitional pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Two-tier Interim End on</td>
<td>11-13/14, 13/14-15/16 and 13/14-18 (All transfer at 13/14 but to one of two types of upper school)</td>
<td>Disliked, only to be permitted as transitional pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Sixth Form College</td>
<td>11-16, 16-18 or 11-16, 11-18 with transfer at 16</td>
<td>Neutral, limited to a few experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>5-8/9, 8/9-12/13, 12/13-18 (All transfer at 8/9 and 12/13)</td>
<td>&quot;A very small number&quot; only to be approved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This initial statement of policy was backed up and augmented by a number of other actions and statements over the following years. In March 1966, Circular 10/66 stated that, "The Secretary of State will not approve any new secondary (major building) projects... which would be incompatible with the introduction of a non-selective system of secondary education." ²

There were regular exhortations to LEAs to reorganise. It was made clear that money which would be made available for the raising of the school leaving age could only be used in ways compatible with reorganisation. When RSLA was postponed for two years in 1967, the Government allocated an extra £7m over those two years specially for reorganisation. From 1968 onwards there were growing threats that the government would introduce legislation to compel authorities to reorganise and in 1969 a Bill was introduced to that effect, although it was never passed.

4.2 THE LEA RESPONSE: REORGANISATION TAKES OFF

Table 4.2 gives some impression of the submission of plans in the period following circular 10/65. The table is derived from various Government statements concerning LEAs in England and Wales and is not entirely consistent in its classifications. Nevertheless it is sufficient to show that the vast majority of LEAs did draw up and submit plans as requested in the circular. In addition as time went
Table 4.2  Pattern of submission of schemes following circular 10/65 (England and Wales)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEAs with schemes approved for the whole or greater part of the authority</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs with schemes approved for part of the authority</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs with schemes under consideration</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs requested to reconsider or resubmit schemes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs rejected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs which formally declined to submit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs which did not respond</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs which withdrew schemes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAs not classified</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DES, Education in 1966 (HMSO, 1967)
by a larger proportion of these plans were acceptable to the Government and covered 'the whole or greater part of the authority'. By 1970 some 70% of LEAs in England and Wales had substantial reorganisation schemes approved by the DES while apparently only about 14% had openly defied or clearly failed to adhere to the Government's policy.

The figures in tables 4.3 and 4.4 which show the extent of comprehensive schooling actually implemented (again, for England and Wales) reveal rather less impressive results for this period. Nevertheless over half the LEAs had 10% or more pupils in comprehensive schools by 1970 and the proportion of children maintained by the state in comprehensives rose from 8.5% in 1967 to 37.7% by January 1970. Table 4.3 also shows that the rate of reorganisation continued to increase in the early 1970s. Allowing for an inevitable time-lag between the approval of plans and their implementation, at least some of this progress was the result of decisions made by LEAs in the 1966-69 period.

Taking the approval of plans and the evidence of effective actions together it is clear that these years represented the take-off period for comprehensive reorganisation. However the explanation for this take-off may not be as obvious as it seems. When central government policy and the progress of reorganisation coincide in this way it is easy to jump to conclusions. Certainly several writers have implied that circulars 10/65 and 10/66 were very largely responsible
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>ENGLAND AND WALES</th>
<th>ENGLAND</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pupils in Comp. Schools</td>
<td>Pupils in Grammar Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. (1000)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>59</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>129</td>
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<td>61</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. % refers to percentage of all pupils in maintained secondary schools.

Table 4.4  Percentage of 13 year old pupils maintained by LEAs in Comprehensive schools in England. January 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of pupils</th>
<th>No. of LEAs</th>
<th>% of LEAs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-89</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-49</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>146</strong></td>
<td><strong>101</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

for the increase in reorganisation which followed. However the correlation between central government policy and LEA reforms is not necessarily evidence of a simple causal relationship. Indeed it is clear that there were a number of other influences at work which tended to accelerate the rate of reform.

Evidence from the previous chapter showed that the policy of reorganisation was already beginning to attract the attention of many LEAs before the central government intervened. In July 1964 the TES remarked, "It is already being assumed that an LEA which has no plan up its sleeve must be a backward type." Within the national local government system discussions of the various comprehensive patterns were common. In 1965, before the circular had been officially released, the journal Education remarked that at the ABC conference emphasis had "shifted from 'whether to change' to 'how to change'."

The principle of comprehensive education was approved at this conference and at the Divisional-Executives' Conference the same year. All six of the patterns which the circular described were either in operation or had been proposed by LEAs. Penn and Simon argued that in this respect the circular was not so much a case of central guidance, it was more a reflection of what was actual practice." At the time that the circular was launched Crosland could state, "Seventy-four per cent of secondary school children live in areas that have
adopted, are adopting, or are contemplating comprehensive schemes. 8

This momentum within the local authority world would clearly have continued whether or not the circular had been issued at that time. Contact between LEAs over the issue was extensive. Neighbouring authorities were invariably kept informed of changes taking place. There were often formal and informal meetings, to discuss reorganisation between officers and members of different LEAs. And it was not uncommon for representatives from one LEA to visit another to look at schemes which were already operating. 9 Together with discussions in the local authority associations this generated a diffusion of ideas and knowledge throughout the national local government system which would surely have encouraged the spread of reform quite independently of any central government initiative.

This momentum was assisted by the growing acceptance of comprehensive schooling among educationalists of all types. In the teaching profession, the NUT, having expressed strong support for the principle in its evidence to the Plowden committee, fully endorsed reorganisation in 1966 and the NME showed itself willing to cooperate fully with LEA policies in this direction. 10 The issue was particularly relevant to the responsibilities and career prospects of education officers, and many were eager to turn their skills to producing plans. Among academics almost all the voices were in favour. In 1967 the Director of the London Institute for Education declared.
that comprehensive reorganisation was, "the majority view among those working in education." At the 1966 Labour Conference Jennie Lee could state quite convincingly that Labour had, "won the intellectual argument." Public Opinion was also at its most favourable at this time. A Gallup poll in May 1965 (before the circular and its attendant publicity) showed that 37% of those questioned had heard of comprehensive education and 62% of these thought it was 'a good idea' as against only 19.5% who 'disliked the idea'. In 1967 a different poll found that 52% of all respondents were 'in favour' of comprehensive education, 19% were 'against' and 29% were 'don't know'.

Largely as a result, no doubt, of this upsurge in public and educational opinion, there was also growing political support in all quarters. It is clear, from the activities of LEAs prior to the circular that many local Labour groups had been converted to the idea well before it became Government policy. However support was also found among many Liberals and Conservatives locally and nationally. Edward Boyle had already given his support to a certain amount of reorganisation and he maintained a flexible attitude towards the circular. A 1965 motion at the Conservative Party Conference acknowledged that "Comprehensive schools have an important part to play." In June 1967 Tory Leader Edward Heath said, in a widely publicised speech, that he, "accepted the trend of educational opinion against selection
at eleven." A number of Conservative and Independent controlled LEAs were considering comprehensive schemes of some kind before the circular arrived. By 1969 there were substantial schemes operating in parts of Cornwall, Essex, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire, Northants, the East Riding of Yorkshire, Barnet and Merton for which the Labour Party had not been primarily responsible.

"With hindsight it can be seen that in many ways the period 1966-69 marked the high point of enthusiasm for comprehensive schooling within national educational opinion and the national local government system and that these trends were important influences on the actions of the LEAs. However the influence of central government should not be ignored even if it has been exaggerated at times. Labour's victory in 1964 and the Government's commitment to reorganisation were an important part of the changing mood and provided the atmosphere within which many of these other influences could develop. Circular 10/65 certainly brought all LEAs face-to-face with the issue of comprehensive education and in most authorities precipitated quite a wide ranging debate. Circular 10/66 probably did put pressure on some LEAs and many of the negotiations which the DES became involved in by the late 1960s were with LEAs concerned to secure major building programmes. In general the Government's continued exhortations to LEAs to reorganise kept the issue alive and the threat of further sanctions including legislation may have convinced one or two of the reluctant LEAs that they were swimming against the tide.
In the end it is impossible to know whether the LEAs which agreed to reorganise during this period would have done so anyway. There are perhaps two reasonable suppositions which can be made, however. Reorganisation would have continued and probably accelerated during this period without the aid of the circulars. On the other hand this central intervention undoubtedly prompted some LEAs to consider reorganisation earlier than they otherwise would and persuaded more LEAs, particularly those under Labour control, to adopt full reorganisation schemes. This latter point is particularly significant. Without the circular many LEAs would probably have adopted a more piecemeal approach to the issue. They may well have been inclined to treat established grammar school interests with kid-gloves. The circular requested them to tackle this problem head-on and many Labour LEAs responded. 21 Ironically it was probably this which provoked many Conservative authorities to baulk at complying with the circular in full. Whether on balance this form of central intervention did more to generate resistance or reform will be considered below.

4.3 THE LEA RESPONSE: THE GROWTH OF RESISTANCE

Despite the progress made during these years it is important to recognise this period as the one in which serious opposition to reorganisation first emerged on a significant scale. In tracing the growth and extent of this resistance
to comprehensive education it is important to return to the figures presented in tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. Although they do provide evidence of an acceleration in the rate of reform, a closer examination reveals considerable limitations on the extent of this progress and points to the beginnings of substantial resistance.

First it is important to consider the submission of plans, shown in table 4.2. Seventy percent of LEAs are classified as having approved plans for reorganising 'the whole or greater part' of the authority by 1970. The phrase 'greater part' is important. A number of LEAs (precise figures are almost impossible to calculate without access to D.H.E.C. files) had plans approved which excluded several schools or a small area within the authority. In some cases the schools were Voluntary grammar schools which LEAs were relatively powerless to tackle. Others were simply individual, normally prestigious, grammar schools which the authority chose to retain in their existing form. In both cases the LEA was not fully comprehensive. Most of the other 30% of LEAs in the table were in some way or other defying or delaying reorganisation on a larger scale. In addition the number of LEAs openly defying the Government was increasing throughout this period.

Secondly there is the question of the extent to which approved plans were fully implemented. Table 4.3 shows that the proportion of children in comprehensive schools didn't
reach the 70% figure in England until 1976 which suggests that many of the 1960s plans were either altered or subject to very long phasing-in periods. Table 4.4 shows that 42% of LEAs did not have even 10% of pupils in comprehensive schools by January 1976. Even then these figures are misleading. It was from LEA returns that the DES calculated these percentages, but authorities varied in their classification of a comprehensive school. In extreme cases secondary modern schools could be re-named comprehensive without any alteration to the selective nature of the system or the grammar schools within it. Table 4.3 shows that the increase in comprehensive pupils was proportionately greater than the decline in grammar school pupils at least until the early 1970s. Even then LEAs could reorganise in part but retained a few grammar schools alongside what they then classified as comprehensives. In a survey of 728 comprehensive schools carried out by Penn and Simon in 1968, 52% were found to be co-existing with grammar schools. The issue of coexistence came to dominate the debate in the early 1970s and will be dealt with further in chapter 5. It is to note that in many eyes these schools were not truly comprehensive.

Finally table 4.3 is also incomplete because it ignores the extent to which LEAs took up selective places at grant and independent schools.

Resistance and the Nature of Central Government Policy

There is considerable evidence that delay and resistance
in reorganising was partly the consequence of the particular form which central government policy took. On the one hand circulars 10/65 and in particular 10/66, secured the comprehensive issue as one in which adversary party politics would operate. And yet at the same time these were weak and ineffective weapons for carrying through the Labour Government's stated intentions.

By declaring quite openly the Government's intentions to abolish all selection, circular 10/65 began the process of national resistance. By threatening non-complying LEAs with financial penalties circular 10/66 stirred up strong Conservative Party opposition. It could be argued that at least part of the resistance which emerged came from Conservative LEAs reacting against a Labour central government attempting to impose its views on local authorities and that in this sense the particular issue was not important. According to this view the momentum of reorganisation would have ensured the spread of comprehensive education at least as far if not further than the circular. While many LEAs would still have abolished selection on ideological grounds, Conservative LEAs would have been open to persuasion on the educational and economic merits of comprehensives. Furthermore there would have been no need for the Conservatives nationally to put up much opposition and spokesmen like Edward Boyle who clearly had much sympathy for reorganisation, would have been freer to provide support for and encouragement to Conservative LEAs considering the issue.
There is an alternative argument which will be considered below in section 4.5, namely that the issue was inherently ideological and eventually was bound to become a question of political controversy. However, whatever the cause, it is clear that once the issue had entered into the realms of adversary party politics the policy resources employed by the Labour Government were too weak and limited to overcome the determined resistance which emerged.

As a non-executant authority in education the central government depends on LEAs to put its policies into effect. The extent of its control over LEAs is ultimately derived from legislation. The existing legislation in education did not give the Secretary of state powers to order LEAs to establish comprehensive schools. If effective legislation had been introduced to this end then resistance from LEAs would have been largely futile. However a request in circular 10/65 had no statutory force and as a result made resistance possible.

Immediate political considerations may have been one important factor in the decision to use a circular, legislation is time-consuming and politically expensive. The 1964-66 Labour Government had a perilously narrow majority and shied away from any particularly controversial legislation. In addition, after 13 years in opposition, they had a heavy programme and comprehensive reorganisation was not an absolute priority. Finally there is a question mark over the commitment of some cabinet members to the swift abolition of the grammar school; particularly those, including the Prime Minister, who
were the products of such schools. However these short-term considerations probably only confirmed a decision which had effectively already been made. There was some discussion of the possibility of legislation within the Party in the mid-50s but Parkinson indicates that from the publication of 'Learning to Live' in 1958, this option appeared to have been ruled out. Despite the occasional voice in favour even after the election the overriding impression is that compulsion had been largely rejected before they even came to power.

Ironically one of the major reasons for the decision to use a circular was almost certainly the desire to avoid the intense adversary party politics which eventually emerged in any case. Nevertheless at the time it seemed logical to argue that a circular requesting LEAs to reorganise was more likely to maintain and encourage the momentum of reform. It would aid the build up of a consensus favouring comprehensives and avoid controversy and confrontation.

This argument was influenced partly by uncertainty about the degree of public support for compulsion but also by the strength of the opposition to legislation from many of those who were to implement and operate the policy - the LEAs and the professionals. The AEC was strongly opposed to compulsion. Sir William Alexander was a critic of comprehensive education at this time but the belief he held most strongly was in local autonomy and the majority of the AEC executive agreed.
The same was true of education officers. Even those, like Alec Clegg, who were strong supporters of reorganisation opposed legislation. 30 Finally the teachers associations although divided between and within themselves on the merits of reorganisation, were united in rejecting compulsion. 31

The fact was that despite individual cases of conflict, some of them over the comprehensive issue, an ideology of consensus and 'partnership' permeated the intergovernmental educational world. But it was not just the fears of disturbing this pattern which influenced the use of a voluntary policy but the hopes of using it positively. Alexander for the AEC and most of the teachers stressed their willingness to cooperate with a non-compulsory policy. 32 Then this view was combined with the increasing evidence of the momentum of reorganisation at LEA level. It is easier to understand the belief among ministers that voluntary compliance was likely to be extensive.

If Crosland's own words are to be taken literally this was the main reason for choosing a circular — and a weakly worded circular at that. An earlier version sent out to LEAs and the AEC was criticised for being too strong and amended to 'request' rather than 'require' plans. 33 Crosland later noted, 'I was strongly influenced by my meetings with the AEC and my judgement of the general mood of the local authority world.' 34 In 1966 he declared, "There is an expectation that, in education policy when there is a declaration of national intent, this will be carried
through by central and local government in co-operation." 35

And at the time the circular was issued he said he expected
"very nearly 100 (of LAs) are going to submit plans for
going comprehensive by July." 36

Nevertheless there was also considerable realism about
the time scale of reorganisation if this approach was adopted.

Back in 1951, despite forming a policy of requiring plans
from LAs "with all reasonable speed", Parkinson claimed
the Labour Party, "seemed to give up the idea that reorgan-
isation could be wholly achieved within the first five years." 37

This was echoed by Crosland on becoming Minister in January
when reform
1965, he observed that would have to come at a moderate
pace. "In five years, he claimed, 'such progress could be
made that the comprehensive system would be accepted as the
normal pattern, towards which all local authorities were
working, though necessarily at different speeds." 38 This
perhaps best reflects the optimistic view that went with
the adoption of the circular. If the existing momentum
could be harnessed and controlled to ensure carefully
planned and implemented comprehensive schemes, it was argued,
all authorities would accept the trend and gradually reorganise.

Hence Crosland argued that it was, "precise" because the
movement of reform was gathering such strength in the country
that it was necessary to develop some form of central
guidance and supervision." 39 This helps explain Crosland's
actions in delaying and then approving only part of schemes
sent to him before the circular was issued. He did not want hastily conceived plans which opponents could object to on educational as well as political grounds.

However there is little doubt that this view underestimated the development of resistance locally and that the use of a circular actually aided those resisters. Ultimately LEAs could simply refuse to comply with the Secretary of State's request. However few LEAs did this in the early period and it was the reliance on cooperation and the procedures laid down in the circular which made the problem of non-compliance particularly difficult to deal with. If, say, 30% of LEAs had simply refused to submit any plan it could have been clear to the Secretary of State that tougher measures were needed. In fact, whether by shrewd tactical awareness or a simple case of wishing to avoid open conflict for as long as possible, very few LEAs did this. Instead many who did not intend to go fully comprehensive nevertheless adhered to the request to submit a plan although often not within the specified time. The problems for the DES was unravelling these plans from the rest.

Without access to all the plans received by the DES it is not possible to quantify the nature of the plans received. However, it is possible to specify at least some of the alternatives, and in the process provide an idea of the problems faced by the DES.

The DES wanted a clearly documented, genuine comprehensive plan which covered the entire LEA area and included a
'reasonable' implementation timetable. They received many plans of this type but rather more plans which were unsatisfactory in one of the following respects: an unrealistically long implementation timetable, no implementation timetable at all for all or part of the plan, no plans or unacceptable plans for parts of the authority or for just one or two schools within the authority, clearly selective plans, disguised selective or bogusly named comprehensive plans, problems with the pattern of reorganisation proposed, with the admission procedures or with the use of resources, and finally plans which were simply too vague or unclear.

The intentions behind these plans varied considerably but it was not always easy to distinguish between them. Deliberate attempts to retain selection could be dressed up in 'comprehensive' language. Genuine plans for gradual reorganisation, area by area, looked very similar to attempts to stall and reorganise only a few schools. Apart from the obvious possibility of mistakes or oversights by the DES, the process of checking the details of every plan was very time-consuming. Crosland admitted later that the DES was under heavy pressure and could not deal with the plans as quickly as he wanted. Several LEAs complained at the delay and this could be used to the full by resisting LEAs. But even if the checking could have been achieved much faster, reliance on LEA planning was slow and opened up endless possibilities for delay. Many plans did not
arrive within the year specified. By August 1966, sixty-two of the 162 LEAs in England and Wales had not submitted a plan, but only three of these had specifically declared that they were not going to. By January 1967 the figure was still forty-two, the vast majority of which said that they were still working on a plan. There was little or nothing the DES could do about these delays. When plans arrived but were incomplete or unclear, the DES had to wait for further information. When plans were unsatisfactory, in part or completely, the LEA were told to resubmit more plans. At this point long correspondence between LEAs and the DES were common and these sometimes resulted in deputations or unofficial meetings in order to 'clarify' the situation.

At each of these stages another one or two LEAs would openly admit their intentions to go no further but others continued the dialogue with offers of 'possible future actions'. In the end there was nothing the DES could do when an LEA refused to comply, but the delay before this became clear made it difficult for the Government to adopt an alternative strategy such as legislation.

One particular aspect of the circular and the issue of compliance which caused considerable delay and confusion was the patterns of reorganisation which were to be permitted. Penn and Simon in particular criticise the Secretary of State for giving far too much freedom to LEAs in this respect. For example the circular included two two-tier patterns,
similar to the Leicestershire Plan. However because they could have included schools of unequal status and provision they undoubtedly permitted elements of selection to continue. It is true that the circular specifically expressed disapproval of these patterns and stated that they were only to be adopted as interim patterns on the way to full reorganisation. Nevertheless they were included under the heading, "Main Forms of Comprehensive Organisation" and plans which included one of these patterns had been approved in 37 LEAs by the end of 1969.

There were two other patterns which similarly retained elements of selection and were not specifically discouraged in the circular. One was the 6th form college pattern, where selection by ability to the colleges was apparently to be permitted (no disapproval was registered), although non-selective or open entry colleges were also discussed. The other was the mixture of 11 to 16 and 11 to 13 schools with the latter likely to retain a higher status despite open transfer from the former. This and the two-tier patterns were particularly unsatisfactory when they were combined with the system of transfer between schools known as 'guided parental choice'. If LEAs 'guide' parents into choosing the 'appropriate' school there is a danger, where there are obvious differences between the schools, that a form of selection continues to operate. This was a problem which could arise with the transfer proposals in
any of the plans. It was an issue which the DES either
glossed over and therefore tainted the comprehensive system,
or became the subject of investigation and therefore further
delay.

One important issue concerning the patterns of reorgan-
isation involved the middle school pattern. It was already
known at the time of the circular that the Flowden
Committee, which was considering primary education, was
likely to propose a change in the age range of schools.
(When the Committee eventually reported in 1967 it recommended
the introduction of middle schools for children aged 8 to
12.) Furthermore the West Riding of Yorkshire were
going ahead with their middle school plans, approved by
Boyle in 1964. And yet in the circular Crosland made it
clear that he would permit very few LEAs to follow suit.
He argued that as Flowden had not yet reported and "there
is bound to be a considerable period between the making of
any recommendations (by Flowden) and the implementation of
Government decisions on them," it was best to proceed as
if the age of transfer were to remain unchanged.

The middle school pattern had all the advantages of
the Leicestershire Plan with less of the problems. It fitted
particularly well into existing buildings in many LEAs (a
virtue which the circular specifically encouraged) and
avoided the need for large or expensive schools. At the
same time it was truly comprehensive and avoided the very
short 2 or 3 year schools required by a two-tier pattern.
In 1966 after pressure from several LEAs and further indication of the Plowden Committee thinking, the Secretary of State announced that the middle school pattern would henceforth be looked on more favourably. Following that statement the middle school pattern soon became very popular. By the end of 1969, 52 LEAs had middle school patterns approved by the NMS, the second most popular pattern after the all-through comprehensive which had been approved in 62 LEAs. The delay in recognising the potential of this pattern during the first year when most places were initially being considered may well have been important.

There was one other aspect of Government policy which was important in contributing to the delay in reorganisation and the failure to prevent resistance and that was the question of finance. Not only was circular 10/66 itself weak but there was no financial commitment to back it up. No extra money was set aside by the central government for reorganisation before 1969. Furthermore, following the devaluation crisis, the education service was hit badly by expenditure cuts at a time when the school population was increasing. As a result almost all LEAs had to rely on using existing buildings for reorganisation and yet the middle school and two-tier patterns which were most suitable for such a situation were discouraged in the circular.

Many LEAs planned to use the extra funds which were
to be made available for ROGLA for reorganisation. In 1968 ROGLA was postponed for two years and although £7m was put aside to compensate, plans were undoubtedly affected. This lack of funds probably had two results. One was to delay the implementation of schemes in some areas which genuinely wanted to reorganise and the second was to provide a further excuse for delay from LEAs not wishing to do so. Penn and Dixon quote Surrey as an example of the latter. They argue that even substantial funds would have made little difference to most resisting LEAs, although it might have been decisive in a few areas which were divided on the issue.

While there was no carrot, there was a stick - refusal to allow major building projects which were incompatible with reorganisation. While it is difficult to judge the precise impact of this sanction it is clear that it did not have a dramatic impact on many LEAs. A number of authorities were able to cope without major building for what turned out to be a relatively short period of Labour Government. The minor works programme could be used for small alterations. In any case this period was one of financial stringency generally and many LEAs spent their money on the primary sector and would not have embarked on large scale secondary school programmes even if they had been allowed to. In fact however, it was possible to obtain approval for major building without a commitment to full reorganisation. In some cases the DES were prepared...
to accept projects involving the up-grading of secondary modern schools or the establishment of individual co-existing comprehensive schools within selective systems. Another means of improving the secondary provision without reorganising was to increase the provision of denominational school places.

A final area of weakness in central government policy during this period concerned the position of voluntary aided and direct grant grammar schools and the taking up of places in the private sector. Circular 10/65 stated that voluntary schools should be included within reorganisation schemes and urged LEAs to initiate consultations and "negotiate solutions" with these schools. Similarly it called on LEAs to "open discussions" with the direct grant schools so that the schools might be "associated with their plans."

However the Government made no efforts to back up these unrealistic exhortations. Although many Roman Catholic voluntary schools co-operated fully, the endowed grammar schools and the direct grant schools were offered no incentives nor issued any threats which would be likely to persuade them to give up their selective intakes and none appear to have done so in this period.

The Public Schools Commission Second Report revealed that in January 1968 all but 39 of the LEAs in England and Wales took up places at direct grant schools. Furthermore some 92 LEAs also took up places at independent schools. The Government failed to tackle either of these
problems during this period.

To return to the figures presented at the beginning of this chapter it can be argued that the failure to acknowledge the extent to which selection was continuing and resistance to reorganisation was growing, itself contributed to these problems. Penn and Simon accuse the Government of 'kilology' in presenting the front that all was going well with the policy of comprehensive reorganisation. The DES may well have felt that this would help encourage LEAs to go along with what appeared to be an irresistible tide. However it seems just as likely that it encouraged those LEAs who did not want to abandon selection to continue to delay and put up a front of their own which gave the impression that they were still willing to cooperate. In addition this probably contributed to a certain complacency and from the point of view of Labour Government policy, a failure to recognise and stand up to the growing alternative current of resistance.

The defence of the grammar school and early resistance

The previous section was primarily concerned with why central government policy was unable to prevent resistance. However, apart from the argument that part of it was created by that very policy, there is a need to explain why and how resistance occurred in the first place.

The policy of reorganisation by circular relied heavily
on the momentum of reform which had built up before 1965. However what the Government seemed to underestimate or chose to ignore was the evidence which already existed of opposition to reorganisation in particular cases. While it is true that the extent of local opposition was limited before the circular, in many cases this was because LEAs pursued reorganisation in areas and in ways which minimised conflict. As chapter 3 revealed, very little reorganisation took place which challenged the interests of existing grammar schools. Then they were involved, the changes to the grammar schools were minimised. In Leicestershire for example the grammar schools became the upper schools for 14 to 18 year olds and retained the name 'grammar'. Furthermore in the few cases where grammar schools were threatened with major change, opposition was intense. Part of the reason for the rejection of the Middlesex scheme in 1948 was the opposition campaign mounted around Ashford grammar school. Similarly, the Manchester plan for Wythenshawe in the 1950s attracted considerable opposition from residents. But the clearest evidence came from the more recent reactions to large scale comprehensive plans for places such as Bristol, Manchester and Liverpool in the early 1960s. Protest campaigns, not against comprehensive schools but in defence of grammar schools were widely publicised and many objections to the schemes in these areas were received by the Secretary of State early in the Labour Administration.
Although these protests were the exception as far as pre-circular reorganisation was concerned, they occurred over precisely the kind of schemes which the circular required - covering large parts or all of the LFA and involving the abolition of selective grammar schools. Whether the Government believed the protests were unlikely to inhibit reorganisation, were unlikely to occur in most areas, would be prevented by a clear statement of national policy, would be overcome by long term transactions and full consultation or would diminish in time, is not known. But with hindsight it is clear that signals pointing to the strength of opposition were there before the circular was issued.

The defence of the grammar school was usually taken up most openly by parents and former pupils, often through formally constituted pressure groups. In 1965 the National Education Association was formed to aid and coordinate the activities of these groups. The NEA provided financial assistance in two particularly celebrated cases of local resistance at this time.

In 1966 in Ealing, a group of parents attempted to get an injunction in the courts against the council's reorganisation plans. They argued that section 76 of the 1944 Education Act required the LFA to provide schools in accordance with parents' wishes but the court ruled against them and the planned reorganisation went ahead. A year later in Enfield a parents' group were more successful and, on appeal, managed
to get a temporary injunction against the council's reorganisation plans. In this case the parents argued that the authority had not gone through the full legal requirements of publishing notices and considering objections to the proposed changes. Enfield council and the DES had assumed that this was not necessary with some of the schools involved but the court decided otherwise. From then on the DES advised all LEAs to publish section 13 notices whenever the character of a school was altered in any way by reorganisation. Enfield council put these requirements into practice immediately after the court case and in due course their reorganisation scheme became operational. In neither of these cases were the grammar school parents successful in preventing reorganisation, however both cases did receive considerable publicity and encouraged similar group action elsewhere.

Teachers were also involved in resistance movements. Officially they could not openly campaign against council decisions but it seems clear that many grammar school teachers, especially headmasters, played important roles behind the scenes in these campaigns. Nationally and locally the Joint Forum were able to express their opinions and did so, strongly in many cases, in defence of the grammar schools. The reasons why these campaigns emerged more strongly in some areas than others and the degree of influence of the campaigns on LEA policy in this period is uncertain. In strong Labour controlled LEAs they probably had little
impact. A determined Labour council had little to fear from such campaigns, particularly as all the evidence suggests that local issues have little effect on voting in local elections. 72 Although some Labour authorities were not particularly enthusiastic at first, 74 most appeared to push on with their plans, even against fierce opposition. 72

In Conservative controlled LEAs it is harder to untangle the determinants of policy. The reaction of Tory Groups and the activities and views of the grammar school lobby often overlapped. Even those few LEAs which quickly and openly rejected the circular (Bournemouth, Worcester and Westmoreland for example) may well have been influenced by the potential grammar school lobby or by direct councillor contact with these schools as parents or former pupils. In any case almost all Conservative LEAs did open up the circular for some discussion and regarded the opinions of teachers and parents. In these Conservative LEAs which went as far as proposing reforms the reaction of the grammar school lobby was bound to be important. The issue frequently caused splits in Tory ranks, for example in Croydon and Surrey.73

and Conservative LEAs wishing to proceed with reorganisation against a large and determined grammar school campaign were likely to have problems. It would be reasonable for Conservatives to assume that the majority of their supporters would also support the grammar schools. In fact, despite the support shown for comprehensive education in opinion
polls at this time, the support for the grammar school was even stronger. In 1967 seventy-six per cent of respondents in one poll said they were in favour of retaining grammar schools. The same poll showed 52 in favour of comprehensive education. This schizophrenic attitude to reorganisation was common but it did suggest that 'save our grammar school' campaigns were likely to receive considerable sympathy. Nevertheless several Conservative LEAs were able to reorganise and therefore must either have overcome or never faced these campaigns. Elections which were decided on the popularity of the national government also influenced what happened locally over reorganisation, although not through any expression of opinion on that issue itself. In 1967 and particularly 1968 there were massive swings against Labour all over the country. In these two years Labour lost control of 54 LEAs in England, 30 of them to the Conservatives or Conservatives working with other parties. Labour retained control in only 15 LEAs. In some, although by no means all, of these LEAs the change of control led to a reversal or delay in the reorganisation plans. Penn and Simon quote the examples of Foxley, Halifax, Southend and Reading in particular in this respect. (See also table 4.6.)

Finally it is necessary to consider the extent to which the Conservative Party nationally contributed to the beginning of resistance. If they had taken a firmer stand one way or the other, their influence might have been considerable. Certainly total rejection of reorganisation would have placed pressure on Conservative LEAs not to associate themselves with a Labour policy. Whether strong support
for reform would have convinced local parties is not as clear.
In fact the policy which they adopted was flexible and they relied mainly on defending the freedom of LEAs to make their own decisions. Thus the policy of enforcing full reorganisation was strongly attacked and circular 10/66 came under particularly heavy criticism for attempting to use financial sanctions to coerce LEAs into reorganisation. On the other hand, in January 1966 Boyle told the North of England education Conference that he would not necessarily immediately withdraw circular 10/66 if the Conservatives were returned to power. Although this was hurriedly 'clarified' by Conservative Central Office to stress that Boyle did not support the objective of the complete abolition of selective education, it was clear from this and other statements that a future Conservative Government would be prepared to support a considerable amount of reorganisation. This position may have been influenced by the element of support for comprehensives within the Parliamentary Party. However a stronger influence was probably the varied response of Conservative LEAs which included considerable acceptance of reform.

Rather than take a lead on the issue therefore the Party appeared to prefer to react according to the response of Conservatives locally. This led them to approve some reorganisation in a number of Conservative counties but to support grammar school campaigns particularly in the large
towns and cities. The argument they used was that in these areas the intelligent, underprivileged child needed the grammar schools in order to escape the disadvantages of a poor environment. However it was also the case that these areas were most often the ones under Labour control and where local Conservative opposition to reorganisation was unequivocal.

Nevertheless the Conservative Party in Parliament played a crucial role during this and future periods to help the resistance of local Conservative LEAs. This was simply to be there as an alternative Government which would be prepared at the very least to defend the right of these LEAs to keep their grammar schools if they wished. Without this prospect local resistance may well have been considerably dampened.

4.4 SUMMARY

In the period following circulars 10/65 and 10/66 a majority of LEAs submitted plans, most of which were eventually approved by the DES. Only a minority of LEAs actually implemented substantial parts of these plans before 1973 but most were subsequently put into effect in the early ’70s.

Table 4.5, based on a DES report of progress at the end of 1969, shows that continuously Labour controlled authorities were more likely to have substantial reorganisation plans
Table 4.5 The state of reorganisation plan submissions to the DES at the end of 1969 by political control of LEAs 1965-69, in England

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to reorganisation</th>
<th>Continuous Conservative Control</th>
<th>Continuous Independent Control</th>
<th>No overall control 1965/6 switching to Conservative Control</th>
<th>Labour contr. 1965/6 switching to Con. Control</th>
<th>Conservative Labour control</th>
<th>Other variations</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. LEAs with substantial reorganisation plans approved or implemented</td>
<td>20 57</td>
<td>10 71</td>
<td>11 65</td>
<td>30 60</td>
<td>15 100</td>
<td>10 71</td>
<td>96 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. LEAs with partial plans approved or implemented</td>
<td>3 9</td>
<td>2 14</td>
<td>2 12</td>
<td>5 10</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>3 21</td>
<td>15 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. LEAs with plans still being considered</td>
<td>2 6</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>1 6</td>
<td>8 16</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>1 7</td>
<td>12 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. LEAs with plans rejected or who had not submitted</td>
<td>4 11</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>3 18</td>
<td>7 14</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>14 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. LEAs who formally rejected the request for plans</td>
<td>6 17</td>
<td>2 14</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>8 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35 100</td>
<td>14 99</td>
<td>17 101</td>
<td>50 100</td>
<td>15 100</td>
<td>14 99</td>
<td>145 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
approved by this date than other LEAs in England (line 1).

A combination of the fact that comprehensive education fitted Labour's egalitarian ideology and was the firm policy of the Government ensured that Labour LEAs made good progress towards reform.

Nevertheless over half the LEAs in line 1 were never under Labour control during this period. Fifty-seven per cent of continuously Conservative controlled LEAs had substantial plans approved as did sixty per cent of LEAs controlled by the Conservatives in 1967 or 68. As a result it would be wrong to assume that the response to reorganisation at this time can be explained solely or even mainly in party political terms. The take-off of reorganisation was as much a result of the growing realisation among educationalists of the problems of selection and the possibilities of comprehensive schooling and an increasing momentum for reform at in the national local government system. This momentum had begun before the issuing of the circulars and the take-off was far from being solely the result of central government intervention.

At the same time a significant minority of LEAs delayed, obstructed or completely rejected reform. All the clearly rejecting LEAs identified in the table (columns 4 and 5) were either under continuous Conservative or Independent control or had been captured by the Conservatives in 1967 or '68. However the table does not reveal the full extent of resistance. Many of the LEAs in lines 2 and 3 were putting up a struggle
are not reorganisation and even several of the LEAs in line 1 were planning to retain one or two selective grammar schools.

The argument expressed in 4.4 above, that more reform would have occurred if the Government had not issued the circulars and relied instead on the momentum of reorganisation seems unjustified. There is no doubt that in many cases the grammar school interests were well entrenched and only to defend those schools against any challenge to their privileged status. All comprehensive reorganisation would inevitably involve such a challenge. There were the pressures for full reorganisation came from they would be certain to provoke opposition from many grammar school supporters. Labour LEAs might be able and prepared to resist such opposition. However the case would not necessarily be true of all Conservative or Independent LEAs whose links with the grammar schools and their supporters would often be far greater. For this reason, while the momentum of the early 1960s was important in spreading comprehensive schooling, it was never likely to be sufficient to fulfil the Labour Government's aims nor to produce significantly greater reorganisation than the circulars (and possibly less - particularly in Labour controlled LEAs).

However, by the same token, the circulars themselves were never likely to achieve the complete abolition of selection. Any challenge to the grammar school could be met with strong resistance but the use of circulars actually
ailed and encouraged such a response. Labour policy in this period never contained the power to force through change against such resistance.

With the momentum of reform on the one hand, the grammar school interests on the other and a fairly 'neutral' attitude from Conservatives nationally, the local Conservative response was, perhaps not surprisingly, varied. The precise influences which led particular LEAs to begin to resist during the period while others did not, remain unclear at this level. They are the subject of further investigation in this study.
Footnotes to chapter 4

1. DES, 'The Organisation of Secondary Education', Circular 10/65, H.S.30, 1965

2. DES, 'School Building Programmes', Circular 10/66, H.S.20, 1966


4. TES, 10/7/64

5. Education, 9/7/65


8. TES, 16/7/65

9. See for example the case of Richmond in chapter 10 of this study, also James, op. cit., pp.86-97

10. See Fenwick, op. cit., p.135

11. TES, 6/10/67

12. Labour Party Conference, 1965


15. See page


17. TES 23/6/67

18. The circular was thought to be an important influence on reorganisation in Bath and Southampton (T. White, 'The Reorganisation of Secondary Education in Bath and Southampton', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Southampton, 1974), and in Birmingham (see P. Isaac-Henry, The Politics of Comprehensive Education in Birmingham,

10. See for example the case of Richmond in chapter 10.

11. For example, Surrey, see Penwick, *op. cit.*, p. 133; and Croydon, see B. Sumner, *Urban Politics*, enguin, 1969, p. 266-266.


13. For example in TDB.

14. Excludes include Redbridge, Bromley and Ealing.


16. Donnison argues that reorganisation might have occurred in Croydon on a bi-partisan basis but for the circular which, initially, created opposition from the ruling Conservative group. J. Donnison et al., *Social Policy and Administration Revisited*, George Allen and Unwin, 1975. See also James, *op. cit.*, p. 2, p. 8.


19. I. V. Lewis, personal advisor to Crosland, claims that he and a few others favoured legislation at this time (in conversation with the author).


22. See Penwick, *op. cit.*, p. 133; and TEB 16/7/65.

34. Ibid
35. Hansard, 21/7/66, Column 854
36. See Penn and Simon, op. cit., p.65
37. Parkinson, op. cit., p.86
38. Ibid., p.90
39. Ibid
41. See Penn and Simon, op. cit., p.72
42. Hansard 4/7/66, written answers columns 166-169
43. DfE, Education in 1966, PSC, 1967
44. Penn and Simon, op. cit., pp.71-74
45. For example a LEA might have 11-13 schools followed by a division between 13-15 and 13-16 schools, the 13-18 schools would tend to have higher status and therefore selection could creep in at 13.
47. On this see Penn and Simon, op. cit., pp.60-62
49. DfE, Circular 10/65 op. cit.
50. Hansard 25/4/66, column 494
51. Public Schools Commission, 2nd Report, op. cit., p.43
52. Penn and Simon, op. cit., pp.71-79
53. Ibid
54. Penn and Simon, op. cit., pp.69-70, quote Plymouth as an example of this.
55. See the example of Sutton in chapter 11 of this study
56. DfE, Circular 10/65 op. cit.
57. Ibid
58. Ibid. 507
59. Ibid., p. 209
60. Penn and Simon, op. cit., p. 65
61. See pages 90-94
62. See Penwick, op. cit., p. 6-47; also R. W. C.,
    Decision-making in Secondary Education, Clarendon, 1973
63. Ibid., p. 209-103
64. Ibid., p. 120-124
65. For example, 1974, 3/10/64, 6/11/64, 8/1/66
66. See J. Buxton, 'Comprehensive Education: Central Government,
    Local Authorities and the Law', in G. Fowler, V. Morris
    and J. C., Decision-making in English Education,
    Heinemann, 1973; and G. Fowler, 'The Local Education
    Authority', in The Open University, Decision-making in
    British Educational Systems, Course E27, The Open
    University, 1974, Unit 5, pp. 35-46
67. See Buxton, op. cit.; Fowler op. cit.; and M. Kogan, The
    Politics of Educational Change, Fontana, 1979, pp. 83-85
68. Penn and Simon, op. cit., p. 75-76; Simon, op. cit.,
    p. 66
69. Ibid., op. cit., pp. 125-126
70. See J. Newton, Second City Politics, Clarendon, 1976,
    pp. 16-18; and J. Dunleavy, Urban Political Analysis,
    Macmillan, 1980, pp. 136-138
71. See for example White, op. cit., on Soutperton; or
    W. Taylor, C. M., Brian and I. Harris, Going Comprehensive,
72. For example Manchester and Birmingham
73. See Saunders, op. cit., or Donnison, Social Policy and
    Administration Revisited, op. cit.
74. Donnison, 'Education and Opinion', op. cit.
75. Penn and Simon, op. cit., p. 66
76. See ___ 3/10/65
77. ___ 4/1/66
78. ___ 4/10/66
79. See ___ 4/3/66
80. See a speech of Rogers reported in ___ 25/3/66
Chapter 5, 1969-76 ADVERSARY POLITICS AND THE ISSUE OF COEXISTENCE

5.1. CATHOLIC RIGHTEOUS POLICY

By 1969 the parties in Parliament had taken up more clearly adversary positions. A survey carried out that year by Kornberg andensure claimed that if's from the two major parties differed more over comprehensive education than any other policy issue tested. From 1969 through to 1976 the parties retained distinct positions and then in Government promoted clearly divergent policies towards reorganization.

This was reflected in 1969 by the changes in the two parties' spokespeople on education. Edward Short, the secretary of state for education, was probably a more belligerent opponent of the Conservatives on this issue than his predecessors. In September 1968 Edward Boyle announced he would be leaving Parliament to become Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University and was replaced on the Conservative front bench by Mrs Margaret Thatcher. While Boyle was on the left of the party he defied the Tory whip to vote for Labour's Race Relations Bill and undoubtedly had some sympathy for the comprehensive cause. Mrs Thatcher was to the right of centre an apparently a strong grammar school supporter.

The clash which marked this period of more open conflict came when Labour decided to introduce legislation to cancel the Bill to produce comprehensive plans. The Bill was even introduced the Conservatives declared their
intentions to repeal it and from the time it was given its
first reading in February 1970 they united, almost for the
first time on this issue, in opposition to it. 3

The main section of the Bill was defeated in Committee
when three Labour members were unexpectedly absent. This
turned out to be a fairly unimportant defeat because the
general election intervened. The Bill, which had been
re-committed by then, never became law, but even if it had
been passed initially there would have been no time for it
to be implemented.

In an unusually swift action the new Conservative Secretary
of State issued circular 10/70 and withdrew circulars 11/65
and 10/66 the first few days after taking office. The new
circular said that it would be "inver to determine the shape of
secondary provision in their areas." 4 Comprehensive re-
organisation was no longer required although it was certainly
not prohibited. The Minister expected future plans to take
into account "educational considerations in general, local
needs and purposes in particular, and the wise use of resources." 5

Section 3 of the circular indicated that they could notify
the schools of any wish to modify plans already approved
or withdraw plans already lodged with the DFE. Section
4 stated that, "full opportunities should be given to parents
to make their views known before decisions are reached." 6

At first Mrs Thatcher was prepared to consider plans as
a whole and by the end of 1971 she had approved 4 major plans,
5 smaller plans and rejected none. However early in 1971 she began to consider proposals for each school individually rather than as part of a group. As a result, although she approved changes to all the schools in some LEAs, she sometimes rejected them all, her last common response was to approve one change in most schools and reject changes for just a few. In those cases the changes rejected were almost always those for grammar schools. In April 1973, in answer to a Parliamentary question, it was revealed that changes to 29 schools from 26 LEAs had been rejected since June 1971. By November 1973 the figures had risen to 276 schools from 56 LEAs. 10

These rejections are almost entirely under the minister's powers under section 12 of the 1944 Act. However, an unusual one was Thatcher's use her section 60 powers against Surrey County Council. She declared that Surrey were acting 'necesarily' in law to reorganise one particular grammar school. At the time the action caused considerable controversy and many people argued that she was misusing the section 60 powers but the decision was never officially challenged. 11

In approving schemes for parts of surrey or for certain schools only, and in rejecting proposals to reorganise individual grammar schools while approving all the other changes in 'B' plans, Thatcher was giving, official sanction to the policy of co-existence which had existed in any TPs
for some time. Under the previous Labour Government some schemes covering only part of an GSA or excluding particular grammar schools were approved but only as far as the DfE were concerned on a temporary basis. However Mrs Thatcher made it clear that the coexistence of grammar schools and comprehensive schools was a long term policy which she could not only approve but positively encourage and if necessary impose on ...,  

Then Labour returned to power in 1974, the new Minister Reg Prentice withdrew circular 10/73 and replaced it with circular 4/74. This was a rather stronger worded version of 10/65. It "required" LAs to inform the DfE of the measures it would take to complete reorganisation (although it still had no statutory force to back this up). It included only the all-through 6th form college and middle school patterns and required the elimination of "all forms of selection at all stages". 12 The L.A majority on voluntary controlled school's governing bodies were told to support change and a threat was issued to voluntary aided schools that they "cannot expect to continue to receive...substantial financial aid...if they are not prepared to cooperate." 13  

The same financial pressures were applied to LAs as had been used in the 1960s. No major building was to be permitted which did not fit in with reorganisation plans. However this time a carrot was also offered. Twenty-three million pounds was made available to assist with reorganisation
during 1975-76 and a further £25 million for the following year. 14

The Government decided to tackle the issue of direct
grant schools more forcibly. Circular 7/75 announced
that the Secretary of State intended to withdraw financial
support from direct grant schools in September 1975, unless
by the end of 1975 they indicated that they would join the
maintained sector. 15 This effectively dealt the blow to the
direct grant status.

The threat of legislative action to secure these drastic reorganisations had effectively been
hung over the heads of the grant sector were returned to
power. Circulars were also at various times after circular
474 had been released about the possibilities of regulation. 16

It was not until the Will to take over as Secretary of State in June 1975 that this action became a certainty
and Circular 474 was not given until the Queen's Speech
of July 1975. 17

5.2 IMPLICATIONS OF REORGANISATION

Table 4.3 on page 120 showed that in terms of implementation
the period 1969-1975 was quite dramatic. The proportion of
children educated in comprehensive schools in England and
Wales almost doubled in less than a third to more than three-
quarters in this time. Similarly the position for 1970 in
England as seen in Table 5.1, reveals a much larger proportion
with full or substantial reorganisation in operation than the
equivalent 1970 Table 4.4 on page 121.
However it is clear that a significant proportion of this reorganisation was the product of decisions made during the previous period. It is very difficult to assess the effect of this time-lag or to know the numbers of actual decisions to reorganise taken after 1970. The Conservative Government of 1970-74 did not publish any systematic record of plans which were submitted. They also encouraged submission of schemes for small parts of an LMA which were often not separated out from more substantial plans in statements made about the developments taking place. It is known that in the second half of 1973 they received four major plans and five smaller ones, and that by November 1973 Mrs. Thatcher had rejected parts of plans of some kind from at least 36 LMA.

This certainly shows that local decisions to reorganise did continue during the Conservative administration. However the full number and the scope of these plans remain uncertain.

When Labour returned to power the figures quoted in circular 4/74 bore little relation to those published in 1969-72 (see Table 4.5). According to the circular on March 31st 1974, the last day before the local government changes, 72 LMA's in England and Wales had approved plans for their entire area, 76 had reorganised in part and 16 had submitted no approved plans. These figures reflected a tougher and more realistic approach to the progress of reorganisation than the previous Labour Government had taken. The category of LMA's previously labelled as having
Table 5.1 The extent of LEA reorganisation in England in 1974 and 1976

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of maintained secondary schools in comprehensive schools</th>
<th>LEA in Jan. 1974</th>
<th>LEA in Jan. 1976</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95-99</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94-91</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-80</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89-80</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88-70</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87-70</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

plans for the whole or greater part of their domain had been broken up into full and partial plans, revealing a majority of LAs without full plans. The 22 openly resisting LAs in 1969 in Table 4.5 had apparently been reduced to 17.

The first figures released for the new LAs following the local government changes were even more startling. Only 32 LAs in England had full plans approved or implemented as a minority classified as having some degree of reorganisation and just one LA credited with no comprehensive schools at all (that was the London Borough of Kingston). Furthermore of the 32 LAs, it was revealed that 9 still had voluntary grammar schools operating. (This obviously would also apply to a number of the 72 old LAs classified under circular 4/74 as having full reorganisation schemes).

Nevertheless the process of local government change had confused the position and many of the 73 partially reorganised LAs were in the process of considering how to deal with newly acquired situations. By October 1975 the Secretary of State reported that 7 English LAs had refused to produce plans at all as required by circular 4/74 and another 27 had produced unsatisfactory plans. The rest of the partially reorganised LAs had submitted plans to reorganise in full by the end of the decade. Thus 16 of the 92 LAs in England at the end of 1975 remained non-compliant and thus still ignored those of the remaining 66 LAs which had voluntary grammar schools.
5.2 Numbers of LEAs maintaining pupils at private schools, by partisanship of councils and proportion of secondary school pupils involved. England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of maintained secondary school population in private schools</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Fixed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantial but unidentified total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.1 to 1.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 to 5.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5.0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total no. of LEAs</strong></td>
<td><strong>56</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>104</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dunleavy, Urban Political Analysis, Macmillan, 1980
'M: Adapted from TES, 18/2/77
By the end of 1975 fifty-one direct grant schools had decided to join the maintained sector as comprehensive schools. Almost all of these were Roman Catholic schools. The remaining 123 direct grant schools became fully independent. However they did not necessarily lose all links with the maintained sector as a number of LGs were still taking up places in independent schools at this time. A DfE survey relating to September 1976 found that all but 39 of the 164 LGs in England and Wales took up such places that year, although another 19 took only the odd one or two special cases. Twenty LGs sent over 2½ per cent of the secondary pupils they maintained to independent schools. (See table 5.2)

Why Reorganisation Continued

It is clearly unlikely that central government policies were mainly responsible for the continued reorganisation throughout this period. From June 1970 to February 1974 there was no central government pressure in that direction and yet it seems there was little difference in the rate of reform between these years and the rest of this period. Circular 4/74 was a tougher circular and there was the implicit and later explicit threat of legislation to follow it up. Also funds were available to assist with and encourage reorganisation. However the circular still had no legal force and in most respects Labour policy in this period was little more than a continuation of the persuasive approach
first elaborated in 1960. As a result there is no reason to
expect that on its own it could be much more effective.

It also suggests that one explanation for reform during
the era of the Conservative Government is that the removal
of the new and element of Labor's policy and anger
Consequences is the key, that it is. It argues that, if it could
be effectively linked with a more directly to a Conservative
D is a more clearly a more obvious. 7 This is an
extension to the preceding political argument presented in
chapter 4. The withdrawal of the radicals and their
replacement by a more conservative could be seen as taking
the impact of this policy. Further argument could be
to allow for an easier acceptance than if the reform
became more dramatic and more difficult perhaps in an
existing framework or structure. In this sense, society may
have required to be brought about by early stages
in the comprehensive change.

If there were only some who are in the view to understand
reasoning behind this shift. There is evidence that at
least a new and a conservative 8, which regards what it this
an extension from the Labour before the 1971 election of produced
fully comprehensive scheme. 9 This suggests that the consensus
for change for a possible nesce tic of the previous
chapter continued to be evident in the early 1970s.
The trend of reform continues while the national level government
system did not yet; just because of a change of government,
even if it was following them. By the late 1960s there were
many schemes in operation throughout the country providing evidence and expertise on a wide variety of comprehensive patterns. The advantages of the middle school and 6th form college patterns were particularly well documented by then.\textsuperscript{28} Conservative MPs which had been reluctant at first were able to see some of the benefits and have many of their fears allayed. For example these two patterns ensured that comprehensive schools did not need to be very large. Over one third of ISAs in England in January 1976 had comprehensive schools with an average of less than 900 pupils.\textsuperscript{29} An additional advantage of the 6th form college pattern was that previous grammar schools could often be used as the usual colleges and thereby retain an academic and slightly more privileged status.

Amongst educationalists support was still strong. Rubinstein and Simon claim that the immediate attrition of circular 1970, and fears of a grammar school backlash prompted some groups to come out in clear support of comprehensive education for the first time.\textsuperscript{30} Certainly the \textit{TLS} editorials, which had been opposed to full reorganisation during the 1960s,\textsuperscript{31} were very critical of circular 1977.\textsuperscript{32} Also the C, although still a conservative party, was angered at the complete lack of consultation before "en Thatcher stated and the case was true of most of the teachers' groups.\textsuperscript{33}

These explanations based on the momentum of reform were particularly appropriate to Conservative and other non-Labour
LHBs which reorganised in this period. The change of national
government in 1970 may have made the decision easier for some
LHBs but the evidence is that they were moving in that direction
anyway. It was not possible to discover any details of
LHB reorganisation during the Conservative government, less
information was published and the situation was confused
by local government changes. However of the 35 areas
which had approved the change to schools rejected by the Thatcher
between July 1971 and November 1972, 12 were under Conservative
control, 14 were under Labour control, 12 were not under the control of
the area or the local authority. 35 In the case of most of the study counties of the other Conservative
LHBs that submitted a report this was the case in all cases.

Neither a report was submitted to the Ministry in these cases, or the
areas were rejected by the Thatcher government and the areas were decided to reject the
of the report by November, 1972. Therefore, even in the
this single case evidence, it is clear that a significant
proportion of LHBs that reorganised in this period were
under non-Labour control. In addition a number of the new
LHBs submitted a proposal after 1974 were also certainly
Conservative controlled. Of the 70 new LHBs listed as having
only private firms in 1974, only 20 were under Labour control
at any time between 1974 and 1976. 35 In October 1973 the
claimed that 36 of them had no statutory plans and therefore
at least 9 non-Labour LHBs must have produced new social plans. 35

However, the other major explanation for reform in the
first half of the 1970s was the local Labour victories in
that period. By 1972 Labour had won control of 45 LDCs in London and the English county boroughs which they had not controlled in the 1964-7 period. In total in 1972 they controlled 43 of the 45 LDCs in London and the county boroughs. There were no county elections under the old local authorities while the voting to Labour control. A number of the re-captured LDCs had always been Labour or not contested full elections and then under Labour's control. The party's commitment to reorganisation was very strong by the time the new authorities were certainly all those the first full elections soon after they returned to the Tower mill.

Labour took Kidwell in the first elections held, in 1974, for the new LDC. They won 16 of the 36 new district elections although they won only 7 of the 36 new authorities in England; another 11 were most likely balanced or in party control all control. Once more it is now more sure that all of the new Labour authorities could have elected on the 'Partially reorganised only' list responded in full to circular 4/74 (and could have produced such plans) about the circular. The reason that on any could have decided to use this list was that Mrs. Thatcher had rejected many of new of the Labour local proposals, referred to above, while she was Secretary of state. Another explanation lies with the local government changes themselves. Many of the new are especially the metropolitan districts were the result of a complete restructuring of an area and more about no relation
to previous LAs. Others underwent significant boundary changes which gave them new areas and new schools. Finally, the electorates were Labour's first concern in the counties and were notional voting rules in their favour since 1964. The result they won control or had an important influence over building in a number of areas that had been lost to them largely since 1967.

5.3 CHALLENGE AND THE TRANSCENDING OF PRACTICE

Although reorganization continued throughout these years it was perhaps more significant as a period of strengthening resistance and a probing longer-term commitment to coexistence. By the end of 1979 more LAs were prepared to stand a challenge and use universally behind their new or similar schools than at almost any other time. Only one LA in the country had no comprehensive schools by their own definition, but no others like a third were determined to retain non-comprehensive schools alongside their comprehensives.

Though accurate figures are not available it is certain that co-existence was mainly attractive to Conservative MPs, fitting as it did a ideology of retaining non-privileged education and upgrading the rest of the state sector. Making up losses in under-qualified schools complemented this view and table 5.2 indicates that there was also a strong equally Conservative policy.
The actions and attitudes of the Conservative Party nationally clearly influenced these trends. Mrs Thatcher's decision to block the reorganisation of a number of grammar schools had a direct impact by inhibiting coexistence on some authorities. In addition the release of circular 10/70 with its invitation to LEAs to withdraw previously submitted schemes, the abandonment of any financial pressures featuring reorganisation and Mrs Thatcher's clear promotion of coexistence may have encouraged other LEAs to retain selective schemes of some kind. After Labour returned to power the new Conservative spokesman in September 1974 greater than any of his predecessors in defending the grammar school and encouraging LEAs to resist the new circular. In a pamphlet published in September 1974 he declared that a future Conservative Government, "will expect local authorities in submitting schemes for secondary reorganisation to preserve direct grant and grammar schools of proven worth." 26 For the first time Conservatives appeared to be positively requiring the retention of grammar schools. The TUC attacked John Stevens for "irresponsibly advocating" EMA resistance. 27

Nevertheless Conservative policy nationally was itself partly a response to Conservative practice locally. It was here that the decisions to resist full reorganisation and defend the grammar schools were first made during the 1960s. The idea of coexistence had been born with the very first comprehensive schools in the 1950s but many Conservative LEAs in the following decade esp. it as an appropriate response to
circular 10/65 and the growing momentum of reform. However as it became clear that the Labour Government could not accept some aspects of the long-term and intended to reorganize all grades and set up an advisory in 1974 began to add a teacher's voice from the Conservative Party in the Commons. In any case those documents were published by the authorities present, most notably in this instance of the Prime Minister, who were also meeting with both Conservative Secretary of State and national party figures and other senior internal net one or committed within the party. In ever the most visible expression of the general trend, those during the 1965 elections, Conservative Party members in the years following (circular 10/65) that were any motions raised attacking the Labour Government's comprehensive policy. However at least one debate in 1965 to ensure that a tax in the national's tactics and created 'heavies' if 'breaching-up' they and the charge of priorities and 'heavies' in this case did not the principle of comprehensive education. At election these lines were carried unanimously in 1965 and 1966 but in 1977 there were several speakers who attacked such actions as too new...There were calls for a party pledge to retain all grassy schools. To be rejected this call. Though the motion was passed by 1,327 votes to 46, the fact that there was a ballot at all revealed a clear split. Between 1965 and 1977 there were only a ballot in Conservative...
conferences on any motions and two of these were on comprehensive education. In 1968 the comprehensive issue was not mentioned in the original motion. A number of speakers in the debate called for a clear statement of support for resisting authorities and an amendment to the motion was carried which called on the Conservative Party, "to give clear and unequivocal support to Conservative local authorities which seek in pursuance of their election pledges to resist Government blackmail and preserve their grammar schools from senseless destruction." In 1963 unity was achieved by a motion opposing the Labour Government's Bill. By then it was clear that a future Conservative Government would come under heavy pressure from its own ranks and files if it was not seen to be defending the grammar school forcefully. Although the comprehensive issue was kept off conference motions while the Conservatives were in Government, opinions were still expressed showing support for the grammar school and calling for a more positive policy.

It was not just Conservative MPs opinions which were listened to, but those of the grammar school lobby. Mrs Thatcher rejected plans to reorganise grammar schools in several Conservative UDMs. The precise criteria she used for accepting or rejecting plans is not known but in most cases it seemed to bear some relation to the number of objections and the volume of protests received after the publication of section 13 notices. However it is unlikely that it was simply a question of counting up the signatures on petitions.
Personal contacts and appeals to the Secretary of State may have been important in some cases, for example in Surrey.\textsuperscript{48} In others the general prestige of the grammar school involved appeared to be significant. In general more pressure from below seemed to be involved in most of the decisions. In 1972 Mrs Thatcher explained that, "here the change are proposed for famous grammar schools with supreme reputations the objections come in thick and fast." \textsuperscript{49}

The Conservatives could have simply left the's completely free to make their own decisions. This is the position which would probably have been adopted in the mid -'50s by Boyle. The local protests were one influence which led to a more active response. Another came from the weakening of the consensus for comprehensives which had been built up in the previous period.

In 1969 the first two Black Papers were published and others followed in 1970, 1975 and 1977.\textsuperscript{50} They had academic origins and began as special issues of a literary journal, Critical Quarterly. The first issue was devoted only to student unrest, but the 2nd and 3rd took up attacks on progressive teaching methods and comprehensive schools. The articles were from a wide range of authors, some were entirely polemical, others included a limited amount of empirical research. They provided an intellectual basis for criticism of comprehensives, based on alleged lowering of standards and neglect of the bright child. The academic standard of the
papers came under considerable criticism. One study concluded, "As a contribution to serious educational debate the book is of limited value." 51 However, as this writer continued, "as a political battle-cry they are extremely stirring". 52

They certainly generated a considerable amount of media coverage and became educational best-sellers, under the most significant author and editor either for Hodder & Stoughton, former conservative school inspector, or the time of conservative MPs and Northern Ireland. He took the campaign into the conservative Party election campaign.

But at the time other academic researchers were finding it difficult to provide evidence of the success of comprehensive education. It had been relatively easy to document and quantify the failings of selection but early research did not vary too strongly about the extra educational resources creating any greater quality of opportunity. 5 In recent years, a number of studies began to provide such ammunition for those who were warning that educational standards were declining. A "hart and call" reading survey indicated that standards had risen since 1974. 55 The Bullock Report of 1975 in particular, that a major effort was needed to combat illiteracy. In 1976 a study of 'curriculum' or informal teaching methods in primary schools showed an overall formal method produced higher standards. 7 Each of these studies were full of reservations and cautious words about their implications but were taken up by the media and 'right-wing' educationalists and politicians.
they made sensational reading. 62  

The William Tyndale Primary School 'crisis' provided a particularly easy target for the media and the black paper writers. The school had adopted a radical philosophy in which many conventional teaching methods and school rules were abandoned. The school managers and some parents objected to these practices. EMA tried to carry out an inspection which the teachers refused to accept, the teachers went on strike and after a four month enquiry five of them were dismissed. All these events received a full and often sensationalised coverage in the media. 63  

There was also increasing talk of violence and disruption in schools at this time. In 1975 the EMA published a report, 'Violent and Destructive Behaviour in Schools' which catalogued a number of attacks on teachers. 60 Rhodes Boyson blamed the schools for the growth of adolescent violence. 61  

Then taken together these events contributed to the emergence of 'declining educational standards' as the major issue in education in the mid-70s. The Conservative party jumped on the bandwagon at an early stage (indeed they contributed to getting the wagon rolling) and directed the attack at Labour's education policy. Norman St John Stevas did this in a Conservative Research Centre pamphlet entitled 'Standards and Freedom' which was published in 1974. 62 The 1975 Conservative Conference passed a motion which began, 'This conference is concerned that educational standards are falling.' 63 In 1976 a motion calling for improved literacy
and numeracy are introduced by the leader of one of the ULMs

resides in a factory. On one hand, it is difficult to compare the standards. The following are some examples of children's names in education:

In the 1980s, the Chinese government introduced numerical scores to evaluate students. These scores were used to rank students and schools, which led to a competitive atmosphere in education. In the 1990s, the government introduced a new system to rank schools, which led to a highly competitive atmosphere in education.
This trend thus provided intellectual and popular support for the grammar school. It provided a climate within which the principle for those schools was rejected by teachers, whose opposition existed in an informal way, and which were clearly under attack from all.

The conclusion may be neatly illustrated by an examination of the percentage of all school voters who voted for grammar schools. This was 70% in 1977, 68% in 1971 of all school voters voted for grammar schools. The

There has been a general rise in the popularity of the comprehensive school, as Chapter 4, "The Education of the Comprehensive School", has shown. The figures are notional and based on a sample of supporters of the comprehensive school. The comprehensive school in 1977 is still growing in popularity but somewhat slower than the public at large. Twenty-two percent of the British said that they were for grammar schools.

The reasons for Labour initially using a circular system when they returned to power in 1974 were probably, after all, those in 'op. cit.' where a majority of those itises worked for a circular system. There was no point in getting this system passed into law voluntarily. This argument was based on a relatively small number of evidence cases to a circular system might still be acceptable in legislation. However, it is clear that a majority, if only at the time, must have realized, that these were not unrealistic, and the conservatives nationally were more enthusiastic and the consensus favoring reorganization had broken down.

This...
Furthermore, the local government changes of 1974 took LAB
status away from a number of inner-city boroughs, which
were now under Labour influence but were responsible to
the Conservatives. They engaged in a campaign for reform
in the national local government and in the local
administration of the larger Conservative controlled
areas as a counterbalance. A virtual revolution was
engaged in, and the result of this was a greater sense of
legitimacy.
Footnotes to chapter 5


2. An example of his style occurred in a 1972 speech. "One of the problems with the current economic situation is that it is a situation which is putting too much emphasis on economic growth."

3. The speech was made in 1972. "We have seen a trend towards a more aggressive approach to economic policy."


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


11. See, for example, J. Bell, *The Decline of Local Authority* in the *Local Authority*, *Managing in Local Government*, Macmillan, 1972.

13. Ibid.


16. See 2.3, 17/1/75.


21. Hansard, 10/6/74, written answers columns 460-461.

22. Hansard, 14/10/75, written answers column 653.


24. Ibid., 18/2/75.

25. P. Dunleavy, Urban Political Analysis, Macmillan, 1980, p. 36. Dunleavy recalculated the original 261 figures which had an error in them.


27. For example, Surrey, Bedfordshire and one N. A. included in art II of this study, Richmond.


29. Ibid, 10/10/76, written answers column 214-215.


31. Ibid., 3/7/70.

33. Hansard, 19/11/73, written answers columns 324-329; and election date, see note 5, chapter 2, n. 74.

34. Circular 8/74, op. cit., p. 4, election date, ibid.

35. Circular, 14/10/72, written answers column 142; and election date, ibid.


37. The same...

38. op. cit., 154, shows that a large proportion of a local government's expenditure is spent on services.

39. In the op. cit., 154, shows that a large proportion of a local government's expenditure is on services.


41. For example Conservative Party Conference, 1971.

42. For example Conservative Party Conference, 1971.

43. For example Conservative Party Conference, 1971.

44. For example Conservative Party Conference, 1971.

45. For example Conservative Party Conference, 1971.


47. The data necessary to know the exact number of such cases is in preparation for this study. Before he left power 12 Conservative controlled LIs were unable to decide the case of an L.I.S. University student in 1969. In October 1971, in Hansard, 12/11/71, written answer, column 103-306.

48. In a parliamentary debate in 1971 Sir and Miss looked forward to the day when 'little boys would be encouraged in their schools to understand the roads' bill and 'to use their eyes and ears' well.


52. Ibid.


54. See Hopkins, op. cit., chapter 3 and 4; and Kogan, ibid., chapter 7.


62. St John Stevens, op. cit.


64. Conservative Party Conference, 1976. The mover was Robin Squire, Leader of Sutton Council, see Chapter 11.


67. One of the first attempts at comparing exam results between comprehensive and selective schools was by .
Jordan in Black paper Three, on cit. See also Tel. 17/10/75;
and J. Taylor in Black paper 1975. This tactic was later
continued and advocated strongly by Helen Lyon, see,
Annual Report, 17/9/75, 14; also Jack, on cit.

68. Annual Report, 17/9/75

69. 17/9/75

70. 17/9/75
6.1 LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL ACTION 1976-79

The struggle over reorganization finally broke out into legal and judicial conflict during 1976. That year saw a flurry of central government activity aimed at dealing with the recalcitrant authorities once and for all. In an isolated incident the Secretary of State issued a section 66 order against Tameside council requiring them to proceed with a comprehensive plan and took the issue to court in an attempt to ensure compliance. In November the Education Act 1976 received the Royal Assent. Circular 11/76 explaining the intentions of the Act declared, "At last the principle of fully comprehensive secondary education is written into law." A second circular dealt with the phasing out of LEA places at independent schools. Finally the Secretary of State used the 76 Act to require plans from 32 LEAs in England.

Tameside

Although the dispute with Tameside was largely unique, it is worth describing briefly as an illustration of the level of conflict which had been reached by this time. Tameside, one of the new LEAs created in 1974, was initially under Labour control and as such drew up a comprehensive scheme. The plan was submitted to the DES and approved and was due to be implemented in September 1976. However in the local election
that May the Conservatives won control and immediately voted to postpone the reorganisation of two grammar schools. A speedy selection procedure was devised to fill 240 places at these schools for the following September.

The Labour Secretary of State decided to try to prevent this move on the grounds that implementation was already underway and there was not enough time adequately to make the rearrangements necessary. Using his powers under section 68 of the 1944 Act he declared the authority to be acting 'unreasonably' and directed them to implement the comprehensive plan. Tameside council decided not to comply with this order and the Secretary of State then applied to the High Court for an order of mandamus under section 99 of the same Act.

The order was initially granted but on appeal, and eventually in the House of Lords, the decision went against the Secretary of State. The Lords argued that he had been unable to provide sufficiently convincing evidence that the LEA's action was unreasonable. As a result, Tameside schools remained selective for a little longer.

The Education Act

The decision to introduce the Education Bill was hardly surprising. Labour's policy set out in 1965 was still some way from fulfilment and Conservative attitudes had hardened into a strong defence of the grammar school. The resisting LEAs had been given every opportunity to reform voluntarily and been subject to a range of pressures and it was clear
that most were now extremely unlikely to reorganise unless compelled to by legislation. For some years there had been considerable dissatisfaction with the speed of reorganisation from the rank and file within the Labour Party. Many academics, educationalists and educational pressure groups including the NUT favoured legislation.

The 1976 Education Act came into effect in November.

The most important provisions were:

Section One. The Principle of Comprehensive Education

Secondary education "is to be provided only in schools where the arrangements for the admission of pupils are not based (wholly or partly) on selection by reference to ability or aptitude." Exceptions - special schools, schools for music and dancing, section Two (6) below.

Section Two. The Submission of Plans.

(1) "If at any time it appears to the Secretary of State that progress or further progress in giving effect to [this] principle is required in the area or any party of the area of any LEA, he may require the authority to prepare and submit to him, within such time as he may specify, proposals for the purpose of giving effect to that principle...."

(3) "Managers or Governors of voluntary schools may be required to do the same.

(4) "The Secretary of State may require....further proposals in substitution for any proposals previously submitted." He will say how and why he regards the original proposals unsatisfactory and "may specify conditions to be fulfilled by
the further proposals with respect to any of those matters."

(5) "Proposals prepared and submitted under this section shall be in such form as the Secretary of State may direct and shall indicate the times when they are respectively to be carried into effect."

(6) Selection may be used, "to secure the even distribution between the schools of pupils of different degrees of ability or aptitude," as long as the Secretary of State permits it.

Section 4 Implementation

It is the duty of LEAs to implement any proposals approved by the Secretary of State under section 13 of the 1944 Education Act.

Section 5 Places at Independent Schools

The Secretary of State may revoke any approval previously given to LEAs for providing education and paying the fees and expenses of pupils at non-maintained schools.

Section 12 Supplementary

(3) "This Act shall be construed as one with the Education Act 1944."

Circular 11/76 emphasised that "it will be for local authorities and voluntary school governors to propose whatever pattern of comprehensive education seems best for their areas, consistent with the resources available and the need to complete the job with all reasonable speed."

Two days after the Act was passed the Secretary of State, now Mrs Williams, wrote to 6 LEAs requiring them to submit full
proposals under section two (1). They were given six months to comply. In January 1977 26 more LEAs were told to submit plans for certain specific schools or areas within the authority (3 of these involved voluntary schools only). Further proposals under section two (4) were required from a number of these LEAs during 1977. Finally in a few cases the Secretary of State resorted to her default powers under section 99 of the 1944 Act and six of these were scheduled for court action.

Circular 12/76 explained to LEAs how section five of the 1976 Act would be operated. LEAs were required to submit information about existing arrangements involving non-maintained schools. It was recognised that there were legitimate reasons for using these schools in particular to ensure sufficient boarding education and to provide a choice of denominational schooling. The practice would also be permitted temporarily where LEAs were genuinely short of school places. However, the Secretary of State intended to ensure that future arrangements should be "consistent with the government's policy of abolishing selection for secondary education." After the information was received further guidance would be issued and discussions initiated on how unsatisfactory arrangements should be amended. In the following year many LEAs were told they could no longer continue to take up such places.

To summarise, between 1976 and 1979 the Labour Government finally took action in Parliament and the Courts in an attempt to complete reorganisation. It not only pursued the
reorganisation of all fully maintained schools in a number of
LEAs but also tackled the issue of voluntary schools and
maintained selective places at independent schools.

6.2. LEA REORGANISATION AND RESPONSES TO THE ACT 1976-79

Once again the figures show that reorganisation continued
during this period. The percentage of maintained children
in comprehensive schools rose from 73.2 in January 1976 to
84.9 in January 1979. Nevertheless this marked a
considerable slow down in reform. The increase in the
percentage over these three years was just 11.7 compared with
26 in the previous three. The bulk of this reorganisation
came from proposals submitted in earlier years. In January
1977 Mrs Williams implied that there were 41 LEAs in England
which were not yet fully reorganised but which had plans in
progress with which she was satisfied. It was some of these
LEAs which contributed to the increasing proportions during
this period.

As far as new proposals went, and in particular the response
of the 34 LEAs tackled under the 1976 Act, the period was
disappointing for the reformers. Far from the Act bringing a
swift compliance with reorganisation, the DfE met with continued
and in some cases strengthened resistance.

Many of the 34 LEAs required to submit plans for the
first time under the Act failed to produce them within the
deadlines set. In addition, when the plans did arrive they
were often unsatisfactory, including all eight from the LEAs
required to submit full plans. The three inadequacies which
were most frequently present in these plans were:
1) Possible elements of selection retained, for example through a combination of 11 to 16 and 11 to 18 schools where the latter were former grammar schools.

2) Unreasonable demands on resources involving new purpose-built schools at a time of financial constraints.

3) Long term implementation proposals, fifteen years before selection was to be abandoned in one case and almost always allowing sufficient time for at least one general election to intervene before any irrevocable changes were due to take place. 14

All eight of the LEAs first approached and some of the second group of 26 were required to re-submit plans which met specific deadlines and use of resources. Some complied but others decided, after taking legal advice, to defy the Secretary of State. Mrs Williams then issued section 99 orders under the 1944 Act and six LEAs were either to be taken to court or themselves sought a judgement as to the validity of the Secretary of State's orders. Only one of these cases was actually heard before the 1979 election. In this case Mrs Williams won her action against North Yorkshire. This particular dispute involved her right to reject particular details of a reorganisation scheme submitted by the authority. 15

The early election in 1979, the Conservative victory and their subsequent actions (see below) ensured that this continued resistance by a number of LEAs was successful. It is important to examine both why such resistance was even
contemplated in the face of legislation and why it proved to be worthwhile.

There is no doubt that there was a hard core of resisting LEAs in 1976 which were determined to keep up the struggle for as long as possible without breaking the law. These LEAs had fought long and hard to keep all or some of their grammar schools and they were not likely to give up easily at this stage. Table 6.1 shows that, excluding the LEAs ordered to submit voluntary school plans, there were two types of resisting authority at this stage. The vast majority were solid Conservative LEAs which were immune even from the extreme national swings of support which characterise the middle and frequently unpopular years of most Governments. The other group were more marginal LEAs in which control did change but where Labour were never in power long enough to pass and begin implementing reorganisation before the Conservatives returned and retained selection.

The Conservative Groups in these LEAs probably decided to continue resistance partly as a political gesture against a Labour Central Government coercing them to reorganise. However, in addition they also had some realistic hope of a reprieve. Between 1976 and 1979 the Labour Government's majority was extremely small and steadily declining as they suffered by-election defeats. In the latter years the Government was only kept alive by a pact with the Liberals. As a result there was a real possibility of an election at almost
Table 6.1 Political control of LEAs tackled under the 1976 Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Control</th>
<th>LEAs required to submit plans for all or some LEA schools</th>
<th>LEAs required to submit plans for voluntary schools</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.P. Political control calculated since 1974, except for London Boroughs since 1964. Either continuous control or control shared with others at some stage but with that party remaining the largest.

Sources: *Hansard*, 13/1/77, columns 69-72; and election data, see note 3, chapter 2, p. 74
any time during that period. In these circumstances LEAs were encouraged to keep up their resistance for as long as possible by the prospect of a Conservative Government coming to their rescue. The Conservative spokesman, St John Stevas, was particularly outspoken in his support for these LEAs. He pledged that a future Tory Government would repeal the 1976 Act and support LEAs wishing to retain grammar schools. At the 1977 Party Conference, with representatives from most of the LEAs who were actively being pursued by the DES at that time in the audience, he said, "One-third of the LEAs in the country still have (grammar schools) and I say to the LEAs there 'hang on, because help is coming'." 17

However there is no evidence that any of these LEAs were prepared to 'do a Clay Cross' and actually defy the law. Therefore a crucial element in the continued resistance was the extent to which authorities could challenge the Secretary of State's interpretation of the Act and delay compliance without being clearly in breach of the law. There is no doubt that these LEAs tried hard to find the means to do this but equally they would not have pursued their resistance for as long if they had not been able to find some legal opinion to support such a position.

The first tactic used was to exploit possible weaknesses in the wording of the Act in an attempt to escape through a loophole. Whether any such loopholes really existed remains unknown because only one challenge to the Secretary of State
came to court. In this case the verdict went against the LEA but other authorities were challenging her actions on different grounds. However it was the possibility of loopholes, identified by legal opinions sought, which allowed LEAs to take the issue as far as they did. The three possible loopholes which were probed concerned the Secretary of State's powers to set a deadline for the start and completion of implementation, to dictate a particular pattern of reorganisation and to require complete reorganisation. The latter was used by Redbridge at one stage based on the idea that a 95% compliance constituted adherence to the 'general principle' of comprehensive education. This was probably the most dubious challenge. The power to require a particular pattern seemed to be confirmed by the one case which was completed although this was not absolutely clear from the Act. The question of timing was the most frequently used. The Act did not say the Secretary of State could impose a deadline for implementation. However the DES argued that the powers under section 2 (4) to "specify conditions to be fulfilled by the further proposals" covered that point.

Nevertheless these questions of clarification were enough to justify court action as far as Conservatives locally and nationally were concerned.

It may be inevitable that some grounds for challenging the interpretation of laws will always be found by a determined opponent. However, particularly given the delay before legislation was introduced, it is surprising that the
wording of the Act in respect of deadlines for implementation was not more carefully checked by the Government as this was the most common resistance ploy used by LE's in the years since 1965. The failure to do this may well be an example of the lack of political supervision over the precise drafting of legislation or simply a shortage of manpower and the pressure of time on Ministers and civil servants.

Another aspect of the Act which was exploited by LEAs was the fact that the submission of plans was an additional duty imposed on them, to be added to the other duties under the 1944 Act and subsequent Acts. LEAs apparently successfully claimed that the failure to respond adequately to letters from the Secretary of State requiring the submission of plans was not in itself a breach of the law. They argued that if the Secretary of State felt that the LEA was defaulting on its duties then an order under section 99 of the 1944 Act should be issued. This could be enforced through an order of mandamus from the courts, which could be challenged on appeal. Only if the order of mandamus was confirmed and the LEA still refused to comply would it be breaking the law. This interpretation of the procedures to be followed is not necessarily the only valid one but it was the one which LEAs used to justify their actions and the approach which Mrs Williams eventually adopted in challenging
these actions. The result was a considerable delay in bringing the full force of the law to bear on the recalcitrant LEAs. In fact the delays and deliberations within the judicial system was an important factor in dragging out the resistance until the election arrived.

An additional problem which the DES had faced before was their dependence on LEAs for the details of any re-organisation scheme. The central government had neither the power nor the local knowledge and expertise to draw up its own viable scheme. Its reliance on LEAs to produce plans even under legal direction led to further delay and negotiation. There would be no point in initiating long, slow judicial proceedings simply because LEAs missed deadlines. If reorganisation was to be implemented a viable scheme had to be drawn up and for this the DES ultimately remained dependent on the LEAs.

Finally it is important to note that the resisting LEAs were not working in isolation by this stage. The similarities in the styles of resistance to the Act tend to confirm reports that "About 30 Conservative authorities organised themselves into a group......which met secretly twice yearly to discuss, among other things, tactics on how to outwit the Labour Government and the 1976 Act." 22 In 1977 the TES reported a meeting between the Conservative shadow cabinet and "30 or 40" LEAs involved with the Act. 23 At the same time the issue of declining standards was kept alive by
the media and the Black Paper writers. The appointment of Rhodes Boyson as a Conservative shadow spokesman on education ensured that comprehensive schools remained in the firing line. In the summer of 1978 he published a comparison of the exam results of a comprehensive LEA, Manchester, and a selective one, Trafford. He made no allowances for the differences in social composition of the two areas and not surprisingly the results were considerably better in the latter. The severe limitations of such figures were not always pointed out and as a result they appeared to give a boost to the grammar school lobby. All in all the struggle against the 1976 Act seemed to strengthen the forces defending selection.

The result of Labour's attack on voluntary selective schools and LEA places at independent schools is less clear. Some voluntary schools joined the comprehensive system but most seem either to have gone independent or had not finalised their future before the election changed the position again.

The threat of refusing to allow non-essential places at independent schools probably acted as a deterrent for some LEAs and Mrs Williams received applications for only 4,517 places for 1977-78 compared with an estimated 6,000 taken up in 1976-77. She rejected 906 of these applications from 13 LEAs but approved the rest from 31 LEAs. Many of these were necessary on the grounds of "shortage of suitable maintained places." Therefore it seems that although the
numbers involved were cut back the DES were prevented by lack of LEA accommodation from ending the practice altogether.

6.3 REPEAL AND THE SUPER-SELECTIVE OPTION

Repeal and its Effects

The election of a Conservative Government under Mrs Thatcher in May 1979 was the event which finally released LEAs from the obligation to reorganise. The first legislative act of the new Parliament was to repeal the main sections of the 1976 Act. The court cases pending were abandoned and LEAs were free to decide whether or not to continue with plans drawn up under the pressure of legislation. The Conservative Government was fulfilling its pledge to the resisting LEAs made while in opposition. As Mark Carlisle, the new Secretary of State declared during the debate on the repeal, "Above all, those areas which have fought hard to retain their grammar schools should be allowed to do so." 27

Precise details of the plans of LEAs following the return of a Conservative Government are unclear. However it is possible to present some data from a survey of LEAs conducted in the summer of 1979 by Geddes. 25 A summary of the data from this survey was kindly made available for this study and a follow up telephone survey carried out in the summer of 1980. 29 Although the findings from these sources should be treated cautiously, they represent the best information available as to the immediate and subsequent responses to the repeal of the 76 Act.
It should be stated at the outset that the presentation and use of the Geddes' data in this study is quite different in emphasis from that by Geddes herself. She chooses to stress the extent to which reorganisation was continuing despite the change of Government. However there are two points about her interpretation of the data which are problematic. She identified some 110 grammar schools in 19 LEAs which were still likely to go comprehensive following the election, and correctly interpreted this as evidence of continued reorganisation. However almost all of these were in LEAs which were not tackled under the 1976 Act and were not therefore among the hard core resisting faction of authorities. Rather, they represented the residual reorganisation from authorities which made the decision to go fully comprehensive free from legislative pressure in an earlier period. In addition when she presented the data on LEAs retaining grammar schools she understated and underestimated the likely extent of continued selection. First she chose to emphasise that only eleven LE's were certain to retain all their grammar schools and played down the number who were certain or likely to retain at least some. Secondly after up-dating her survey in the summer of 1980 it is clear that most LEAs which Geddes classified as 'uncertain' turn out to be retaining some form of selection.

Table 6.2 shows that the follow-up survey revealed that most of the LEAs tackled under the 1976 Act (excluding
### Table 6.2 Probable state of reorganisation proposals in 1980 of those LEAs in England tackled under 1976 Act, by political control up to 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Control</th>
<th>LEAs tackled under 1976 Act (excluding those with voluntary grammar schools)</th>
<th>LEAs likely to retain some grammar schools in 1980 survey</th>
<th>LEAs likely to reorganise in full in 1980 survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**  26   20   6

NB. Political control means continuous control or control shared with others in which that party remained dominant. It is calculated for 1974 to 1980 inclusive except for London Boroughs for which it is 1964-1980. The figures in column 1 differ from those in table 6.1 because one LEA which was under Conservative control in table 6.1 is re-classified as 'mixed' having been captured by Labour in 1979. That LEA is Bolton.

Sources: *Hansard*, 18/1/77, columns 69-72; 1980 follow-up survey to survey by D. Geddes, *Locality* 5/7/79, see note 6, page 29; and election data, see note 3, chapter 2, page 74.
those with voluntary grammar schools only) are likely to retain some grammar schools following the Act's repeal. All but two of these were Conservative dominated LEAs and even the two exceptions have been under Conservative control for most of the time. It seems that the process of resisting central government legislation served to consolidate and strengthen support for the grammar schools in these areas. Previously divided Tory groups united against the Act - particularly when it was used to impose short deadlines and prohibit the use of extra resources. When the reprieve came it was apparently unthinkable in many cases for the local Conservatives to do anything but retain the grammar schools which they had fought so hard and long to defend.

In the five more marginal LEAs changes of control have produced reorganisation plans in three cases. This includes Tameside where Labour, having won back control in 1979, re-submitted the same plan which had been withdrawn at the last minute by the Conservatives in 1976. However, even in these LEAs there is always the prospect of further electoral reversals. Among LEAs with voluntary grammar schools at least 4 of those tackled under the '76 Act seem likely to take no action to attempt to change the selective nature of these schools or their place within the authority's education system now that the pressures have been removed.
In addition selection may well continue for some time in other LEAs not tackled under the '76 Act. In January 1977 Mrs "Illiams acknowledged that on top of the 34 LEAs contacted there were 41 which were not at that time fully comprehensive. She commented, "The great bulk of the 41 authorities which I have not on this occasion written to...intend to reorganise as soon as resources are available for them to do so and I am persuaded of their goodwill." It may well be questioned not only how long some of these LEAs will feel the need to wait for resources but whether changes in party control of some of these, together with the arrival of the Conservative Government might not also dissipate their goodwill towards full reorganisation. The Geddes' data provides some early indications of this. It shows at least three of these 41 LEAs were 'reconsidering' their reorganisation plans and others were reviewing the timetable of reform. Furthermore since the election at least one LEA has proposed, and received the Secretary of State's approval, for the re-establishment of a grammar school which had been turned into a comprehensive. This appears to be the first time this has happened and although an isolated incident shows the strength of the selective lobby in at least one area.

According to the DES, in January 1979 there were still 49 LEAs in England with selective grammar schools. A number of these LEAs will continue with the implementation of previously agreed reorganisation plans over the next
few years. However something like a quarter of the 96 LEAs in England will retain some grammar school education for the foreseeable future.

**Super Selection**

Although selection is likely to continue this is not to say that it will necessarily take its traditional form in all these LEAs. A few will keep all their grammar schools (at least in a particular area) and operate a system of selecting approximately 20-25% of eleven-year-olds much as was common in nearly all LEAs in the 1950s and '60s. However rather more seem to be moving towards a form of 'super selection'. In these authorities just a few (sometimes only one) of the most prestigious grammar schools in an area are retained catering for a much smaller proportion of children (the average seems to be around 5%). As a result these schools take a very narrow range of top ability children. The rest of the schools in that area are then frequently classified as 'comprehensive'. Very often the selection tests used for these schools are optional and taken only by those children whose parents specifically choose to enter them.

Again it is difficult to find detailed data about this trend. In large LEAs the number of grammar schools retained does not reveal the degree of concentration of such schools in particular areas. However the follow-up telephone survey in 1980 revealed that of the seven London Boroughs
retaining selection five were moving towards super-selective system with either one or two grammar schools."

There are a number of explanations for this trend. One is that it provides a useful response to the problem of falling rolls. As the secondary school population declines so a fixed percentage of selection produces less children. Increasing the percentage selected would weaken the selective intake to both grammar and non-selective schools in the area. However, if the number of grammar schools and therefore selective places are reduced then the status of remaining grammar schools may be increased and at the same time there will be a rather higher ability intake to the non-selective schools. This is particularly important if such schools are to be able to continue to provide whole sixth forms. (This is the trend which has already a number of comprehensive UGs to consider the sixth form college pattern recently.)

Nevertheless the origins of super-selection in many UGs are older and can be traced to the coexistence policy of Mrs. Thatcher in the early 1970s. The encouragement and in some cases imposed the retention of individual prestigious grammar schools alongside comprehensives. Such a system was also voluntarily adopted by some UGs partly as a response to the problem when traditional selective systems created of secondary modern schools unable to support higher academic work.
However the trends of coexistence and super-selection also owe much to the emerging ideology of an elite education for the 'high flyers' in 'centres of excellence'. This is a view which has been encouraged by some educationalists and well as Conservatives, Black Paper writers and others outside education.41

This ideology extends beyond the establishment of super-selective county grammar schools to other aspects of secondary education policy which seem likely to continue or grow under the Conservative Government. First some of the voluntary aided grammar schools may now remain within the state system as super-selective schools. This may not be many because a number, having decided to go independent, will continue to do so, no doubt hoping to safeguard themselves from future action by a Labour Government. Nevertheless these schools will still have the opportunity to retain links with the maintained sector. This is partly because the Conservative Government are likely to permit LEAs to take up places at independent schools once more. In addition however, the Conservatives have introduced the assisted-places scheme as a substitute for the direct grant system. Eventually the scheme is intended to provide between 80,000 and 100,000 places for children at independent schools financed by the DES. The estimated cost of these places in 1979 was £55 million. However the Government announced only a modest 6,000 places costing £3 million for
the first year, 1981. These policies are forms of super-
selection which will often cream off pupils from otherwise
fully comprehensive systems.

The prospects for the 1980s are for selection and in
particular super-selection to continue with the support of
a number of Conservative MPs and the Conservative Government.
Mrs Thatcher's Government has had less dealings with the issue
than Governments for some time and no clear policy towards
comprehensives has emerged. Carlisle, the First
Secretary of State for Education, approved Tameside's
resubmitted plan but refused to allow the newly elected
Labour council in Birmingham to return a girls' grammar
school to comprehensive status from which it had only
recently been removed by the previous Conservative adminis-
tration. Carlisle did appear to favour a move towards
6th form college or tertiary college plans from LEAs which
were already comprehensive as a response to the declining
secondary school population. However this policy was
disliked by his successor Sir Keith Joseph. At the same
time as Joseph took over as Secretary of State, Gyles
Toyson became Minister of State in charge of schools. Under
these two, comprehensive schooling was not had a favourable
reception. Toyson in particular has publicly criticised
comprehensive schools in a way which no minister had done
since the 1950s.

It is unlikely that the Conservative Government will
campaign openly for the re-establishment of grammar schools and will probably allow most LEAs to determine their own policy towards selection. This may produce a further trickle of reorganisation, particularly in any LEAs which change political control, but most of the authorities intending to keep their grammar schools are solidly under Conservative control and unlikely to change their approach in the near future. Meanwhile Labour wait in the wings for yet another attempt to remove the last bastions of selection. If they get the opportunity they will hope to have more success next time.
Footnotes to Chapter 6


3. This was expressed frequently at annual conferences from 1967 onwards.

4. For example S. Marsden, Politicians, Bourgeois, Comprehensive, Fabian Tract 411, 1971, the Campaign for Comprehensive Education argued for legislation from an early date and the UTL supported the abortive attempt at legislation in 1963.


6. ___, 26/11/76

7. ___, 21/1/77


9. ___.


11. ___, 1973, '76 and '79

12. ___, 12/1/77, columns 69-72

13. ___, 17/7/77

14. See for example TES 4/2/77 and 6/1/78

15. The Times, 20/10/78

16. Of the 4 mixed control UAs in table 6.1, three were metropolitan districts with annual elections in which Labour only had control for one or two consecutive years. The other mixed UA was Teyler which had one period of 4 year Labour control since 1964.

18. See TES, 6/1/78
19. The Times, 20/10/78
20. Education Act 1976

21. In a BBC TV programme 'Tonight' on 30/3/78 St John Stevas defended Redbridge Council's decision to challenge the Secretary of State's powers under the 1976 Act in the courts. From verbatim taped transcript of programme.

22. D. Geddes 'What will happen to grammar schools', in New Society, 5/7/79, p.13
23. TES, 15/7/77
24. See The Sunday Times, 2/10/77; and TES 22/9/78
25. This was clear from the raw data obtained by Geddes, op. cit.
26. Hansard, 25/5/78, written answers columns 637-646
27. The Guardian, 20/6/79
29. For details see note 6 page 29

30. Calderdale was either under Conservative control or in a situation of no overall control for the bulk of the period since 1974, while Bexley, despite two earlier periods of Labour Control, was under continuous Conservative control between 1974 and 1980.
31. Kirklees, Bolton and Tameside
32. Unpublished Geddes data, see note 6 p. 29
33. Hansard, 18/1/77, columns 69-70
34. Ibid., column 70
35. These were Avon, Walsall and Liverpool, unpublished Geddes data, op. cit.
36. This occurred in Birmingham in 1980 while under Conservative control
38. Examples include Trafford, Fexley and Sutton, 1980 follow-up survey. On Sutton see chapter 11.

39. Examples include Tedbridge, Fosbery and Laxingham, follow-up survey.

40. Follow-up survey, see note 6 page 29.

41. See for example F. St John Stevens, Better Schools for All, Conservative Political Centre, 1977; also Wooding, op. cit., chapters 1 and 3.

42. Education, 15/2/80

43. TES, 15/5/81

... see for example The Guardian, 26/4/82 and TES, 4/5/82.
Chapter 7 THE NATIONAL POLICY PROCESS REVIEWED

7.1 THE COMPLEX POLICY PROCESS IN ACTION

In this last chapter of part I the developments of comprehensive reorganisation analysed in the previous four chapters will be summarised in to the complex educational policy process outlined in chapter 2. Figure 7.1 provides a model of the basic configuration of roles in this system as it has functioned for this particular policy issue.

The Local Authorities and the Schools: a view from the bottom

One of the striking features of the development of reorganisation is the importance of individual LEA decisions and the influence of the schools themselves. At first it was the pioneering policies of a few authorities in introducing the first comprehensive schools, planning the early more ambitious schemes and experimenting with different patterns of reorganisation. These decisions and the experience of the schools began the spread of ideas within the national local government system as well as providing practical examples of a policy which was already being discussed within the educational world and the Labour Party. Later it was the defence campaigns produced by individual grammar schools together with the covert and then overt resistance of a small number of LEAs which held up the progress of reorganisation. As time went by these early resisters began to work closely with the Conservative Party and cooperated with each other to create a political
Figure 7.1 Model of the National Policy Process for Comprehensive Education
base for the opposition to comprehensives and maintain selective and coexisting systems as viable alternatives.

This suggests a need to reject any exclusively 'top-down' view of policy formation in Britain. It is clear that local initiatives can be a very important source of influence on national trends.

The National Local Government System

Notwithstanding the importance of certain individual local actions it is clear that LEAs do not make discrete policy decisions in isolation from each other. Inter-authority influences were important at each phase. These operated on a one-to-one basis such as when one LEA visited another to see its system in operation, through ad hoc organisations such as that set up by the LEAs resisting the 1976 Act or through formal organisations such as the ADC.

As the early innovations were consolidated and began to prove themselves discussions within the national local government system gradually led to the build up of a consensus favouring reorganisation. The diffusion of reform among LEAs tends to create a multiplier effect so that it acquires a momentum of its own.¹ In this way it is possible to see how reorganisation could develop independently of central government interventions. As a result whenever such interventions did occur their influence was structured by an already functioning system of inter-authority influence.

In this respect the diffusion of innovation found in this
study is similar to that identified by Dunleavy in his study of the spread of high rise housing.2 Adapting Dunleavy's work it is possible to present the basic structure of intergovernmental relations as in figure 7.2. It shows six main types of influence flow. These are:
1. Central government on local authorities
2. Local authorities on the national local government system
3. The national local government system on local authorities
4. One local authority on another or others.
5. The national local government system on central government
6. Local authorities on central government.

The national local government system operated mainly as a stimulus to reform in the 1960s. In the 1970s as the momentum slowed so the continued existence of selective LEAs set up counter influences particularly on the use of co-existence and super-selective systems.

The Professions

Education officers, advisors and inspectors were important participants in the policy system both as integral parts of the national local government system and as professions in their own right. However it is difficult to assess the precise nature of their influence. It seems clear that individual CEOs played important roles in a number of decisions. Ideological support for reorganisation within the profession together with the prospects it offered for career advancement, probably played some part in aiding the spread of comprehensive education. In particular the popularity of certain patterns
Figure 7.2 The Structure of Intergovernmental Relations

of reorganisation probably owed much to their standing among education officers.

However, as was suggested in chapter two, education officers tended to be heavily employer rather than profession orientated. As such although they may have played decisive roles when given some freedom to act, they did not, as a profession, develop a strong and consistent national position on the issue. It is not surprising to find that on the whole education officers seemed to respond to other influences within their particular LMA at any time.  

Teachers acted more independently although they are also mainly employed in the public sector. However they were seriously divided organisationally and displayed few of the signs of a strong profession. Radical teachers' groups were influential in the early period in a few LMA and the support of the national leadership of the largest teachers' union was an important element of the build up of the consensus for reorganisation in the 1960s. However as a whole they also tended to follow rather than lead opinion. Furthermore there was never a rank and file professional commitment to comprehensives and there appears to be no evidence of teachers ever taking industrial action in opposition to any particular LMA policy. Probably the most consistent teachers' group was the Joint Four who were important in continually defending the grammar school and at least covertly aiding individual grammar school protests. They were able to give some professional
credibility to the anti-comprehensive movement.

National educational Opinion

As well as the professions and the national local government system, other important elements of national educational opinion were involved. The activities and reports of quasi-governmental agencies, particularly the OCRs and a range of academic research contributed in particular to the increasing criticisms of selection in the late '50s and early '60s. The formation of pro-comprehensive pressure groups and the generally favourable media treatment during this early period also contributed to the climate of reform. As a whole the growing consensus favouring reorganisation within educational opinion helped give a momentum to this policy locally, encouraged the Labour Government to intervene and persuaded some Conservatives of the educational merits of comprehensives.

In the 1970s a breakdown of this consensus occurred as the black Curle writers and the media linked the decline of the grammar school with the alleged decline in educational standards. Meanwhile academics were unable to provide clear evidence of the success of comprehensive education. This split united the grammar school defenders and helped make the issue ideological again.

Central Government

As a consequence of the existence of these other non-local sources of influence on TV's it was difficult to un-
tangle the role of central government. There were some occasions when central interventions were obviously crucial but much of the time these actions coincided with other pressures operating in a similar direction and their precise impact is unclear.

This was particularly true of the authoritative resources employed by Labour Governments. Circulums 10/65 and 4/74 and the numerous general exhortations to reorganise were part of, and largely depended for their success on, the growing consensus favouring reorganisation described above. Clearly these circulars had some influence on particular LAs at least in terms of the timing and form of reorganisation contemplated. However they proved ineffective against determined local opposition backed up by the break-down of the consensus and a Parliamentary Opposition prepared to help reverse the trend towards reform. In fact the reliance on authoritative resources to promote reform enabled the resistance to take a filibustering form rather than one of outright confrontation. As a result resistance became confused with cautious but nevertheless genuine efforts at gradual reorganisation.

The financial pressures were also rather less effective than some writers on central-local relations have suggested. In the 1960s Robson argued that local authorities were losing control to the centre "mainly because of their extensive dependence on central grants." Similar concerns were expressed during the debate on local government reform in the 1970s and in the Layfield Report on local government finance.
However, while determining the overall level of expenditure provides a general central government influence, financial controls cannot easily be used as short-term or specific controlling devices over detailed DfE policy.

The majority of expenditure derived from central government grant is used on current account. This is necessary for the day-to-day running of the education service and cannot easily be tampered with. Similarly it is difficult to deny authorities approval for absolutely essential capital projects. All governments have acknowledged the need to ensure that there are sufficient 'roofs over heads'. This leaves only a limited amount of room for manoeuvre.

Control over the building programmes was used frequently over the comprehensive issue. It proved highly effective in the 1950s and early '70s in blocking reforms which required major alterations. In addition the restrictions imposed by circulars 10/66 and again in 1974 often led to detailed negotiations between the DES and LAs and may have persuaded or encouraged some of them to proceed with reforms. However it is clear that these sanctions were not effective in many cases. The DES gave approval to building for limited re-organisation which tended to encourage coexistence. In addition it would have required considerably longer periods of Labour Government to cause serious problems for most Conservative LAs which were generally well-off and reasonably equipped.
By far the most effective central government actions were those derived from statutory powers. The right to approve or reject significant changes to schools was used by Governments of both parties before 1964 and Conservative Governments after that date to block reorganisation plans. In addition Mrs Thatcher used her section 68 powers to prevent one LMA from pursuing an 'unreasonable' comprehensive proposal. Nevertheless Labour's attempt to use section 68 against Tameside proved how limited those powers are in practice. Furthermore although the 1976 Act gave the Minister new powers over LMA's which produced reorganisation plans from even the most recalcitrant authority, the implementation of that Act revealed further weaknesses. Drafting and passing legislation is a controversial and time-consuming process. The enforcement and interpretation of that legislation in the courts creates even more delay. Finally legislation can be repealed or amended. The combination of these limitations enabled resisting LMAs to escape from determined central government intervention.

Therefore although it is clear that the central government played a decisive role in blocking reform during certain periods it is less certain just how much impact central intervention had in promoting reorganisation.10

Party Politics

Party politics clearly played a crucial part in structuring the relationship between central government and the LMAs an
determining the progress of reorganisation. The ideological case for comprehensive education fitted much more easily within the Labour than the Conservative Party. Many of the early experiments with reorganisation came from Labour Groups and although there was some ambivalence nationally up to the early 1960s, once Labour had been elected in 1964 the Party consistently, if not always forcefully, pursued the abolition of selection. All Labour dominated LEAs had produced full comprehensive plans by the late 1960s (see table 4.5 page 150) and when more marginal authorities were captured by Labour, that was usually one of their early priorities. Table 7.1 shows that most Labour dominated LEAs had completed reorganisation by 1974 and 74% of LEAs subject to mixed control had over half of their pupils in comprehensive schools. The figures for 1979 referring to the post-74 local authorities, shown in table 7.2, reveal a strengthening of these trends. All Labour controlled, and over three-quarters of LEAs subject to mixed control were over 90% comprehensive by then.

Conservatives nationally and locally were more pragmatic at first and a number of Conservative LEAs voluntarily produced reorganisation plans and made swift progress in implementing them. However as local resistance emerged in a few areas, most of them Conservative dominated, so the party nationally began to respond with a tougher line. By the 1970s the issue was clearly one in which adversary politics was operating. Almost all of the resisting LEAs tackled
Table 7.1 Reorganisation at January 1st 1974 by political control of LEAs in England 1964-1974

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of 13 yr olds in Comprehensive Schools January 1st 1974</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Total of LEAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 - 99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Party control is calculated as either continuous control for that party alone or control plus periods of shared control in which that party remained the largest. For county boroughs with annual elections a loss of control for a single year was also counted as full control as this could not conceivably affect reorganisation.

Table 7.2  Reorganisation at January 1st 1979 by political control of LEAs in England since their formation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of maintained pupils in comprehensive schools</th>
<th>Political Control of LEAs, 1974-79, except London 1964-79</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 1st 1979</td>
<td>Labour No.</td>
<td>Fixed No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 - 99</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 90</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Party control is calculated as either continuous control for that party alone or control plus periods of shared control in which that party remained the largest.

under the 1976 Act were Conservative (see table 6.2, page 205)

Table 7.1 shows that about half of the LEAs which had not
began reorganising by 1974 were Conservative dominated.

Most of the rest were under mixed control and the majority
of these were more often Conservative than Labour. By 1979
eighty-five per cent of LEAs with less than 90% of their
children in comprehensive schools were Conservative dominated
authorities.

Much of the dialectical relationship which developed
between central government and LEAs over this issue was the
result of shifting patterns of party control. In a situation
of adversary party politics, conflict was fuelled by two main
trends. Firstly while just over 50% of LEAs were dominated by
one party throughout this period (and 34% were Conservative
dominated) Central Government experienced a see-sawing of
relatively short periods of control from one party to the
other (Labour being in power for a total of eleven years from
1964 to 1980). Secondly among those LEAs in which control
did change, many made the switch against the existing Government
in Parliament as a result of the characteristic swing against
the Party in power between general elections.

7.2. LOCAL RESISTANCE AND THE UNANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES

In this, the first part of the study, the complex
policy process which determined the over all development of
comprehensive reorganisation has been analysed. It has been
possible to uncover a number of influences which operated
during each period.

Reform and Resistance

The progress of reorganisation can be traced back to the early experiments in individual LEAs. Then came the build-up of support within the national local government system, national educational opinion and the Labour Party and the added impetus of circular 10/65 and Labour Government policy. Reorganisation took off as the consensus favouring comprehensives reached its peak. The momentum of reform and continual support from the Labour Party and many educationalists ensured continued progress throughout the 1970s although by 1975 the rate of change had slowed considerably.

Similarly resistance began with the defence of individual grammar schools and the decision of a few Conservative LEAs to resist Labour Government policy. As this resistance became more open and obvious it gained added encouragement from the Conservatives nationally and the 1970 Conservative Government positively promoted a policy of coexistence. In the 1970s the consensus favouring comprehensives weakened and provided extra support for the 'traditional academic standards' of the grammar school. By 1976 there was a solid block of Conservative LEAs determined to defend selection and they worked together and with the Conservative opposition to fight against the 1976 Act. The resistance campaign paid off and in the 1980s grammar schools and the policy of super selection will be maintained by Conservatives.
nationally and locally.

Reform or Resistance?

However this analysis of national level trends leaves a number of questions unanswered. Those questions relate mainly to local level decisions but are no less important to an overall explanation of the development of reorganisation. The local level is the executant level as far as reorganisation decisions are concerned. It is here that the final decisions are made whether and how to reorganise or to resist. This first part of the study has analysed many of the national level influences operating on LEAs at different periods but it has not offered many explanations of why some LEAs responded to those influences in one way and others quite differently.

In addition, each of the movements, for reform and resistance, and their origins locally. Quite a lot is known about the early period of innovation. There are local explanations for the pioneering comprehensive schools and schemes including the presence of particular Chiefs, radical teachers and politicians, the existing structure of schooling in the area, unusual economic pressures, etc. There are also many studies of LEA decisions to reorganise during the 1960s showing how local factors interacted with the national trends.11

However far less is known about the origins of resistance and why some LEAs resisted for longer than others. Furthermore, little is known about the difference between reforming and resisting LEAs. In this respect the crucial period was after 1965. Important trends and influences
Table 7.3 A summary of the position of Conservative LMs in respect of reorganisation at various stages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Selected data on Conservative LMs and reorganisation</th>
<th>Table taken from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>26% of LMs had comprehensive schools were Conservative on stil</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>l.1. since 1965 had substantial reorganisation plans approved or implemented. LMs had not submitted a plan or had one rejected.</td>
<td>page 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>LMs not fully by Conservatives since 1964, 10 were fully comprehensive, 1/5 had over half their pupils in comprehensives. 20 had no comprehensive schools.</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/5 had less than half of their pupils in comprehensives.</td>
<td>page 227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>10 of LMs tacked under the 1976 Act to reorganise their county schools were Conservative</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>imp.</td>
<td>page 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>10 LMs supported by Conservatives. 20 were fully comprehensive. 1/5 had between 10 and 90% of their pupils in comprehensives. 1/5 had less than half of their pupils in comprehensives.</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>page 228</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>About 25% of LMs likely to retain some form of selection are also likely to remain under Conservative control.</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>page 205</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Codes cited in last column
existed before this time but LEA resistance did not begin until some central government pressure was exerted to reorganise. From 1965 onwards LEAs were faced with clear alternatives. The key question which remains unanswered is what determined whether an LEA adopted a policy of reform or resistance?

One important variable which it is possible to analyse nationally is that of political control. Tables 7.1 and 7.2, together with data presented in other chapters show that Labour control is a very significant variable in explaining reorganisation. Furthermore from the first part of this study and from a number of local studies of Labour LEAs, logical and well documented explanations for this exist. However the same is not true of LEAs under Conservative control. Table 7.3 presents a collection of data from other tables in this study to show the considerable variations in response of Conservative LEAs. There is little in the national level analysis presented so far to explain this variation. It suggests a need to investigate local decisions made by Conservative LEAs. Furthermore such an investigation needs to be comparative in order to pinpoint the crucial determinants of reform and resistance. This is the aim of the second part of this study.
Footnotes to chapter 7


2. P. Dunleavy, The Politics of Mass Housing in Britain, Oxford University Press, 1974


4. T. Jones, op. cit., chapter 4 and p.120 reaches similar conclusions; as does J.G. Parvin, The Comprehensive School, Methuen, 1976, chapter 8

5. T. Kogan, Educational Policy-Making, George Allen and Unwin, 1975, chapter 8 similarly points to the importance of what he calls the 'intelligentsia'.


9. See page 162

10. For a more detailed discussion of the limitations of central control revealed by this study see: T. Atkinson, 'Intergovernmental relations and the limitations of central control' in Oxford Review of Education, Vol. 6, no. 1, 1980. Similar conclusions are reached by Jones, op. cit., chapter 2 and pp.113-114

11. Jones, op. cit., provides a good summary. See also note 55, page 32

12. Ibid
PART II  THE LOCAL POLICY PROCESS

Chapter 8  LEA DECISION-MAKING AND THE CASE STUDY METHOD

8.1 METHODOLOGY

Part II of this study focuses on the local policy process.

Chapters 9, 10 and 11 report the findings of three in-depth case studies of LEA decision-making on reorganisation.

Chapter 12 includes a much briefer account of a fourth LEA.

Chapter 13 analyses the findings from these four LEAs using the alternative theoretical perspectives outlined in chapter one.

The use of detailed case-studies over time has a number of advantages. It enables the application of a plurality of methods within the broad case study approach. It provides the depth and richness of data which is necessary for the generation of detailed explanations of complex phenomena. Finally it allows for the testing of a number of theoretical perspectives.

Case Studies and Pluralist and Elitist Explanations

Until recently case studies of decision-making were associated with pluralist and elite theory approaches to the study of power. This method emerged in the USA in response to early elite studies which had used the 'reputational technique' and evidence of the common social background of decision-makers to argue that power was exercised by and in the interests of a small dominant group. In what became known as the community power debate, Dahl and others
criticised these studies for failing to provide evidence of 'actual' power being exercised. The pluralists advocated the use of detailed case studies of the making of important decisions in a community. In the classic study in this tradition Dahl identified a wide range of groups and individuals who had influence over three key decisions in New Haven.

Moreover, in their counter-attack on Dahl, elite theorists also advocate the use of similar case study method. Such as work in the UK, and in Britain claimed to find evidence of elite control through studies of decision-making in particular communities. The main difference between their approach and the pluralists' one was in looking beyond the formal and most visible decision-making processes. They identified informal and hidden behaviour by elites which influenced the time in which decisions were made and actually kept certain challenging issues off the political agenda.

For their part pluralists have regarded the empirical evidence from these studies as suspect. Nolst argues that it will never be possible to provide reliable evidence of non-decision making or of structural influences from this sort of case study approach.

Aggregate Data Analysis and Structural Explanations

The structuralists who first entered the community power debate made a complete break from the case study approach. Instead they adopted various forms of aggregate data analysis.
techniques. Using increasingly more sophisticated quantitative methods they attempted to establish correlations between policy outputs and various structural characteristics of local communities. In showing the relationship between 'background' structural variables and policy they argued that decision-makers operate within structurally determined limits. 9

This method has also been tried in Britain. Boaden for example showed that various measures of need, disposition and resources independently correlated with a number of policy outputs from county boroughs in England.10 The significance for this study is that working with Alford, Boaden also applied this method to comprehensive reorganisation.11 Boaden and Alford found that the number of school age children, the percentage of Labour members on the council, and the income in rates and grants of these authorities were all independently related to the submission of comprehensive plans to the VII during the year following circular 10/65's release.

In a more limited way, tables 7.1 and 7.2 at the end of part I of this study are applications of this technique for one particular variable, political control. It is possible to show from these tables that there is a clear and significant difference between the actions of Labour and Conservative controlled LMs over this policy issue. However, any suggestion that all the questions posed in this study could be answered by extending the type of analysis in tables 7.1
and 7.2 or by updating Corden and Elford's work must be dismissed.

This sort of data analysis has a number of limitations. First there are considerable difficulties in creating and but then crude measures of policy output and community characteristics. Corden and Elford admitted that using 'less sector' was unrealistic, it said nothing about the quality or those sites, several of which proved inadequate. The structural variables present even greater difficulties. For example, Corden and Elford could only identify an absolute size and characteristics but not its socio-spatial distribution; level of financial resources but not the condition of existing school buildings; and one of the labour market's structural.

More importantly this technical problem of the level of explanation required for this study. Data may be sufficiently correlate between community or government's variables and policy output (although even here the regression coefficients are rarely very significant) but it is unable to say anything about the causal relationships involved. It may be that strong statistical relationships can be established between, for example, labour control and extent of reorganisation. However, the explanation for this relationship can only be discovered from a detailed examination of the issue and the political processes involved. It is this type of explanation which is required.
in this study.

This is not to say that the use of aggregate data is redundant. It may be used, as Vikesen and Alford suggest, as a first level of analysis to help in selecting the areas worth examining in depth. It may be used as supporting data in the context of a detailed study, as for example in Dunleavy's study of high rise housing. Finally it can be used after the case study analysis in order to corroborate explanations on a more general scale, as Crenson does in his study of the air pollution issue. To a limited extent all of these techniques are used in this study but only in the context of a general case study approach which focuses on providing the detailed evidence from which to construct causal explanations.

Comparative Case Studies and Structural Explanations

The case study approaches of Crenson in the UK and Dunleavy as Saunders in Britain provide a challenge to the assumptions of Tolstoy that reliable evidence of structural influences cannot be obtained in this way. Thomas Anton points out that pluralists themselves have sometimes identified structural influences. However such influences were never the central concern of pluralist studies. As the evidence which pluralists (and many other theoretical studies) are looking for is usually easily observable there is a danger that they will not dig deeply enough to find most of the structural influences which might exist. Crenson, Dunleavy
and Saunders show that if the researcher is aware of the need to look beyond the observable decision-making process and search for constraints on the action and inaction of those involved then there is the possibility of identifying and substantiating such influences.  

This is the approach adopted in this study. It is recognised that such a method does involve some intuition on the part of the researcher. However that should not be taken to indicate that anything other than the most rigorous standards of evidence will be applied. This study is not undertaken with the assumption that structural influences will be found or prove to be important, but rather that to refuse to investigate them (difficult as they may be to uncover) would contribute an inadequate and one-dimensional examination of the determinants of public policy.

A comparative case study approach is a particularly useful tool of analysis in this context. Creason and Dunleavy were able to identify key structural variables partly as a result of the comparative nature of their studies. In the area of comprehensive education James also advocates a comparative approach. He uses a form of secondary source comparison in which he brings together the case studies carried out by other social scientists. While claiming some worthwhile findings he recognises, although perhaps understates, the limitations of bringing together data collected in diverse ways, by different people, working with a variety of
assumptions. He argues the need for more systematic primary comparative studies carried out using a common method to which a number of theoretical models can be applied. The theories and many of the specific methods in this study are very different from those briefly suggested by James. Nevertheless, although his book was published after this study was completed, the broad approach advocated by James has been applied empirically in this study.

In basic terms the comparative case study method adopted here enables the researcher to ask why something happened in one case but not another. By testing alternative theoretical explanations for these differences a more complete and multidimensional analysis of the determinants of policy is possible.

2.2 THE CHOICE OF CASE STUDIES

In deciding which particular cases to study it would be possible to attempt to identify several 'typical' or 'representative' LEMs in the hope that any findings could be easily generalised. However the difficulties of arriving at a comparable list of such LEMs would be compounded at the stage of generalising the findings by arguments about how typical the typical cases were. As a result such an approach is rejected in favour of one in which the cases are selected according to some criteria of usefulness for comparative analysis. In particular the choice of case studies should enable some variables to be controlled while others are compared and tested.

There are two main alternatives within such an approach.
In the first, the dependent variable, in this case the reorganization decisions, is controlled while the independent variable, i.e., the D's, are measured. In the second case, some of the independent variables are controlled while the dependent variable changes. It is the latter which is adopted in this study. Four LAs have been chosen which have a number of characteristics in common but also variously different responses to reorganization. In this way a number of structural variables are controlled and the range of significant determinants of policy is reduced. This approach does not rely for its generalisability on the typicality of the cases. Instead it concentrates on establishing the internal logic and explanatory base of each study in its own right and thus making the cases, within which more locations can be told how a comparison of the case studies.

The origins of the particular cases used in this study lie in the authors own experience of teaching in two neighbouring London boroughs. In 1966 I moved from a secondary modern school in the London Borough of Sutton to a comprehensive school in the London Borough of Werton. The two authorities were similar in a number of respects including the fact that both were under Conservative control and yet their education systems were fundamentally different, as too were the two schools in question.

Having decided to study these differences another neighbour Conservative controlled LEA was added which also appeared similar to Sutton and Werton and yet had an education
system markedly different again. This was the London Borough of Richmond. These three LEAs became the main focus of research for this study. At a later stage a much briefer study of a fourth LEA, the London Borough of Kingston was added to assist with the comparative analysis. (See map, figure 8.1)

Table 8.1 shows the degree of similarity between these LEAs over a number of variables. One thing which makes this combination of LEAs particularly useful for comparative purposes is their common history. All four authorities were first created by the 1963 London Government Act. The Act took away from the counties around the London County County (LCC), several boroughs and districts to become part of the Greater London Council (GLC). These areas were amalgamated into larger units to form new London boroughs. Originally the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London suggested sharing educational responsibilities between the London boroughs and the top tier authority, the GLC. However the Conservative Government rejected this view. They created one large education authority for the old LCC area, to be known as the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). For the rest of Greater London, education became the sole responsibility of each outer London borough. The new councils were first elected in 1964 and took over their responsibilities as LEAs in 1965.
Figure 8.1 Map of South-West London post 1964.
Table 8.1 Comparisons and Similarities between case study LEAs
(Figures are for 1971 unless otherwise stated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>KING'S CROSS</th>
<th>WORTH</th>
<th>RICH END</th>
<th>BUTTON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area (Acres)</td>
<td>9281</td>
<td>9380</td>
<td>13971</td>
<td>10729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>140 550</td>
<td>177 150</td>
<td>174 310</td>
<td>160 090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. Ranking of 145 LEAs</td>
<td>91st</td>
<td>77th</td>
<td>75th</td>
<td>30th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. Ranking of 96 LEAs in 1974</td>
<td>25th</td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>91st</td>
<td>93rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. of 5-14 yr olds</td>
<td>10 600</td>
<td>25 600</td>
<td>22 500</td>
<td>25 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranking of 20 outer London Boroughs</td>
<td>20th</td>
<td>17th</td>
<td>19th</td>
<td>16th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rateable Value per head</td>
<td>74.68</td>
<td>64.65</td>
<td>65.30</td>
<td>63.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- owner occupied (%)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- council rented (%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- private rented (%)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupations of economically active males:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial (%)</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual (%)</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>SUMMER LODGE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanisation</td>
<td>SUMMER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>- First established as an LGA in 1964 —</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Control</td>
<td>Previously part of</td>
<td>Previously</td>
<td>Previously</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1964-1990)</td>
<td>Surrey C.C.</td>
<td>part of</td>
<td>part of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Surrey C.C.</td>
<td>Surrey C.C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middlesex C.C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>one period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Con. with</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>of Labour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to 1965 all of the areas covered by Kingston, Nerton andutton and part of Richmond came under the jurisdiction of Surrey County Council. As a result they largely shared a common catchment in terms of their secondary education policy. The Twickenham area of the new borough of Richmond had been an elected district within the Guildford County Council, but their policy to secondary education had been little different. ill results had been inherited in 1965 another bi-partite selective system of secondary education and continued any prior experience of comprehensive education. This is not to say that all four U's were with identical school systems. In each case study directors will show they varied in the number and type of school catchment extent in typology, whether they were private liberal, and union schools. There is no clear evidence to link the principle of selection to some identifiable.

Finally all four U's are similar in one further respect, which is crucial for this study; that of political control. Kingston, Woking and Putney were under continuous Conservative control from 1964 to 1968. Although Weymouth and one period of Labour control between 1971 and 1974, this period was largely unimportant in terms reorganisation policy was concerned and for the rest of the time it too was controlled by the Conservatives. Part I of this study indicated that although political control was an important variable it was not
sufficient alone to explain the variations of resistance and reform among LEAs. It is within Conservative dominated LEAs that the greatest variation exists and for which there is no clear explanation.CHOOSING Conservative dominated LEAs therefore provides one of the essential dimensions for investigating these variations.

The other dimension is that of policy response. Being able to control a large number of independent variables is only useful if there remains sufficient variation in the dependent variable to enable clear comparisons to be made. Ultimately the choice of these four boroughs followed from the dramatic contrasts in the way they responded to the comprehensive issue.

Norton council unanimously approved a middle school comprehensive pattern for the entire borough within the year specified in circular 12/65. Reorganisation began in 1969 and was completed in 1971.

Sutton council initially rejected any abandonment of selection. Then in 1970 they reconsidered the issue and with some discussion approved a sixth-form college comprehensive pattern throughout the borough. The plan was implemented between 1972 and 1975.

Sutton council rejected an end to selection following the circular but established one new coexisting comprehensive school. An attempt to introduce a full comprehensive scheme in the early 1970s was defeated. In 1980 a strong selective system still exists.
Kingston council completely rejected circular 10/65s request and has retained a full selective system ever since.

These studies are interesting and atheret neglected cases in their own right. They include the case of a unanimous reorganisation under Conservative control, a sudden U-turn by a Conservative council, coexistence and the failure of a reorganisation proposal, and complete, mutual co-operation.

However they offer particularly important material for comparative study. They combine a good range of policy responses with a broadly similar political and environmental base. As a result, by asking why one thing happened in one DCLG, not in another, it should be possible to uncover some of the important determinants of resistance and reform.

1.3 Methodology

The case study approach is a very general method within which a number of more specific methods can be employed. For the three main case studies her official and unoffical documents and unstructured interviews were the main sources of data although some observation was also used. Most of the material was gathered over a three year period starting in the summer of 1977.

The documentary material used included systematic surveys of council minutes and local press reports in each U.D.

Where available education department reports, working papers and other council documents and material from other institutions, organisations and individuals were consulted.
Some of these were publicly available, others were kindly shown to me by individuals with access to them or who had been involved in the policy debate and kept documents and records.

The usual limitations on the use of documentary material applied. Formal records, particularly council minutes, are rarely very informative and may even be misleading. Although decisions may be recorded the reasons behind them usually aren't and may be deliberately disguised. Controversial behaviour, behind the scenes lobbying, internal divisions and personality clashes may all be important in shaping decisions and yet are rarely recorded in any form. The public explanation of behaviour does not always reflect reality.

These records can sometimes answer such events but are themselves notorious, unreliable. In addition there were some documents in each file which it proved impossible to trace or gain access to. Nevertheless a considerable (perhaps surprising) amount of good quality information was obtained in this way.

The limitations on documentary evidence always made it certain that another major source of data would be needed. To this end a large number of interviews were carried out with some of the key participants in each file. The interviewees were not chosen systematically, i.e. according to positions held or a fixed number from each party, etc., but on an assessment of their importance and usefulness and according
to availability and willingness to cooperate. Table 5.2 provides a break down of interviews carried out in each authority. The interviews were unstructured, although certain questions were always asked, and varied in time from twenty minutes to three hours. A small amount of re-interviewing were also undertaken in each U.A. Most interviews were taped and the information was usually given on a non-attributable basis. There quotes from and references to interviews are made in the following chapters they are identified only by the interviewee’s position, e.g. a senior Conservative councillor, an officer, a co-opted teacher, etc. and consequently are not footnoted.

Again there are limitations on the use of interviews. They are notoriously subject to hindsight and self-aggrandizement. Some respondents were asked to recall events as such as fifteen years before. As a result the evidence of one interview alone is never used, unless explicitly stated. In addition some interviews could not be obtained. Some of the individuals had died, were ill, or had moved away and were untraceable. In one case only were repeated attempts to obtain cooperation rejected.

Finally although it provided very little solid or systematic data, a whole range of personal observations, experiences and memories probably contributed in a subtle and diffuse way to the analysis presented. I visited many of the schools and colleges in the three main U.As during
Table 8.2 Breakdown of interviewees by LPA and position held

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Labour or</th>
<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Total no.</th>
<th>Total no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>surveillance or control</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>code</td>
<td>of interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merton</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>duration</td>
<td>++P</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
- + = one and two interviews
- ++ = three and four interviews
- P = postgraduate interview(s) involved in more than two interviews
the period of research and attended several council and committee meetings. In addition to own experiences as a teacher, active member of a teacher union and assistant in two of the LEAs in previous years undoubtedly played their part. It could be argued that such impressionistic evidence and personal involvement was no part in an investigation of this sort, and in fact I made no special effort to draw on that material. However I prefer to argue that in a small way it contributed to a wider understanding of some of the situations, events and individuals referred to here.

It should also be noted that other studies of varying detail and competence have been written on these subjects. For example, I. Lenton completed a M.A. thesis in 1966 entitled "Secondary school reorganisation in the inner London boroughs, with special reference to the London Borough of Islington." 12

One of the details from this proved useful because it had been carried out much nearer to the time of events. However most of the data had already been obtained and the analysis itself was very and largely unhelpful in the context of this study.

There are three studies of Richmond, however all came from the same source. Karen based her case study in an Open University course on a chapter in a book by Rivers. 24

However Rivers's chapter was itself based on a booklet produced by Collins 20 who was an active member of the
Richmond Association for Advancement of State Education.

This is a well written and useful pamphlet which provides some interesting material and ideas. However, as a participant in the issue, Ellin's account is far from objective and tends to overemphasize the role of parents' pressure groups.

Finally, a short sociology article on "in some novel cases in one or two specific instances." 7

In general these studies did not provide a great deal of data or only of use to this study. In fact in all cases material was uncovered which threw doubt on one or two analyses presented in each of these sources.

There are inevitably cases in the analyses presented in the following three chapters and these will be illustrated if they seem important. Furthermore the extremely difficult task of creating motives to the participants was a win some sort of tentative. Nevertheless the combination of sources and the evidence produced is sufficient for the tasks undertaken in this study.

The evidence from Croston in chapter 12 is however far more sketchy. This case was added only near the end of the study because of interesting comparative features which emerged at that time. It relies entirely on press reports, council minutes, publicly available reports and letters. An initial approach to the education department produced an unhelpful response (in contrast to the other three L.L.'s) and as time was short it was decided to abandon the idea.
of any interviewing. For this reason the analysis of Kingston should be treated with greater caution than the other three LAs. Nevertheless the account in chapter 12 is deliberately restricted to basic factual material or very general assessments and the case is used carefully and sparingly in the comparative analysis in chapter 13.

8.4 AN OUTLINE OF THE LOCAL POLICY PROCESS

Before embarking on the four case studies of local decision making it is worth briefly considering some aspects of the local policy system. Figure 8.2 gives some indication of the complexity of the system. Some of its components were described in chapter 2 and part I of the study identified many of the non-local influences on LAs. Nevertheless some of the important parts of the system will be considered briefly.28

The Committee System

All LAs are statutorily required to establish a separate education committee. In practice the bulk of the work is now done in sub-committees although the main committee serves an important co-ordinating and general debating function. The division into sub-committees varies but most LAs use some vertical divisions by sectors of the service, for example primary, secondary, further; and some horizontal such as finance and often a general purposes sub-committee as well.

The chairman of the education committee oversees the work of all sub-committees, represents the committee in relations
with all other parts of the policy system and is empowered
to act in certain ways on behalf of the committee between
meetings. The school and community participate in the
election process only in order to be aware of, or influence
issues that are due to occur. It is extremely important
that any candidate, in party controlled towns, is usually removed
for some party reasons. Any action by it must be
consistent with the services of pupils and the
examining function. It is not unusual for this to be amended.

Election committees are not entirely required to
include co-optional teachers. The numbers vary but they nearly
always include representatives of the teachers and the
parent communities. It cannot be said that the committee
meets. The committee may or may not meet. It is
likely to have its maximum attendance, or to have a small attendance
among all teachers with the exceptions making exceptions,
or in the instances where in relation to the committee
strong feelings between candidates as expressed and
the candidate usually has the right to a teacher's ballot
(but not). The teacher usually ensures that there are
recommendations of each as a member of the service committee.
The teacher has no
both voting and non-voting co-opted teachers.

In the late 60s and early 70s, alternating election
options of the committee meant that one

corporate policy-making structure in which a central policy and resources or management committee oversees all major decisions. In most, but not all, cases the chairman of education would expect to be on this committee. Its main impact on education is likely to be through decisions on finance, particularly affecting building projects, rather than on directly educational matters. It is noted that there are three main parties on most councils, Conservative, Labour and the education committee. This suggests a degree of independence for education even within corporate systems. However, it should not be taken to imply that education is free from party control.

The Majority Party Group

In party controlled C's the majority party group determines the chairmanship and membership of committees and if they have a secure majority, council policy. They also elect a leader who becomes the leader of the council. He is an ex officio member of all committees (although he doesn't always attend meetings) and usually chairman of the policy and resources or management committee. The leader plays the major role in choosing committee chairmen (although elections can be forced) and together they choose the membership of committees.

The group meets before every full council meeting and decides the party's position on the issues coming up. There may be a consensus but if not a vote is taken. A clear
majority (usually two-thirds) is often needed for the decision to pass a policy. There are exceptions where 25 percent or more of the board members may vote to override a decision of the chair.

The chair and the executive director as administrators have considerable authority in running the school districts. The superintendent of the district and the board, even if they do not have the power to override a decision of the board itself. However, the chair of the board may still assume much of the burden of running the district. Superintendents may be more willing to accept little change in policies when they have little control over the matter.

The chair also plays a very important role in the district. The chair may be the only one who is truly accountable to the board. The chair is often the liaison between the board and the community and is usually the person who is most visible to the public.
also an advisory service headed by a chief adviser or inspector.

The Department's function is to manage the service and provide advice and expertise to the education committee. The senior officers of the Department (the chief inspector and his staff) usually hold regular management meetings. On major issues such as reorganisation the Department also works as a team. The OIC is ultimately responsible for writing all reports for the committee and for liaising with the chairman and broadly the leader of the council on major issues. He also meets regularly with teachers.

There is considerable evidence of chief officers' influence over policy in any area. In a recent study with evidence gathered from a survey of education officer styles, the 'conciliator' is passive and stresses the mediator or broker's role of officers, while the 'deconstructor' is more proactive, stimulating innovations and effecting improvements. The role of officers and particularly OICs is clearly important for the reorganisation issue and they are a central focus of investigation in that study.

Teachers:

In most of the local branches of the main teacher associations are represented on a consultative committee or council. This body is used as the normal machinery for consultation between the authority 'officers and committee members' and teachers. To a large extent the teachers' associations
to decide on the membership of the consultative committee. The associations may be represented in proportion to their membership in the D L or a certain number of representatives per association or to a combination. In the former case the NUT almost invariably holds a majority on the teachers' committee. In other words the associations are nominally informed and all teachers elect the representatives. However as the associations recommend their members to vote for their candidates the effect is little different. The consultative committee meets regularly on its own as well as with officers 3 or 4 times a year and less frequently with members of the education committee. The head teachers and in some 3 of the secretaries of the associations also meet regularly with the NUT. Very issues such as remuneration increases actions between teachers, officers and councillors are written down.

Governing bodies

All secondary schools have a governing body, though the schools are usually grouped together for this purpose. They are nominally responsible for the 'general conduct of the school' but in practice have few powers. In any case they are unlikely to go against NUT policy or a majority of governors. The nearly always carry political appointments. There have been some cases recently to which refer and to include more teachers, parents and even pupils.

Pressure groups

Parent-teacher associations or parents' associations are quite common. They devote most of their time to social events
and raising money but they may become active on major issues affecting the school, such as reorganisation. Apart from local branches of the U1F, other ad hoc pressure groups may be formed to fight for specific one-off objectives. In this study a number of these were evident.

This provides a general outline of the important features of the local policy process. Some of the details vary from one LEA to another, these will be pointed out whenever they are relevant in the case studies presented below.

A note on 'forms of entry'

The term 'forms of entry' is used frequently in the case studies. This refers to the number of forms or classes of pupils which enter the school each year. Each form of entry is assumed to represent 30 pupils, thus a 6 form entry school will have 180 pupils entering each year. The significance of the term is that it provides an indication of the size of the school and, depending on the type of school, the likely extent of advanced work in sixth forms. In a grammar school where a high proportion of pupils stay on, 3 or 4 forms of entry will usually produce academically viable sixth forms. However in secondary modern schools this is unlikely below 6 forms of entry. Most comprehensive schools also require 5 or 6 forms of entry to produce viable sixth forms.
Footnotes to chapter 8


12. Ibid., p. 203.


15. Crenson, op. cit.


17. F.inton, 'Local, Whitley and Local politics', in Hawley and Wirt, op. cit.

18. Crenson, op. cit.; Dunleavy, op. cit.; Saunders, op. cit.


20. Crenson, op. cit.; Dunleavy, op. cit.


30. K. Newton, Second City Politics, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 203

2. "Vat". Re Kor. nation and Resources, 1976, 1977, p.44.
Chapter 2 CONTRIBUING FACTORS IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF WORTON

2.1 THE AREA

The London Borough of Worton was formed by the amalgamation of the boroughs of Hitchin and Histleton and part of the District of Wheathampstead. In 1965 the new borough was covered by one of three parliamentary constituencies. However, in 1970 these were replaced by just two, Histleton, and Hitchin wards. These constituencies at their peak were the areas of analysis in the 1971 census. Some parts of the data for this study is taken. As a result the borough will be examined in these terms.

Table 2.1 together with the relevant parts of table 2.1 on page 323, give some indication of the character of the borough. The area to the north of Histleton, known as Histleton Village, is probably the most distinctive part of the area. It consists of many large, expensive houses and contains some of the pre-middle class, including middle and working class homes. It includes two private golf clubs and the world famous Histleton tennis Club and blenovers onto the attractive open spaces of Histleton Common. In the two areas which cover this area there are around 40% employed males were in professional or managerial occupation. The proportion for the borough as a whole. Much of the rest of Histleton is a predominantly middle class area occupied...
Table 9.1 Land Use, Socio-Economic Groupings and Housing in Erton, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Kitchen</th>
<th>Erton Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>not available</td>
<td>not available</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Open Spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING Tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner Council</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privately Rented</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Old Census; CIL, Greater London Council, 1973

Table 9.2 Representation on Erton Council, Including Elections 1964 - 1978

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cons.</th>
<th>Lab.</th>
<th>Ind.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
residential area with pockets of council housing and some light industry.

Witcham andorden in contrast is predominantly working-class with a higher proportion of council housing and a mixture of light industries. Three of the wards around Witcham itself are between 57 and 62 manual workers compared with an average of 46 for the borough as a whole. North of Witcham is the only part of the four Lills being studied with any significant black population. In the east is isolated, more rural and less picturesque than its counterpart in Radlett. In the south east of the borough, and bordering on to Sutton, is part of the St Helier Estate, a large 1930s overall council estate, the rest oforden is largely over council.

The Politics

Table 5.2 shows the political composition of the council following the borough elections (including aldermanic elections) of 1964 to 1977. Following national swings 1964 and 1971 were good years for Labour and 1962 and 1973 good years for the Conservatives. From 1971 to 1974 Labour were in control of the borough. For the rest of the period the Conservatives were in control, with only 1964 to 1966 they were dependent on the support of independents on the council. In fact Labour emerged from the 1964 council elections as the largest party but without overall control. However in the aldermanic elections the independents voted with the Conservatives, as they did on most issues considered by the council.
On the whole the strong Labour and Conservative areas are such as would be expected from the socio-economic and housing features. Internal in a lesser extent was tendency towards "Labour-Lite". More pro-conservative, Labour areas were strong in central districts.

In 1964, Dr. Frank Vincent Balfour, a stockbroker and leader of the old-time and for a short period, he was a member of the council, grew and installed a year for the responsibility to the Labour party's new council.

The Induced Action

action on the only area in the UK in the early which, prior to 1970, included a complete electoral Conservative division, of a Labour seat that, relatively speaking, North East Division's seat. This need for an administrative and employability of a considerable intake, the men and women for the new recruitment at the time, around in the UK, were recruited from outside the area. Mr. Greenwood was a relative of first name for a term. He had been in educational administration for the term, serving in several UK schools recently as a headmaster after the expected posting at Dayton. Greenwood is a brilliant footballer of a crucial role and more, confirms the need for" educational" content at play a "considerable role" to DaVilla's role. However, as he becomes involved in the mobility of the election left to the extent an early date and soon after his term in aton to become Secretary of the office of the Regional office. Later in the early 1970s he was elected to
the TUCs national executive committee and in 1979 became
national vice-president. But for his sudden death that year he
would have become a senior in 1980.

The maintained secondary schools inherited by counties are
outlined in table 2.2. It was originally a tri-partite selective
system although three secondary modern schools were being
developed by county as in bi-lateral schools. All upper or
school leaver schools the last maintained maintained school. It
was a voluntary school but under REA control. One of the
interests featured in the large number of well schools;
including the two large general schools, however often as
lucky to inherit the new secondary modern school, and often end as a junior, very unusual, school and school band
theory.

The details of the new schools notes in the table relate
to various different years, some of problems in a junior.
the data. There are in this case relatively small children
is interesting, nevertheless is more likely to represent
the social. This study a relatively high proportion of children
in junior or junior secondary. Details on the calculations
were not found in appendix 7.

Among the there are a number of independent schools
situated in the area. These include Hildreth College
School, a junior preparatory girls' public school opened in
1929 and Hildreth High School for girls a direct grant school
founded in 1963 and run by the Hildreth Girls' School Trust
(GST). Both those schools and several preparatory schools
are situated in or near the Hildreth village area. In
### Table 9.3 Educational Features of the London Borough of Merton

#### A. Maintained Schools Inherited by Merton in 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEA</th>
<th>Secondary Modern</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Two with 1 form of entry</td>
<td>Mitcham Boys 2 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six with 2 f.e.</td>
<td>Mitcham Girls 2 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two with 3 f.e.</td>
<td>Raynes Park Boys 2 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five with 4 f.e.</td>
<td>Wimbledon Girls 3 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two with 5 f.e.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3 of these schools were 'bilateral')</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total  No. of Schools</td>
<td>17, f.e.50, Average f.e. 2.9</td>
<td>No. of Schools 4, f.e.9, Av. f.e. 2.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary Schools</th>
<th>Rutland Boys (controlled) 4 f.e.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One R.C. with 2 f.e.</td>
<td>Wimbledon College (RC) 4 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One R.C. with 3 f.e.</td>
<td>Ursuline Convent (RC) 4 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One C. of E. with 1 f.e.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total  No. of Schools</td>
<td>3, f.e.6, Av. f.e.2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Overall Total No. of Schools | 20, f.e.56, Av. f.e.2.8 | No. of Schools 7, f.e. 21, Av. f.e.3 |

#### B. The Non-Maintained Sector, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate % of 13 year olds resident in the area and educated in independent schools*</th>
<th>Merton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of 13 year olds maintained by the LEA in independent schools</th>
<th>Merton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of 13 year olds maintained by the LEA in direct grant schools</th>
<th>Merton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Independent schools located within the area</th>
<th>Merton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### C. Miscellaneous, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Immigrant Pupils</th>
<th>Merton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staying on rates:</th>
<th>Merton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 yr. olds as % of 13 yr olds of 3 yrs earlier 41.4</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 yr. olds as &quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; 4 yrs &quot;</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awards to students at University per 1,000 18 and 19 year olds</th>
<th>Merton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>109.8</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of population with a degree or equiv. and who are in employment</th>
<th>Merton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See Appendix 1 for an explanation of this calculation

in his study claimed there were nine independent secondary
schools in Tindall on in 1965. Other officers and politicians
agreed that there is a strong private education ethos in this
area and that the majority of the privately educated children
living in the borough probably attended schools within the
borough. The headmaster of Kings College, interviewed for
this book, estimated that half the intake to his school (150
- 140 boys annually) come from the Tindall area."

Tindall also inherited a policy of paying for a few places
in independent schools, including Kings College, and the take-up of
a number of places at Tindall High, although the proportions
were lower than average.

In 1965 the Conservatives made Sir Cyril Black the First
chairman of the education committee. Sir Cyril was a prominent
right-wing conservative for Tindall at the time. He took
a particularly firm line on moral issues such as pornography
and homosexuality law reform. He was also very interested in
education. Prior to the formation of the new borough he was
a member of the old education committee and chairman of the
North-Western Divisional Executive, the area now covered by
Tindall. As an old boy and later Governor of Kings College School,
his was a prominent and influential local figure with a considerable
knowledge of educational administration. Despite these
qualifications however, Sir Cyril Black was able to devote
little attention to local politics at this time and certainly
did not play the leadership role in education normally associated
with the chairman. This was almost entirely as a result
of heavy commitments of time involved due to the full timetable
of work on the education department at the time of the 1965 to 1969 program.

In March 1967, the interim appointee to the vice-mayor
took over. That post was held by Robert L. Flett,
leader of the council. "Ballot" was also a member of the
Executive Committee from 1963 to 1967 and the
Permanent Council from 1965 to 1969. He was
formerly a police officer and a local
official in the field of education. In
March 1967, Robert L. Flett was in a unique position to
control expenditures, since he was the chief executive officer and had the
responsibility to "make sense out of the financial data,
supply an interpretation to Ballot, and assume charge of the schools.
In 1967, the Council and Ballot officially took over as chairman, the position
that he occupied effectively well.

In 1971, the education committee was expanded to three
sub-committees, to elementary, secondary, and further education
and youth services. The full committee continued to operate as the
"supervisory board member", the "concerned
member" and one of the "members
at large". It is a result of the close work between the
School Board and council the"value of the co-operated
system. Ballot's involvement on early learning and the full
community.
The co-opted teachers were elected by a ballot of all teachers in the borough from nominations made by the teachers' associations. As a result the two successful candidates, one representing primary teachers and the other secondary, were both UT teachers. The latter was a particularly highly respected headmaster of a secondary modern school who, when he later retired, was awarded the C.B.E. for his services to education. He became the one co-opted member of the secondary sub-committee.

The Teachers Consultative Committee met regularly with the CEC and less often with members of the education committee. The CEC, Greenwood, refused to recognise the members of the teachers committee as representatives of the teachers associations. He "wanted to meet junior teachers as teachers...not as trade unionists". Forever is the associations decided the membership of the committee the CEC was effectively meeting their representatives. Initially the committee was constituted in proportion to the membership of the associations within the borough, thus giving the U.T. a clear majority. Later it was notified to give an equal number from each union.

A Norton Association for the Advancement of Secondary Education (NASE) was set up soon after the borough came into existence but its membership was small and it was never a prominent pressure group in the area.
The conditions under which the political parties took up for the issues in the election of 1966 bore were much the same as those of the national election. Both Liberal and Labour candidates advocated comprehensive education. The Conservatives tended to ignore the issue, but described some of the criticisms of large comprehensive schools and defended the record of existing local schools, in particular, grammar schools.

It was not a particular issue of, or limited to, comprehensive education. It was a matter of the problem of selection, the classroom and failure of the eleven plus examination. Under the system of divisional executive and select interview transfers of 15 between secular, union and grammar schools. In every case, it has been noted, it was the need for the use of middle schools and comprehensive schools, as "incomparables," over the whole of the island it was not a prominent issue in the election.

In May 1965, the Department for Education published a report entitled "The Career Structure in Secondary Education: A Sixth Form Education Pattern." It was also clear at the time that the need for a reformed school system.

However, the education department made no moves to consider the issue before circular C465 was released. The Minister, Greenwood, had no experience of comprehensive schools in the previous authorities and apparently had no strong views on, or interest in
reorganisation when he arrived in Merton. One fellow officer suggested that at this stage the CEO was "generally unsympathetic to, or at least not persuaded of the comprehensive principle" and another recalled him referring to "this comprehensive nonsense". Greenwood's immediate concern was the mixture of grammar, modern and bi-partite schools, the size of the schools and the low proportion of grammar school places. He disliked this complex structure in such a small LEA and began working on changes to introduce an orthodox bi-partite system with 20% selection. It was while a report was being prepared along these lines for the SESC that the circular arrived in July 1965. Greenwood decided to append some initial comments on the circular to his report.6

However he first met with the TCC to hear their views and invited each of the associations to submit a memorandum on the circular. At this stage the NUT and NAS were generally in favour of reorganisation while the Joint Pay and the Head Teachers Association supported selection.7

As the SESC meeting approached, the parties' positions remained unchanged. The headline in the Mitcham News and Mercury reported, "The Coming Battle: The Council are almost equally divided." The paper quoted Talbot as saying that, "any real form of comprehensive education in Merton is just not on" and the Independents as being likely to oppose reorganisation. It concluded, "The issue will inevitably be debated at a political level, Labour arguing in favour, Conservatives against."8
The First Report

On 15th September 1965 the CEO presented his report entitled 'The Organisation of Secondary Education' to the Authority. The report (hereafter to be called H) was in two parts, the first dealt with the proposals for changes within the current selective system and the second with the Circular. Part one recommended the ending of the bi-lateral schools system and a return to a straight bi-variate selection for grammar schools, levelling marks, amalgamation of certain schools in order to eliminate the very small secondary schools, a change in name so that all secondary schools should become 'high schools' and the reduction of places taken up by the authority at independent schools or just three annually at For a College. 2

The second part of the report was devoted to comprehensive education. All committee members were given copies of the circular. The CEO report began by stressing that no additional funds were available for reorganisation and went on "to attempt to show how the Authority's existing resources could be used to fit...the types of comprehensive education described in part II of the circular." On 11 to 12, all-through schools the CEO reported that the "provision of suitable buildings (is) a serious problem", he noted that split sites would almost certainly be needed in the short term and felt that these would, deprive the school of a great deal of social unity". He thus concluded, "The location and size of the schools do not lend themselves to this form of organisation. (The scheme would) take generations
to complete and must be accompanied by years of untidy organisation, public neglect and discontent among the teaching staff."

... but a third of the terms of any are longer, clear, and only the result of the experience of the practical. However, the conditions are different about the small term college and demand and concluded that the committee "my feel that the average ... in the absence of any adaptability was achieved by a relatively permanent plan in my school." In writing about the pattern, the report stresses the need of increased efficiency of supervision and experimental work on site level, "the first important ... ability to the town as well. For here was another major influence on later Nazarene history."

... of the most important, has been..."
built up around the proposal in section one to drop the bi-
lateral scheme. A campaign was mounted around one of the three
bi-lateral schools in Islington, which involved parents and
teachers and was fully supported by the local press. The Labour
group indicated support for the bi-lateral policy on the PPC met
in December to consider the report, the interim report, and
Telford's write of 'the growing controversy' on
resolution about the two schools 'as a test case.' 11

The voting and the decision committee meeting
which followed, several recommendations from one of the
report were approved. These included discontinuation of the
greater students in the bi-lateral schools and a distinct 20
schools for grammar schools for the north-east year
1956-57. However, they also recommended, 'that in regard
to report, "Education and Science Circular 1955," consi-
ideration of the recognition of secondary schools in
the borough on comprehensive lines be deferred until the
submission of a further report by the Chief Education Officer
on the various types of comprehensive structure, every regard
to conditions prevailing in Islington.' 12

Discussion on the detailed report was not unusual
recalling, and there is no evidence that any other action as
contentious. However, it was made more urgent and compelling
for the Conservative group by the threat of strong opposition
to section one of the report. In principle the Labour group
were opposed to closing the bi-lateral schools to go
selective system because they were the nearest thing the
borough had to a comprehensive school. 13 Given the balance of
the committee and the considerable outcry from some teachers and parents at the proposal ending of the bi-lateral schemes, a serious warning of protest to which I could only be an oblique\ncompliment to the move. The bulk of the older group however, decided to support the end of the bi-laterals.\n
The group's press officer later wrote to the board prior\nto explain that their position was, 'only on the strict\nunderstanding that it was for one year (renewable)....'\nconcluding 'We education will be given serious consideration.'\n
Four Labour councillors still refused to vote in a full council\nfor a vote on the segregated selective system,\nbut most accepted the trade-off.'\n
The meetings in autumn provided the first\noccasion for a general debate on comprehensive education,\nalthough there was no intention that the issue should be\nresolved one way or the other at this time. Several Labour\ncouncillors declared their belief that selection was strong\nand was able to point to the bi-laterals as a limited\nalternative to the very same. In relation the trade of re-appointed\nrepresentative was able to express a firm strong position\nand the unity of his fellow professionals, in selection.\nThe U. T. E. R. had submitted observation to the committee which\nurged the introduction of an all-through comprehensive scheme.\n
The other teachers associations were not as keen. The Joint\nFour and the U. T. E. R came out in favour of the 11+ although\nfavouring more flexible transfer after eleven. The U. T. E.\nproposed an unusual scheme in which the grammar schools woul
become 6th form colleges but retain a one-form entry at eleven for a 'high-flyers' stream. 18

It seems clear that, although the Conservatives as a group were still generally opposed to the idea of reorganisation, they would in any case have requested a more detailed report at this stage even without the need for the trade-off over the bi-laterals. In December 1965, after the request was made, one Tory councillor told the press that they would give comprehensive education a lot of thought but they had to remember that children had differing abilities... "and many of the children would be lost in these very big schools." 19

These early responses were much as could be expected from the major parties. Labour was pushing for reorganisation, the Conservatives were sceptical. The circular was a formal request from the DES and there was no question of rejecting it without some attempt to debate the issue. The CBO pointed out that some response was required but otherwise he showed few signs of advising the council on what that response should be.

9.3 THE DECISION TO REORGANISE

The Second Report

It had been largely the CBOs own work, but for the second report (72) 20 there was a much wider and deeper discussion within the department. In particular Mr John Cooper the newly arrived Assistant Education Officer (AEO) responsible for secondary education was closely involved.
This was Cooper's first administrative post. Despite this administrative inexperience and the presence of two other longer serving assistants and a deputy chief officer, he came to play a crucial role in comprehensive reorganisation in Merton. Perhaps the main reason for this lay in his unique position as the only officer in the department with experience of and commitment to comprehensive education.

His first encounter had been as a teacher in a new school in Bristol in 1954 when that authority was beginning its experiment with comprehensive education. He then moved to London in 1958 where he became deputy-head of a comprehensive in ILEA until his move to Merton. Furthermore, during this period his wife was headmistress of a London comprehensive. In 1973 he moved on to become deputy-director of education in Hounslow, and eventually Director.

Cooper became involved in the reorganisation issue during the winter of 1965. This meant that when R2 came up for consideration there was some definite enthusiasm for the comprehensive idea from within the department. Not that this was immediately apparent. R2 was a more detailed report but it again made no recommendations and was more restrained in its judgement on the various patterns.

This is not to say that it did not present some patterns more favourably than others. On the 11-18, all-through schools it stated that an eight form entry would probably be required to produce a viable and economic sixth form,
although an alternative with smaller six form entry schools was outlined also. The average school size under such a scheme was estimated at 1,336 and the problems to be faced by schools of that size, in particular split sites in the short term and high capital expenditure in the long term, were once more stressed. In addition any 11 to 16 plan would result in several school closures and obsolescent sites.

The other patterns were generally presented neutrally. It was stressed that the interim two-tier patterns would not be acceptable as long term solutions. The sixth-form college pattern was presented without the favoured comments used in R1.

It was again emphasised that middle schools were an unknown quantity but the comments were less cautious than in R1. The report remarked that, "It is thought that the Dowden Committee may consider the possibility of a middle school," and that "this pattern has its attractions." These included the fact that no school closures would be required.

Although it was difficult to produce accurate costings for alternative schemes any attempt was made. The all-through pattern was most expensive followed by middle schools but there was little difference between any of them.24

A special meeting of the CCP considered this second report at the start of March 1966. Once more full consideration was deferred and the report was made available to teachers' organisations, head teachers, governing bodies, managing bodies, neighbouring education authorities, the press and the public.
These groups were invited to submit written observations for consideration at a further special meeting arranged for the end of April. At the April meeting still no definite decision was taken and a further report was requested on just three patterns, all-through schools, sixth form colleges and middle schools.

Meanwhile, early in May 1966, Cooper and his wife organised a visit to two LEA all-through comprehensive schools. Several councillors went along, although not Talbot. One school was on split sites and alienated many Conservatives. One officer recalled their reaction as, "If this is what going comprehensive means then we don't want it." However the other school was on one site and more settled and the same officer claimed that some councillors came away appreciating rather better how important it was to have buildings and facilities which were well suited to the particular pattern of reorganisation.

It was clear by this stage that the officers and some Conservatives, Talbot in particular, were looking very seriously at the middle school option. The passage of time and the lack of documentary evidence makes it impossible to be sure of the order of events during this period. However it seems clear that sometime during the preparation of R2 the ARE, Cooper, became convinced that the middle school pattern was the best one for Werton. Then, sometime during the discussions around R2 and the period immediately following, Greenwood came to accept this conclusion. At about the same time Talbot decided that middle school comprehensive reorganisation was
what he wanted for Werton. Finally in the same period the DES also announced its more favourable attitude towards the middle school pattern.

Although it is not possible to reconstruct the precise process of conversion and decision-making, or to be certain of the motives of those involved, it is possible to make an informed assessment of the influences on events at this time.

The Conversion of the Officers

There seems little doubt that it was Cooper who first realised and articulated the potential of the middle school pattern for Werton. He was the one who advocated and won support for the particular scheme of 9 to 13 middle schools within the department. As a fellow officer put it, "I'd say it was 80% Cooper's idea, 80% or more."

He nevertheless needed the CEOs backing and despite the opposition of at least one other officer, Greenwood accepted the idea and himself became an enthusiastic supporter of it. In fact when the plan was finally published it became known as 'the Greenwood plan' (to the mild annoyance of Cooper and the considerable disgust of Talbot). Greenwood's reputation within the profession was undoubtedly enhanced by Werton's success with the scheme. He frequently lectured on it at conferences and meetings and it probably helped establish his position within the Society of Education Officers.

Cooper's teaching experiences seem to have had some influence on his ideas. As deputy head of a comprehensive
school in ILMA he had been in charge of the lower school, ages 11 to 13. There he came face to face with the problems of 11 year olds arriving in these large schools and the task of getting them used to specialist subject teaching and designing appropriate syllabi within those constraints. As an officer put it, it was, "working against the system,......Burnham was pushing ambitious men into specialist subjects....there was really no incentive for a master to work as a general subjects teacher just to help cushion them from transfer at 11".

However the most compelling arguments for the scheme were essentially administrative. The middle school pattern offered an extremely good 'fit' with the existing school system in Merton. In particular the small schools inherited by the borough were well suited to becoming middle schools while the larger schools and the two new schools planned by Surrey could become 13 to 18 high schools with little adaptation. Naturally those involved are somewhat reluctant to concede that administrative rather than educational reasons were the most important factors in the final decision. However the two are not so easily separated. There are good educational reasons for choosing a scheme which minimises disruption. One officer described his conversion in the following terms, "The discipline of thinking about administrative changes in terms of the physical quantities we have available can in fact assist ones crystallisation of educational philosophies."
He went on to explain how considering the physical limits of each school, "led one to go on to think about what would happen in these buildings and the educational justification emerged in a very complex way, bound up with questions of physical space and even teacher expectation, so that one became persuaded of the merits of three-tier, not simply because it fitted the pattern, but because reflecting upon the pattern had resulted in a redefinition of one's views about what ought to be going on at the primary or secondary stage. I may be wrong but I think it was a very subtle process of this kind." Thus the fit between the middle school pattern and the available stock of buildings was vital to the conception of the idea. But in addition there was educational support for the idea which could be used to back up and legitimise this choice.

The educational support came in particular from the Plowden Committee.24 Although the committee did not officially report until 1967 the officers in Merton were made aware, through their HMI, that it would back the idea of middle schools.25 One of the main arguments used in Plowden and by the officers in Merton, was that middle schools provided a crucial period of development free from the pressures of examination. The officers pointed out that these ideas fitted in closely with the theories of Piaget, one of the most influential educational psychologists of that period.26

The Conversion of Talbot

Although it is clear that the officers, and Cooper in particular, became convinced of the merits of the middle school
pattern of reorganisation, nevertheless the conversion of Talbot was crucial to the eventual decision. Greenwood was not generally an 'educator' in style and Talbot was an independent minded, experienced and powerful politician. Clearly the officers were able to present the middle school pattern in a favourable light. However Talbot was far from being pressured into accepting it. Above all else the crucial decision for him and his party was whether to end selection and reorganise the grammar schools. On this matter Greenwood was silent.

Every councillor and officer interviewed for this study confirmed Talbot's importance. For example one officer remarked, "I am in no doubt that (Talbot) is absolutely central to an understanding of how it was Werton decided to do this." A Conservative councillor replied, "Yes, I think he probably was particularly influential, although others of us had to come round too," while according to one Labour councillor, "He was a bully boy and very much dominated his group."

An appreciation of Talbot's conversion must begin with his initial worries about selection. The problems of selection had been brought home to him personally when his son failed the eleven plus. This clearly influenced his thinking in attempting to modify the selection procedure in Surrey. One interviewee put it more strongly, "I bet if Talbot's boy hadn't had a smooth run into grammar school he'd have defended them to the death." Nevertheless, through his
involvement in education throughout the 1950s and early 60s. He was aware of the trend away from selection. Furthermore, the success of the Labour Party nationally, the Conservatives' narrow majority in Merton and the concerted attack on selection by the opposition and teachers combined in the December MECC meeting must have entered into his thinking.

However in 1965 Talbot had yet to be convinced that any comprehensive system had less weaknesses than the selective system. It was here that the consideration of the individual comprehensive patterns seems to have been important. With the help of the officers he was able to appreciate the educational and administrative advantages of the middle school system. In particular this pattern avoided the necessity of large comprehensive schools and could be implemented quickly throughout the borough with the minimum of disruption.

In addition the middle school pattern appealed because it was novel. There was clearly prestige to be gained from being one of the first authorities to successfully adopt such a scheme. A senior Conservative remarked, "The fact that we were setting a new pattern and breaking new ground made it easier to accept comprehensive education." and later said, "I took the view that for a Conservative council to pursue comprehensive education would meet with tremendous approval from our Lords and masters at Westminster." If these thoughts were in Talbot's mind at the time he was proved right. He was personally singled out for praise by Edward Boyle, the DES was "extremely generous" with its funding and assistance, and
educationalists from all parts of the country, and abroad, came to visit Hertton's middle schools. They became a little bit of a showpiece for the DES, one councillor remarked.

The Conversion of the DES

On April 25th 1966 in the House of Commons the Secretary of State for Education and Science made an announcement on middle schools in answer to a question. He stated, "Our thinking has shifted in the light of experience since the day when we used the language in the Circular. We would now be more willing than we were to consider possible 9 - 13 schemes." And then again on May 10th Crosland stated, "I have indicated to a number of authorities that, in principle, I would be prepared to accept a scheme involving the establishment of middle schools." It was not until the release of circular 13/66 in July that LEAs were formally advised of this possibility but it was around these early dates that most authorities, including Herton, became aware of this change of heart.

The role which this change of heart played in Herton's decision remains unclear. In his final report (34) issued in November 1966 Greenwood wrote, "The pronouncement of the Secretary of State in the summer of 1966 seriously influenced the authorities' thinking." In a talk given at three teachers' meetings in the autumn of 1966 the CEO described this more dramatically. "Then suddenly late in the summer term came a pronouncement of the Secretary of State which threw the whole
thing back in the melting pot."

However this interpretation clashes with the account given by another officer who said, "I have a very clear memory of that, I know that we had almost put the last dot and comma on the three tier scheme just before Crosland came out with that statement...we were glad of it but we had already done it, Crosland opened the door just before we knocked on it."

What seems clear is that Cooper had been convinced of the merits of the middle school pattern before Crosland's statement. How far he had convinced Greenwood and whether Talbot had made up his mind is not certain. However this statement from the Secretary of State was undoubtedly important in rallying support from other sources and strengthening the position of the CEO and Talbot. It was certainly a powerful weapon to use when making the decision public and it is hardly surprising that the detailed explanation released to the public in R4 and presented by the CEO to the teachers laid a heavy emphasis on the support of the DES for what was a new and rather revolutionary scheme. There is little doubt that the middle school pattern would have emerged as a strong candidate without DES support, but whether it would have been pursued and unanimously approved without it is much less certain.

The Teachers Reaction

In response to R2 the teachers' associations had commented on each of the patterns outlined. There was considerable agreement that if comprehensive reorganisation were to be
introduced the all-through pattern was most favoured. The only association to disagree were the NAS who still argued for sixth form colleges. The Joint Four were still generally opposed to reorganisation but the Head Teachers appeared to be ready to accept it. 35

The CMO invited all head teachers to a meeting on May 11th to discuss what was by then a clear move towards a middle school pattern. The heads continued to express support for the 11-13 all-through schools. The CMO emphasised that that pattern would almost certainly require split site schools in the short term. 36 In follow-up correspondence after the meeting it emerged that a majority of heads were prepared to back the middle school pattern. 37 Although the NUT's official policy remained firmly in favour of all-through schools the teachers' co-opted members, from that union, backed Greenwood. 38

The Third Report

Greenwood quoted the support of teachers for several of the comments in his third report (33). 39 He began with a final assault on all-through schools. The teachers' organisations had agreed, he wrote, that "the disadvantage of this system ......is that existing school buildings would require to be linked, two or three existing buildings going to form one comprehensive school. As has been said, this inconvenience would be acceptable if it were temporary and if there were some assurance that it would be eliminated in the foreseeable future. The pronouncement of the Secretary of State on the
availability of capital funds is not encouraging in this respect, however, and it could take years to complete the programme." There was less certainty about the balance of advantages and disadvantages of the sixth-form college. However, the report noted that from "the observations of teachers' organisations....the main objection to this scheme appeared to be that it would deprive the secondary schools of their sixth forms, and the leadership, stimulus and encouragement which the younger pupils derive from them. It was also suggested that young people would not transfer to another establishment at 16, but would go to industry or technical college."

On the middle school pattern however, there was little but praise. R3 began, "The significant educational advantage of type VI is the length of the period which the child spends in each school", and went on, "The middle school opens up attractive possibilities in experimentation with teaching techniques. Modern languages could perhaps begin earlier.... The practical facilities.....in the secondary schools which would become middle schools could open up new vistas to the teachers who would teach this age-group. At best there would be scope for educational advance that the creation of the middle school could achieve great educational importance." The report concluded, "It seems obvious that the type VI high school (is) better suited to our facilities since the overall size is so much smaller.....(requiring) relatively minor internal re-
organisation." It was felt that the middle and primary tiers could also be accommodated relatively easily.

Approval in Principle

The WSC met in special session on May 24th to consider R3. They resolved that the all-through and 6th form college patterns, "would produce grave practical difficulties and disadvantages" and they went on to recommend that "serious consideration should therefore be given to the adoption in principle of the middle school pattern."

This system clearly involved more than just the secondary sector, the proposal was referred to the primary sub-committee, who concurred. At the scheduled meeting of WSC on 8th June the committee recommended that the C51 should be involved in the proposals and that details of the scheme should be ready for submission as soon as possible. To this end a working party of officers, members and teachers was proposed to consider the many detailed matters still to be decided. These included the allocation of existing schools to the new three tier system (the C50s suggestions in R3 were regarded only as a 'first attempt'), the decision whether to have co-educational or single sex schools, staffing, building alteration, transfer procedures, drawing catchment areas and the phasing in of the plan. Finally the working party were to draft a detailed report for the Secretary of State and an explanatory leaflet for the public.

On 8th June the full education committee recommended that, "the Secretary of State for Education and Science be informed
that the authority propose to introduce a scheme of comprehensive education based on type VI", the middle school. On July 20th the full council concurred. In each case the decision was unanimous.

A unanimous decision for full comprehensive reorganisation by a Conservative controlled LEA is really quite remarkable, possibly unique. To some extent unanimity was achieved as a result of Talbot's powerful position as leader of the group and chairman of education. As a Labour councillor put it, "He was a man with considerable knowledge of educational matters, the Conservative group had a lot of young, inexperienced politicians, no, I don't think he had too much trouble in getting his own way." On the other hand as a leading Conservative remarked, "I don't think the Conservatives would have backed him on his own. Others of us had to come round." Even here Talbot's style of leadership was influential. There seems little doubt that gaining complete public unanimity was a goal in itself and he followed a quite deliberate strategy to prevent any opposition emerging. One policy he adopted was to put off any clear decision as long as there was uncertainty in the committee, and to delay any firm commitment until a scheme had emerged on which there was complete agreement. As one Conservative put it, the Chairman, "never, never, never allowed a vote, we took it step by step, if there was disagreement (he) said 'O.K. let's look at this again, another report on this please Mr Greenwood, we'll discuss
it against next time." Although Talbot could have obtained a majority at any time with the aid of the Labour and co-opted members, he wanted to prevent any serious campaign of opposition emerging from within his own party.

An important factor in obtaining full support, as it had been in his own conversion, lay in the particular pattern of reorganization. The image of comprehensive education to many Conservatives at the outset was the large ILA comprehensive school of up to two thousand pupils. Almost all the councillors interviewed expressed their opposition to this large type of comprehensive school. Back in 1965 many assumed that this was the only type possible. When asked to comment on comprehensive education in general the vice chairman of the CBC was quoted in December 1965 as opposing the idea because "many children would be lost in these very big schools." The opportunity to look closely at the detailed patterns was probably important in winning over many of the Conservatives on the education committee. Through the middle school and other patterns they were exposed to the possibility of comprehensive systems with small schools, created with the minimum of disruption which were markedly different from the image they originally had.

Once the ideological barrier had been overcome the different patterns could be discussed in largely non-partisan terms. One officer interviewed claimed that in the later discussions on the middle school pattern a particularly eloquent female Labour councillor was influential. One Labour councillor believed that
the co-opted teacher was important in these debates. Another
typically referred to the Conservative attitude thus, "In exam-
ing the options their minds were just as open, (they) discussed
it in the right kind of spirit, with the education of children
at heart."

"When the advantages of the three-tier system were spelt
out it was easier to show that they were preferable to selection.
Many Conservatives had doubts about selection, often also from
personal experiences, "a lot of my friends were on edge over this
eleven plus," as one put it. In the past the problems of
selection had been weighed against the ogre of the large
comprehensive, now it could be seen in relation to the middle
school scheme and that won the day. A leading Conservative
explained her conversion, "I do think that a lot of us who were
parents knew the problems of the eleven plus and I think from my
own point of view it was that which had a very large influence,
that maybe if we could find the right comprehensive scheme this
was the way to go about it."

Therefore the ability to find an acceptable pattern was
important in securing the necessary support for the end to
selection. This view was backed up by councillors of both
sides, for example "I'm perfectly sure it would have been more
difficult to get a comprehensive scheme through if three-tier
had not been an option" (Conservative) and "Yes, three-tier was
more acceptable to the Tories, they had a terror of these great
big comprehensives." (Labour) An officer agreed, "I think
the three-tier system is the system most acceptable to the
Conservatives... I think there would have been opposition both from teachers and from members to either type I (all-through schools) or type V (sixth-form colleges)."

In the end there were still one or two Conservatives who were not entirely convinced. According to one source, one member of the education committee in particular couldn't bring himself to vote for the scheme. The chairman asked him to find an excuse to leave the room when the vote was taken. This he did and the vote was recorded unanimously. The one person who could have represented a serious challenge to Talbot was Sir Cyril Black. However, as one officer put it, "although he was influential - of immense significance - in the total political climate of Fenton, one never felt he was applying his undoubted weight against a comprehensive scheme." To some extent he seemed to be carried along by events locally while his attention was mainly focused on Parliament. He had worked closely with Talbot on education in Surrey and seemed to be content to leave matters in his hands. A leading Conservative remarked, "I think Sir Cyril was prepared to lend his support as long as we refused to go comprehensive with very large schools."

Initial reaction outside the council

The GDs third report was never released to the public. Apart from the officers and members involved only the head teachers and the co-opted teachers were made aware of the likely decision for a middle school scheme in advance of the full education committee meeting on June 27th (over a month after the SECC decision and seven weeks after the head teachers
were consulted). There was then just four weeks before the full council rubber stamped the education committee decision. Not surprisingly there was some criticism in particular from MAASE and the NUT at the lack of public consultation and the short period permitted for reaction. In the time which was available the NUT expressed their continued preference for an all-through pattern. However on the whole there was a marked lack of response and almost no public criticism of the reorganisation decision in principle. There were just two letters in the Wimbledon News in this period criticising the abolition of selection and the introduction of comprehensive education. Both were from the same person, a master at the independent Kings College School.

9.4 FINAL APPROVAL, THE LACK OF OPPOSITION AND THE NON-MAINTAINED SECTOR

The Detailed Scheme

The working party began its considerations immediately and met regularly right through to November 1966 producing an interim report on 26th September. At that September meeting the education committee resolved: "(i) that no teacher shall suffer financial loss from reorganisation of secondary and primary education and that each teacher shall be guaranteed by the Authority full salary protection......and (ii) that in all cases protection shall be at the appropriate point of the scale...." Later in the autumn of 1966 the CEO called three teachers' meetings in different parts of the borough,
at which he explained how and why the decision to go three-tier had been made and received and answered comments and questions. All the borough's teachers were invited to at least one of these meetings.

The final report of the working party (24), submitted to a Joint (Primary and Secondary) Education Sub-Committee in November, explained itself in its title, 'Scheme for the introduction of comprehensive education in Kenton on the basis of primary schools 5-9, middle schools 9-13 and high schools 13-18.'

The report included details of which schools would become middle and high, the latter being the larger grammar and secondary modern schools and the former the smaller secondary schools plus a few primary schools. All middle schools were to be co-educational but the high schools were to be in three geographical groups of three schools with one girls, one boys and one mixed school in each group. A combination of parental choice and catchment area would be used as allocation and transfer methods. The report included details of funds needed for immediate alterations, mainly in the new high schools, and a long term building programme. Negotiations had been progressing with the denominational schools and although problems were still to be ironed out with the Roman Catholic schools, the Church of England schools and a real and the R.C. diocesan authorities were not opposed in principle. Finally the report suggested the scheme would be phased in over three years, starting in September 1969. The report was made public on November 13th, approved unanimously by the education committee ten days later and by the
council within a month. 53

Throughout the period from the autumn of 1965 to the spring of 1967 an officer (usually the CEO) and a member of the education committee (usually Talbot) attended at least 52 meetings concerning reorganisation with parents, teachers and governors of the authorities' schools. 54 In December 1966 a letter was sent to every parent or prospective parent in the borough explaining the scheme in principle and finally at the end of 1967 the CEO produced a pamphlet giving the precise details of the new schools as they affected parents in different parts of the borough. 55

Although there were still a few details to be cleared up, the DES gave it approval in principle in February 1967. In the letter the Secretary of State expressed his "appreciation of the thorough and efficient way in which the authority has responded to circular 10/65." 56 The DES made it clear that it was important to include the Catholic schools in reorganisation and the council's negotiations to this end. They obtained the approval of all the R.C. schools by the summer and sent the details to the DES. Final approval was obtained in September 1968. 57

There is no doubt that the DES was generous to Merton in approving the use of funds for reorganisation. As a leading Conservative put it, "I took the view that for a Conservative council to pursue comprehensive education would meet with tremendous approval....and that we would be much more likely
to get financial assistance for buildings and equipment and
indeed this proved to be the case. None of our capital
commitments were ever turned down. . . . we were offered all sorts
of money in the last few weeks of a financial year, I remember
one of 360,000. . . . we were able to get extra this and that far
beyond our share of the goodies going round." This was confirmed
by the officers, one of them adding that he felt one of the
reasons was, "because it was a genuine copper-bottom comprehensive
scheme at a time when authorities were seeking a way round the
pure undiluted Doctrine."

In fact Horston did not require an extensive building
programme in order to implement the scheme - officials had
also been one of its advantages. Initially it was envisaged
that funds from the minor works programme and "EH" would be
sufficient. However when S&D was postponed those calculations
were hurried. The local press reported that this might delay
implementation of the scheme 59 but the full case to the rescue,
first in 1969 with an allocation of £165,000 for major building
and then an additional £90,000 early in 1969. 59 Later approval
was also given for two new purpose-built middle schools which
were opened in the mid 1970s. 60

In September 1969 selection was abandoned in Horston and
the phasing in of the middle school scheme began. In 1971 the
final stages were completed.

The Impact of Opposition

One of the most remarkable features of reorganization in
Merton is the lack of opposition to the principle and details of the scheme, both inside and outside the council. This has already been noted for the period immediately following the initial decision to reorganise but it also continued throughout 1966, including the period after the release of the detailed plan, and indeed through the period of implementation.

As table 9.4 shows throughout 1965 and 1966 when the main debate was taking place only five letters appeared in the "imbedded" opposing comprehensive reorganisation in principle. All five letters came from the same person.

Despite its early opposition the Joint Four association made no attempt to oppose the scheme when it finally emerged. There undoubtedly were some grammar school teachers who disliked the plan in principle. One grammar school head teacher in particular was very critical and eventually left the authority to become head of a grammar school in Surrey.61 (He was replaced by a dissatisfied secondary modern headmaster from Sutton, see page 455).

On the whole, however, the scheme received considerable support from the vast majority of teachers. In fact the middle school pattern generated a great deal of interest and enthusiasm in the profession even although none of the associations had originally backed it. It was a new system which gave all teachers a chance to re-assess the age group they wished to teach. Teachers could apply for any new post within the borough, their salaries were safeguarded and overall reorganisation did result in more positions of responsibility, particularly as a result of adding
Table 9.4  *Werton Press Coverage of the Comprehensive Issue*  
*The Wimbleton News 1965 and 1966*

A) Front page coverage of the comprehensive issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of article on actions or announcements of:</th>
<th>Number of stories 1965 1966</th>
<th>Column centimetres 1965 1966</th>
<th>of total column centimetre 1965 1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council or Conservative Group</td>
<td>2  4</td>
<td>134  265</td>
<td>47  78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents pro-comprehensive group</td>
<td>1  2</td>
<td>98  35</td>
<td>37  10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>1 -</td>
<td>57 -</td>
<td>16 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual schools</td>
<td>-  1</td>
<td>-  40</td>
<td>-  12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4  7</td>
<td>224  340</td>
<td>100  100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total number of equivalent all-news (no adverts) front pages**  
(3,16 column centimetres to an all-news front page, actual size).

1965 = 0.7 front pages  
1966 = 0.8 " "

C) Letters and editorials on comprehensive education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>favourability</th>
<th>Letters 1965 1966</th>
<th>Editorials 1965 1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Comprehensive</td>
<td>3  6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-Comprehensive</td>
<td>-  2+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposed to pattern</td>
<td>-  1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open to ending bilaterals</td>
<td>-  10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposed lack of consultation</td>
<td>-  3</td>
<td>-  1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>13  15</td>
<td>2  1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ All from one author
the extra tier. In addition it opened up exciting new prospects for the courses and teaching methods used in the middle school. To this end considerable in-service training was made available. As far as parents were concerned, there was no evidence of any attempt at organised opposition to reorganisation in Merton. Two interviewees recalled some murmurings of discontent from parents at the voluntary controlled Rutlish school, but they all agreed that there was never anything which could be called a concerted campaign. There is certainly no reference in the press for that period of any such campaign.

Consultation?

When this lack of opposition was brought to the attention of interviewees it was clear that many had never thought it unusual. "Now you mention it I suppose it was rather remarkable", one officer commented. The most common explanation from Conservatives and officers was in terms of the wide involvement of all those concerned in the decision. "There would have been (opposition) if it hadn't been handled properly. I believe strongly in consultation, I learnt a lesson from Surrey where they always consulted after the decision had been made. We weren't going to do that. We consulted parents at all the schools," (A senior Conservative). Senior officers referred proudly to the long list of meetings with parents and teachers. Lewin in his study claimed these meetings were effectively a referendum on the issue.

There are some problems with this explanation. Of the 56 meetings quoted above, 7 were held before the end of March 1966, one was held in July and all the rest were held after September 1966. The crucial decision-making period,
during which the principle and the pattern of reorganisation were secured, was between April and June. This means that the vast bulk of the meetings were held only after these decisions had been made. Furthermore at the meetings held before April 1966 and in the observations submitted in response to R1 and R2, no single organisation or group came out specifically in support of the middle school pattern which was eventually chosen.

The evidence strongly suggests that neither parents nor the bulk of teachers were ever seriously involved before the key decisions had been made.

Nevertheless the period from June to December during which the plan was open to criticism, the public meetings and the necessity of public notice and ministry approval for the changes provided ample opportunity for a campaign to emerge against the decision. When no such opposition resulted it was quite possible to argue that this was because the scheme reflected what the people of Norton wanted.

On the other hand it is possible to view the process more in terms of the manipulation of opinion and deliberate attempts to prevent opposition arising. The consultation with head teachers and the teachers' organisations can be seen as a means of making them feel they were involved without giving them any real influence. One officer was prepared to admit as much, "I think we did honestly want to get the teachers involved once the basic decision had been taken as to which of the six types we would adopt......But I don't think we can
claim to have taken a lot of notice of the teachers up to the
summer of 1966....Yes, we wanted to consult them and it would
be too crude to say we only wanted to do so to make it easier
for us, but undoubtedly some observer would be able to argue
that the record of mid-1966 is one of arrogance on the part of
the officers and one or two members in imposing what they thought
was right against the express wishes of a lot of other professionals."
The comments of a leading Conservative suggest a similar view,
"I always insisted on consultations with teachers at every stage.
It made the teachers feel they were very much involved in what
was being done. Whether or not they were is another matter,
their observations were normally not very much use, but the
mere fact that they made them helped." Another senior Conservative
remarked, "I think it would have gone through anyway but their
(the teachers') cooperation was helpful."

Similarly the belated consultation with parents and rank
and file teachers can be seen as an end in itself. The meetings
followed on from a fairly rapid and largely closed decision-
making process. The speed and secrecy of developments between April
and June may well have helped prevent any anti-comprehensive
campaign emerging. The meetings were then a largely cosmetic
exercise which served to legitimise decisions which had already
been taken.

Another possible explanation for the lack of opposition
lies in the likely impact of comprehensive schooling on
particular communities and groups in Merthyr. One aspect of
this was the degree of social and educational integration
likely to be produced by the reorganisation proposals.

As section 9.1 revealed, although there are considerable socio-economic contrasts within the borough, the extremes are also geographically distinct. The hearts of middle class Wimbledon and working class Mitcham are at opposite ends of the borough. The probable use of geographical zoning as one element in the allocation to high schools ensured that any fears which middle class parents had were minimised. The comprehensive schools in Wimbledon would be as different in social composition from those in Mitcham as the old grammar schools had been from the secondary moderns.

This would not satisfy all parents, particularly those who held firmly to an elite ideology in education. However for many of them the impact of reorganisation was negligible because they had their children educated in the private sector. In Wimbledon, and particularly Wimbledon village, the private school ethos was so strong that many of the upper-middle class, including many of the most prominent members of the community almost certainly never considered using the state system. These are the parents who might well have provided the leadership for an anti-comprehensive campaign had they been involved in the state system.

For some middle class parents who were in the state system, or uncertain whether to use it, the private sector provided an alternative if they disliked the comprehensive system. These parents would still oppose reorganisation but might be less
prepared to fight a long hard battle to attempt to stop it.

The absence of any campaign of opposition from parents was undoubtedly helped by the lack of overt opposition on the council itself. In fact opposition in either arena would almost certainly have generated and fed off one another. However there were no public splits on the council. High outside a concrete could exist and similarly the contested councillor had no organised support outside the council to use.

However the virtual unanimity on the council my also be partly attributable to the strength of the private sector. For any Conservative councillors who were privately educated or whose children were privately educated, there was little reason to be gained from opposing reorganisation. This may well be a further explanation why in April 1972, an old boy and governor of Kings College, was prepared to go along with the scheme.obot himself was also involved with the private schools. He was favoured reorganisation partly because his first son failed the eleven plus, he then sent his second son to Kings College and soon afterwards became a governor of the school.

Two interviewees lent some support to the idea that the private sector might have been influential. First, a senior officer attested to the prominent position which the two most prestigious independent schools held within the community. "We have a bond relationship with... Kings College and Independent High, even though it decided to go comprehensive. Of course these schools had played an important part in the education of the area for a long time". One of the co-opted teachers believed that this probably had had a direct effect
on some of those individuals involved in the reorganisation debate. "There was a small group of influential individuals who effectively said, 'Let them go through with their fight and bother, but we've got our escape route.' And they were the ones that could have caused opposition." Finally a Labour councillor put the argument most clearly, "I think because we had a public boys school and a public day school trust up in Wimbledon they (the Conservatives) were sure their kids could have a grammar type education if they wanted it by paying for it. I don't think there's much doubt that that was influential". On the other hand, although hardly surprisingly, one officer and two Conservatives when re-interviewed and confronted with this argument totally rejected it.

The Non-Maintained Sector

The issue which more overtly involved the private sector in the reorganisation debate concerned the places which the authority took up at non-maintained schools. Under Greenwood's proposals contained in R1 the number of places purchased at independent schools was fixed at just three annually at Kings College. Seventeen places were also taken up at Wimbledon High School.

Wimbledon High and the GPDST were not willing to participate in any comprehensive scheme. The question of whether to continue to take up places there and at Kings was discussed by the working party but not resolved. The teachers' groups and the
Labour party were strongly opposed to any such scheme and the officers described any move to end the policy as "a logical step" following reorganisation. 68

However in December 1968 the new Middle and High School sub-committee decided to continue to take three places at Kings and to take six places at Wimbledon High. 69 The numbers involved were small but feelings on the issue among Conservatives ran high and there was some support for significantly increasing the number. 70 All the Conservatives interviewed made a point of stressing their continued belief in private education despite supporting reorganisation and this seemed to be a symbolic gesture which affirmed that belief and made reorganisation more palatable. One officer summed it up as "the price we had to pay," for getting comprehensive education.

Matters did not rest there, however. In 1971 after Labour won control of the council they discontinued the policy, with the committee and council dividing on party lines as before. 71 In 1974 the Conservatives reinstated it 72 only to be told to end the policy by the DES in 1976 under the Labour Government. 73 However senior Conservatives were adamant in 1979 that they would take up places again under a Conservative Government. 74

9,5 Merton's Schools in 1980

In 1980 the London Borough of Merton maintains a fully comprehensive system of education consisting of seventeen co-educational middle schools for children aged between 9 and 13 and eleven high schools for 13 to 18 year olds. Three
of the high schools are co-educational. Two high schools are voluntary aided Roman Catholic schools and one is voluntary controlled. All eleven high schools are either 5 or 6 forms of entry, maintain good size sixth forms, offer a wide range of examination courses and send pupils on to higher education.\textsuperscript{75}

This is not to say that there is perfect equality between these schools. Some clearly have better reputations than others and are oversubscribed. These tend to be the single sex schools, particularly for girls, and the two ex-grammar schools on the Wimbledon side of the borough - Rutlish and Raynes Park. A senior Conservative admitted that there were still inequalities between schools in Mitcham and Wimbledon. He saw this as one of the main failings with the comprehensive system. In many respects this is not surprising given the general social inequalities between the two areas.

The middle school system has its critics within the borough. High school teachers complain that pupils arrive ill prepared to begin examination work within a year. There have been serious discipline problems with some thirteen year olds at the top of the middle schools and some councillors and officers believe an 8 to 12 age range might have been preferable. But on the whole the system works well and is admired in many circles. Much depends on the head of the middle school as to how it operates. One ex-grammar school head runs his purpose built school just like the junior end of a grammar school. Another head makes imaginative use of the open plan and moveable walls in his identical building to provide a variety of old and new teaching techniques and curricula. The
atmosphere and enthusiasm of pupils and teachers in this latter school was the most impressive of any school visited during this study.

However Merton is faced with particularly acute problems as a result of the falling school population. The middle school pattern means that three tiers of schools will be affected. At the time of writing the LEA is agonising over how many and which of the middle and high schools to close. Ironically the approximate equality between the schools and their settled pattern makes it more difficult to make such decisions. In the end however marginally less popular schools will go and the degree of equality of opportunity between schools within Merton's comprehensive system may well be improved as a result.
Footnotes to chapter 9


2. Lewin, op. cit.

3. Interviews

4. Interviews

5. Wimbledon News, 1/5/64

6. Report of the Chief Education Officer, 'The Organisation of Secondary Education', (R1)

7. Ibid., appendixes B, C and D

8. Mitcham News and Mercury, 10/9/65

9. R1, op. cit.

10. Ibid

11. Mitcham News and Mercury, 10/9/65

12. Minutes of Proceedings of the Borough of Merton, (Hereafter referred to as Merton Minutes), Education Committee, 22/11/65

13. Interviews

14. Wimbledon News, 17/12/65

15. Merton Minutes, Council, 8/12/65

16. Merton Teachers Association, (NUT), 'Reorganisation of Primary and Secondary Education'; and interviews.

17. Merton Head Teachers Association, 'Reorganisation of Primary and Secondary Education in Merton'; and 'Memorandum to the Chief Education Officer from the Joint Four Associations on the Organisation of Secondary Education in Merton'; and interviews

19. Mitcham News and Mercury, 10/12/65.

20. Report of the Chief Education Officer, 'Circular 10/65 The Reorganisation of Secondary Education', (R2)

21. R2, op. cit., appendix E

22. Merton Minutes, SESC, 1/3/66

23. Merton Minutes, SESC, 26/4/66


25. Interviews

26. Interviews; and Children and their Primary Schools, op. cit., paragraph 371

27. Interviews

28. Interviews

29. Interviews


31. Hansard, 10/5/66, written answers columns 59-60

32. DES, Circular 13/66, HMSO, 1966

33. Report of the Chief Education Officer, 'Scheme for the introduction of comprehensive education in Merton on the basis of primary schools 5 - 9, middle schools 9 - 13 and high schools 13 - 18.' (R4), p.1

34. Text of speech given at three teachers meetings, unpublished document.

35. Interviews; and letter to Mr Greenwood from Secretary of Merton Head Teachers Association, 20/5/66

36. Comments on meeting between Mr Greenwood and Head teachers, unpublished documents; and interviews

37. Letter to Mr Greenwood from Secretary of Merton Head Teachers Association, 20/5/66

38. Merton Teachers Association (NUT), 'News Sheet 66/5'; Wimbledon News, 1/7/66; and interviews
39. Report of the Chief Education Officer, 'Schemes I, V and VI in Merton', (R3)

40. Ibid

41. Merton Minutes, SESC, 24/5/66

42. Merton Minutes, SESC, 8/6/66

43. Merton Minutes, Education Committee, 27/6/66

44. Merton Minutes, Council, 20/7/66

45. Wimbledon News, 17/12/65

46. Interview

47. Wimbledon News, 18/11/66

48. Interviews and unpublished documents

49. Wimbledon News, 25/11/66 and 9/12/66

50. Merton Minutes, Education Committee, 26/9/66

51. Text of speech by CEO and letters of invitation

52. R4, op. cit.; and Merton Minutes, Joint Sub-Committee, 9/11/66

53. Merton Minutes, Education Committee, 23/11/66 and Council, 7/12/66

54. 'Meetings with the Public and with Interested Bodies', unpublished document

55. Letter from Chairman of the Education Committee to Parents, headed 'Comprehensive Education', 8/12/66

56. Merton Minutes, Education Committee, 27/2/66

57. Merton Minutes, Education (General Purposes) Sub Committee, 28/10/68

58. Wimbledon News, 19/1/68

59. Merton Minutes, Education Committee, 24/2/69

60. Interviews

61. Interviews

62. Interviews

63. Survey of Wimbledon News and Mitcham News and Mercury
64. Lewin, op. cit., chapter 4
65. 'Meetings with the Public and with Interested Bodies', op. cit.
66. Observations on R1 and R2, op. cit.; interviews; and press coverage
67. R1, op. cit.
68. Merton Minutes, Middle and High School Sub-Committee, 11/12/68
69. Interviews
70. Interviews
71. Merton Minutes, Education Committee, 27/9/71
72. Interviews
73. See Pages 192-193
74. Interviews
75. Education Committees Yearbook 1980, Councils and Education Press, 1980; and interviews. Repeated attempts to secure precise data on size of sixth forms failed to produce a response.
Chapter 10 RESISTANCE AND REORGANISATION IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND

10.1 BACKGROUND

The Area

The London Borough of Richmond was formed by the amalgamation of the three boroughs of Richmond, Barnes and Twickenham. Richmond and Barnes had previously been part of Surrey while Twickenham had been in Middlesex. The 1965 Parliamentary constituencies of Richmond (which included Barnes) and Twickenham remained unchanged by the 1970 boundary alterations.

Some of the characteristics of the borough can be discerned from Table 10.1 and Table 8.1 on page 243. The borough as a whole is remarkably homogeneous. Richmond and Twickenham on opposite sides of the river Thames are both very 'desirable' residential areas. They attract the more affluent commuters and are also popular with artists, publishers and those who work in the media. Thirty per cent of the economically active males are in professional or managerial positions. There are two film studios and a television studio within this small borough. What little industry there is, mainly light engineering and chemicals, is concentrated in the north of the borough towards Barnes and in a small industrial estate near Twickenham. The overall proportion of council housing is low (at 13% the lowest of the three main boroughs in this study) and is found mainly away from the towns of Richmond and Twickenham themselves. There is quite a large private rented sector, particularly in
### Table 10.1 Land Use, Socio-Economic Groupings and Housing in Richmond, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parliamentary Constituency of Richmond</th>
<th>Parliamentary Constituency of TWICKENHAM</th>
<th>London Borough of RICHMOND TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAND USE: (% of area)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>NOT</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>AVAILABLE</td>
<td>AVAILABLE</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Open Spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOUSING (% of dwellings/households)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Rented</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL CLASS (% of economically active males)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Managerial</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Workers</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 10.2 Representation on Richmond Council following the elections (including aldermanic elections) 1964-1978

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Lab</th>
<th>Lib</th>
<th>Ind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Richmond, which attracts young professionals and students.

The borough has the highest proportion of public open spaces of any authority in the country. Within its boundaries can be found part or all of Old Deer Park, Kew Gardens, Richmond Park, Wimbledon Common and Hampton Court.

**The Politics**

The political complexion of the council can be seen from table 10.2. Since its formation it has been firmly under Conservative control. The fortunes of the Labour and Conservative Parties followed the national swings in the election years. In 1968 the Conservatives won a complete landslide victory, capturing every seat on the council. The Liberals became the largest minority party in 1974 and the only minority party in 1978. As this suggests there are no safe Labour areas, although they do best in the North West between Richmond and Barnes and in the East bordering onto Kingston. The Conservatives had a large number of safe seats until 1974 but since then have been vulnerable in several areas to the Liberals.

In 1964 Alderman Harry Hall, a company director from Hampton, Twickenham, was elected leader of the Conservative group and in 1965 became leader of the council. He was a strong and forthright leader but had to work hard at times to keep his group together. This was partly as a result of some resentment from the Richmond Conservatives at the dominance of the Twickenham group and in particular at what became known as the 'Hampton gang'.

Table 10.3  Educational Features of the London Borough of Richmond

A. Maintained Schools Inherited by Richmond in 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEA Schools</th>
<th>Secondary Modern</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right schools with 2 f.e.</td>
<td>Richmond Girls 2 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One school with 3 f.e.</td>
<td>Shene Boys 2 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six schools with 4 f.e.</td>
<td>Thames Valley Mixed 4 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total No of schools 15, No of f.e. 48, Av f.e. 2.9</strong></td>
<td>Twickenham Girls 4 f.e.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary Schools</th>
<th></th>
<th>Hampton Grammar (Aided) 4 f.e.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One R.C. with 3 f.e.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One C. of E. with 2 f.e.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total No of schools 2, No of f.e. 5, Av f.e. 2.5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th></th>
<th>No of schools 5, No of f.e. 16, Av f.e. 3.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total No of schools 17, No of f.e. 48, Av f.e. 2.8</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. The Non-Maintained Sector, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Richmond</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approx % of 13 yr olds resident in the area who were educated in independent schools</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of 13 yr olds maintained by the LEA in independent schools</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of 13 yr olds maintained by the LEA in direct grant schools</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of independent schools located within the area</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Miscellaneous, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Richmon</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of Immigrant pupils Staying on rates:</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 yr olds as % of 13 yr olds of 3 yrs earlier</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 yr olds as % of 13 yr olds of 4 yrs earlier</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards to students at university per 1,000 18 and 19 year olds</td>
<td>177.9</td>
<td>95.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of population with a degree or equiv. who are in employment</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


+ see Appendix 1 for an explanation of this calculation
The Education System

The old boroughs of Barnes and Richmond had been the Northern Divisional Executive of Surrey. Twickenham had been an excepted district within Middlesex. Although the two parts of the borough were similar in many characteristics, these different administrative histories resulted in clearly visible differences in their schools.

Although, as section A of table 10.3 indicates, the new borough inherited an orthodox bi-partite system, several of the schools involved were particularly small. Furthermore almost all of these small schools were situated on the Richmond side of the river and on sites which often could not easily be extended. The Twickenham schools in contrast were larger and generally in a better state of repair. Overall the maintained sector included an embarrassment of places and sites. There were almost one thousand more school places than pupils at this time. In addition two sites had been designated for new schools, one on each side of the borough. One consequence of this particular combination of schools was the high number of grammar school places inherited.

The old Richmond borough had a tradition of a high rate of selection and this was carried over into the new borough. In the LEAs first full year about 33% of eleven year olds in the maintained sector were given grammar school places, compared with a national average nearer 20%.

The grammar schools included one voluntary aided school, Hampton Grammar. This was a foundation school dating back to 1557. It took some two-thirds of its pupils from the new Richmond
borough, the rest coming from what was Middlesex and in 1965 became part of Surrey. It was without doubt the most prestigious state school in the new borough with a very high national as well as local reputation. Academically an average of 20 to 30 boys gained Oxbridge places each year and over half went on to higher education. The school rowed at Henley each year and boasted a long line of old boys who have represented their country at various sports. A senior teacher at the school admitted that for much of this period the school stood out among the rest of the maintained schools. "There was a difference in style as well as prestige. We were rather more traditional and rigid. We had more of the trimmings of a posh independent school, with prefects and gowns, etc." The headmaster in 1965 jealously guarded these 'differences'. A new headmaster took over in 1970 and the school became more relaxed although academically no less prestigious.

At the same time there is no doubt that support for private education has always been strong in many parts of the borough. According to a 1961 publication, 'The Schools of Richmond, Twickenham and District', included no less than 30 independent schools. According to the DES in 1976 the London Borough of Richmond had 20 independent schools, 16 of them recognised as efficient. The private school ethos is cultivated particularly by the large number of preparatory schools and independent day schools. A senior officer interviewed remarked, "We must have more prep schools per 1,000 population than any
other LEA. Not only that but it affects the type of people who come to live in the borough. Many come chiefly because of the private schools here. The 20 independent schools in 1976 catered for 5,464 pupils of all ages, more than a quarter of the number of pupils in maintained schools in Richmond. Of course, not all these pupils in private schools actually live in Richmond. However the calculations made for this study indicate that just under 17% of thirteen year olds in Richmond were educated privately in 1971. This is the highest figure for all outer London Boroughs and may well be the highest in the country. In interviews for this study even higher figures, ranging from 20% to 30% were quoted by education officers and councillors for the total number of school age children in private schools at the time (1973-9). The figure for all secondary age children would be higher than that for 13 year olds on the assumption that a larger proportion of privately educated children stay on at school beyond the minimum leaving age. It is uncertain whether any of these proportions changed during this period.

In addition the figure of 17% does not include the number of children in independent and direct grant schools whose places were financed and/or secured by the LEA. This boosts the figure in 1971 to over 22%. In 1965 Richmond inherited relatively high commitments to places in independent schools. Among the schools with whom this relationship was already established were Lady Eleanor Hollis, a girls independent school; St Catherine's Roman Catholic independent school; and St Paul's, a boys H.".C.
independent school. All these schools were within the borough's boundaries, e.g. St. Paul's girls school, which was just outside the boundaries, across the river, also took in some pupils from the LEA.  

Richmond was also notable for the high proportion of its children who obtained awards to study at universities or other institutions of higher education. For many years the borough came top of the national league table of awards per thousand pupils. The borough's educationalists were very proud of this record and when they fell to second place one year, behind Solihull LEA, one officer recalled that it was regarded as, "a bitter blow". Of course these awards include many obtained by pupils living in Richmond but educated privately and/or outside the borough. Nevertheless the 'staying on' rate in Richmond's maintained schools is well above average. The adult population of Richmond is also the most highly qualified of any Outer London Borough. (See table 10.3, part C)  

There was a slight mix up in the appointment of the first CEO for Richmond. Initially the post was offered to an inspector from the Surrey education department. However after complaints that the correct procedure had not been followed, the position was re-advertised and a Mr W.R. Wainwright, Senior Assistant Director of Education for Liverpool, obtained the post. He was undoubtedly a conciliator in David's terms. He remained CEO for Richmond until his sudden death in 1972.  

In contrast with the CEO the first chairman of the education committee was a strong, independent-minded politician. He
was later to be succeeded by Mrs Champion, who in 1965 was chairman of the schools sub-committee. Mrs Champion was a councillor for Hampton where she owned and ran a small travel agency.

The education committee included ten co-opted members, three from the churches, three teachers and four political appointments. The three teachers were elected in separate ballots of all primary, secondary and further education teachers in the borough. Nominations for these posts are made by the Teachers' Council (TCC) - the main consultative body for the borough. The TCC was determined by a complicated formula involving elections and co-options but the NUT was ensured of a majority. Nevertheless the nominations for education committee co-option were not necessarily made on a union basis. The first secondary school co-opted teacher was a grammar school head teacher and a member of the Joint Four.

The Richmond Association for the Advancement of Secondary Education, (RAASE) was the second AASE group formed in the country when it was established under the old Richmond borough in 1960. It gained a national reputation when one of its members was chosen to sit on the Plowden Committee on primary education as a representative of parents. By the time the new borough was formed it was already an active and respected local pressure group.

The main local newspaper, the Richmond and Twickenham Times (hereafter abbreviated to Richmond Times) was rather unusual. It was owned by the Dimbleby family, of national media fame, and it maintained a fairly liberal/radical stance on most
issues. The standard of journalism and editorship also appeared to be considerably higher than the 'run of the mill' local press found in other boroughs in this study.

10.2 EARLY RESPONSE

Initial Positions

There was considerable debate about comprehensive education in Richmond even before the circular arrived. This was partly due to the efforts of RAASE, which campaigned within Surrey against the eleven plus in the early 1960s. In the latter half of 1964, RAASE turned its attention to the new London Borough and demanded that selection be abandoned and a middle school comprehensive scheme be introduced as soon as the borough became an LEA. The choice of the middle school pattern was partly a reflection of the then Chairwoman's position as a member of the Plowden Committee. The association began a series of meetings and debates on the issue.

The RAASE proposals received considerable coverage in the local press and the Richmond Times declared its early support for their campaign. In an editorial in February 1965 the paper attacked "this wrong, inhuman and educationally nonsensical system of picking over young children like piles of old clothes at a jumble sale." The Labour group made its support for comprehensives known early on. In February 1965 they pushed for a report from the CEO on the issue and for the establishment of a special subcommittee to consider it. Wainwright recommended that
such consideration should be delayed until the Secretary of State made his position clear. Two attempts to debate the issue by Labour were defeated.20

There was no experience of or support for comprehensive education among the officers at this stage. An officer who served under Wainwright claimed that the CEO "believed firmly in the grammar school system."

There were also early statements of opposition to reorganisation from the teachers' groups. This included the NAHT and rather surprisingly the NUT, although the latter recommended a decrease in the proportion of grammar school places.21 The Joint Four was strongly opposed including the co-opted members of the education committee.22 A particularly uncompromising stand was taken against comprehensives by the headmaster, staff and old boys of Hampton Grammar even before the circular was issued.23

In the 1964 elections the Conservatives pledged to "make available more grammar school places"24 but also to reform the selection procedures. After the elections there was a small group of backbenchers (about four) who favoured reorganisation of some kind but the majority were apparently opposed, including the leader.25 And in December 1964 the chairman of education stated he was 'categorically' opposed to comprehensive education.

**Consideration of the Circular**

In September, following the arrival of 10/65, the schools sub-committee (SSC) laid out a timetable for the consideration
of the issue. They decided to invite the views of all interested parties and the public immediately. Those observations, together with reports from the officers would be received at a series of five special S3C meetings between September and February. A final decision would be made by June 1966. 27

The views expressed by organisations at this stage were much the same as in the period before the circular. The Labour group took up the RAASE proposal for a middle school pattern. The Richmond Times again attacked selection as "faulty and useless", accused grammar school teachers of wanting to "select the children they will teach and reject the rest" and concluded, "for heavens sake get rid of it." 28

This followed a report that three of the grammar school heads had publicly opposed reorganisation. 29 But they were not alone. A straw poll taken by the NUT produced 82% in favour of retaining the grammar schools. 30 However the main focus of the grammar school campaign became Hampton. At a meeting at the school in October 1965 a national pressure group to defend all grammar schools was formed. The National Education Association (NEA) was the idea of the school's old boys association and representatives came from many of the most prestigious grammar schools in the country, particularly voluntary schools. The NEA pledged to help any grammar school to resist reorganisation and a fund was set up to be used to this end. 31
In February a preliminary report from the SSC went forward to the education committee. The report rejected any change to a comprehensive system. Using the officers' reports it claimed that none of the patterns in 10/65 were applicable to Richmond. There were no schools large enough to maintain an 11-18 pattern, the wide dispersal of small schools under any two-tier pattern would create problems, middle schools would "create the need for a considerable increase in places" and sixth form colleges would involve "decapitation of all other schools at 6th form level."

The report noted that no extra money was available under the circular and this was considered to rule out the major reorganisation required under any of the patterns. 32

Despite the apparent consideration given to all the comprehensive patterns from the circular, this part of the report was, as one officer put it, "purely cosmetic". The Conservatives were clearly determined to retain selection and the bulk of the report was devoted to ways of improving the existing system without changing its basic structure.

These measures, the report claimed, would create "true equality between all secondary schools." 33 Through mergers and two new schools the secondary modern sector was to be developed into a series of six form-entry schools, all producing viable sixth forms and a full range of examinations. The two small grammar schools were to be merged and all grammar schools became four forms of entry. The percentage of children selected for these schools would be 'ultimately' reduced from the present 33% to 20%. Finally the eleven plus would be abandoned and the
'distribution' (carefully avoiding the term 'selection') of children between these schools would be determined by 'guided parental choice'.

There were six dissenters from this report, three Conservatives joining the Labour representatives on the SSC. The co-opted teachers supported the plan. In the education committee the three Conservatives abstained and in full council voted for the reference back motion from Labour. The final vote was 35 to 17 against the reference back. Although the local paper headlined 'Tories split on school plan', the split was not serious and never threatened acceptance.

Details of the plan for the Secretary of State

The sub-committee continued to meet to discuss the details of the plan and the new selection procedure. These were finally released in May 1966. Under the 'procedure for transfer' parents were to 'discuss' with the primary heads the school 'most suitable' for their children. The heads then used the child's record at the school, including one standardised verbal reasoning test taken at age nine, to arrange children into three groups - grammar school material, secondary modern material and the borderline cases. A panel of secondary heads would then look at all the borderline cases and make a decision. Finally an appeals panel would be set up.

Consultations were immediately begun with teachers' groups and other organisations and two public meetings were arranged. There was opposition expressed by teachers and parents but,
despite the efforts of the Richmond Times and RAASE to direct the attack against the principle of selection, most of the protests concerned the fate of individual schools and in particular the balance between single sex and mixed schools proposed. There was also considerable criticism of the proposal to reduce selection to 20% from parents who saw this as diminishing their opportunities of gaining a grammar school place. RAASE continued to argue for a middle school plan and the DES had now made it known that this scheme would be acceptable. A compromise proposal also emerged in which one or both of the new schools proposed would become co-existing comprehensive schools.

The S3C agreed to hold a special meeting in June to consider some of the issues brought out by the consultation process and to make its final recommendation. It made small adjustments to the provision of single sex places and the selection methods. However the middle school plan was again rejected, ostensibly because the Plowden Committee had not yet reported and a reluctance to disturb the primary sector. The co-existence plan was also rejected. They suggested that any such school would need to be large (12 forms of entry was mentioned) and would draw pupils from a large catchment area (probably the whole borough). This, they argued, would effectively make the selection rate even higher and have damaging effects on the remaining secondary modern schools. The final plan was approved by the council on party lines with just two Conservative abstentions. One notable change was the omission of any
reference to reducing the number of selective places.

The plan which was sent to the Secretary of State in July (within the period specified in the circular) was conciliatory and, it could be argued, misleading in tone. "Imposed selection would be of marginal significance", it declared and went on, "It is hoped that these proposals will lead to the position whereby transfer to a secondary school becomes a matter of guidance rather than selection. It is moreover intended and expected that once the planned development of all secondary schools is achieved selection could and should, as such, cease to exist." The authority declared themselves ready to "adapt this system in the light of research and experience."

Reasons for rejecting the circular

There seems little doubt that the Conservative leadership in this early period were instinctively opposed to reorganisation. Furthermore there was no enthusiasm for such reform from any source which the leadership needed or wanted to listen to. The three or four dissenters in their own party were not in any position to influence events and made no particular efforts to organise or join any systematic opposition to the council's plan. The Labour Party were never likely to be able to challenge them electorally.

RAASE and the Richmond Times were certainly active and vociferous in their support for reorganisation. As Table 10.4 shows in 1965 and 1966 the pro-comprehensive case was presented
Table 10.4 Richmond Press Coverage of the Comprehensive Issue
The Richmond and Twickenham Times, 1965 + 1966

A. Front-page coverage of the comprehensive issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of article on actions or pronouncements of:</th>
<th>No. of Stories</th>
<th>Column Centimetres</th>
<th>% of Total Column Cms,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council or Conservative Group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents pro-comprehensive group</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-comprehensive group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Schools</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour + other parties</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Total number of equivalent all-news (no adverts) front pages, (204 column centimetres to an all-news front page, microfilm size).

1965 = 0.6
1966 = 4.4

C. Letters and editorials on comprehensive education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-comprehensive</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-comprehensive</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposing lack of consultation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
frequently in the letters and editorials in the Times and the issue as a whole, including the RAASE and Labour Party positions, received considerable coverage especially during 1966. (Compare for example with the equivalent coverage in Merton, see page 301). However the Conservatives were well aware that the membership of RAASE was small and unrepresentative. Furthermore much as they protested their independence they became closely associated with the Labour Party, particularly when Labour adopted the RAASE middle school proposal. The group and the newspaper's activities were a nuisance but at this stage at least they never posed a serious threat to the majority party. Furthermore the Conservatives could find considerable support for selection in other quarters. The opposition to the proposed reduction in selection could be seen as an indication of a parental view quite different from that taken by RAASE. Although the officers were generally non-committal on the principle of selection, the CEO was known to favour its retention and presented considerable administrative objections to every one of the patterns in the circular. Finally the teachers and supporting groups, were very clear in their opposition to reorganisation. The Conservatives' instincts to defend the grammar school were afforded considerable support, especially by the response at Hampton, the most prestigious grammar school. While undoubtedly underestimating the general intransigence of the Conservative group, one of the Richmond Times' editorials of this period gave some indication of the attention given to Hampton Grammar School. After the plan had
been sent to the Secretary of State the Times wrote critically, "At the bottom of the problem is the special status of Hampton .... an ancient grammar school foundation. It was largely to evade the problem of how to bring Hampton, against fierce opposition from some of its supporters into a non-selective system of secondary education for the borough, that....(this) plan was produced." 41

10.3 GROWING PRESSURES ON THE SYSTEM

In the period between the summer of 1966 and the summer of 1969, the Conservatives encountered increasing pressures and problems with their plans for secondary education.

The DES and non-local pressures

The council's carefully worded response to 10/65 did not deceive the DES. In December 1966 a letter declared, "The Secretary of State has carefully considered the proposals and notes that they provide for the retention of selective schools and the allocation of pupils to schools of different types at eleven plus. He is therefore unable to regard the proposals as acceptable." 42

Accompanying this rejection was an invitation for talks with the Department. The Council decided to send a deputation of officers only; the CEO, Deputy and Town Clerk. The chairman of education, said he wished to avoid a head on clash and that the plan was 'flexible' and open to negotiation. 43 The meeting took place on 1st February 1967 and the officers reported back
to the SSC at their next meeting. The officers had pointed out that the abolition of the eleven plus and the move towards equality between schools in the plan were moves in the direction intended in the circular. However they reported that the DES was not satisfied with this and, although "they accepted that any plan might take many years to achieve" the Government wanted a 'Declaration of Intent' to abolish selection from the council. 44

Having received the officers' report the SSC recommended that the Secretary of State be informed that "the council do not wish to submit alternative proposals at the present time." 45 In ratifying this decision in the education committee the leader of the council, Hall, was reported as saying that the Conservatives had never really intended to modify the plan in any case. 46

Soon after this Richmond discovered that none of its secondary school building projects were included in either the 1968/69 or 69/70 lists. The Conservatives attacked Crosland for using the reorganisation issue to deny them building approval. 47 Labour commended the Minister's decision but failed in an attempt to get the comprehensive issue reconsidered. 48 That October the Labour group's leader proposed the education motion at the national Labour Party Conference which called for legislation to force LEAs to reorganise. 49 The motion was only narrowly defeated and it was made clear that continued pressures would be applied to recalcitrant authorities.
In July 1967 Mrs Champion became chairman of the education committee. She first experienced central government pressures when the following summer the DES refused the council permission to carry out the merger of two schools in Barnes. The local paper suggested that the failure to reorganise was the main reason, but in fact there were other important considerations involved (see below p. 345). In the event the Minister changed his mind just before a deputation from the council was due to see him about the decision. In 1969 the authority had none of their secondary projects included in the 70/71 building list. Later that year the council's proposals for building under the RO3LA programme were initially held up. However they were eventually permitted to spend £300,000 on a major extension to a secondary modern school in Teddington.

In March 1969 the Secretary of State Edward Short accepted an invitation to speak at a parents meeting in Richmond. Mrs Champion was present and met the minister. Short announced at that meeting that a Bill would be introduced that year compelling LEAs to reorganise and urging Richmond to voluntarily abolish selection before they were forced to.

Senior councillors and officers recalled these central government pressures but none considered them unbearable. The refusal of building projects disrupted the council's plans but because of the excess of places over children they were never short of accommodation and they were given the go-ahead
for the Teddington project. The threat of legislation brought a note of defiance rather than surrender from Conservatives. Nevertheless they were a constant reminder that Richmond was in the minority in not reorganising. The leadership was well aware of the trends within the national local government system and also among Conservatives elsewhere. During this period Mrs Champion met with Edward Boyle to discuss reorganisation and he apparently encouraged her to reconsider. Richmond's Conservative M.P. announced that he was now opposed to selection although he stressed that he would not interfere with the local debate.

The Richmond Parents' Campaign

In that local debate parents' groups and the press continued to be the most vociferous opponents of selection. In the summer of 1966, soon after the plan had been sent to the DES, RAASE presented the council with a petition which it had been gathering ever since the initial 39C plans were known. The petition read, "We the undersigned, call on the Borough Council to prepare a plan for Secondary Education in Richmond-upon-Thames which avoids imposing selection on young children and which eliminates separation in secondary education, as requested by the Secretary of State". It contained some 12,000 signatures.

In February 1968, with local elections approaching, a group of dissatisfied middle class parents formed the Richmond Parents Association (RPA). Initially it was quite independent from RAASE but the membership and particularly the leadership
soon overlapped until the two groups were effectively working together. The inspiration behind the RPA, and its first chairwoman, was an economist and wife of a journalist in the national press. She was described by Rivers as, "A born leader......an effective speaker and writer."60 Another prominent figure in the organisation was Joan Sallis who had been a principal in the DES. She later became chairwoman of RAASE and gained national prominence as a member of the Taylor Committee on school governors.61

The RPA was extremely well organised. It was specifically a short term group with just one aim, to get selection abolished.62 It made every effort to recruit parents. There was no membership fee and joining simply involved filling in a form. It grew rapidly to over one thousand members. Their initial target was to influence the 1968 local elections. The membership was split into ward groups and each was responsible for contacting all candidates, initially with a questionnaire and later wherever possible face to face. The association as a whole organised meetings, leafleting and posters. An attempt was made to place a poster opposite or near every candidate's house. One poster read 'Oppose Richmond Council's plan to fail 4 out of 5 children' and showed five children, four with crosses through them. This illustrates the sophisticated policy of the association of deliberately attacking selection rather than promoting comprehensive education. The leaders were well aware that the latter had less appeal and one of them admitted
that the membership included parents who supported grammar schools but didn't like or had fallen foul of the selection method.

Labour and Liberal candidates were happy to support the RPA goal. The Labour Party made education the central plank in their education platform. "Tories want to retain selection .... Votes for your Labour candidates are votes against this Tory selection nonsense," the manifesto claimed. A separate leaflet headed 'Vote for Comprehensive Education' was also distributed by Labour.

Conservatives were instructed not to fill in the RPA questionnaires and avoid the association if possible. Although some candidates were prepared to support the RPA the majority would not. Their election manifesto was ambiguous. It declared their education policy was, "1. To retain our four grammar schools. 2. By rebuilding or extending existing schools, to remodel completely the Secondary Modern schools into nine larger comprehensive schools" (emphasis added). This seems to have been a move towards presenting a coexistence front to the public.

In May 1968 the Conservatives had a landslide victory, capturing every seat on the council.

Undaunted the RPA campaign continued. In June they decided to field a candidate in one of the by-elections which resulted from the aldermanic elections. Again they campaigned hard and when they polled a third of the votes they claimed a great victory. As table 10.5 shows, the Conservatives won easily but the group had still made their presence known.
Table 10.5 East Sheen Ward elections May and June 1968

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Local Election May 1968</th>
<th>By-Election June 1968</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading Conservative (of 3)</td>
<td>1,786</td>
<td>Conservative 1199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading Labour (of 3)</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>Parents Association 618</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Labour 151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The RPA spent a considerable amount of money on this by-election. In the process they quite innocently contravened the Representation of the People Act on election expenses. The association was heavily fined. It gives some indication of the nature of the organisation that this presented no problems. As one member put it, "We didn't ever have any trouble with money... The fine was paid for by a sale of work by local artists and craftsmen who were members."

The RPA kept up its work throughout 1968 and 1969. At Christmas they sent every councillor a copy of Robin Pedley's book The Comprehensive School 67 and frequently contacted those Conservatives they knew had some sympathy with their aims. They organised meetings, including the one at which Edward Short spoke of the coming legislation, lobbied the council and had members present at all education committee meetings.

One new tactic they adopted in 1969 was to encourage and support parents in appealing against the schools allocated to their children by the selection procedure. Some members opposed this idea because it meant supporting attempts to get children
into grammar schools. But as criticism of the procedure became more common it seemed too good an opportunity to miss. The association made every effort to contact dissatisfied parents, inform them how they could appeal and help them to have their children independently tested. The association then publicised the more spectacular cases of obviously bright children who had not been offered grammar school places. Many of the appeals they backed were successful.

One of the associations' regular activities was writing to the local press. As table 10.6 shows they also received an increasing amount of news coverage in the Richmond Times. The paper used every excuse to publicise the campaign and show the selective system in a poor light. The editorials were consistently pro-comprehensive and Mrs Sallis called the paper's support 'unequivocal'. Another leading member of the parents' campaign acknowledged that their cause was "aided by the local press and by the happy chance of their nearness to television studios." On July 25th 1969 Thames Television, based in Twickenham, broadcast a programme from Richmond called 'A case of selection'. In the programme Alderman Hall and Mrs Champion vigorously defended the grammar schools against representatives of the RPA and a Liberal councillor whose success at a by-election had made him the sole opposition on the council.

**Divisions within the Conservative Group**

A frequent story-line in the Richmond Times concerned
Table 10.6 Richmond Press Coverage of the Comprehensive Issue: The Richmond and Twickenham Times, 1967-1969

A) Front Page coverage of the comprehensive issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of article on action stories or pronouncements of:</th>
<th>No. of Centimetres</th>
<th>% of total Column cms.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council or Conservative Group</td>
<td>7 2 9</td>
<td>325 63 469</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents pro-comprehensive group</td>
<td>- 8 7</td>
<td>- 313 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>- 3 2</td>
<td>- 131 115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Schools</td>
<td>1 2 -</td>
<td>56 53 -</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour and other parties</td>
<td>2 2 -</td>
<td>44 52 -</td>
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<td>Central Government</td>
<td>2 4 5</td>
<td>57 85 242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 2 4</td>
<td>56 54 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13 23 27</td>
<td>538 791 1136</td>
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</table>

B) Total number of equivalent all-news (no adverts) front pages.
   (204 column cms to an all news front page, microfilm size)

1967 = 2.6
1968 = 3.9
1969 = 5.6

C) Letters and editorials on comprehensive education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
alleged splits within the ruling Tory group. The landslide victory of 1966 undoubtedly brought a larger number of comprehensive sympathisers into the Conservative group. Whereas there were four at most prior to this election, Mrs Sallis claimed there were as many as fifteen (out of a group of 63) afterwards. At least two of these became active members of RAASE. Most prominent among the comprehensive supporters was Timothy Raison who had been editor of the journal Pol. Society, a member of the Plowden Committee and co-opted member of ILEA. In 1970 he was elected to Parliament, in 1971 he retired from the council and in 1979 became a junior minister in Mrs Thatcher's Government. However whatever his existing or subsequent reputation, he did not step straight into any position of power in Richmond. He was not appointed to the SCC. Furthermore other known comprehensive supporters were kept off or removed from the education committee. In a change in council organization Alderman Hall became chairman of the new policy and resources committee and within the Tory group he took overall charge of all major policy matters. He made it clear that the group would continue to support the grammar schools because it would be, "dishonest to depart from promises in the Conservative election address." The fact that the council was all Conservative for much of this period probably encouraged back bench rebellions. The disquiet expressed by the press and the Labour and Liberal parties outside the council at the lack of public debate on issues, was shared by several councillors. Committee and council meetings were being conducted in record time and the leadership was accused
of stifling debate. Dissent came in particular from the Richmond councillors who still felt unfairly dominated by Twickenham Tories. Group meetings were apparently often long and heated affairs and at first were the only arena in which policy issues were genuinely debated. Later there were open rebellions on the council on some issues. This may have been partly because the leadership could not prevent dissent in such a large group and partly because they were more willing to permit it while there was no opposition to exploit such disagreements. In these circumstances the comprehensive sympathisers were more likely to express their views and the issue was more often a topic of at least informal discussion than might have been the case on a council which included an opposition group. Nevertheless none of the comprehensive supporters was in a leadership position and they were in a clear minority within the group.

The Teachers

In June 1968 the Head Teachers Association set up a working party to consider its position towards comprehensive education in the light of developments since 1964 when it last committed itself to selection. The working party reported in September and recommended a reversal of the association's stand. A resolution recommending the council to "make an immediate declaration of intent to implement a comprehensive system of education in the borough" was approved at a general meeting attended by 43 members of the association. The Richmond Times made a great deal out of this announcement and it undoubtedly represented some shift in
opinion among heads since the earlier period. However when the results of a poll of all head teachers carried out by the working party were revealed, it was clear they were still divided. As table 10.7 shows there was barely a majority of those replying in favour of some comprehensive reorganisation and only a quarter supported full reorganisation.

Nevertheless opinion was also changing within the NUT. In 1969 they also set up a working party to consider the question of selection in Richmond. Among the five members of this working party was Norman Radley, a grammar school teacher who in 1968 had taken over as the secondary schools co-opted representative on the education committee and the SSC. He was undoubtedly more sympathetic to reorganisation than the Joint Four representative whom he had replaced.

Table 10.7 **Head Teachers' Opinion on Comprehensive Reorganisation in Richmond**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For full comprehensive reorganisation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For some</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against any</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Richmond and Twickenham Times, 13/12/68 and 2/10/70

Dislocation in the selective system

Several of the pressures discussed so far were themselves partly a response to serious dislocations which were occurring in the selective system in Richmond during these years. Two main problems emerged - the viability of secondary modern schools, particularly in Richmond and Barnes, and the selection procedure itself.
The Secondary Moderns

As early as 1967 it became clear that secondary modern schools in Richmond and Barnes were not attracting as many pupils as had been predicted and were unlikely to be able to reach the 6 forms of entry envisaged in the 1966 plan. A number of children in this area were apparently entering the private sector or attending schools in neighbouring authorities. Among the latter some were going to comprehensive schools in ILF and rather more to secondary moderns in Kingston and Surrey. 79

This was happening apparently partly in response to the rather weak academic intakes to these schools. During this period the selection rate to grammar schools varied between 32 and 39%. This resulted in very few bright pupils entering the secondary moderns, many of which were still very small and were therefore unable to support much examination work. Table 10.8 shows the examination results for the whole borough. It clearly shows the inequalities between grammar and secondary modern schools. If figures were available for individual schools it is almost certain that inequalities would also be acute within the secondary modern sector. One headmaster of a school in Richmond and Barnes was reported as being about to drop all exam work except CSEs. This emerged in a series of articles, letters and editorials in the Richmond Times in July 1967 which included many accusations against the schools in Barnes. 80 Several of these accusations were effectively acknowledged by Alderman Hall and the Chairman of the Teachers Council.

The problem of the viability of schools in Barnes was probably the main reason behind the Secretary of State with olding
permission for the merger of two secondary modern schools in that area in September 1968. Although the council were given the go-ahead it was clear that more drastic action would be necessary in the near future. In recognition of this a special working party was set up in January 1969 to study the future of secondary schooling in the Barnes and Richmond half of the borough. In establishing this working party Alderman Hall made it absolutely clear that it was not considering comprehensive reorganisation. The Conservatives would stick by their 100% mandate for backing the grammar schools, he said. The working party reported in the summer of 1969. Its findings were never made public but revealed serious long term problems. In addition to those already discussed it was clear that many of the secondary moderns were finding it increasingly difficult to attract teachers. Richmond was an expensive area to live in and yet small schools with little advanced work offered poor career prospects. This became part of a vicious spiral of declining pupil numbers, difficulties in attracting good staff and falling prestige. The working party concluded that major changes would be needed including the closure of at least one school.

Table 10.8 Richmond's schools examination results, summer 1969

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GCE O' Level Passes</th>
<th>GCE A' Level Passes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar Schools</td>
<td>3,112</td>
<td>802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Modern</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Richmond Education Department document
The Selection Procedure

The selection procedure approved in the 1966 plan ran into problems immediately. Different primary school heads had different standards for determining which children were capable of benefiting from a grammar school place. The panel of secondary school head-teachers had difficulties in comparing the borderline cases from different primary schools. Faced with these difficulties the tendency was always to be generous and put the borderline cases up into the grammar schools. Because the authority was not short of accommodation the physical limit of selective places was very high. In the end, the first year of this procedure resulted in a staggering 39% of eleven-year-olds entering a grammar school, almost twice the national average.

In an attempt to avoid such a high figure with its consequences for the secondary modern intake, the CEO recommended that the primary schools should be graded and each headmaster allocated a fixed number of grammar school places according to the ranking of his school. In order to do this all primary school children took anonymous tests to determine the ranking of the school. However, it was still up to the headmaster, after discussions with parents to decide which children should receive the grammar school places made available to him. The obvious anomaly which this system produced was that it was not necessarily the children who did well in the tests who were selected.

This system ran for two years and came in for considerable criticism from parents and teachers. Head teachers in particular
were put under enormous pressure and teachers in the primary schools bore the brunt of parental anger. As primary heads were in a majority in the Head Teachers Association and all primary teachers formed a majority of the NUT membership they may well have been responsible for the change of opinion within these bodies. This deliberately more subjective system of selection (compared with the 'objectivity' of the old eleven plus) encouraged parents to appeal if they were dissatisfied. When combined with the poor status of the secondary modern schools and the assistance given by the RPA it was not surprising that the number of appeals began to rise sharply, reaching a peak in the summer of 1969. 86

That year the procedure was changed again (for the third time in four years). The problems of a subjective system of selection were recognised and the authority decided to move back towards a more traditional eleven plus style of testing plus a head teachers' assessment and appeals panel. These changes were approved in October 1969 but not without initially being defeated by a backbench revolt in the education committee over insufficient opportunity to debate the issue. 87 Joan Sellis' conclusion about this period was that, "Selection.....received its death sentence that summer when large numbers of people ceased to believe that it could be made to work." 88

There is little doubt that these dislocations in the existing system played a major part in the decision, taken on August 28th 1969, to set up another working party to look into the organisation of secondary education in the borough as a whole. 89 It was clear
from the report on secondary schools in Richmond and Barnes that a major upheaval was required in that half of the borough in any case and this undoubtedly encouraged a re-appraisal of the entire system. It was equally clear that the attempt to find a method of selection preferable to the much criticised eleven-plus had failed.

10.4 RECONSIDERATION AND THE DECISION TO REORGANISE

The reorganisation Working Party

The reorganisation working party (RWP) was to "examine the evidence which has arisen since the council submitted its plan for secondary reorganisation and if necessary to make recommendations." 90

It would be wrong to assume that the decision to set up this working party ensured that a comprehensive system would emerge. With hindsight it clearly was a crucial decision but at the time it was far from certain what the working party would come up with. Although the supporters of comprehensives displayed considerable optimism, the grounds for such hopes were shaky. The two most influential members of the RWP, Alderman Hall and Mrs Champion, had strongly defended the grammar schools on television only a month before it was set up. 91 There is no evidence that they had changed those opinions, and comments at the time and in interviews reveal that both were still extremely sceptical of comprehensives. 92 Furthermore, despite the presence of one or two comprehensive supporters, notably Timothy Raison, the majority of the working party felt much the same way. Although
they recognised that there were problems with the existing system, it was only during the RWP deliberations that the majority came to accept that there was a comprehensive system which would be an improvement. As a senior member of the RWP put it, "I think quite a few members of the working party that set off with an absolutely definite view that no-how no-way would they go comprehensive, gradually changed their minds during the process."

The RWP had ten members, 8 Conservative and 2 co-opted representatives, one from the Roman Catholic authorities and Mr Radley from the NUT and the Teachers Council. It met in private eight times between September 1969 and July 1970. By the end of that period it was in a position to recommend, with two Conservative dissenters, that the authority adopt a fully comprehensive system of 11 to 16 schools plus two sixth form colleges.\(^{93}\)

Documentary evidence of the deliberations of the RWP were not available for this study. However from the interviews carried out and an article in the Times Educational Supplement written immediately after the RWP reported\(^ {94}\) a reasonable account of its activities can be constructed. The members began by considering the existing system in relation to the 1966 plan and they noted many of the problems referred to above. However many of them also emphasised the excellent record of the grammar schools particularly in obtaining places in higher education for their pupils.

They then decided to look at three different patterns of comprehensive education to see what they had to offer for Richmond.
The three patterns chosen were the most popular ones from the circular - the all-through, middle school and sixth form college patterns. Visits were arranged by the CEO (with particular help from Timothy Raison who had many contacts in the educational world) to authorities operating each of these patterns; Hertfordshire, Merton, and Luton and Southampton respectively. The officers also produced reports on the possible application of each of these to Richmond.

Many members were initially unconvinced that a comprehensive system could either be made to work without major disruption or cater for Richmond's very high academic standards. Further investigation of the all-through and middle school schemes did nothing to make them change their opinion. Eleven to eighteen schools would either be too large, and create major problems in Richmond with the number of small schools still operating there, or if smaller could not provide strong academic sixth forms.

The middle school system, which some member admitted to liking initially, received strong opposition following the working party visit to Merton. Exactly what put them off is unclear. It took place during the first year of transition to the middle school scheme and an impression of some chaos and disruption would not be surprising at that stage. They were also apparently disconcerted by meeting middle school heads with quite different conceptions of what these new schools were to be like. One RWP member commented, "We saw the Merton system and were far from impressed. They didn't seem to know where they
were going, at that time. The middle schools in particular seemed quite aimless." Another was more specific, "The middle schools seemed to be going in different directions depending on whether a secondary or primary head had been appointed. It was frightening." 95 Finally because of some of the 'more progressive' philosophies of the middle school which they encountered, Richmond members were worried that 13 to 18 high schools would leave insufficient time for preparation for public examinations.

However the turning point in the RVP's deliberations apparently came with the visits to Luton and in particular Southampton. Luton's sixth form college had restricted access, requiring a minimum number of G'levels for entry. As a result its academic record was very strong. Alderman Hall appeared to be impressed, as one member of the working party put it, "In Luton I realised for the first time that we'd got through to Harry Hall ....... that it was possible to have a comprehensive scheme in which the academic children wouldn't suffer". Nevertheless the particular pattern adopted in Luton was not suitable for Richmond and the comprehensive supporters on the RVP were unhappy with its restricted access.

In Southampton three sixth form colleges operated with complete open access. There is little doubt that several of those who went on this visit were very impressed by what they saw. This included Mrs Champion, Mr Radley and the CEO, "ainwright. As a member of the RVP who did not go on the visit recalled in
the TEM article, "Right up to that visit to Southampton no member of the working party would have touched any of the comprehensive schemes with a barge pole... (but) Mrs Champion and company returned from Southampton with the light of conversion in their eyes." This was confirmed by the interviews for this study. For example one RWP member, who did attend said, "It was the visit to Southampton which was crucial. It was perfectly obvious after that visit that we had seen a system that could work academically, economically and administratively."

The economic and administrative advantages were confirmed by Mr Wainwright who was able to produce a scheme involving two open access colleges, which fitted well into Richmond's existing pattern of building. Some alterations were required but less than under other comprehensive patterns and no more than would be needed under a continuation of selection.

However the advantage which most attracted senior Conservatives to this pattern seemed to be its ability to continue to provide a focus of academic excellence within the borough. Another member of the RWP commented, "We were handling an upper middle class society and a lot of good children academically and as we saw it the sixth form college was the answer....the thing that dominated all our thoughts was the number of C' and A' levels and university places we came out with...The thing which motivated us, and certainly the then leader Harry Hall, was 'are we doing the right thing by the bright kids?'" Or as an officer put it, "It is a 'toffs' population in Richmond, with high selection....and I think they chose the secondary college as the
easiest way out, the least disturbing. A break at 16 is not a form of selection but it does break off the academic sixth form from the comprehensive school. It's always been a Tory council and I think this was the most salutary scheme. They wouldn't turn their grammar schools into all-through comprehensives."
The sixth form college comprehensive pattern secured an academic role for at least two of the grammar schools and several grammar school teachers. At the same time it offered the opportunity of a far wider range of advanced courses and concentration of academic work than the traditional grammar school (particularly small ones) could provide.

By the end of July 1970 the R&T report was completed. It recommended an end to selection and the introduction of a sixth form college pattern of comprehensive education. An appendix to the report included a full plan drawn up by the CBO which was to be the basis for discussions on the details of the scheme.

Thus the reorganisation decision by the working party seems to have stemmed from a combination of the difficulties being experienced by the existing system and the existence of an acceptable alternative. As a senior member of the R&T put it, "I began with an open mind. It was only after examining the evidence, seeing the problems of the current situation and what was going on elsewhere that my mind came round to believing there had to be change and that it had to take the particular form which it did......it was done by tying together ending selection and going comprehensive in this particular way. It wasn't taken in
Other developments at this Time

While the RWP were meeting they were aware of other developments of relevance to the comprehensive issue they were discussing.

The RPA and RAAB stepped up their campaign. They received further publicity in the Richmond Times and television coverage on the 'Today' programme. The RPA organised a protest march, a motorcade and demonstrations in the council chamber whenever the selection procedures came up for debate.99

The Labour Government increased the pressure on recalcitrant authorities early in 1970, introducing their promised comprehensive Bill and again refusing Richmond approval for secondary school building projects.100 However when they were defeated in the June general election the pressures dramatically changed. Mrs Thatcher withdrew circular 10/65 and immediately approved two of Richmond's secondary projects.101

Also in June, not long after the influential visit to Southampton, the NUT's own working party completed its deliberations. Their report claimed that, "The many modifications and changes which have taken place in selection in Richmond in the five years of its existence have led to confusion concerning it, among not only the parents but teachers and even head teachers in the borough's own schools".102 It went on to criticise the principle of selection and, as expected, argued that, "there are no grounds for the division of children into different kinds of schools at
the age of 11+ years." However, rather more surprisingly and
clearly strongly influenced by Radley's knowledge of the way the
RWP was moving, they recommended the adoption of a system of
sixth form colleges and 11 to 16 schools.

Local

The AEP executive publicly approved these recommendations
just a week before the renamed Schools and General Purposes Sub-
Committee (SGPSC) debated the RWP report.104

Opposition Emerges

The SGPSC debate lasted two and a half hours before approval
was given with two votes against.105 In the full education
committee stronger opposition emerged but an attempt to refer back
the recommendation was defeated by 26 votes to 6.106 It was at
this meeting, on September 14th, that the proposals were first
officially made public. They were due to be ratified by the
council 15 days later.

There followed considerable protests, mainly from grammar
schools. Under the detailed proposals two grammar schools were
to become sixth form colleges, one was to be closed and Hampton
and Twickenham Girls were to become 11 to 16 schools.

One focus of opposition was simply the lack of consultation
and the short period before the full council's decision. The
headmistress of the grammar school which it was proposed to close
only heard about the plan when she read it in the local press.107
The Richmond Times agreed that only allowing two weeks for public
discussion was extraordinary.108

However there was also immediate opposition to the re-
organisation scheme itself. This was led by Hampton grammar
school. The school had appointed a new headmaster in January
1970. Remarkably the new head was not informed of the proposals from the RTF before they were released, despite the fact that Hall was a governor of the school. On 23rd September, after discussing the report with his staff, the head wrote to every councillor. He informed them that a resolution had been passed nem. con. stating that, "The staff of this school are opposed to the proposal that it should become an 11 to 16 school." The letter continued, "I am therefore writing to express our hope that at Tuesday's meeting (of the council) no final decision will be taken about the actual form reorganisation should take in the Richmond Borough." The Joint Bour Association, of which the head of Hampton was an officer, expressed similar sentiments. A meeting of angry parents at Twickenham Girls grammar also opposed the scheme.

As was to happen throughout the future debate on reorganisation, this initial opposition combined those who opposed the principle of comprehensive education and those who opposed the sixth form college pattern. By focusing on the latter they maximised their strength. Aware of this, at the council meeting the Conservative leadership proposed acceptance of the recommendation of the RTF that selection at eleven be ended, but that the recommendation on the sixth form college pattern be referred back for further consultations. This was accepted by a large majority.

The working party was newly constituted and enlarged. It invited the public and all interested groups to submit their views in writing and they also met with the teachers' associations.
As the working party carried on meeting into 1971, two main struggles emerged. One was an attempt by grammar school supporters to delay the decision until after the may elections in the hope that a new council would be more right wing and reconsider the entire issue. (Timothy Raison, one of the leading liberals was leaving the council following his election to Parliament). The other was a move to reject the sixth form college pattern in favour of middle schools. This position produced a strange alliance. The Labour Party and NE® had both favoured middle schools and they were now joined by the Joint Four Association and the head of Hampton grammar. Although for some this was a genuine belief in a middle school comprehensive scheme it was clear that for others it represented an opportunity to re-introduce selection. In a letter in The Observer in February 1971 one member of the NE® declared that the light for selection was still on. He argued that as the council had only voted against selection at eleven, the middle school pattern could be used to retain selection at thirteen. In fact the working party debated just such a scheme in which some of the grammar schools would remain as 13 to 16 selective schools.

On 23rd January 1971 at a special meeting of the governors of Hampton grammar a memorandum was passed. It noted that the school's "distinguished record makes it of national as well as local importance" and declared that, "The Governors are not willing to agree to the school becoming an 11-16 school."
However the governors wished it to stay within the maintained sector and proposed that the school remain an 11 to 18 selective school within whatever system the council approved. The governors included Alderman Hall and one of the leading opponents of re-organization from the council who was also an old boy of the school.

There was really never any question of Hampton participating in any non-selective education system, but the choice of a sixth form college pattern with Hampton as an 11 to 16 school confirmed that certainty. Throughout the deliberations of the first RFP the issue was largely avoided and teachers and officers continually expressed optimism on this point. However as a senior teacher from the school commented on the 11 to 16 proposal, "I couldn't help feeling it was an offer that wasn't meant seriously." In fact the appendix to the first RFP report mentioned the possibility that Hampton might remain an 11 to 18 school. The head of the school was considerably more liberal than his predecessor and said that he would have been prepared to consider the possibility of participating in a middle school or all-through comprehensive scheme but he admitted that the majority of the staff and governors would probably not have supported even that.

This must have been always apparent to senior Conservatives, particularly Hall, and the second RFP report explicitly acknowledged this. It was finally pushed through in March 1971, although not without continued dissent from some members. The report again recommended a sixth form college pattern.

It suggested a few minor changes to the details in the first
report but the most significant amendment concerned Hampton. The report recommended "that subject to review at the end of 5 years from the introduction of the scheme of reorganisation, the school continue as a 4 form entry, 11-18 boys school, 60 places to be reserved annually for boys resident in the borough, the decision on the admission of pupils to be made by the Governors." 121

Naturally this did not satisfy all the opponents of the scheme. The Joint Four continued to press for a middle school plan 122 and the opponents of reorganisation on principle saw in this an opportunity for further delay and possible 13+ selection. In the SECOC the recommendations were approved by only 11 votes to 7 and by 20 votes to 10 on the education committee. 123 Approval was still uncertain when it reached the full council. In a dramatic meeting, an amendment to reject the plan and refer it back for reconsideration of a middle school alternative produced a tied vote and was declared lost on the casting vote of the mayor. 124 A further amendment from liberal Conservatives that Hampton be told either to participate as an 11 to 16 school or go independent was opposed by the leadership and defeated. Finally the ICT recommendations were approved by 32 votes to 24 and were forwarded to the DES.

Other Influences on the Reorganisation Decision

The analysis to date has indicated that dislocations within the existing system, the academic prestige of the sixth form college pattern and the conversion of the Conservative leader-
ship were important influences on reorganisation. However, considering how close some of the voting became it is likely that a range of other factors mentioned above played some part in actually getting the decision through all its stages.

The existence of a block of liberal Tories on the 1963-71 council provided one source of support. The decision to preserve Hampton as a selective school within a comprehensive system may have converted others. The support of the NUT and head teachers for the sixth form college pattern (one which teachers elsewhere had vigorously opposed) may have dampened opposition to that particular pattern. It was pointed out by one teacher interviewed for this study that as very few secondary modern teachers did any sixth form work in Richmond at that time they had little to lose.

As for the influence of central government, the pressures were often contradictory. In the early stages there was the incentive of additional building approvals from the Labour controlled DES which might have eased some of Richmond's problems, in particular the small secondary modern schools. On the other hand most interviewees claimed that financial pressures were not crucial and certainly when Mrs Thatcher arrived at the DES and approved two building projects this did not change the RPs' thinking. The alternative argument is that it was easier for some councillors to support reorganisation under a Conservative Government than when under Labour Government pressure. However it seems just as
likely that the new Government and its building approvals would bring out opponents of comprehensives who might otherwise have quietly acquiesced on the grounds of necessity.

The other main area of possible influence deserves rather more attention.

**Parental Pressure Groups and the Press**

John Ballis's informative account of the campaign against selection by MAAC and the NAA is careful to stress that there were other factors which influenced the decision to reorganise. She begins, "It would be an oversimplification to explain this sudden reversal of a policy so long and bitterly defended wholly in terms of the campaign against the principle of selection by organised groups." Among the other factors she discusses are the Liberal Conservatives, the teachers and the breakdown of the system. Nevertheless she goes on to give parental pressure groups a central role in the decision and attempts to refute those who would dispute this. She writes, "Any members of the 1965-71 council would deny that the pressures exerted on them by parents had any bearing on their change of policy. It would be difficult for an impartial observer to accept this view, it was so obviously a massively effective campaign, brilliantly planned and executed." 125

But of course Mrs Ballis was no impartial observer. Nor in a different way were the other writers who used the Ballis account. Patrick Rivers set out to write a book about how middle class pressure groups could exert their influence over elected politicians. 129 He used the Ballis pamphlet as the
basis for a chapter which nicely supported his general argument.

Rene Caran set out to write an Open University course unit on 'Pressures on central and local government,' in which the influence of pressure groups on educational policy-making are examined.130 As an example of local pressure group activity she decided to use River's account, and therefore, third hand, Bellis's account, of parent groups in Richmond. She concludes the unit, "At central government level pressure groups appear to have had far less impact on policy formulation than is often attributed to them... At the same time there seems considerably more scope for educational pressure groups to make an impact at the local level. You saw this clearly in the Richmond case study on the abolition of the eleven plus."

This study can claim greater objectivity with respect to the role of parent pressure groups in Richmond than any of these three accounts, which effectively come from one source who was herself involved in the campaign. The evidence gathered throws some doubt on the claim, in these accounts, that the parent's campaign was "obviously massively effective".132

The RPA was certainly very vociferous and made sure the decision-makers were aware of the issue. However the extent to which they posed a serious threat to the Conservatives is questionable. Certainly when the group attempted to exert electoral influence in 1968 the Conservatives achieved a landslide victory. Although the by-election performance was creditable it was never likely to pose a realistic challenge to an all-Tory council. Furthermore in 1966, when the RASE
campaign gathered an impressive 12,000 signatures, it had absolutely no impact.

The RPA tactics employed from 1968 onwards can be interpreted in more than one way. While they clearly brought the campaign into a prominent position, they could also have antagonised councillors and officers rather than make them sympathetic. For example one of the parents' leaders claimed, "We had very effective council harassing tactics, we were turned out of the public gallery with monotonous regularity," and then later admitted that the CEO had ordered his officers not to respond to any RPA communications. A number of studies of local pressure group influence suggest that activities such as demonstrations and harassment are regarded by decision-makers as illegitimate methods of expressing views which lead to the group being labelled as 'uncooperative' and 'irresponsible' and being refused access to the decision-making process. Similarly when a group is seen to be supporting council policy it becomes a legitimate group and is brought into the official decision-making process (thus making disruptive tactics unnecessary). This appears to fit the evidence from Richmond. Today, in 1980 RAASE is clearly an established and respected group with considerable influence. For example they were closely involved in Richmond's decision to extend the system of parent governors well ahead of the Taylor Committee recommendations (which have largely been ignored in any case by most LEAs). However there is considerable evidence that the parents' groups in particular the RPA were not regarded so highly during the debate on reorganisation.
Bearing in mind the argument of Sallis [135] that Conservative councillors are unlikely to admit to being pressurised into the decision, the following interview quotes all come from other sources:

"There were a number of councillors who opposed them (the parents' groups) because of the nuisance they caused. I think in the early stages there was a lot of opposition...At one time it was, as a councillor put it at the time, 'the kiss of death to know Joan Sallis'. Now it's become respectable.

Interviewee: Has this change happened since the reorganisation decision?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewee: The parents' group were declassé, definitely a dirty word." (A senior teachers' representative).

"We don't do anything now without consulting them (RAASE). There is a much closer liaison now, since 1973. Then, they were on the outside shouting in, often literally, with banners. But, largely due to the Chairman, we now welcome them." (Officer)

"RAASE and the RPA gained a lot of publicity...but they had nothing like the influence they think they had. The councillors saw them in perspective." (Influential Labour politician who had supported the parents' groups throughout).

On the other hand there is no doubt that the parents' groups were extremely well organised and active. The articulate middle class leadership, the range of tactics employed and the use of the media meant that on one level at least the Conservatives could not ignore the campaign. They kept the issue of selection in the forefront of debate, contributed to the build up of appeals
against selection and helped create an atmosphere of waning confidence in the system. Furthermore, in grabbing much of the publicity they may have distracted attention away from the grammar school case. Finally the informal contacts between leading members of RAASE in particular and a few sympathetic or open minded councillors probably had some influence. In fact RAASE, the smaller and quieter group, may well have been more significant than the larger and noisier RPA.

Working together with the parents' groups the Richmond Times gave considerable publicity to the anti-selection case in news items, letters and editorials. (See table 10.9) In the same way this may have contributed to a break down of confidence in the system. Nevertheless the Conservative leadership were well aware of the paper's position and frequently attacked it for biased coverage. 136

10.5 THE FINAL STAGES
Ministerial Approval

In July 1971, following the local elections, the DES requested clarification of certain details in the plan. 137 In November public notices were published inviting objections to the proposed changes. Opponents of the scheme made a final attempt to have it rejected. On 28th January 1972 the Richmond Times main story claimed that, "More than 20 right wing Tory councillors are trying to persuade Mrs Thatcher.....to reject the borough's plans." 138 A row blew up within the group over this move and one of the ring-leaders, after refusing to resign her post as a committee chairman, was sacked from the group. 139

The leadership began to get more apprehensive as the DES
Table 10.9 Richmond Press Coverage of the Comprehensive Issue: The Richmond and Twickenham Times 1965-1972 inclusive

A) Front page coverage of the comprehensive issue 1965-1972

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<tr>
<td>Council or Conservative Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents pro-comprehensive Group</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2541</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Schools</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour and other parties</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Government</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>166</strong></td>
<td><strong>5641</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B) Total number of equivalent all news (no adverts) front pages, (20 lines = close to an all news front page, microfilm size)

1965 - 1972 = 27.7 front pages

C) Letters and editorials on comprehensive education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Letters</th>
<th>Editorials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Comprehensive</td>
<td>142 (64%)</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti- Comprehensive</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing patterns</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposing lack of consultation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>222</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
delayed their decision well into the summer of 1972. It was well known that Mrs Thatcher had rejected the reorganisation of several grammar schools even when the plan had originated from a Conservative council. The education committee, under a new chairman, ('Mrs Champion had lost her seat in 1971), was packed with supporters of the plan in order to prevent any internal revolts.

In August 1972 Mrs Thatcher replied. She gave her approval to the scheme in principle and accepted the detailed plans for the Twickenham area. However she was unable to give her approval to the detailed plans for the Richmond half until further consideration was given to the 'educational difficulties' which existed there. The letter pointed out that "Population trends in the Borough now available to the Department suggest that the numbers on roll in secondary schools in this sector of the Borough are unlikely to rise sufficiently to justify schools of the size that the Authority's proposals envisage." 140

This was not a rejection, however, full approval was given following a meeting between the Department and a deputation consisting of councillors and the new CEO (who had been appointed in May 1972 following "AINwright's sudden death)." 141 The authority acknowledged the problem of uncertain future numbers but argued that this could be coped with within the present plan by close co-operation between the schools in that area involving subject specialisation if necessary. The DES decided to allow Richmond to carry on and sort the problems out as they
The talk of rebellion from the Tory group subsided during the period of discussions. When the approved scheme came up for a final decision in council, it passed relatively easily by 45 votes to 11.\(^{142}\) However all eleven opponents were Conservatives, indicating that the leadership were unable to impose group discipline on this issue right up to the end.

There are a number of possible explanations for Mrs Thatcher's approval of the scheme and the disintegration of the opposition in Richmond. First there is no evidence of a strong parents campaign against the plan. Although there was some opposition from the parents of Twickenham Girls grammar school it was weak and isolated. In contrast RPA and RAASE made their support for the plan known to the DES.\(^{143}\) As Mrs Thatcher wanted to be seen as responding to parents wishes, it would have been difficult to justify rejecting the plan.

Mrs Thatcher was also keen to defend the more prestigious grammar schools and retain them as super-selective schools within otherwise comprehensive schemes. The retention of Hampton grammar within Richmond's plans already proposed such a relationship and the Secretary of State was probably pleased to approve it on those terms. This also dampened opposition in Richmond. As well as the exclusion of Hampton there was also the large private sector within the borough which provided an alternative for parents. As one observer put it, "(this) meant that some councillors cared less about the reorganisation of the state sector."
Finally it is also known that the Conservatives nationally were quite keen on the sixth form college pattern at this stage and that the leadership in Richmond maintained close contacts with their counterparts in other minister throughout this period.\textsuperscript{144} One senior Conservative described these contacts as "vital" in getting the plan approved.

The Details and the Direct Grant and Independent Places

As soon as the DES approval was given an ad hoc committee was set up to finalise the details of the scheme and to decide whether to continue to take up places at direct grant and independent schools.\textsuperscript{145} The committee reported late in November.

Among the details they recommended that a combination of geographical factors and parental choice be used to allocate children to particular schools or colleges. On the second issue they recommended that 12 assisted places be taken up at independent schools and 40 free places at direct grant school.\textsuperscript{146} In addition 55 places were to be taken up at Roman Catholic Schools while discussions continued concerning their participation in the new scheme. Agreement was eventually reached with one R.C. school only in June 1974 and 20 R.C. independent places were continued.\textsuperscript{147}

Then the CCCEC considered this report they accepted all the recommendations except those concerning the direct grant and independent places. These were rejected with two dissenting votes.\textsuperscript{148} As indicated, this committee contained the strongest supporters of comprehensive education and with the co-opted
teachers, Labour and Liberals opposing the places, the non-selection purists won the day. However their decision was quite unacceptable to the Tory group and when it came before the education committee and full council the places were re-instated with voting along party lines.\textsuperscript{149} The following year a similar decision by the 3GPSC was again reversed.\textsuperscript{150} These places were seen as an important provision for the 'high flyers' by the Conservative group.\textsuperscript{151}

In September 1973 the new scheme came into operation. The new 11 to 16 schools took in a non-selective intake and began transferring their sixth formers to one of the two sixth form colleges. Hampton grammar school selected two forms of entry of eleven year olds from Richmond and, excluding the Roman Catholic places, 51 places were taken up at direct grant and independent schools. The independent schools were St Paul's Boys, St Paul's Girls and Lady Eleanor Hollis. Altogether this represented a selection rate of just over six per cent.\textsuperscript{152}

However Hampton's position within this scheme was only temporary. Ever since the original plan to turn Hampton into an 11 to 16 school, the idea that the school might go independent had been discussed by the Governors. When the school was subsequently retained as an 11 to 16 selective school it was stated that its position would be reviewed after five years of the new scheme. It soon became clear that the school's anomalous position would create difficulties. In continuing to retain a flourishing sixth form it would threaten the viability
of having two colleges for the rest of the borough's sixth
formers. According to a senior teacher at the school it was
implicit within the agreement made with the governors that at
the end of the five years the school might be asked to become
an 11 to 16 school or go independent. This was certainly never
made public at the time and was denied by other interviewees.
However if this agreement had been reached, and bearing in
mind the Conservative leadership's opposition to an amendment
specifically asking Hampton to become an 11 to 16 school or go
independent, it is possible that it was kept quiet in order to
prevent opposition to the plan emerging. Whatever the truth
of the matter in June 1973 the governors decided that the school
would become independent in September 1975.153 From that date
the council would take up 20 free places each year at the school.
The governors and staff of the school were apparently not pre-
pared to accept the uncertain future within the maintained sector
and decided to become fully independent while retaining its
links with the borough through the reserved places.

Ironically this arrangement to take up places at Hampton
was never implemented. Early in 1975 the council's new Policy
and Resources Committee decided that stringent cuts had to be
made in expenditure.154 The education service was required to
make savings of £900,000. Among the targets for these cuts
was all primary education for the under fives and the places in
the non-maintained sector. PASE mounted a strong campaign
against any primary school cuts.155 They were joined by
Richmond's Conservative M.P.156 and the local NUT who held a
one day strike in March. As a result the council modified the proposed cuts in primary education, while the proposal to cease to take up places at non-maintained schools, was approved with little dissent. Without the campaign against the cuts in primary schooling there would probably have been stronger opposition to this move. As it was, from September 1975 Richmond operated a pure non-selective system of secondary education.

The Tertiary College Plan

In July 1974 the post of O.C. changed hands again. The new incumbent was Mr Naismith, previously the Deputy since January and before that the officer responsible for further education in Bradford.

With the implementation of the bulk of the comprehensive scheme in 1973, a working party had been set up to look into the forward planning and continued development of secondary schooling. By 1973 it was clear to the new O.C. and this committee that serious problems were emerging and that some major alteration would be needed in the existing plan. In particular the projected school population was now considerably lower than previously forecast (compare the 1971 and 1975 estimates in table 10.10). This was causing major dislocations particularly in the Richmond area (much as the O.C. had predicted). Among the problems was the fact that a sixth form college for that half of the borough was already below the size for which a good range of courses could be offered and would be likely on these new calculations to get considerably smaller. In addition, partly as a result of the falling population but also
because of the economic constraints being imposed by central government, it was unlikely that the borough’s building programme envisaged in the reorganisation plan, would be able to proceed.159

Table 10.10 Estimates of annual entry to secondary schools in Richmond made in 1971, 1975 and 1977.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1971 Estimate</th>
<th>1975 Estimate</th>
<th>1978 Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numbers Forms of Entry</td>
<td>Numbers Forms of Entry</td>
<td>No. Forms of Entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1540 62 1/2</td>
<td>1542 51 1/2</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>1415 47</td>
<td>1195 43</td>
<td>1365 45 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1293 47</td>
<td>1273 42 1/2</td>
<td>239 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>No Estimate</td>
<td>1950 35</td>
<td>239 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>No Estimate</td>
<td>No Estimate</td>
<td>6.5 28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the same time a second committee on developments in further education was increasingly concerned about the future of Twickenham College of Technology. Some of the college’s traditional courses (in particular printing) were beginning to suffer declining numbers and a proposal to merge the college with a nearby College of Education had not received much support.160

In January 1975 the education committee circulated a consultative document outlining these problems and a series of possible alternative arrangements.161 In July 1975, after the Secretary of State had definitely rejected the College of Education merger, a firm plan emerged. The proposal was to amalgamate the two sixth form colleges and the college of technology, on the latter’s site, to form one tertiary college for all the authorities post-16 education. At the same time two 11-16 schools with low enrolments would be closed and sold off while a new 11-16 school was
created on the site of one of the sixth form colleges. 162

This plan was largely the work of Laismith, the new CEO. 
He had a more forceful, 'educator' style and used his previous experience in further education to make a strong educational as well as economic case for the scheme. It was also taken up by the chairman of the education committee who effectively sold it to the leadership and the group. Most interviewees admitted that had a tertiary college plan been suggested back in 1971 it would have had little chance of success. But having made the move to sixth form colleges, the tertiary scheme seemed less of a leap and the economic arguments were compelling.

The Labour group and to a lesser extent the Liberals opposed these plans. They argued against further disruption to a system which was only just settling down. 163 However the Conservatives pushed the measure through. 164 The scheme was greeted enthusiastically by the Labour DES who quickly approved it despite the many difficulties it involved (including bringing school teachers under lecturer scales). Implementation began in September 1977 and in 1979 the new Richmond College was officially opened by the Secretary of State, Mrs Williams.

10.6 Richmond's Schools in 1990

In 1990 Richmond operates a fully comprehensive system of secondary education. It maintains nine 11 to 16 secondary schools, three at 5 forms of entry, five at 6 forms of entry and one at 7 forms of entry. 165 Three of the schools are
single sex. There is one voluntary school, a joint Roman Catholic and Church of England school, formed in 1978 by the amalgamation of two separate religious schools. All schools provide a good range of courses up to O' levels. At sixteen all pupils in the maintained sector who wish to pursue further education of any kind transfer to Richmond College. The authority does not take up any places in the non-maintained sector.

The upheavals which the Richmond system experienced in the mid-70s caused several problems and brought complaints of chaos and uncertainty. However the system has settled down now and operates relatively smoothly. The tertiary college is building a good reputation. It is visited by many other authorities contemplating tertiary schemes and has maintained Richmond's record of high academic achievement. The more relaxed atmosphere of the college has also attracted pupils back from the private sector at 16.166

Nevertheless the private sector remains strong. Hampton is flourishing as an independent school, although a senior teacher admitted the intake was not quite as high academically as when it was part of the state sector. This teacher estimated that just under half the intake now come from the Richmond area. It is possible that Hampton has therefore drawn even more children out of the state sector, although there are no figures to test this.

In the maintained sector one of the 11 to 16 schools, the 5
form entry, all girls, ex-grammar, Twickenham school, has consistently been the most popular. One officer admitted it operated as a "quasi-grammar school", with ambitious parents opting for the school on single sex grounds but knowing its academic reputation. Almost all the other schools have surprisingly similar reputations. The weaker schools from pre-organisation days have either been closed or substantially improved. As a result of the closures carried out (21 secondary schools in 1969, excluding Hampton, have been reduced to 9 and soon 8) the authority have spent over one million pounds on secondary schools in this time, much of it coming from the sale of redundant sites.

This massive transformation is still not completed. By 1975 it was clear that the school population would fall below even the projections made in 1975. (See table 10,10). By the late 1970s the authorities intake at eleven is expected to fall to a staggering 830 pupils, under half the estimated figures produced in the early 70s. Under current proposals Twickenham girls school will close and the two other 5 form entry schools will be expanded. As a result all 11 to 16 schools will be a minimum of 6 forms of entry, the hidden selection of the single sex ex-grammar school will be removed and Richmond will be left with even secondary schools offering opportunities no similar as one could hope to find within one LHA.
Footnotes to chapter 10

1. Interviews; and Richmond and Twickenham Times (hereafter Richmond Times) 16/5/64.

2. Interviews, particularly with officers, provided most of the information for this and the rest of the paragraph.

3. Interviews; also see 'Reorganisation of Secondary Education', submission from Education Committee to DFE, approved 22/6/66.

4. Interviews.

5. Interviews.

6. 'The Schools of Richmond, Twickenham and District', 1961 pamphlet.


8. Ibid.


10. Richmond Minutes, Schools Sub-Committee, 12/10/65.

11. Interviews; for example in 1974 children in Richmond obtained 154 awards per 1,000 pupils compared with the national average of 73 per 1,000; DFE, Statistics of Education 1974, HMSO, 1975.

12. Richmond Times, 29/3/64.

13. R. Pavill, Reform, Reaction and Resources, NFER, 1976; see page 257.


15. Interviews.

16. See Richmond Times, 19/9/64 and 21/11/64.

17. Interviews.

18. Richmond Times, 13/2/65.


20. Ibid; and Richmond Minutes, Schools Sub-Committee, 3/3/65.

21. Richmond Times, 16/1/65; and Richmond Minutes, Schools Sub-Committee, 31/12/64.
22. Richmond Minutes, Schools Sub-Committee, 31/12/64; and interviews
23. Richmond Times, 3/7/65
24. Richmond Conservative Party Manifesto, 1964
25. Interviews
26. Richmond Times, 12/12/64
27. Richmond Minutes, Schools Sub-Committee, 7/9/65
28. Richmond Times, 7/10/65
29. Ibid
30. Richmond Times, 29/1/66
31. Richmond Times, 30/10/65
32. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 14/2/66
34. Richmond Times, 19/2/66
35. Richmond Minutes, Council, 22/2/66
36. Richmond Times, 19/2/66
37. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee 16/5/66
38. For example public meeting reported in Richmond Times, 21/5/66
39. Richmond Minutes, Schools Sub-Committee, 9/6/66; and interviews
40. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 22/6/66
41. Richmond Times, 17/12/66
42. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 19/12/66
43. Richmond Times, 17/12/66
44. Report of the meeting between officers of Richmond and the NUT, Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 17/4/67
45. Ibid
46. Richmond Times, 22/4/67
47. Richmond Times, 29/4/67 and 5/5/67
48. Richmond Minutes, Council, 31/10/67
49. Labour Party Annual Conference 1967; and Richmond Times, 7/10/67
50. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 25/9/68

51. Richmond Times, 27/9/68

52. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 20/11/68

53. Interviews

54. Richmond Times, 1/8/69

55. Richmond Times, 7/3/69

56. Interviews

57. Interviews

58. Richmond Times, 27/6/69

59. Richmond Times, 30/7/69

60. V. Rivers, Politics by Pressure, Harrow and Co., 1974, p. 172


62. The material on the RPA presented in the following paragraphs was obtained from interviews with J. Ballis, 'An account of the campaign against selection at 11+ in Richmond-upon-Thames', unpublished RAAE pamphlet

63. Richmond Labour Party manifestos, 1963

64. Interviews; and Richmond Times, 3/3/69

65. Richmond Conservative Party manifestos, 1963

66. Ballis, op. cit., p. 10


68. For example, Richmond Times, 6/3/70, featured as a prominent front page article the case of a locally based actor who had announced he was leaving the country. The paper focused on the fact that one of his reasons for leaving was the state of education in the borough; or Richmond Times, 16/9/70, the main headline read, '11+ Results Shock; The Rich Schools Take Biggest Share,' and the RPA campaign featured prominently in the story.

69. Ballis, op. cit., p. 14

70. Richmond Times, 25/1/69

71. For example Richmond Times, 10/2/68
72. Sallis, op. cit., p. 5
73. Richmond Times, 24/5/68
74. Richmond Times, 17/5/68
75. Richmond Times, 28/5/68
76. Richmond Times 20/9/68
77. Richmond Times, 13/12/68
78. Interviews
79. Interviews; and Sallis, op. cit., pp14-15
80. Richmond Times, 3/7/67
81. Richmond Times, 17/1/69; and Interviews
82. Richmond Times, 23/3/69
83. Interviews; and T. Devlin, 'How a council had a change of heart over selection', in TES, 25/9/70
84. Interviews
85. Interviews and Sallis, op. cit., p. 16
86. Sallis, op.cit.,p.16
87. Richmond Times, 17/10/69
88. Sallis, op. cit., p. 17
89. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 28/3/69
90. Ibid
91. Richmond Times, 25/7/69
92. For example, Richmond Times, 19/9/69, Hall rejects idea that it will produce a comprehensive scheme.
94. Devlin, op. cit.
95. See chapter 9, page 309
96. See chapter 9, page 309
97. Devlin, op. cit.
99. Sallis, op. cit.; and, for example, *Richmond Times*, 14/11/69

100. *Richmond Times*, 20/3/70

101. *Richmond Times*, 3/7/70


105. Richmond Minutes, Schools and General Purposes Sub-Committee, 2/9/70

106. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 14/9/70

107. Interview, one source only

108. Richmond Times, 23/9/70

109. Interview, one source only

110. Letter from Headmaster of Hampton Grammar School, 23/9/70

111. Richmond Times, 25/9/70


113. Richmond Minutes, Council, 2/10/70

114. Richmond Times, 16/10/70; and Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 27/10/70

115. *The Observer*, 14/2/71


117. Excerpts from Governing Body of Hampton Grammar School, 21/4/71


119. Interview, one source only

120. Richmond Minutes, Schools and General Purposes Sub-Committee, 2/3/71


122. Interviews
123. Richmond Minutes, Schools and General Purposes Sub-Committee, 2/3/71

124. Richmond Minutes, Council, 30/3/71; and Richmond Times, 2/4/71

125. For example in Burton and Sutton

126. Ibid., op. cit., pp12-13
127. Ibid., p.1
128. Ibid., p.11

129. Rivers, op. cit.

131. Ibid., p.47
132. Ibid., op. cit., p.11


134. 'A New Partnership for our Schools', op. cit.
135. Ibid., op. cit., p.11, quoted above page 362
136. Interviews

137. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 23/7/71

138. Richmond Times, 28/1/72

139. Richmond Times, 4/2/72, 3/3/72 and 30/3/72

140. Letter from DES, dated 4/3/72

141. Richmond Minutes, Schools and General Purposes Sub-Committee, 17/10/72 and Richmond Times, 13/10/72

142. Richmond Minutes, Council, 31/10/72

143. Richmond Times, 12/11/72

144. Interviews

145. Richmond Minutes, Schools and General Purposes Sub-Committee, 17/10/72
146. Ibid., 20/10/72

147. Ibid., 24/6/74

148. Ibid., 17/10/72

149. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 11/12/72; and Council, 2/1/73

150. Richmond Minutes, Council, 27/11/73

151. Interviews

152. Interviews; and Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 24/6/73 and Richmond Times, 7/1/73

153. Richmond Times, 25/6/73; and interviews

154. Richmond Times, 7/2/75; and interviews

155. Richmond Times, 7/2/75

156. Richmond Times, 21/2/75

157. Richmond Times, 7/2/75

158. Schools and General Purposes Sub-Committee Working Party, established 1973


160. Further Education Youth and Community Services Sub-Committee, established 1974


162. Ibid

163. Richmond Times, 27/6/75

164. Richmond Minutes, Education Committee, 7/7/75

165. Education Yearbook 1980, Councils and Education Research, 1980

166. Interviews

167. Interviews

Chapter 11 RESISTANCE TO REORGANISATION IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON

11.1 BACKGROUND

The Area

The London Borough of Sutton was formed by the amalgamation on the borough of Redhill and Wallington, the borough of Sutton and Cheam and the urban district of Carshalton. In 1965 the new borough was covered by part or all of three parliamentary constituencies. However in 1973 these were replaced by two constituencies — Sutton and Cheam, and Carshalton.

Table 11.1 and table 3.1 on page 243 indicate some of the borough's characteristics. Sutton and Cheam to the west is a largely homogeneous, owner occupier, commuter territory. Only 6% of households rent from the council and only 35% of economically active males are manual workers. There is some light industry in the extreme north west.

The east of the borough is an area of far more varied contrasts. Wallington and South Carshalton are desirable owner-occupied, residential areas. However north of Carshalton, covering all of two wards and some of a third, is the major portion of the St Helier housing estate, the rest of which is in Epsom. East of Wallington is part of the core green Beltishaw council estate and an area of industrial development bordering onto the borough of Croydon. Manufacturing and electrical engineering are the main industries. While between 69 and 72% of employed males in the three St Helier wards were
in annual occupations in 1971, the proportion was as low as 13% in one and 26% in two other wards in Crouchall and Wallington.

The Politics

The composition of Sutton council after the elections of 1964 to 1973 is shown in table 11.2. The Conservatives have been in continuous control and the parties' fortunes followed the national swings. 1968 and 1973 saw large Conservative majorities. 1964 and 1971 saw large Labour majorities, and in 1971 only the aldermanic elections assured an overall majority for the Conservatives. In 1974 a small Liberal group was elected for the first time. The main areas of strength for the different parties included, the Woodley Estate as the only safe Labour area and Wallington central as an Independent stronghold for most of the period. The Liberals have recently done well in parts of Sutton and Cheam but the bulk of the authority is solidly Conservative.

Alderman 'Tag' Taylor of Sutton became the first leader of the Conservatives and the new council. A strong and well respected leader he was active in the local authority associations. From 1964 to 1971 he was Chairman of the Lib and after resigning as leader in Sutton became the leader of the Conservative group and for some time Chairman of the LGA.

The Education System

The new borough of Sutton included the old Mid- Surrey Divisional Executive and part of the Large Central Divisional Executive of Surrey. The first CEO was Dr H. Evans, previously
Table 11.1 Land Use, Socio-Economic Groupings and Housing in Sutton, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LAND USE: (of all land)</th>
<th>Constituency of SUTTON + OCEAN</th>
<th>Constituency of CARSEALTON</th>
<th>London Borough of SUTTON, Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Open Spaces</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUSING: (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Rented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL CLASS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census 1971, and C.L.C. Greater London Statistics, 1973

Table 11.2 Representation on Sutton Council following the elections (including aldermanic elections, 1964-1978)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Independent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deputy GTA for Southend and before that a member of the Hampshire education department. Interviewees confronted with the alternative roles of 'conciliator' and 'educator' placed significantly in the former one. He remained GTA in Sutton until 1974 when he left WA administration to become Secretary to the Girls' public Day School Trust (GDST).

Sutton inherited an orthodox bi-partite system of secondary education as table 11.3 shows. There were never very small schools than in Verton or Richmond although at least half of the secondary moderns were either small or had inadequate buildings and facilities. The four grammar schools were all well established, late nineteenth or early twentieth century schools with sixth forms of over one hundred pupils.

Ellington Girls grammar school moved into new, well equipped buildings in 1965. Ellington Boys achieved the best academic results of the four. In 1970 'Ellington Boys got 40% of one year's intake into university, twice the national average for grammar schools.' The only other school with any sixth formers to speak of was one of the two bi-lateral schools. The other school was due to be rebuilt on a new site as a 4 form entry bi-lateral under plans drawn up by Surrey and already approved by the DFE. There were no voluntary schools in the new IPA.

There were also very few independent schools. The only two prestigious ones were both girls schools, St Hilomenos's Roman Catholic independent school and Sutton High School for Girls, a GDST direct grant school founded in 1851. The
Table 11.3 Educational Features of the London Borough of Sutton

### A. Maintained Schools inherited by Sutton in 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEA Schools</th>
<th>Secondary Modern</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two with 2 f.e.</td>
<td>Nonsuch Girls 3 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four with 3 f.e.</td>
<td>Sutton Manor Boys 3 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three with 4 f.e.</td>
<td>Wallington Girls 3 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two with 5 f.e.</td>
<td>Wallington Boys 3 f.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2 of these schools were bilaterals)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of f.e.</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of f.e.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. No voluntary schools

### C. Non-Maintained Sector, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sutton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total No. of 13 yr. olds resident in the area</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom attended independent schools</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom attended maintained by the LFA in independent schools</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of whom attended maintained by the LFA in direct grant schools</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### C. Miscellaneous 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sutton</th>
<th>All Outer London Boroughs</th>
<th>England + Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of immigrant parents staying in rates</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 yr olds as % of 13 yr olds of 3 yrs earlier</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 yr olds as 6% of 13 yr olds of 4 yrs earlier</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averages to students at university per 1,000 18 and 19 year olds</td>
<td>117.6</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of population with a degree or equivalent who are in employment</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sources:
- Census; DES, Statistics of Education 1971, Vol 1;
authority inherited a commitment to take up a small number of places in these and other non-maintained schools. The proportion of 11 year olds in Sutton in independent schools was higher than the average but lower than both Richmond and Werton.

The authority had a high staying on rate and a reasonably high rate of awards for higher education. Although the number of awards were nowhere near as high as Richmond the smaller independent sector meant that Sutton's maintained schools (almost exclusively the grammar schools) were probably as successful in this respect.

The first chairman of the education committee became incapacitated early on. This placed two other members of the committee in influential positions. The first was the chairman of the Secondary Education Sub-Committee (303C) Councillor who had recently arrived from Hull where he served on the education committee. The second was Councillor Hill who had been a member of Surrey's central divisional executive since 1961. He eventually became chairman of education in Sutton in 1966 and remained in the post until 1974. As his experience grew Hill became involved outside the borough as a member of the South East Regional C.U.P. board and in the local authority associations. He became chairman of the L.E.A. education committee, was a member of the Furnham Committee and briefly on the AEC education committee. His most prestigious post was as a member of the influential AEC national executive committee from 1963 to 1974. One other member of the first
education committee who became prominent over the comprehensive
issue was Councillor Gadd who was a teacher in further education
outside the borough and had a wide experience and knowledge of
education.

There were 3 co-opted members of the first education
committee, three of them teachers. The co-opted teachers were
appointed by the borough's Teachers Consultative Committee
(TCC). The TCC consisted of two representatives from each of
the associations except the UTT which had four members. The
first chairman of Sutton TCC was Dr Walsh, a primary school
headmaster, President of the Sutton Joint Four and previously
secretary of the Surrey Joint Four and a co-opted member of
education sub-committees in Surrey. He also became one of the
co-opted members on the first Sutton education committee and the
TCC, accompanied by an UTT representative. He was chair and
then secretary of the TCC until his retirement in 1976.

A Sutton Association for the Advancement of State Education
(ASASE) was established soon after the borough formed. It
remained active but never very large or prominent throughout
the period of this study.

11.2 PUBLIC RESPONSE

Initial positions

There was very little debate in Sutton about comprehensive
education before the circular arrived. SMASE made their demand
for reorganisation known and they organised a public meeting
to discuss the issue. The Labour group were also committed to
reorganisation and at this stage appeared to favour a two-tier pattern such as that adopted in Leicestershire.\(^4\) This pattern was also suggested by the Sutton branch of the NEU early in 1965.\(^5\) Or "shock and the Joint Four however were quick to defend the existing system which they claimed was working well.\(^6\) The Conservative group remained quiet but had defended the selective system in the 1964 election campaign.

The Special Sub-Committee

In September 1965 the CEO, Evans, responded to the arrival of the circular by presenting the SSEC with a report, "to assist members in their preliminary considerations."\(^7\) The report contained a brief outline of the present structure of secondary education in the borough, a statement of the main ideas behind comprehensive education and a general review of the possible comprehensive patterns using examples from other LEAs where possible. Two appendices gave detailed descriptions of the all-through system used in the old LCS and the Leicestershire two-tier scheme. On the former the report noted that schools were "normally very large and have between 1500 and 2000 children on roll."\(^8\) The CEO suggested that the committee would need a more detailed report on the implications of each pattern for Sutton before giving serious consideration to the circular.

The committee followed this advice. In December this second report was ready. The Conservatives decided to set up a Special Sub-Committee (SSC) to consider the report, receive the views of interested parties and make recommendations.
At the education committee meeting the chairman made a statement stressing that the circular was "a request...there is no statutory obligation" involved. However in the spirit of the "tradition of co-operation" between LEAs and the DfE, the request could be given full consideration in the G, in order to "remove the subject from political controversy". This statement was partly a response to local group reports.

The G's decision to support some reorganisation and the arrival of the circular was greeted with the headline, "Full Change to Comprehensive". The statement was clearly intended to dammen any premature conclusion about the purpose of the circular to reassure grass root school supporters. As this indicates there is little evidence to suggest that the chairman or for that matter any leading Conservative felt enthusiastic about comprehensive schools at the outset. Nevertheless they are not so doctrinally opposed as not to consider the proposals in more detail.

The G was made up of seven Conservatives, (including one who became the chairman after the first meeting, William Taylor), the Labour representatives (including the Labour leader and the party's education spokes person with some experience in education) and one independent but no teachers. It met eight times between February and June 1966. They considered the DOE's detailed report on the collection of data on the different patterns in the circular to action. The report was very neutral and made no recommendations. However it was
clear that there were more problems in applying some of the patterns than others. In particular the all-through pattern would require substantial new building.

During these meetings the TCC met the TCC and heard the views of all the main associations. All the teachers were united in their opposition to any form of split-site schooling. As a result the SU and NAS who both favoured reorganisation in the long term suggested a gradual change to a Leicestershire two-tier pattern. The Joint Forum and NASF favoured retaining the selective system but acknowledged the need for change within such a system. In their initial written response to the sub-committee, the TCC stated that "none of these alternatives is a really satisfactory system for this area. The committee is by no means convinced that any of the proposed systems will be educationally more successful than a continued and imaginative development along present lines." Nevertheless of all the patterns the Leicestershire two-tier was given most support. By the time they met the TCC in March 1966 they were talking of "reorganisation by evolution" using this two-tier pattern. At the same time they noted that in the long term the middle school pattern "had many attractions and the TCC would like to know more about it." 

It also made a presentation to the TCC favouring an all-through pattern with the use of temporary split-sites as an interim measure.

In May 1966 the TCC presented a memorandum to the TCC summarising the committees response to date but also bringing
to their attention the change of attitude towards middle schools at the DES.\textsuperscript{16} In this report Evans wrote, "My own feeling is that there is much attraction in the scheme" and bearing in mind the teachers' interest he recommended that the NC have another look at it.

In June 1966, Nichols issued an interim statement on the work of the NC. He said that the committee had been ready to report in time to meet the DES deadline but as a result of the announcement that middle school schemes were now more favourably regarded, the committee needed a little more time. The DES were to be informed that as a result the circular was still under active consideration.\textsuperscript{19}

The NC Report

After three more meetings in October, making eleven in all, the NC produced a report (371) containing a number of detailed recommendations for changes in the pattern of secondary education.\textsuperscript{20}

The report began by stating the committee's aim as being to produce a system with true parity of esteem between all secondary schools. The names 'grammar' and 'secondary modern' were to be dropped and instead all schools would be called 'high school'. They were all to be developed into a minimum of 6 forms of entry, providing a full range of courses up to and including 'A' levels.

Further are the eleven plus exams to be abandoned from 1968 and 'entry' to high schools would be based on 'parental consultation' and 'teacher guidance'.

However, much as these statements appeared to be heralding a comprehensive system, other parts of the report betrayed the
committee's true intentions. In the most crucial sentence the VC recommended that, "the four schools at present designated grammar schools shall continue to specialise in pre-university courses."

It seems that the Conservative members wanted to make some concessions towards the comprehensive movement but were not willing to change the basic element in the selective system, the grammar schools. It is clear that at that stage they were never prepared to consider genuine reorganisation because they could not retain "the high reputation in the borough which our four maintained grammar schools enjoy." There was no pressure to change this part of the existing system from within the party or from any source outside which they were likely to respond to. The officers made no attempt to influence the VC in that way. The teachers were solid, never forceful in promoting reorganisation and Dr Welch commanded considerable support for his view of "imaginative development along present lines." In fact some Conservatives on the VC apparently genuinely believed that developments including the upgrading of secondary modern schools and a more flexible system of selection could eventually evolve (1980 was the date mentioned) into a comprehensive system. One of the Labour members of the committee acknowledged that they were "open minded and flexible, they really were prepared to think about it in the long term... they believed a comprehensive system would evolve....but they never really understood the implications... They kept saying these 6 form entry schools would become fully comprehensive but it was a nonsense."
Nevertheless the PSC did make some other, more immediate concessions towards comprehensive education. Consideration of the circular had coincided with negotiations with the DES over the new 4 form entry school planned by Surrey. It was already clear that a larger 6 form entry school could be acceptable for Sutton's requirements. Nichols, Hill and Evans in discussions with the ETTI and territorial principal at the MI, realised that the project could be treated more enthusiastically and generously if it were put forward as a comprehensive school. As a result they proposed one new purpose-built comprehensive school to serve the entire borough. As a senior Conservative remarked, "Immediately we said we'll offer that on a comprehensive deciding you'll allow it to be 6 form entry, the DES were very good, very co-operative." The school was permitted more generous facilities, design features and staffing allowances than might have been expected.

These reasons were compelling enough, but there were others which might have been equally important. The existence of one large comprehensive school would serve to channel off some of the demands from a vociferous minority of mainly middle class parents, associated in particular with MI, who wished comprehensive schooling for their children. Furthermore, although they restated the word 'experiment', this was clearly seen by many Conservatives as an opportunity to see how well such a school performed. Nichols was quoted in the press as saying, "If Sutton's first comprehensive school is a success then the education committee would be prepared to introduce comprehensive education throughout the borough....if its course
then we'll discard it."26

The final element in the 1968 plan was for the development of four "comprehensive" denominational secondary schools for the borough, two Church of England and two Roman Catholic, one boys and one girls school each. It was quite unusual for an authority to have no maintained denominational secondary schools and there was a need to be some demand for these in Sutton. There were two Roman Catholic primary schools in the borough and in 1966 the authority were responsible for 147 Roman Catholic pupils in secondary schools outside Sutton or (in the case of 172 of them) at the private ...school at Chislewens's.27 In addition there were five Church of England primary schools in the borough. There is little doubt that still, a practising Roman Catholic was not eligible for the plans in negotiations with the diocesan authorities. It was also a question of availability. It was proposed to bring St Chislewens's into the maintained system under aided status and to take a boys' S. school just over the boundary with the London borough of Croydon, part of Sutton's responsibility. The Church of England plan included the transfer of Wilson's, an aided foundation grammar school, from Sutton to a new site in Bexley. Wilson's girls' school, according to the 1968 plan, a 6 form entry comprehensive school when it opened.28 No girls school had yet been found to balance the provision.

These plans for four denominational schools were included in Sutton's submission to the DFE as part of their move towards comprehensive education.29 As will become clear, these proposals
were too optimistic and, at least in the case of Wilson's school, more than a little misleading.

Approval of the ESC plan

The plan was approved by the education committee on 1st November 1966 along with detailed proposals for its implementation. In the long term many building alterations and extensions would be needed and some of the smaller secondary modern would eventually be closed. The changes were to take place gradually over the period from 1966 to 1980. The progress of the plan was to be monitored and reviewed in full after five years of operation, i.e., in 1973. Finally a new working party of teachers was established to determine the details of the new 'transfer arrangements' to replace the eleven plus.

Labour's education spokesman pinned some hope on these arrangements and appeared to be mildly encouraged by the ESC proposals at first. He called them "an enormous step forward" and felt that there was room for manoeuvre over the extent of selection. However the Labour group decided to take a tougher line and in the full council debate she led them in opposing the entire plan. Labour were joined by the Greenfield in criticising the proposals as "an extension of the grammar school system" and a dishonest response to the circular. The Bottom and Dene Advertiser declared itself for the first time in an editorial attacking the plan for perpetuating the "stigma of selection". The plan was approved with voting on party lines and was submitted to the WEC.
11.3 NEGOTIATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS - GENERAL

Des Rejection

In April 1967 the ISC responded to the plan. They noted approvingly the plans for five comprehensive schools but continued, "and it cannot be maintained for an indefinite period, four schools specializing in pre-university courses does not seem to be consistent with the general principles set out in the circular." The letter ended by suggesting that discussions take place between representatives of the authority and the Department, "to consider the lines on which alternative proposals might be recorded."

Internal discussions between schools, councils and the ISC and ISC took place immediately. The Conservatives claimed Liberal attacks on the "rejected" scheme were unmerited and that agreement could still be reached along the lines of the plan through negotiation. It was clear that the central element in the lesson plan was the school of selection. The ISC noted that the costs for all secondary provision to be included in entry 41 to 43 schools was "very suitable" for a full comprehensive system. The Impact these possibilities had on education for the sick, The teachers' working party on selection had only just reported the previous month and the Conservatives said that the content of this report would help resolve the ISC of the council's long term intentions.

The Selection Procedure

following the ISC guidelines the teachers' working party
devised a complex 'transfer' procedure involving parental choice, teacher guidance and pupils' primary school records. Primary head teachers were to discuss with parents that three choices they should take from all the secondary schools in the borough. The choices would then be compared with a primary school record card including the head teacher's assessment of the child's capabilities. The working party concluded that some form of objective testing was necessary in order to compare standards between pupils in different schools. To this end they decided to give pupils two WPP verbal reasoning tests: "about any social notice or fuss." 

The working party consisted of some teachers who were sympathetic towards comprehensive education. They realised that the crucial element in the procedure was how the more able able children were to be allocated to different schools. This would fundamentally affect what 'guidance' head teachers were to give. The report urged that the council "avoid the creation of a hierarchy of schools". They accepted that "there must be a transitional period" in which the "quality of good academic potential" continued to be channelled into the former grammar schools and the upper level of the new comprehensive school. However "as the scheme develops" they recommended that the aim "should be to provide a reasonably balanced and viable intake for all high schools." In other words the teachers' working party envisaged a move towards a system in which pupils' ability was used only to create a balanced intake to all schools.
This report was sent to the DES who simply replied that they were unable to comment until they knew the council's own response to the report. The DES were subsequently informed of the council's approval of the report. However certain amendments had been made. Most important among these was that the phrase "a reasonably balanced and viable intake" was changed to "a reasonable and viable intake". Furthermore it was emphasised that there were long term aims which would need to be settled by the borough perhaps after exchanges with the Government. It was clear that the immediate plans for transfer to high schools beginning in 1963 were to retain selection of the academic children for the ex-grammar schools and the new 'comprehensive school'.

**Secret Negotiations**

By the summer of 1967 there was no sign of agreement. The DES had invited a deputation from Sutton but the authority decided not to go until they had received a response to their plan for 'transfer arrangements'. The local press accused the council of delay and being determined to "stand firm" the DES.

There followed a series of decisions by the Council, some currently intended to put pressure on the council. First the postponed approval for the second stage of Greenshaw, the new comprehensive school. At the same time the first stage of the transfer of Illson's of H. school to Sutton was withheld. Finally in September 1967 the DES even deferred consideration of the council's plans to change the names of their secondary schools to 'high' schools.
From then on, but decision arrangements were made for the abolition of Nicholas, Till, and new to the town "Leek" to be the junior minister, a slight town in October.

It was interesting to observe the leadership made a specific proposal. Taking up the idea of an "interim plan" the survey had apparently proposed to the leaders at that time, but it was rejected, as it was not seen as the best solution. Certain objections were made to it.\(^7\)

Yet they stated that the building small comments on this was not compatible with a truly comprehensive system, but was about the "total system of education in the borough". A third, a working party could be established to report in 1973 on "the progress of comprehensive education in the borough". Finally, it was as a result of the consideration in 1973 the council came to the conclusion that the comprehensive system was the right system. Therefore, they called for a date by which they would..... on education entirely." (c. 1973 cited).\(^8\)

The fourth was not satisfied with this and made it clear that the proposals were only acceptable when integrated with social action was hampered by building requirements. Further-\(^9\), it was refused as saying, "all proposals of this type will not contain in some form or other a declaration of intention to introduce a complete system of comprehensive secondary education."\(^9\)

Following this meeting, the leadership decided to give what they called an "interim submission". In this, they made one crucial modification to the proposals made at the meeting.
As a result of the working party report in 1973, they stated, "the Council will decide on a date by which selection WILL be discontinued in the borough" (emphasis added).

When negotiations had taken place without the knowledge or approval of the council, the Labour group or the Conservative group. Yet this was however, in February 1971, the leadership decided to go to the group. They clearly believed that their last proposal would be accepted and now they needed the group's backing. In a document introducing the proposals to the group, the council wrote, "The Minister has now indicated that these terms are not acceptable. This is untrue although they may have received certain signals. The Conservative group is said to accept these terms as the best that can be obtained. Preliminary contact would seem that Thomas II of Greenham (the new conservative) could be more flexible, and the consequent reorganisation of primary education in the centre of Sutton could not take place. Instead, the controversy over secondary education would be put into cold storage for five years." (emphasis added)52

It is clear from this last sentence that the Sutton Conservative group saw these negotiations with the Department as designed to put off the decision on full reorganisation, but yet gain financial approval for their immediate plans. The proposals were accepted by the group.

However, a few days later the leadership learnt that the Secretary of State was still not satisfied. He declined the proposals "as far as they go" but he asked the authority to "have a fresh discussion" that included "an indication of
their firm intention to secure the abolition of selection for, and separation in, secondary education as soon as this is practicable. " Furthermore such a submission was to include the "expected timing of longer term proposals."

Nevertheless approval was given to the change of names in the original plan and in June 1963 the second stage of the new comprehensive school was included in a special list of "emergency projects."

Hardenning of Attitudes

The 1963 Conservative manifesto for the London Borough elections contained a good summary of the co-existence views which predominated among the leadership. It stated, "We are not against comprehensive education but we want to see it in operation in conjunction with our existing excellent grammar schools."

Naylor, still and the new Vice-Chairman of Hoolomun, (Norman Gait), apparently still believed it was possible to have a gradual transition to a situation of non-selection but in both the grammar schools would remain substantially unchanged. However they found it increasingly difficult to contain an increased right wing element in the group who voted then to reject any idea of reorganisation. As one of the 'Labourites' put it, "In the early period there was a genuine belief in comprehensive and gradual change but then the hurri-liners appeared."

Meanwhile the Labour group and comprehensive supporters outside the council were complaining loudly about the delay and the "veil of secrecy" surrounding the negotiations. Labour submitted their own middle school plan, drawn up with the
co-operation of COBSE, to the secretary of state. Their
education spokeswoman contacted Mrs Shirley Williams, a personal
friend and the new junior minister at the DfE, to urge her to
look at the middle school plan and to try to discover the state
of the negotiations. However Mrs Williams said it would be
improper for her to discuss the position. Then, in December
1967, the COB issued a report on the negotiations to note the
Labour group accused the Conservatives of deliberately stalling
for time.

The COB was still worried about funds for improving the
secondary modern schools. Some work had been done under minor
works programmes but no major building had been approved apart
from the new comprehensive school. Further more approval for the
transfer of Wilson's was still being withheld.

In March 1969 the leadership made their last attempt to
reach agreement with the DfE. The letter they sent to the
Department is worth quoting substantially.

"The authority have considered the various forms of
comprehensive education referred to in circular 1, 2 and 3 and
have come to the conclusion that the form best suited to
the borough of Sutton, for educational and practical
reasons, would be that of 3 (i) 'The orthodox comprehensive
school with an age range of 11-18.' The authority have
considered the requirements during the period 1966-8 and are
planning to provide 16 six form entry schools, each to 1,500
pupils."
The authority are convinced that it would not be in the best interests of the children in the borough for them to consider the introduction of comprehensive education into all schools until some accommodation and staffing are such as to make each school an effective educational unit. For this reason the council have decided they will develop all schools to six forms college status and then in so far possible by the 1974. For some time, therefore, while schools are being developed in this size, it will be necessary for the four existing grammar schools to continue to provide in pre-university courses, but as a first step they have decided that the following schools should be developed to six form entry comprehensive schools - Greenhaw, Monk 6 of 7, Haver 6 of 7, St Thomas's ... and one other.

Thus far council have already designated over 35 of their high schools as comprehensive, and are taking steps to enlarge another 2 schools between 1971 and 1973, so that they may take in six form entry and provide advanced courses, including technical and commercial studies.

In 1973 the council will consider the report of a working party on the progress of secondary education in the Borough and decide on the rate at which comprehensive education can be extended to the remaining schools......

There are a number of remarkable things about this letter. The first is that its contents were never debated or approved by the education committee or the council. The Labour group and the public only became aware of it after a council question...
In May 1961 Labour launched a bitter attack on the Conservatives for deliberately mislabeling the council and the NLC. In many ways it was a timely response to the NLC's then unpopular proposals. To date no given for an end to selection until a formal paragraph quoted the clearly religious. It was also overly misleading. The authority had never made a statement in principle recognizing "the orthodox comprehensive way". The leadership were well aware that the majority on the council did not want a particular organizing even in the long run. Finally it was granted the progress made to date in providing comprehensive schools.

**Rich's Comprehensive Schools**

Greenshaw High School, Sutton's purpose-built comprehensive school, opened in September 1966. Plans to receive a balanced intake from throughout the borough. The children were divided into five ability groups and the school received 20% of its intake from each ability band. The school attracted a very well-balanced intake, yet of them felt a firm commitment to comprehensive education. Thus over- emphasised with pupils in its very first year. It was a co-educational comprehensive but it did have a relatively well-balanced intake, although a majority of its pupils from the top 20% of the ability range were probably nearer the bottom of that scale. The school quickly established a good reputation and achieved good academic results. Only two of the fine comprehensive schools were in anything
like an advanced stage of planning when the letter was sent to the
D.E. Furthermore their 'comprehensive' character was in some
doubt. The Labour group were sceptical that it would be
enough, an all-girls independent school with a 'posh' reputation,
could become genuinely comprehensive.60 Then it became an aided
school, the headmistress and governors would still be entirely
responsible for choosing which girls, from those applying for the
school, should be admitted. But for more concerning to the Labour
group was the proposal concerning Ilton's school.

Ilton's was an old foundation grammar school which received
its charter in 1615. It had a strong academic tradition and
succeeded to retain it when it moved into Sutton. It was suggested
by Labour interviewees that one of the reasons the school
wanted to close was to escape from I.D., which in the early
1960s was proposing a tough line against voluntary non-aided
schools refusing to reorganise. Then Iutton first proposed
that Ilton's come into the authority under the 1966 Act so it
was agreed that 2 of the 6 forms of entry should be reserved for
places chosen entirely by the governors and be non-aided but that
the rest could be a collective intake.65 However it emerged that
in order to parents the headmaster claimed that the school
would remain a grammar school.66 Still denied this
and agreed to sort the matter out. However in subsequent
negotiations, Ilton accepted the governors' proposal that the
school remain predominantly selective as long as selection
was retained in Iutton.67 Despite these developments, the P.B.

Discussions had only just got underway with John Fisher on the Roman Catholic school in Croydon and no girls Church of England school had yet been found.

The DCS could not accept the authority's new conclusion as adequate. Feelings on the council began to surface particularly when the Labour Government's plan to introduce legislation became known. They were met with hostile reactions from the Conservative group. One of the right wing back-benchers attempted to get Labour councillors removed from the Governing Body of former schools on the grounds that they were intent on destroying them. Outside the council a petition calling for full comprehensive reorganisation.

There were no further developments before the Conservative Government came to power and witnessed circular No 6. Sutton had been in almost constant negotiations with the Labour GDS during this period. The leadership were continually assured that if outright rejection of the circular could not achieve their building plans, at the same time some of the more Liberal Conservatives were keen to pursue a co-operative strategy. The DCS made no attempt to push for full comprehensive but tried to disguise this resistance by proposing an end to selection at some future, unspecified date. These plans never satisfied the DCS but Sutton did well being classified as an outright recipient, received approval and generous allowances for a
new school and preliminary approval of plans to bring another
prestigious school into the borough.

[Image of a page from a document]

There was also doubt that by this stage Hill, the Vice chairman
of education Committee, and one or two other members were
having serious doubts about selection. At the same time Evans
and particularly Corden by the consequences of the revised
building programme during the 1960s. He was also involved about
the selection procedures which joined him to the
other education officers and involved in it all as Inspector.

These doubts and others were expressed in the report.

In the event had been, or at least to be, the interviewing
procedure for larger secondary modern schools - Chislehurst Clock
and Carshalton Bells - through minor works and recently
approved FAD programmes. Furthermore Greenhill had been built
earlier and was now included in the 1971/2 major building starts
list. However progress had not been sufficient to clear any of
the smaller secondary moderns and there was now a considerable
imbalance between the authority's schools.

On the new selection arrangements were remarked that they "led to difficulties very often greater than those following a traditional selection examination." There had been many transfers between schools after eleven as could be hoped. "It is true," the report continued, "that most children soon settle into the High School to which they are allocated and do not wish to leave until the age of 16." In a survey of 5 schools, "the teachers have consistently been most difficult to divide is the satisfactory allocation of children to particular high schools." It concluded that the existing plans "need careful review in the light of developments in educational thought" and suggested the setting up of a Secondary Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). The review and changes in SEAC were considering, "the most appropriate forms of secondary education for the London Borough of Sutton." 73

Publicly Hill denied that he or the commission had any preconceived ideas at the outset, and they considered all the possible strategies including maintaining the current system. 74 However, privately he and Bald were believed that major changes were needed and they had recruited the support of Taylor, the Tory Leader of Sutton in taking a fresh look at the selective alternative. 75 These four had been close to the problem which the selective system was facing in Sutton but they were also involved in the educational and local government world outside. They were possibly more aware of "the developments in educational thought" and developments in other 76, 77 than almost
any others in Sutton. As a result, to varying degrees, they were more sympathetic to the comprehensive principle than in the earlier period. One of them described this influence in the following way, "I was involved in education in other ways outside the borough. I was Chairman of... and a member of... and... so I was hearing a lot about education nationally and I talked this (comprehensive education) over with them. I learnt a lot. If you set up these big committees you can get few ideas no end."

The Early 1970s Deliberations

The 1970s was made up of six Conservatives, including Hill and Pflug, two Labour representatives (including their education spokesman who had been on the UC), one independent (also on the UC) and two teachers' representatives (Dr. Highgate on the NC). It met seven times between November and April 1971. On April 21st Hill issued the following statement to the education committee and the order; "It is now felt that the education committee should know that the majority of members of the sub-committees favour the abolition of selection."76

It is probable that this majority existed for the committee to act on. Nevertheless there is no doubt that some members did change their minds during these four months. As one member remarked, "a lot of the Tories and (the independents) were definitely pro-selection at the start of the meeting but I don't think they were genuinely convinced by the evidence that whatever else it did, it didn't efficiently carry out the tasks it was meant to."
The SCSC came to the conclusion that there were three interrelated problems with the existing system.

1. There was a serious imbalance between the authorities' schools. This was partly a result of the limited building programme. However it was reflected not only in the accommodation available but also in the number of pupils in each school following post-11 level courses (see table 11.4, column 1). The four grammar schools and the new comprehensive schools had a number of sixth formers following advanced courses. For the larger secondary moderns (Cerhalton Girls, Cerhalton Boys, Gaynesford and Chase in particular) were developing sixth forms but not in sufficient numbers to provide a good range of courses.

2. The other secondary moderns, in the SCSC's view, "do not give the facilities and opportunities available in the larger schools." 77

3. The school did not satisfy the demand for comprehensive education in the borough. Greenshaw was oversubscribed each year with as many as twice the number of parents wanting it as a first choice as there were places available. It was the second most popular school in the borough by this measure (see table 11.4, column 1). Almost 20% of all parents placed it above all three choices.

4. The election method was creating serious problems. The procedure for 'transfer to high schools' set up following the teachers' working party report was effectively creating precisely what the working party had tried to avoid, a hierarchy of schools. In a report drawn up by Evans and the chief inspector,
Table 11.4 Post O' Level work and parental preferences for Sutton's secondary schools, 1970

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>No. of post O' Level work</th>
<th>No. of 1st choices</th>
<th>Mean no. of choices shortfall</th>
<th>No. of 2nd choices</th>
<th>Mean no. of choices shortfall</th>
<th>No. of 3rd choices</th>
<th>Mean no. of choices shortfall</th>
<th>No. of places filled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonsuch</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>+103</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton Boys</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallington Boys</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>+47</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallington Girls</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>+64</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenshaw</td>
<td>Comp</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>+32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carshalton Girls</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gleenburn</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>-34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carshalton Boys</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>-55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheam</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gynecol (G)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elwood</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton Common</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton West</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highview</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>-21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Park</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>-62</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The values in the table are percentages.
it was acknowledged that "In practice allocation to High Schools
has continued to be a selection procedure." Also, there was
recognition that not only in the larger grammar schools but after
that in secondary and then in the five or secondary schools,
both provided advanced work and/or were single sex schools.

The fact that this ordering of schools was reasonably
similar to the selection of opportunities available in the past
meant that head teachers, in guiding the more ableanches
had to consider the effect. One officer involved in the move explained, "Teacher influence at the grades
and the need to take the children into careers.

"Without any doubt, all will be better at the school
system," (Instructor's note). A junior official who also
involved described teacher guidance as, "getting teachers to accept
a suitable very often, but their lack doing so." It
emerged from Table 11.4 that teachers did a very selective
job in August parents of non-academic children were applying
for places at the lower grade school. Even at the persuasion
told parents, however it was clear that the minority intended
to move were little on the receiving end school. In the first
year, the new procedure functioned: the T.D.C. was set as
a priority of those parents will have a choice of school.

67 If a parent of a child obviously not academic, the
majority of parents applying for the lower grade schools. This
will be carried as an "open choice." 79

However it was under the secondary modern schools that the
procedure had its most serious effect. Two or three of the
smaller schools were particularly unpopular (Stanley Park, Sutton "East and Elmwood") in comparison with the larger schools which offered sixth form. The co-educational secondary classes were less popular than single sex schools. Furthermore the small schools were the schools which the 1966-68 had counseled would be closed in the long run. So in Richmond a vicious spiral began to develop: the schools were overcrowded by a lack of academic children, the difficulties in attracting staff. The children who ended up in the first guidance or allocation were almost certainly disproportionately selected initially and from relatively poor environments.

Also, at a tremendous burden on primary teachers in terms of responsibility and daily work load. The IDEA 'word' constraints on these lines from the schools. They calculated that in all 60 school districts were left only in the borough on interviewing parents. This they claimed was critical, their work throughout the first term of the year.

In addition there was the time and from school children involved with the appeals procedure which held up as set up along the lines suggested by the working party. There were three stages of appeal, first to a panel of high school only, second to the school inspector and third to the chairman or vice chairman of the education committee.

Approximately 60% of parents were allocated their first choice school, but some 10% ended up with none of their three choices. These parents were almost entirely allocated to less popular schools (table 11.4). The number who remained was also
about 10% (180 to 190 children) at this time. Although some of these were appealing against 2nd or 3rd choices where grammar schools had been the first choice, many of the appeals were against the unpopular secondary moderns. Most of these parents wanted a place at Greenshaw or one of the larger single sex secondary moderns instead. 82

Apart from the time involved these appeals brought home to those who heard them the problems of the existing system and the personal aggravation and distress which selection can cause. Those involved included the chief inspector who became closely involved with the work of the SOSC, and Hill and Gadd. They were able to tell the sub-committee members at first hand, these problems with the system. 83

Faced with these problems and acknowledging that changes had to be made the SOSC looked at three possible strategies. 84

1. Further co-existence. In order to meet the demand revealed by Greenshaw the authority could establish a second or third comprehensive school. This was rejected because it would create even more problems with the viability of the secondary moderns and the selection procedure.

2. Super-selection. Reduce the level of selection to 10% or less, and boost the academic intake into all other schools. This received some support but was eventually rejected.

3. Full comprehensive reorganisation. Hill and Gadd were firmly convinced that the only long term solution to Sutton's problems was to fall in with the trends in educational thinking and abolish selection completely. By April 1971 a clear majority
on the SOSC were prepared to back them.

This decision was welcomed by the Labour group, the local paper and SAASE, although the latter warned of a tough fight to come in the full council. This warning seemed justified when Hill, with one eye on the May elections, claimed that no final decision had yet been made and that in his statement he had carefully used soft phrases such as 'felt' and 'favour' in describing the committee's views. The vice-chairman, Alderman Gadd, was angered by this and openly accused Hill of "tearing up the report". In the end the Tories went into the election with a carefully worded manifesto which simply noted that the SOSC had proposed that selection be abolished. Comprehensive education was certainly one of the most prominent local issues in the election. The local paper devoted an entire page to letters on the topic. However the Conservatives maintained a low profile arguing that the SOSC had not yet produced any firm recommendations.

The SOSC considers Selection again

The SOSC was expanded and reconstituted following the elections. The new committee had two extra Labour representatives, reflecting their gains in the election, and also a change in Tory personnel. Of three new Conservatives, two were known grammar school supporters, councillors Trevor and MacDowell. Trevor in particular was to play a leading role in the anti-comprehensive campaign. He was described in the local press as a Monday Club supporter and was clearly on the right of the party on most issues. As well as becoming members of the SOSC, he and MacDowell
became Governors of Wallington Boys grammar school. It is apparent that the SOSC statement in April favouring the abolition of selection had caused considerable disquiet among some members of the Tory group. The decision to bring two prominent selectivists onto the SOSC seems to have been a deliberate move to give that faction representation in the hope of mollifying backbench criticism. As a senior Conservative put it, "I wanted them in there. I didn't want to give the impression that we were loading the committee."

The Labour leader was joined by the local paper, in expressing his fears that the issue might become more controversial in the new committee and the more closely contested council. This appeared to be confirmed when Trevor, and another grammar school supporter - a more senior Tory, Councillor Martin - attacked the new comprehensive school, Greenshaw, as a failure. The letters page of the press was full of charge and counter-charge. Greenshaw's headmaster, Hill and Gadd defended the school and Tory leader Taylor publicly rebuked the critics.

Between May and November 1971 the SOSC met twelve times. On the insistence of Trevor and MacDowell the principle of selection was again considered. In addition they discussed the possible patterns of comprehensive education in detail and for the first time received deputations and written submissions from a wide range of groups. Questionnaires were sent out to all the teachers' organisations, PTA and other groups including SAASE. They were each asked whether or not selection should be abolished and if so which pattern they favoured as well as their
views on issues such as co-education, neighbourhood schools and parental choice. 92

This exercise revealed strong feelings on the part of many of the teachers against selection. For the first time the NAHT reported a "substantial majority" in favour of its abolition and they also added that, "the smaller high schools urgently need positive help." 93 The NUT and NAS confirmed their earlier support for this position. 94 Only the Joint Four continued to favour selection. They asked for a return to the eleven plus and argued that reorganisation would produce "inferior opportunities... especially to the able". 95 Dr Walch's sympathies still lay with this latter view but on the SOSC he had to acknowledge that the majority of teachers now appeared to be against selection and he did not vote against its abolition. 96 He and the TCC became more concerned with ensuring that reorganisation was carried out in a way which safeguarded the teachers.

This change of attitude among teachers seemed to stem from three sources. 1. The poorer secondary moderns. Here the heads found it difficult to recruit staff and ordinary teachers were "frustrated", as one put it, by poor facilities, lack of promotion and very few above average ability children.

2. The larger secondary moderns. As another teacher put it, "Schools like Cheam and the Carshaltons were developing a wide range of courses, gaining academic success, rising in prestige in the eyes of parents and they were demanding a fairer share of the brighter children. And they were large schools and carried
a fair number of staff with them."

3. The Primary Schools. Although the eleven plus had been removed primary teachers still felt the constraints and pressures of selection. But as one teacher member of the JOSC put it, "The real pressure was on the primary heads, they faced all sorts of problems with selection. They saw comprehensive education as a possible answer."

The replies from PTAs however favoured the retention of selection. Most held meetings to discuss the issue and fourteen reported a majority supporting selection while eight had a majority for reorganisation.97

Trevor and MacDowell used these figures to back up their case. They argued initially for the retention of all four grammar schools, but if necessary for a super-selective system as a compromise.98

By November 1971, although no clear decisions on a pattern had emerged, Hill argued that a recommendation that selection be abolished should be presented to the council. Trevor was the only JOSC member to vote against, although MacDowell was absent and made it clear he would have done so.99

**Getting the recommendation through Council**

Hill next took the JOSC recommendations to the Conservative group. He stressed the problems with the existing system and, according to a senior Conservative, pointed to "our Conservative neighbours in Merton, Croydon, Surrey and Richmond who had all decided to go comprehensive." Nevertheless he received a rough ride from several right wingers. Trevor and another member of
the SOSC proposed a 'compromise' plan for a super selective system with just two grammar schools. The plan was passed at the meeting by two votes. However this was not enough to become group policy and Hill and Taylor agreed to push ahead with the SOSC recommendations. The group would be allowed a free vote.\textsuperscript{100}

When Hill took them to the education committee the rift, which had already become apparent, between Hill and Trevor grew wider. Trevor and MacDowell raised 86 questions and points of order with the chairman in an attempt to filibuster the issue off the agenda. Hill ignored the questions and pushed ahead with the vote. He received the backing of most of the Conservatives and the recommendation was approved by 14 votes to 3.\textsuperscript{101}

Following the meeting Trevor launched a bitter attack on Hill, accusing him of lying, gagging his opponents and gerrymandering the council's standing orders.\textsuperscript{102}

By this date Sutton had adopted a management committee in line with the move towards corporate management. It was a seven member committee which included opposition representatives and, at the time, four senior Conservatives (Hill was not one of these). All major policy decisions were referred to it. When the SOSC recommendations reached the committee they were approved thus confirming the support of the Conservative leadership.\textsuperscript{103}

At the full council meeting in January 1972, Sutton voted to abolish selection. An amendment by Trevor and MacDowell to retain selection was defeated by 43 votes to 16. Hill was able to count on some solid support, particularly from members of the education committee for whom the appeal to educational opinion
outside the borough seemed more acceptable. The backing of Taylor was also important. However a break down of the vote by party reveals how badly split the Conservatives were, with 16 voting for selection and 15 against. It was only the support of the Labour group and the independents which ensured that the measure was approved. 104

11.5 GROWING OPPOSITION AND THE DEFEAT OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHEME

The Middle School Pattern

The SOSC now began the final stage of deciding which comprehensive pattern to adopt. The all-through pattern had some support from teachers outside, including the head and staff of Greenshaw, but only two members of the committee voted for it. 105 One member noted that, "There was a lot of comment in the papers around that time about the very large schools and disciplinary problems. Horror stories of what goes on in the schools of two thousand plus." In addition members were put off by the large number of building alterations required and the fact that either split site schools would be needed in the short term or reorganisation would need to wait many years.

Hill and Gadd favoured the sixth form college pattern. Gadd's experience in further education was one influence. However, despite being the most senior office holders, they could find few supporters on or off the SOSC. In particular the teachers' organisations were strongly opposed to sixth form colleges. As a senior SOSC member remarked, "It was as a result of strong opinions expressed by teachers' representatives from all the associations that we cast this aside." As well as grammar school teachers staff in the larger secondary moderns
and Greenshaw were particularly reluctant to give up their recently acquired sixth forms. 106

The SOSC took a straight vote between 6th form colleges and middle schools and the latter won by 7 votes to 4. Three Labour representatives, two teachers and the independent were joined by councillor Trevor, the only Conservative to vote for this pattern. 107 A majority of the Labour group had favoured a middle school pattern for several years. They claimed to have been influenced by the Plowden report and the general trend among educationalists. However, they were also influenced by teachers. At least one member of the Sutton Labour Party was a teacher in Merton. A Labour member of the SOSC remarked, "We knew a few teachers from Merton.... They came along with stories of how well things were going there and that helped us decide."

The teachers' representatives on the SOSC were also influenced by Merton. They visited a number of schools there and, unlike the adverse reactions this created in Richmond, as one of them put it, "I was very impressed." By this time two purpose-built middle schools had opened in Merton and the system had settled down. In addition, the teachers on the SOSC were reflecting wider opinions in Sutton. The NAHT reported "a large majority" in favour of a middle school pattern and although there was considerable support for the other patterns in the NUT, the middle schools came out on top. 108

In addition, as a senior SOSC Conservative noted, "The officers generally liked the middle school scheme." Back in
1966 Evans had expressed his view that this pattern fitted the buildings in Sutton and this again came across to SOSC members. In addition one SOSC member said it was clear that the chief inspector "was enthusiastic about middle schools at that time." Once again the Merton influence may have been at work. The CEOs of Merton, Sutton, Croydon and Kingston met regularly, informally over a meal and a senior Conservative remarked, "I think Evans became fairly keen through his contacts with Greenwood, and Croydon was moving that way."

Finally although sixth form colleges were their first choice, Hill and Gadd also liked middle schools and became very enthusiastic backers of that pattern once the SOSC had come to their decision. Together with the officers they realised that in the light of the existing stock of buildings this pattern was well suited to Sutton. In particular smaller secondary modern schools could become middle schools and avoid the problem of either having to close them (which would depress them still further in the short term) or carry out substantial improvements. The larger high schools including the grammar schools would then become 13 to 18 schools. However they were also well aware that this pattern had many educational benefits and was highly regarded among educationalists, many of whom they encountered in their work outside the borough. One interviewee is worth quoting at length on this. When asked why the SOSC chose a middle school pattern he replied, "Thinking at that time. That is something which is so important. At that time
people like Alec Clegg were saying 9 to 13 middle schools....

Now (1979), nobody in his right mind would go for them. When you look at education you must look at this aspect, what was the thinking AT THAT TIME. Someone preaches a gospel, and you get a few disciples who take it up and put into practice, and then others say we'd better go and look at so and so, and people write articles about it, and give talks on it and it gets off the ground. It certainly doesn't come from the top, it comes from all sorts of people in education and between local authorities as well."

Other proposals made by the SOSC at this time included dividing the borough up into two zones for the transfer of children. Each zone would include two co-educational and two single sex 13 to 18 high schools. This meant that in the Wallington and Carshalton area two existing single sex schools would need to become mixed. Under the Labour leaders' urgings it was proposed that the Wallington grammar schools became co-educational in order to avoid any hidden selection for these schools on the grounds of single sex provision. Also Hill and Gadd joined the Labour group in recommending by 6 votes to 5, that no more direct grant and independent school places be taken up by the authority. Selection was to cease in 1975 and the scheme phased in over the next two years. 110

These decisions were reported to the education committee, made available to the press, and sent to various interested groups. They were called 'provisional proposals' and the SOSC

("Alec Clegg was on the ABC executive with Alderman Hill at that time)
invited written observations which were to be considered before
final recommendations were drawn up to be sent to the council.

The Opposition Campaign is Launched

There was opposition from within Tory ranks from the time
of the first proposal to set up the SOSC. However, following
the November 1971 decision to end selection this opposition
began to take on a more organised form.

The main leadership in the campaign was undoubtedly provided
by councillor Trevor, aided by MacDowell and Martin111 (a more
senior Conservative and chairman of social services). In a
front page article in the local press Trevor claimed that,
"the comprehensive system is being pressed upon the public by
communists and their agents".112 In a letter published in the
same issue MacDowell stated that a majority of teachers and
parents opposed the scheme.113 They issued a rallying call
to all defenders of the grammar schools and Trevor began
collecting signatures for a petition.

A number of organisations emerged to take on the campaign.
Although they began life separately they soon started to overlap
in membership and adopt a common strategy. One organisation
known as Selection Makes Sense (SMS) was formed at a meeting
at Trevor's house in January 1972 and a former Conservative
councillor was elected chairman.114 Another, the Sutton
Education Association (SEA) was set up as a branch of the
NEA which had been formed in Richmond. Other organisations
were formed at three of the four grammar schools (it never
got off the ground at Nonsuch). Hill made it clear that teachers were not to become involved in opposing council policy. As a result separate parents' associations were set up at these schools although they often had the same membership as the parents' side of the official PTAs. The teachers adopted varying attitudes towards Hill's order of non-involvement and some were clearly working behind the scenes. Pupils also became involved and a row broke out in the council when it was learnt that they were being used to take campaign literature home to their parents.

The largest and most vociferous of these school based organisations was the Wallington High School for Boys Parents Association (WHSEPA). Its chairman was one Captain Gwilym Lewis-Jones, a retired navy officer, active member of the Croydon Conservative Party (he didn't actually live in Sutton) and future Conservative Greater London Councillor. As one of the anti-comprehensive campaigners remarked, "The Wallington Boys was the most successful campaign without a doubt because it was the best organised. Captain Lewis-Jones....mounted it like a military operation." In addition while the head teachers of Sutton Manor (Dr Waloh) and Wallington Girls kept their distance from the campaigns at their schools, the same was not true of the head of Wallington Boys. As one of the campaigners admitted, "The head supported us all the way. Not publicly but as near publicly as he dared." Finally the WHSEPA had the advantage that councillors Trevor and MacDowell were members of the
school's governing body. At an education committee meeting they attempted to remove all the other governors of the school who supported reorganisation but failed.\textsuperscript{118} By the time the SOSC asked for observations on the comprehensive plan the WHSPA claimed over one thousand members and submitted a strident condemnation of the entire scheme.\textsuperscript{119}

However the comprehensive opponents had also made important gains in the Conservative group by then. In May 1972 Alderman Taylor stood down as leader. In the contest to replace him attempts were made to persuade Alderman Gadd to stand as a candidate. Although education was never an overt issue, one Conservative remarked "it was never stated but it was there, below the surface, as one element." In the end the leadership went, as expected, to the previous deputy councillor Cox. He was not particularly interested in education but he was a grammar school sympathiser and had voted against the abolition of selection. As deputy leader the group elected one of the anti-comprehensive campaigners, Councillor Martin. Following these elections Alderman Gadd was replaced as vice-chairman of education, to his considerable displeasure.\textsuperscript{120}

The Struggle to get the Middle School Plan through the Council

In August the CEO presented a report to the SOSC summarising and commenting on the observations received to the reorganisation proposals. It seems that Hill had worked closely with Evans in deciding the tone of the report. It began, "The majority of the objections to the sub-committee's proposals are concerned with the education of the more able children and come, in the
main, from parents of children who have been 'selected' by the present procedure for places in grammar schools." 121 The CEO went on to comment that these objections, "have nothing new to add to arguments already considered and taken into account before the recommendation to discontinue selection by ability. It was felt than that the proposals would not hold back bright children." He went on to quote evidence from a summary of recent research on comprehensive education contained in the journal *Education.*

There was some criticism of the middle school pattern with preference going to all-through schools. Again the CEO felt the specific points had already been dealt with. There were strong protests from the Wallington grammar schools at the proposal that they become co-educational. The logic of this proposal remained unchallenged however and the CEO again quoted evidence that "mixed schools have the advantage" over single sex. The only substantial area in which the report commented that the SOSC "may wish to meet the objection" was over the decision to stop taking up direct grant and independent places. The CEO felt that 50 places would only have a "marginal effect" on intake to the comprehensive schools. Ironically this was an issue on which there had been very little criticism except from individuals. Nevertheless Evans chose to quote from one of these, "Whether we admit it or not, it is this percentage which is going to provide the country with its executives, managers and leaders." 123

The SOSC considered these observations, as well as the reaction of their own parties and re-affirmed the basic proposals for a middle school comprehensive pattern. However the co-educational
proposal for Wallington schools was dropped by 5 votes to 3 and the independent and direct-grant places were re-instated and increased from 36 to 50. On this issue Hill reversed his previous vote giving a 6 to 5 majority against the original proposal. The former decision was almost certainly for fear that opposition to mixed schooling might jeopardise reorganisation. The latter was equally clearly a sop to opinion within the Tory group rather than reaction outside, although the CEO apparently favoured this policy also.

The SEC recommendations went to the education committee in September where an amendment to re-introduce the co-educational plan for Wallington was accepted. This was proposed by the Labour leader but also received the support of Trevor. As one interviewee commented, "It was in his interests to stir up as much opposition as possible." The amended plan was passed by the education and management committees.

The anti-comprehensive campaign condemned the middle school plan and Trevor attacked the way the CEO had handled the objections. The HSPFA was particularly vociferous. In a letter to Hill Captain Lewis-Jones claimed the views of his organisation had been ignored and declared "we intend to submit our case to the full council" and organise, "active opposition......on a considerable scale." At the full council meeting the anti-comprehensive faction recorded their first victory when after a heated debate, the entire recommendation was "referred back" by 32 votes to 26. A large majority of Tories voted for the reference back including
the new leader Cox, and some members of the education committee and the SOSC who had previously supported it. Only four Conservatives (including Hill and Gadd) opposed this move.

Some of this opposition was based on the middle school pattern, rather than the comprehensive principle. The leader of the independents declared that this was his reason for voting against the plan. However it clearly reflected the worries of many Conservatives about the entire scheme. There seems little doubt that the new leadership were crucial in persuading Conservatives who had previously backed Hill and Gadd, to at least refer the plan back to see if some compromise could be worked out. The vote was heralded as a victory by the grammar school supporters who claimed it reflected public opinion expressed through campaigns such as SEA, SMS and the WHSHPA. The editorial in the Sutton and Chess Advertiser commented that it showed "that a well planned, co-ordinated campaign by an interested faction can still win the day." When the SOSC reconsidered the plan in November, Trevor attempted to re-open the basic issue of selection. Hill overruled him pointing out that the council had already approved its abolition. The only areas opened to discussion were the pattern and details of the scheme. Three specific compromise proposals were considered.

1. To replace the middle school pattern with an all-through pattern. This was thought to be more palatable to grammar school supporters, probably because it would take longer to implement and be easier to reverse. However the SOSC voted 8 to 4 to retain
the middle school pattern, with Hill and Gadd firmly backing it.

2. To increase drastically the number of direct grant and independent places taken up. This proposal was backed strongly by the new leader Cox. He suggested 100 or even 200 places annually, representing 5 and 10 per cent of the intake respectively. The CEO reported that this form of super-selection would have serious consequences for the ability range left. Furthermore it would be very expensive. When in full operation 100 places annually for five or seven years would cost over £200,000, Evans calculated. Although savings could be made in the maintained sector they would probably be less than half this figure. It was partly this economic argument which persuaded Cox to drop the idea, but also opposition from some grammar schools. Hill showed the SOC a letter signed by the headmistress and staff of Nonsuch grammar school strongly opposing this move.

3. A longer phasing in period. A proposal that some selection be retained during the 1975 to 1977 period was seriously considered but eventually also rejected.

Thus the same recommendations, including the co-educational plans for Wallington, were forwarded to the education committee where they were approved\(^{134}\) and sent on to the management committee. This committee contained no Conservative members of the education committee and was essentially controlled by the leadership of Cox and Martin. They noted that the proposals were unchanged and decided to amend the scheme themselves. Without even the help of a report from the education department they substituted an all-through pattern with a long phasing-in period retaining
selection until 1979.  

Hill attacked this decision as "irresponsible". It was ridiculous he argued, that a committee with no educational expertise could overturn in two hours a plan it had taken two years to develop. At this point the Conservatives were in considerable disarray. A majority were opposed to abolishing the grammar schools but not enough to impose a whip on the rest, and not enough to prevent them, in alliance with Labour, getting a plan through. On the other hand the Tory comprehensive supporters could not agree on the details of the scheme.

Facing a situation of continued deadlock and delay Hill decided to compromise. At the council meeting in January 1973 he offered an amended version of the middle school plan as an alternative to the management committee proposals (which he was able to show were actually unworkable). The main change he offered was a considerably longer phasing in period in which the four grammar schools and Greenshaw would continue to receive a selective intake, first at eleven and then at thirteen years of age, until 1981. In addition he dropped the co-educational proposals for the Wallington schools. As a result of heavy lobbying he managed to persuade twelve Tories to support him. From the early days the Labour group had decided to remain firmly behind any genuine comprehensive plan. Therefore although some members didn't like the middle school pattern and many disliked both of the compromise moves, the entire group voted for Hill's proposal. The scheme was passed by 35 votes to 21 and submitted to the Secretary of State, Margaret Thatcher.
Continued Opposition

In February section 13 notices were published which allowed two months for any objections to the scheme to reach the DES. This signalled a big increase in the activities of the various anti-comprehensive pressure groups. Although the campaigns based around individual schools were ostensibly separate it was clear that they were now coordinated with the SMS campaign. Leaflets issued by the WHSEPA, The Parents Association of Sutton Manor HSB and The Association for the Retention of Wellington HSG, were almost identical. The leaflets, distributed to thousands of parents, referred to grammar schools being "destroyed" and warned that the education of children would "suffer....for over ten years." They claimed that the scheme would add "over £5 million (at least) to the rates", and that teachers in the borough opposed the middle school scheme because it would reduce GCE O level preparation time from 5 to 3 years. The SMS campaign made a particular point of attacking the middle school pattern in leaflets aimed at parents of primary school children. They argued that it would be disruptive because it affected every school in the borough, involved an increase in the number of changes of school a child would go through and that middle schools would necessitate an increase in travelling for young children. This tends to add weight to the opinion that Trevor voted for the middle school pattern on the SOSC because he thought it would be easier to campaign against. Parents were asked to sign a petition objecting to the plan which would be sent to the Secretary of State. In addition
'parents' meetings' which were widely advertised as providing 'information' on the scheme turned out to be campaigning meetings run by the plan's opponents. There was also a demonstration organised to coincide with the last education committee meeting of the council year in which protesters chanted "Hill out" and "Hill must go". When the customary vote of thanks for the chairman's efforts was proposed, Trevor opposed it saying his chairmanship had been "appalling".

The SMS campaign came under attack from Labour, Conservatives and outside bodies. SAASE accused the campaigners of deliberately confusing the middle school pattern with the comprehensive principle. They were stirring up parents against the particular pattern and details of the scheme and then claiming them as opponents of the comprehensive principle, SAASE argued. SAASE organised its own petition for an end to selection and formed a new organisation, Support Educational Non-Selection (SENSE). Labour attacked the SMS campaigners' tactics as "deliberately designed to worry parents" and failing to debate the merits of middle schools seriously. It was Hill who led the bitterest attacks. He called the campaign "false and misleading" and "a terrible distortion of the facts". The £5 million figure was "ridiculous", he said pointing out that the authority obtained an independent estimate of £2 million and in any case the bulk of that would need to be spent on improvements within a selective system. The organisers of the campaign were a small "politically motivated group" who had "no real interest in education". They
were "the enemies of progress", he said.  

By now this had also become a personal feud between Hill and Trevor. Trevor accused the chairman of "dictatorship", disregarding the views of parents and being "frightened of the truth." Hill said Trevor was largely responsible for the "solicious and irresponsible campaign."  

In early April the campaign reached its climax and 18 petitions against the scheme were ceremoniously taken up and presented to Mrs Thatcher. Trevor claimed that his organisation collected 40,000 signatures, including 17 Tory councillors and thousands of Labour and Liberal voters. Over 75% of people asked to sign had done so, he said. Lewis-Jones of the WHSEPA claimed 26,000 signatures for their petition alone and that the total number of signatures was over 86,000. This represented over half the entire population of the borough, which had a school population of only 25,000 (3½ parents per child).  

Hill said the petitions were 'a joke' which included many duplicated signatures and the true figure was more like 4,000. However the rival SENSE petition was not a success. It was poorly organised and rather late getting started and was never actually presented. Councillor Martin could realistically dismiss it as "puddy". SASE had clearly modelled their campaign on the Richmond example. However the grammar school organisations were much stronger in Sutton and, as a Labour member remarked, "we never had the same intellectual middle class that they had in Richmond, or the media contacts."

The disproportionate amount of campaigning against the

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scheme in the Carshalton and Wallington area of the borough was reflected in a motion passed by the Carshalton Conservative Constituency Association that they would fight the next local election on a platform of retention of the grammar schools. This was remarkable evidence of the split in Tory ranks which the issue had caused. A council controlled by the Conservatives had just approved a comprehensive plan pioneered by a Conservative chairman of education and being considered by a Conservative Secretary of State. And yet the Constituency Association which controlled half the borough voted to campaign against that decision.

At the Conservative group meeting prior to the annual council meeting in May 1973, Alderman Hill was replaced as chairman of the education committee. This move was expected, Hill had been due to stand down the previous year but had insisted on staying on to see the comprehensive plan through. However it had obvious political undertones and clearly delighted many of Hill's opponents. The choice of his successor marked the beginning of the closing of Tory ranks on the issue. Cox asked a councillor who was not a member of the education committee and had no previous experience of education to take over. When interviewed, the new chairman described the situation in the following way. "The controlling party were rather at sixes and sevens....The chairman had not been getting on with the leader....It was decided to change the chairman and I was asked if I'd take it on. I said yes but not pretending to know anything at all about it....I liked the idea of grammar schools, it was
a set up I'd been brought up in but I was going to wait to see what Mrs Thatcher had to say"

Partial Rejection

There followed a few months in which the issue began to subside from its prominent position in local affairs. Then, in January 1974, came what the Sutton and Cheam Advertiser headlined the "Bombshell Decision". Mrs Thatcher accepted the proposed changes to all schools except the two Wallington grammar schools. The reply which was sent from schools branch I of the DES stated, "The Secretary of State has reached these decisions after very careful consideration of all the relevant facts, the views expressed by local government electors and the Authority's observations on the objections received. She has had regard to the desirability of preserving, wherever possible, existing opportunities to parents and children. In her view the balance of educational advantage lies in enabling the Wallington High School for Boys and the Wallington High School for Girls to continue in their present form".

Mrs Thatcher's decision was not particularly surprising. It fitted in with her policy of refusing to consider comprehensive schemes as a whole, rejecting changes to individual grammar schools and promoting co-existence. As usual the schools she reprieved were those with high reputations around which a vociferous and well organised campaign of support had been built. The Wallington grammar schools were a little more prestigious and academically successful than Sutton Manor. In fact Trevor
launched an attack on the Sutton grammar school accusing it of being badly run and not keeping up its standard. In addition the campaigns around the "allington schools were undoubtedly more visible and more successful in gaining evidence of support through petitions and membership of organisations.

There were many reasons for the disproportionate success of the "allington campaign including leadership, organisation and the backing of the Conservative Constituency Party. However one less obvious, structural factor should also be considered. If part of the ideological opposition to reorganisation in Sutton was the desire for social exclusiveness and worries about the effects of social integration, then the "allington and Carshalton area would be expected to generate greater opposition. The analysis and tables in section 11.1 above showed that this area contained greater social and political contrasts than the Sutton and Cheam area. Several interviewees backed up this argument.

"The children on St Helier don't get many selective places.....they go to the local high school. They've almost a self contained community. That would be less true under a comprehensive system."

Interviewer: "And do you think that influenced the campaign. Interviewee: "Yes, I do." (Conservative councillor)

"I could see people in "allington feeling they'd be swamped by Roundshaw on the one hand and St Helier on the other."

(Senior Conservative)
"There is no doubt about it, there is a very big difference between the Sutton Conservative Party and the Wallington and Carshalton which was always more political in a way, probably because of the more marginal situation there. . . . The Sutton and Cheam area is socially more mixed up, whereas you've got this tremendous block of St Helier so the Wallington people felt more threatened by the idea of comprehensive education. . . . It's not really about education, it's about social exclusiveness." (Labour councillor)

There is an additional factor which may have influenced Mrs Thatcher. It seems likely that she would have been aware of the divisions within the Conservative ranks in Sutton and the fact that the new leadership and the new chairman of education had opposed the scheme. She may well have wanted to show support for this new leadership.

Nevertheless her decision threw both sides into some confusion. The pro-grammar school lobby applauded the decision on the Wallington schools - councillor Martin claimed Mrs Thatcher had responded to an "overwhelming expression of grassroots expression (sic)." However they were disappointed that the other two grammar schools had not been reprieved and were uncertain how to react. The comprehensive lobby put a brave face on it, Labour's spokeswoman called it "quite a major step forward" and they were obviously keen to press ahead with the approved reforms. Hill's immediate reaction was less compromising. He called Mrs Thatcher's decision "stupid and incomprehensible."

The CEO prepared a report on the options now open to the council. These were: 1. to accept the Secretary of State’s decision as it stood and operate two 11 to 18 grammar schools alongside
a middle school scheme; 2. to change the age of selection for
the Wallington schools to 13; or 3. to reconsider other options
for the remaining schools, in particular the 11 to 18 or 6th
form college patterns, which would keep the age of transfer at
eleven.

The parties' positions were thrashed out at group meetings
in February. Labour called for adherence to Mrs Thatcher's
decision, implementation of the middle school system and a change
in the age of selection to the Wallington grammar schools to
thirteen. The Conservatives attempted to avoid the previous
splits in their ranks. Hill and Gadd were persuaded to lead a
compromise move in which the middle school system was abandoned
altogether in return for serious consideration being given to
a sixth form college scheme, for the rest of the borough. Hill
and Gadd, (who, it may be remembered, originally favoured this
pattern of reorganisation in the SOSC) proposed and seconded this
proposal in the education committee.

However when the recommendation came to the council in
March Hill completely reversed his position and proposed an
amendment that the entire issue be referred back to the education
committee for reconsideration. Hill claimed he had been
inundated with appeals from parents since the education committee
meeting. But the crucial event between these meetings was
surely the election of a Labour Government and the invitation
to re-submit plans rejected by Mrs Thatcher. He hoped to
revive the alliance between pro-comprehensive Tories and the
Labour group. However he was joined by only one other
Conservative, the amendment was defeated by 28 votes to 24 and the middle school scheme thrown out.  

The CEO was asked to produce a report including two possible schemes for the rest of the borough. One was a sixth form college pattern and the other a combination of 11 to 16 and 11 to 18 schools with transfer from the former to the latter for sixth form work. At the next ESSC meeting these reports were presented. However no decision was made, partly to give time to consult the teachers but mainly because the local elections were looming up. As a senior Conservative put it, these deliberations were really, "just a holding operation until after the elections."

The Election and its Aftermath

Once more comprehensive education was a prominent issue in the election campaign. The Labour Party wanted the full middle school scheme revived and re-submitted to the Labour Government. The Conservatives said the Wallington grammar schools would be retained and that for the rest of the borough, "The council will consider all the alternatives but is looking first at the possibility of sixth form colleges." The Sutton Head Teachers' Association entered the debate with a published letter to the chairman of education calling the latest plans "disastrous" and claiming that education in the borough was "suffering from indecision...and irresponsible temporary decisions", which made it difficult to attract staff. Although it is unlikely that this issue influenced many voters it clearly affected the composition of the new council.
The Carshalton and Wallington Conservatives adopted as new candidates only those people willing to support the retention of all four grammar schools. A senior Conservative commented, "They tried to deny this, but I know it happened. You were interviewed by the selection committee and if you didn't come up with the right answer you weren't selected."

The national swing to the Conservatives since 1971 produced a group of 15 new Tory councillors. A senior Conservative who was not centrally involved in the comprehensive issue at the time, complained, "You got a lot of people elected who felt very strongly on this issue and nothing else, and the council was a much more inferior body because of that. For much of that council's term you could see people dividing up on issues far removed from education according to what bloody education lobby they were in. It was a really frightening situation. If the leader of the pro-selection group went one way, then all his people went with him."

Several of these anti-comprehensivists were rewarded with seats on the education committee and the whole character of the committee changed. The same senior Conservative remarked, "'e used to have people on the education committee who were actually involved in education, but not now." And another Conservative commented, "It became the policy not to put on the education committee anyone who knew anything about education." The views of a senior Labour councillor are also worth quoting. "In the years of Hill and Gadd we had proper discussions of education
....But after them they deliberately chose chairmen who didn't know the first thing about education and were quite proud to boast they didn't know. People that were interested in education were kept off because they might be seduced by the ideas, they might become dangerous. Discussion simply ceased in educational terms and it became a political slanging match."

The anti-comprehensive moves continued in the Aldermanic elections. Hill saw the writing on the wall and announced that he would not be seeking re-election. He attacked the "right-wing extremists" in the party who were "playing around with the lives of children. I do not want to be associated with them," he said. Alderman Gadd who still had hopes for a sixth form college pattern for some of the borough decided to stand but he was defeated. "I guess you can judge the reason why" he told the press. In all, a senior Conservative recalled, "Two councillors resigned and three Aldermen resigned or were defeated over this issue. There was an absolutely poisonous atmosphere in the group." Two of the Aldermanic seats went to prominent anti-comprehensivists including the Chairman of the SEA.

The final differences within the Tory ranks were settled at a group meeting soon after the elections. The leader Cox put the case for retaining just the two grammar schools. This was partly a positive advocacy of a super-selective system but also apparently because he feared increased pressures from the Labour Government. "I would rather have two grammar schools
than none", he argued. But the new right wingers ensured a clear majority for retaining all four grammar schools. At the ENIC meeting in June (at which the receipt of circular 4/74 was noted) the Conservatives requested Evans to prepare a plan for the future of secondary education in Sutton. The plan was to be consistent with three criteria:

1. The age of transfer should be eleven.
2. There was to be no further consideration of sixth form colleges and 3. "The four academic high schools should continue in their present form." 173

When the decision was affirmed by the council voting was on strict party lines. 174

The seeds of this overwhelming victory for the pure bipartite selectivists were sown over the period from 1972. The change of leadership (which two Conservatives described as, "absolutely crucial" and "without a doubt....important"), the replacement of Hill as chairman, the vociferous anti-comprehensive campaign and the decision to select grammar school supporters in Wallington and Carshalton all took place before Mrs Thatcher made her decision known. Although that decision was clearly important it is clear that even if she had approved the entire middle school scheme a very strong effort would have been made to overturn it. With the increased Conservative majority after May 1974 it seems likely that effort would have been successful.

In November 1974 Evans announced his resignation to take up the position of Secretary to the Girls Public Day School Trust. He had never been a committed comprehensivist but he
had put a lot of effort and professional expertise into the middle school scheme and he was clearly upset at the political manouevreing which defeated it. As a senior Conservative remarked, "There is no doubt that he left over this (comprehensive) business."

11.6 CONTINUED RESISTANCE

In September and October 1974 Evans presented plans for developing a selective system of 11 to 18 schools. He recommended that in the short term expenditure be concentrated on the poorer secondary schools in order to, "make the schools more acceptable both to parents and teachers,." In the long term however the council would probably need to close at least two of these schools. A new selection procedure was proposed. A clear distinction was drawn between the selective and non-selective sectors. The former included the four grammar schools but also two selective forms of entry to the 'comprehensive' school, Greenshaw, and the Church of England school, Wilson's. Eleven-plus style examinations were re-introduced as the basic criteria for determining entry to this selective sector. However not all children had to take the tests and parents had to opt into the selection system. Those parents who opted in indicated two sets of teacher-guided preferences, one for selective schools and one for non-selective. Those parents who did not opt in only made preferences between the non-selective schools. Following the examinations children were allocated to one of the two sectors and then to schools within that sector according to the teacher-guided preferences as far as was possible.
Following consultations these proposals were approved with minor amendments and the new procedure came into effect in 1975.

In December 1974 a formal reply to circular 4/74 was sent off. Despite the forthright views of the new Tory group the reply adopted a similar style to the earlier replies to circular 10/65. The authority stressed the need for improvements to the smaller secondary modern schools in order to develop a full system of 11 to 18 schools which were compatible with an all-through comprehensive pattern. In the last paragraph they stated that selection would not be eliminated "at this stage" but that a decision on this would be taken on completion of the first stage of improvements. 177

On April 1st 1975 Mr Melville took up the renamed post of Director of Education. He had previously been D/E in Roxboroughshire in Scotland and before that in the Edinburgh education department. In the latter he had been involved in planning a reorganisation scheme which was implemented very gradually over ten years. In Roxboroughshire he administered a fully comprehensive system. Nevertheless he could not fail to be aware of the situation in Sutton and was obviously prepared to adopt a conciliator style. He apparently made this clear in his interview. A senior Labour councillor explained, "The candidates were asked, if you had a strong opinion on something and the members wanted to do something else what would you do. One man said 'I'd strongly advise', Melville said 'Well my job is to carry out your wishes'......I voted for the other man."
On June 18th a meeting took place, at the Minister's request, between two officers, the chairman of education and Cox from Sutton and the Secretary of State, Fred Mulley. Mulley began by stressing his intention to end selection, if necessary by legislation. Cox explained that Sutton wanted to establish by 1980 nine 6 form entry high schools "which could, if necessary, be organised as comprehensive schools." Mulley however insisted on a "decision in principle now" on ending selection. He was "not unsympathetic to the view that, in a period of financial difficulty....the time-table authorities were forced to adopt ....will be more extended." But the necessary financial allocations would only be made if "an overall plan for comprehensive education were adopted by your Authority." 178

Following the meeting a formal letter from Mulley was received outlining his demands.179 A reply to this was discussed in the Education Committee. The chairman suggested sticking to the conciliatory style and stressing that upgrading the poorer schools was "in no way incompatible with a full comprehensive system" for the future. This was attacked from the Labour side as "dishonest verbiage" but also from the right wing Conservatives who argued that the letter should set out more clearly the council's policy not to abolish selection by ability.180 The management committee decided to draft a letter which was rather closer to this view. In it they declared that "it would be inappropriate and premature to take a decision even in principle on the ending of selection." Any attempt to deprive the authority of funds they pointed out, would "affect adversely
the standards of education", particularly in the poorer secondary schools. 181

Mulley's reply was short and sharp. "I regret very much that we cannot reach agreement....I cannot accept that any selective system...can ever offer true equality of opportunity and can ever be anything but divisive." 182 Meanwhile in November the Labour Government announced its intentions to introduce legislation to enforce reorganisation on recalcitrant authorities.

Developments in the System.

During the 1970-74 Conservative Government Sutton had obtained approval for major building or PASELA projects to improve Wallington Foys, Nonsuch, Wilson's C of E, St Philomena's C.C. (which was granted aided status), Carshalton Boys and Girls and Cheam. 183 These were all to complete developments to the selective, denominational or larger secondary modern schools and effectively increased the inequalities between these and the smaller secondary moderns.

The Labour Government rejected Sutton's early building proposals but from 1976 onwards approval was given for major projects to Stanley Park and Sutton Common (subsequently renamed Glenthorne) of the smaller schools. 184 In addition John Fisher Roman Catholic School gained aided status and was included in the 1976/77 special programme of reorganisation projects and St Philomena's gained further improvements in the 1977/8 programme (see chapter 5, pp 163-164).

In 1975 Wilson's was established as a 4 form entry school
in Sutton. Despite the claim that the school was a comprehensive
it had two selective forms of entry one form entirely chosen
by the governors and just one non-selective form. Furthermore
the headmaster interviewed all the boys whether selective or
not and had a final say on whether to take them.\footnote{185} It was
clear from the start that he intended to retain the grammar
school character of the school. The school’s prospectus states,
"The school provides courses of instruction for boys who intend
to enter university or to pursue professional, technical or
business careers. Two years in the VI form are regarded as
an integral part of the course and parents are asked to
contract to keep a boy at the school for the full seven years... The school is open to boys of good character and promise."
\footnote{186}
Another head teacher from the borough claimed that "Wilson’s
school, "Caters for able children only.....It's still living
in the 19th century. The headmaster told me he would go indepen-
dent rather than become truly comprehensive.....It's now the
most prestigious school in the borough."

Sutton still hoped to bring a girls Church of England
school into the borough as they had originally planned. They
found a school which was eager to come. It too was an aided
grammar school in ILEA. Again it was supposed to be coming
as a comprehensive school. This time however the Labour
controlled DES rejected the plan completely.\footnote{187} A senior
Conservative on the education committee at the time commented
rather tellingly, "We tried to bring.....another fine Church
of England grammar school into the borough but we weren't allowed to."

As a result of these changes an even clearer hierarchy of secondary schools could be detected by interested and knowledgeable parents. Many interviewees acknowledged this. One teacher was quite specific, "The borough has a pecking order of schools, Wilson's above the grammar schools, then the four grammar schools, then the Roman Catholic schools and Greenshaw, then the two large Carshaltons, then Cheam and then the rest and the attitude in that they can take the rubbish and I think that's appalling." He could also have differentiated the two other single sex secondary moderns, Sutton Common and Glastonbury, which were more popular than the remaining five. The fact that this 'pecking order' has some basis in the academic records of the schools is shown in the last two columns of table 11.5, (only one of the denominational schools was maintained at that stage).

The Allocation Revolt

In the mid 1970s the dissatisfaction with selection and in particular the standard of the five smaller secondary moderns broke out into an open revolt. It was not a widespread organised campaign but centred around a few vociferous, mainly middle class parents who were prepared to fight against the allocation of their children to these schools.

It first manifested itself in the increasing number of appeals against allocation (table 11.6). As a last resort it is always possible, for any parent who feels aggrieved at the school they have been allocated to appeal to the Secretary of State
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of School</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Population 1973/4</th>
<th>O' level Passes 1973/4</th>
<th>O' levels as % of Population</th>
<th>A' level passes 1975</th>
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<td>623</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>192</td>
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<tr>
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<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>638</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>878</td>
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<tr>
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<td>R.C.</td>
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<td>Sutton West</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highview</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>393</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>404</td>
<td>54</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaynesford</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>709</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Park</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
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<td>9</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sutton Education Department document
Table 11.6 Appeals against Allocation to High Schools in Sutton

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Appeals</th>
<th>Appeals as % of no. in allocation process</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late 1960s</td>
<td>180-190</td>
<td>Under 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>273</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>338</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N/A = Not available

Source: Sutton Education Department, 'Allocation to High Schools', various years

against the LEAs decision. In general and in Sutton up to 1972 this was very rarely used. However in 1973 in Sutton the parents of eleven children used this final line of appeal and in 1974 the figure jumped to 27.

That summer dissatisfied parents formed a pressure group known as the Sutton Children and Parents Association for School Allocation (SCPASA) and agreed to withhold their children from school when term started in September. The group had very narrow aims, they simply wanted a school of their choice, (not necessarily first choice) for their children. Although selection was at the heart of most of their grievances this was not a pro-comprehensive campaign and they refused to identify themselves with that cause. As one of the Labour leaders put it, "They were only interested in their own children, not the principle." The driving force behind SCPASA in its early days
was a Mr. G. Parkinson, a probation officer and part-time journalist and playwright. He was able to secure good media coverage for the campaign and the group's case was featured on the Thames Television programme 'Today'.

The debate was intensified by a statement from a previous headmaster of one of the poorer schools, who had moved to Merton (see page 300). He revealed that in his letter of resignation to the education committee he had stated that he believed his school and four others to be "below acceptable standards", and warning them of increasing allocation problems in the future. The same issue was taken up by the ex-chairman Hill who, in a letter to the local paper spoke of Sutton's 'twilight schools' and claimed the authority was "in danger of becoming an educational cesspit".

The paper also reported that Sutton and Cheam's Conservative MP was to make a visit to Sutton West school because of over one hundred letters he had received from parents complaining about low standards and opportunities.

Most of the children withheld from schools under the SCPASA campaign were either re-allocated, sometimes to schools outside the borough, or eventually went to the schools originally allocated. However in September 1975 the revolt grew. The paper reported parents of over 60 children who were prepared to withhold them from school. This time SCPASA set up an alternative school in Wallington. The 'rebel school' was the subject of an article in *The Observer* which drew a direct relationship between the failure to reorganise and the allocation problems.
in 1976 the SCPASA were again featured in a Thames television programme.\footnote{195} The rebel school continued to operate for the next three years. In 1976 it opened with 19 children, in 1977 it rose again to 26 and in 1978 the figure was 18.

Throughout this period the Director of Education became the authority’s main line of defence after the chairman of education refused to comment or became involved in the public debate. Selville tried, with some success, to defuse the issue by setting up an ’educational clinic’ to handle complaints and advise parents. In addition he told the press that these allocation problems were unconnected with reorganisation and would still have arisen under a comprehensive system.\footnote{196} Although there was some truth in this the two were clearly connected to the extent that the failure to carry out sufficient improvements was largely the consequence of the constraints imposed in the 1960s by the DES on authorities which were not reorganising. Furthermore, as Hill pointed out, the middle school scheme would have made use of the smaller secondary moderns as middle schools and thus avoided the most serious status differences.\footnote{197}

Reaction to the 1976 Act

Early in 1976 the Education Bill was introduced into Parliament. In March the Conservative’s education spokesman, St John Stevas, spoke at a by-election meeting in Carshalton. He condemned the Act, defended the grammar school and urged Sutton to do everything within the law to resist reorganisation.\footnote{198}
leader, Councillor Robin Squire. He was a former Chairman of the Greater London Young Conservatives, only 31 years old and a prospective Parliamentary candidate for Hornchurch, for whom he was subsequently elected an M.P. in the 1979 general election. He was on the 'liberal' wing of the party in Sutton. He had voted for an end to selection although against the middle school scheme on its first vote in council. Nevertheless the group still contained a clear majority of comprehensive opponents and the new chairman and vice-chairman of education were strong grammar school supporters. The group settled its basic attitude towards the 1976 Act early on. They were able to unite behind a policy which included the following:

1. They would make it clear that they did not like being compelled by law to reorganise.
2. They would comply with the law. "We weren't going to do a Clay Cross," one of them remarked.
3. They would do everything within the law to ensure that they were not rushed into reorganising. They would only produce plans for 'a good comprehensive scheme', by which they meant, in particular that the change over to a comprehensive system would occur only when all the buildings were 'ready' and all preparations had been completed. 199

In order to interpret this policy in the light of specific events, a senior Conservative explained, "We set up a small group of (the leader), the chairman and vice-chairman which served as an initial contact point for officers who were trying to form the reports. You don't tell officers how to write the
reports but they want some indications."

On November 24th 1976 Sutton received a letter from the Secretary of State, Mrs Williams. Under Section 2 (i) of the Act she required the council to prepare and submit plans "giving effect to the comprehensive principle" by 24th May 1977.200

As requested, in January Melville presented a report on the timetable necessary for producing such a plan within Mrs Williams' 6 month deadline. However in the report the Director remarked that this time constraint made it "impossible to do justice" to a proper consultation process.201 The Conservatives promptly rejected the timetable and wrote to Mrs Williams requesting an extra two months. The request was rejected. The ESSC nevertheless approved a modified timetable whereby full council approval would not be given until July 21st but which permitted the Secretary of State to be informed provisionally of the ESSC decision on 17th May.202

The committee then received the preliminary report of the Director on the major considerations involved in reorganisation in accordance with the Act.203 The report contained a number of recommendations. It noted that "The present situation in the borough, resulting from a number of years of uncertainty regarding secondary education, suggests that for all concerned ..... the simplest possible solution to the problems of comprehensive reorganisation be sought." This, the Director suggested, implied an all-through 11 to 18 scheme in line with the council's previous policy. He also noted that "the financial situation locally and nationally also demands that the simplest
possible solutions be obtained." In addition he stated that
due to the "necessity to adapt accommodation and reorientate
staff,......implementation of the proposals woul' therefore
take some time to realise......It would therefore seem desirable
that.....they should be made to co ncide with the major decrease
in the secondary school population in the 1980s".

The EESC meeting on 9th March accepted the logic of the
Director's report and requested a further report on the
detailed implementation of an 11 to 18 scheme. The report
was ready for the education committee meeting the next day. It
included plans for twelve 11 to 18 schools (including the
three aided schools) of 4, 5 and 6 forms of entry. Six existing
schools were to be "phased out" by"about 1990" and the EESC
had decided that these should be the five 'twilight schools'
plus Glastonbury. Transfer to high school was to be by "guided
parental choice". Extensions and adaptations to eight of the
continuing schools were proposed and in addition Sutton Manor
grammar school was to be replaced by a brand new 6 form entry
school on a new site. The new school it was estimated, would
cost £1½ million. The entire plan was costed at £4,465,000.
The Director explained that the proposals were based on two
"assumptions" that the closures "should coincide with decreases
in the secondary school population" and that "only when suitable
accommodation is available in all the continuing schools should
selection be abolished." As a result he concluded, "an all
ability intake could be introduced at those high schools which
are to form the long term provision by about 1987."
The Labour group immediately attacked the plans but they were published and sent out to organisations for written observations. Many of these were strongly critical. A majority were critical of the time scale for reorganisation including the NUT and SAASE. SAASE proposed their own scheme in which schools would be 'linked' temporarily thus enabling selection to be ended in 1979. In addition some of the proposed closures were attacked and there was criticism of the lack of co-educational provision (only two mixed schools) in the plan. The teachers' organisations were also worried about the viability of comprehensive schools of under 6 forms of entry. There was obvious suspicion at the phrase 'guided parental choice'.

However the majority of observations apparently accepted the case for the all-through pattern rather than middle schools or sixth form colleges. A summary of these comments was drawn up and presented to the ESJC by the chief inspector. He wrote, "Given the terms of reference and bearing in mind the important reservations and objections (which he spelt out)...the Committee's preliminary proposals appear to find general acceptance."  

As a result of this brief consultation process the Director recommended some minor changes. One more mixed high school was to be retained (Stanley Park) and as a result of this, and for no other reason, the date for ending selection was brought forward by just one year to 1986. However the estimated cost of alterations increased to £4,855,000. The "order of priority" for these building projects was stated as,

1. Wallington High School for Boys and Wallington High School
for Girls
2. Sutton Manor and Nonsuch
3. All others. 208

The BESC approved these proposals and the Secretary of State was informed.

At the full council meeting in July 1977 when the plans were ratified Labour and Liberal councillors launched a strong attack on the Conservatives. Labour pointed out that the 1986 date was conveniently at least two general elections away. They feared that the return of a Conservative Government would immediately lead to the withdrawal of the plan. A Liberal councillor challenged the Conservatives to make "a commitment....that they would stand by the proposals even if there was a change of Government." 209 The leadership simply replied that they accepted the plans "as they stood". However Trevor made it quite clear that he would continue to fight for the grammar schools whenever the law permitted and it was apparent that others felt the same way. 210 On the other hand, the Labour group argued, it was perfectly obvious that Mrs Williams would not accept these plans. However the Conservatives would be equally content because this would act as a further delay. The plans had been "deliberately constructed" in this way and were not a realistic response to the Act, they concluded. 211

Sutton are told to Submit New Proposals

On 16th August there was a meeting between officials of the DES and Sutton. The DES had requested the meeting to discuss "the nature and date of implementation of the proposals." 212
It was made clear at this meeting that the plans would be rejected and the authority required to submit an alternative within three months. Worried by this short timetable the Director specifically asked that official notice of this be sent in good time for him to report on it to the next meeting of the education committee to expedite the preparation of another plan. The letter from the DES, dated 9th September, arrived on the 12th, the day of the committee meeting.213

The letter informed Sutton that the Secretary of State had rejected the plans on two counts. First the proposed date for the elimination of selection was unacceptable. Mrs Williams did not consider it necessary for all schools to be fully adapted before taking on all-ability intake. The letter went on, "The Secretary of State does not accept that it is necessary for all schools in the whole of the authority's area to admit pupils of all abilities simultaneously. The Secretary of State can see no reason why the first all ability intake should not be admitted to some schools in 1978 and to all schools within a year or two of that date." Secondly Mrs Williams rejected the proposed use of resources. The plan included "capital expenditure not essential to reorganisation". The resources required to build a new school and make significant enlargements to others were simply not available and "proposals of this kind are not acceptable." The letter ended with the requirement under section 2 (4) of the 1976 Act that the Authority submit further proposals "which take account of the observations above and... provide for the progressive elimination of selection from 1978
and its completion not later than 1980." The plans were to arrive within 3 months, by 9th December 1977.214

The education committee also received another letter from the DES at the same meeting. Under section 5 of the 1976 Act and Circular 12/75, Sutton had applied for permission to continue to take up places at independent schools. Mrs Williams replied that she would refuse the request unless Sutton could show a need based on the lack of accommodation in maintained schools.215

As a result of the late arrival of the first letter the Director was unable to provide a detailed report on its implications at the September meeting. Instead this report was considered at the next EESC meeting on October 10th. Commenting on the letter the Director claimed that in an area the size of Sutton it was "highly desirable to introduce an all-ability intake simultaneously." Meeting the deadline of September 1978 to begin ending selection, he wrote, "poses major problems from the point of view of parents, schools and education department staff." Furthermore ending selection completely by 1980 without ensuing major capital costs involved making changes which coincided with the peak of the school population curve which he described as "the worst possible time". Finally he noted that the three month deadline (now only two months) allowed no time for consultation.216

Nevertheless he outlined two possible schemes for complying with the Secretary of State's requirements. The first involved a large number of small, 4 form entry, schools, making use of
all the existing accommodation. In the short term this would produce schools with very small academic classes and sixth forms and in the post 1980 period, when numbers fall, several of the schools would need to be closed. The Director concluded that this plan was "beset with problems". The second scheme involved creating "split-site" schools. On this scheme the report went into less detail and appeared less critical. It noted that "various combinations of existing schools are possible" and in the post-1980 period "one part of each split site school would become unnecessary and the split site schools would gradually be phased out." 217

This appeared to be the better scheme but seemed as if it might create problems for the pro-comprehensive lobby. In the round of consultations following Mrs Williams first letter there were strong objections to any proposal for split-site schools, particularly from teachers.218 In addition the Labour group had themselves opposed split-site arrangements at an earlier stage.219 However most of these groups found it possible to support such a scheme by adopting the alternative term of 'linked schools' which SMATE had proposed.220 The difference between the two terms, they argued, was that linking schools was only a temporary arrangement involving schools which were scheduled to close being linked with continuing schools. This scheme therefore had the advantage, that those schools which would have to be closed would not suffer the blight and unpopularity which would, and in some cases already had, accompanied the announcement of their impending demise. This argument in particular
convinced the NUT leaders to support this particular plan. 221

However the Conservatives were not prepared to accept what they saw as a semantic, sleight of hand and preferred to muster the considerable professional, educational evidence, including a recent DES document, against the 'split-site' school. Using the considerable range of ammunition provided in the Director's report they decided not to go ahead with either plan but to request a meeting with the Secretary of State. 222 Labour attacked this as yet another delaying tactic. 223

Three weeks later the education committee were told they had been granted a meeting with Parliamentary Under-secretary, Margaret Jackson. The Conservatives felt this was "not at all helpful at this stage" and asked again to see Mrs Williams. 224 They were told that she would only see them if, after meeting Miss Jackson, they still felt there were points which needed clearing up. The meeting took place on 16th November. One of the Sutton deputation called it, "a complete waste of time.... she just made political points.... she's one of those left wing loonies." Essentially Miss Jackson refused to compromise and re-affirmed the demands of the September letter. The deputation reported their dissatisfaction to the management committee on 22nd November, and they requested a meeting with Mrs Williams. 225 This was granted and took place on 7th December. The meeting was considerably longer and the deputation felt more satisfied that the educational problems had been fully discussed. Squire, the leader, told Mrs Williams that he had supported the end to selection in 1971 and was only concerned not to disrupt the
children already in the system by too sudden a change. The officers explained that the selection process for September 1978 had already begun (a booklet had been sent out to parents in September and meetings with parents begun in November). For her part, Mrs Williams stressed the need for an immediate end to Sutton's segregated system. In the end however she agreed to a further meeting the next week between just the officers from Sutton and the DES. One of the officers present described the meeting thus, "We were invited to persuade her officers that a start in 1973 was not on. I thought we did a good job. At the end of the meeting I said to the DES officer in charge, did he feel we had a case and he said he felt sympathetic. We expected a compromise date to be offered after that." However in a letter dated 16th December Mrs Williams saw "no reason to depart from the view that selection should be ended at (four named schools) with effect from September 1978 and in the remaining secondary schools in the Authority's area by September 1980." By now the three month deadline had already passed and a new one, immediately following the council meeting of 26th January, was set.

The leading Conservatives involved decided to keep their options open and ask for three reports. From Kelville they asked for one which complied with the Secretary of State's requirements and a second which planned "the elimination of selection in some schools by September 1979 and completing the process on the optimum date between 1980 and 1986." In addition they asked the Borough Secretary to present a report on the
council's legal position. 227

The Legal Position and a Reprieve

The reports were discussed at a special meeting of the education committee on 16th January 1978. The first again outlined the options of temporary small or split site schools: 228

The second was a modified version of the original submission under the Act. The few schools specified by Mr Williams were to become 'comprehensive' in 1979 and selection would end in all other schools in 1984. These proposals it was specified, could only take effect if considerable building alterations were approved. 229

The Borough Secretary's report cast considerable doubt on the legal basis for the Secretary of State's requests. 230 It noted that "in counsel's opinion the Secretary of State was not empowered to dictate to a LEA the detailed manner in which secondary education should be reorganised in their area. Furthermore the 1976 Act did not confer power on the Secretary of State to treat proposals submitted under section 2 of that Act as unsatisfactory, save for the purpose of and in relation to giving effect to the comprehensive principle." Counsel went on to consider the status of the letters sent by the DES to Sutton. The letter dated 9th September 1977 which quoted section 2 of the Act, did not specify the reasons why Mr Williams felt the authority's date for ending selection was unsatisfactory and as a result they considered that, "on balance... (it) did not constitute a valid exercise of the power conferred on the Secretary of State by section 2 (4) of the 1976 Education Act."
The report continued, "With regard to the letters of 21st November and 16th December 1977 counsel was of the opinion that because they were not expressed in the terms of a requirement under the 1976 Act they did not constitute a further requirement." Furthermore they considered that the requirement in the first letter to begin ending selection in 1978 would be met by all-ability intakes to the two R.C. denominational schools (which were already supposed to be comprehensive).

Finally the report turned to the question of when the authority would be considered to be in breach of the law. "Counsel considered that failure to comply with 'a requirement' under section 2 of the 1976 Act, would not constitute a breach of the law". Such a position would only be reached if the authority did not comply with an 'order of the court'. The procedure by which such an order could be obtained would first involve the Secretary of State issuing an order under section 99 of the 1944 Act declaring Sutton in default with respect to its duties. This order would then need to be backed up by an 'Order for Mandamus' from the courts which would be subject to appeal up to the House of Lords. Only if the order for mandamus were ignored would the authority be in breach of the law, counsel argued.

Faced with these reports the Conservatives decided that there were sufficient grounds for claiming that the Secretary of State was misusing her powers and that in any case the authority would not be in breach of the law by ignoring her requirements at this stage. Against fierce Labour and Liberal
opposition the education committee and the council approved a modified version of the 1984 plan. Under this plan selection could only be ended in the two Roman Catholic schools in 1979 and in none of the other schools until 1984. Even these plans, it was stressed, were dependent on receiving approval for major extensions to three of the grammar schools. The scheme was sent to Mrs Williams with a report explaining the authority's view of the legal position.

In February the education committee considered the Secretary of State's refusal to permit them to buy places at non-maintained schools. In a letter and during the meeting with Mrs Williams they stressed that due to shortage of accommodation (itself a result of rejected building plans) the authority could only take these extra children by increasing class sizes. Mrs Williams stood firm and told them they could find places in neighbouring authorities if necessary. The committee decided to accept her decision "at this stage", but in response they found room to add an extra form of entry to one of the grammar schools to accommodate all but six of the places usually allocated to independent schools.

On 22nd February Button received a further letter from the DES. The DES stated that in their view the requirements in the letter of September 1977 were legally valid. They argued that under the Act the minister was able to decide that a plan was unsatisfactory for any reason even if the plan was consistent with the principle of ending selection. The authority were asked to reconsider their position and "to submit promptly...... revised proposals which meet the conditions set out in that
letter." 235 The letter went on to warn that failure to comply "could lead to the Secretary of State making an order under section 99 of the 1944 Education Act."

A special meeting of the education committee considered the letter on 8th March. Counsel advised them that their opinion had not changed and that they believed the Secretary of State's letter was still invalid. If an order were made under section 99 they recommended taking legal action to determine its validity. The committee rejected again the proposal to end selection in 1980 as "educationally unsound" and informed the DfES they were unable to amend their proposals. At the same time "the officers (were) authorised to take such action as may be necessary, including action in the court, to safeguard the council's interests". 236

On the 27th April 1976 Mrs Williams issued a section 99 order declaring Sutton in default of their duty to submit revised plans as required under the 1976 Act. They were directed to submit these further proposals by 1st June. At a special meeting on 2nd May, after a further report from the Borough Secretary confirming again counsel's opinions, the education committee and the council voted on party lines to seek "a declaration in the courts as to i) the true construction of the Education Acts of 1944 and 1976, and ii) whether the order dated 27th April......is ultra vires." 237

For twelve months after that decision the future of Sutton's grammar schools appeared to be awaiting court action. In the meantime Sutton completed its selection procedure for September
1978 and began the procedure for 1979. In May 1979, before the case had even come to court, a Conservative Government was elected. Their first legislative act was to repeal the main sections of the 1976 Education Act. The new Secretary of State withdrew the section 29 order and the court case was dropped. Sutton education committee suspended the comprehensive plan scheduled for 1984 pending a full review of the future pattern of secondary education for the authority. In October 1979 they voted, along party lines, to retain a selective system.

Successful Resistance against the Act

Having chronicled Sutton's successful resistance to central government pressures to reorganise between 1974 and 1979 it is important to analyse how and why this success was achieved.

Group Cohesion

The Conservative group were able to maintain complete group solidarity on this issue throughout these five years, in stark contrast to the earlier period. There were four main reasons for this.

1. It came partly as a direct result of the struggles of the early 1970s. In the purge of 1974 the leaders of the pro-comprehensive lobby resigned or were removed and many of the new recruits were carefully chosen for their pro-grammar school views. Other new arrivals and the residue of the comprehensive lobby were well aware of the dominant view within the group and the desire among the leadership to avoid any further embarrassing splits.

2. By the mid-1970s Conservative attitudes had hardened considerably
in the country as a whole. The supporters of the 'high academic standards' of the grammar schools were in the ascendency and some who had tended to favour reorganisation in the earlier period were having second thoughts. A senior Conservative remarked, "Tory opposition to comprehensives has grown enormously. Whereas it wasn't at one time now you could say it is official policy. Especially with the criticism of educational standards." Another, speaking of Squire, the Tory who had supported reorganisation in the earlier period, said: "I feel he is now tied up with following a Conservative party line which has hardened no end through Stevas and Mrs Thatcher."

3. It was easier to maintain group discipline against Labour Government attempts to pressure the authority into reorganising. This was particularly true after the passage of the 1976 Act. None of the Conservatives in Sutton or nationally supported legislating for reorganisation.

4. After being required by law to produce a plan the group could unite behind "a good comprehensive scheme" which involved extensive improvements to the schools and a long implementation period. The pro-comprehensive Tories wanted the 'best' possible system and the grammar school lobby wanted as much delay as possible. Both could oppose short deadlines, silt-site schools and a 1973 to 80 phasing in period without compromising their principles. In this they were considerably aided by the attitude of the professions.

The Teachers

Most teachers in Sutton were unhappy at the continued
uncertainty over secondary education and several of the leaders expressed strong opposition to the council's resistance to re-organisation. However it was difficult for them to support schemes involving split-site schools, or indeed any rapid reorganisation which prevented full consultations about future staffing and allowed no time for in-service training. As long as the council produced a comprehensive plan which insisted on careful planning well-equipped schools and full consultation and re-orientation of staff, the teachers who supported reorganisation were placed in a difficult position.

However this may be only part of the explanation for teacher reaction. Although the NUT leadership locally did criticise strongly the proposed dates for ending selection and were prepared to accept 'linked' schools there was a lack of any active opposition from teachers as a whole throughout this period. This seemed to reflect a large degree of at least acquiescence towards and often support for the policy of defending the grammar schools. One of the teachers' representatives and a senior member of the TCC throughout this recent period commented, "The teachers' committee has tended to sit on the fence. "We have not concerned ourselves with the political issue of reorganisation...the teachers' committee and the teachers' representatives on the education committee sought not to vote on the political issues." In the course of interviews for this study the Button teachers approached were the most reluctant to talk or be critical of the council's policy, particularly those actively involved at the time. A senior Labour councillor spoke of the recent period,
"The NUT leadership is pro-comprehensive but they've been unable to do much.... I don't think they can take their rank and file with them. They haven't come to be a teacher in Sutton to initiate great changes, they've come to Sutton because they want a quiet life and nice, clean and respectable children to teach." A senior Conservative expressed it rather differently, "I think we were very fortunate in Sutton in not having the militant type of teacher.... There was no strong opposition from them, they kept out of the political questions." There are a few individual examples of teachers who favoured comprehensive schooling leaving the borough to move into one which had reorganised. It seems quite likely that such a process did operate to a limited extent throughout this period with those who felt strongly and would therefore be willing to campaign for reorganisation leaving the borough while teachers who supported selection gravitated towards Sutton, particularly to the selective schools there.

The Officers

The same might also be expected to happen with education officers. However it is clear that Velville and the chief inspector in Sutton were far from unsympathetic towards reorganisation. The latter supported the middle school scheme in the early 1970s and Velville not only administered a comprehensive system in Scotland but chose to send his children to Greenshaw, Sutton's comprehensive school. Nevertheless when he took on his post as Director he was obviously aware of the political complexion of the authority and probably the events which, it seems, led to his predecessor's resignation. He must have
been quite prepared to come and work within a selective system and could have predicted that he would be involved in resisting Labour Government moves to make Sutton reorganise.

In fact the officers did much to assist the Conservatives. They made clear their dislike of the short deadlines for plans sent by 'Willie' Williams, they produced plans which included distant dates for the end to selection and extensive alterations to the buildings beginning with the grammar schools and they provided the Conservatives with considerable ammunition against the requirement for a 1978 to 1980 reorganisation.

In all these cases the officers could and did point to professional ethics in defence of their position. Speaking of the plan with the 1986 change over a senior officer said, "We think this is a good plan. I personally would be delighted to see that go through". And another remarked, "Yes, we want to go comprehensive, but from strength, with good conditions, well organised." Clearly there are strong educational arguments favouring an end to selection after the peak in the secondary school population, only when all the buildings are fully prepared and occurring in all schools simultaneously. However such conditions are rarely attainable in the real world of political and economic constraints. The 1987 date for ending selection and the proposed level of expenditure were clearly unrealistic and it is inconceivable that the senior officers were not aware of this. In fact the Director, in his preliminary report specifically warned that "the priority is now directed towards 'basic needs' projects, of which Sutton has none, it is not
possible to predict when a major capital allocation for school building will be made available to the council.... The financial situation locally and nationally demands that the simplest possible solutions be obtained." 242 And yet the plans which he subsequently drew up included the closure of six schools (some of which had good facilities), the building of an entirely new school and total expenditure which was eventually estimated at almost $5 million. 243

The officers and Conservative politicians emphatically denied that the Director was under direct political instructions to produce an unrealistic plan. A senior officer said, "I have never let a politician tell me what to put in a report and I don't intend to start now." However it seems clear that the officers' insistence on near-perfect conditions for reorganisation was tailored to fit the needs of their political masters in Sutton. The following remarks appear to corroborate this view:

""We talked to 'Velville and he made it very clear that he knew which schemes the Tories would accept. He wasn't going to spend hours preparing schemes they wouldn't buy. So he produced a theoretical scheme which he could say was educationally the best." (Senior Labour Councillor)

"Let's face it. It was clear that the politicians here wanted 'THE NEW POLITICAL SCHEME' because it suited their purposes" (Officer, his emphasis)

"Let's face it the Conservative majority are probably opposing it (the 1930 date) for political reasons although they are using our arguments that professionally it is better for all
to start at once.... It is useful when the professional opinion supports your political views." (Sembr Officer)

The Central Government

Finally the actions of the central government were crucial to Sutton's resistance. Most important of these were the relatively late passage of the 1976 Act in the life of the Government and the weakness and loose wording of the powers granted to the Secretary of State under the Act (see chapter 6, page 199). The Conservatives in Sutton were not prepared to break the law and if legal counsel had not suggested that there were doubts about the Secretary of State's powers under the Act they would have complied.

In addition the DES aided Sutton's delaying tactics through the late arrival of letters and the vacillation in dealing with denotations. It is also possible to argue that the rigid insistence on a September 1978 date for ending selection in some schools and the refusal to compromise assisted the Sutton Conservatives. A senior Labour representative commented, "We checked with the DES that they were firm about 1978, we'd have preferred 1979.....we thought 1978 was bad tactics really but we couldn't say so because the Tories would have used it." And a comprehensive sympathiser in the Conservative group claimed, "If Mrs Williams had been prepared to compromise then the group would have been in real trouble because people like me would have said, 'she's being reasonable', but as it was she was quite unreasonable."

Clearly Mrs Williams was under pressure from comprehensive
supporters nationally not to compromise any further with resisting authorities and may have felt unable to display any such weakness. On the other hand it may have been good judgement on her part. The majority of the Tory group were unlikely to accept a compromise of 1979 or 1980 as the date to end selection in which case it could be argued it was better for her to stick firm and produce the showdown as soon as possible.

Finally any attempts to use financial pressures to influence Sutton were abandoned in this period. Sutton had spent money on their grammar schools during the 1970-74 Conservative administration and the Labour DES were unwilling to withhold approval for major expenditure on the secondary modern schools. These projects were for 'basic needs'. Similarly it was difficult to withhold funds for the denominational schools because they were to become comprehensive.

11.7 SUTTON'S SCHOOLS IN 1980

Sutton operates a complex selective system of education in 1980. (Table 11.7) It retains the four grammar schools which it inherited in 1965. However the percentage of selective places allocated within the borough has risen over this period from 20 to 25%. The extra places are largely the result of some selective entry to two other schools. Wilson's school, brought to the authority under the guise of a comprehensive, takes two selective forms of entry and one non-selective as well as one form determined entirely by the Governors. At least half of the schools intake comes from the top 25% of boys in Sutton and is determined by selection tests. The school is one of the most prestigious in
### Table 11.7 Sutton's Secondary Schools 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Form Entry</th>
<th>Number on Roll Jan 1980</th>
<th>Sixth form numbers as % of roll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonsuch</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallington</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton Manor</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson's</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>'Li-lateral'</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenshaw</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>'Comprehensive'</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Fisher</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>R.C. Compr.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Philomenas</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>' '</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carshalton</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1020</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheam</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1070</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carshalton</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1060</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenthorne†</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaynesford</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clistonbury</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley bank</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highview</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton est</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmwood</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Secondary Mod.</td>
<td>0++</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Notes

+ Previously Sutton Common
+ Possible form entry September 1980 but bound to be reduced by 4 as a result of parental choice
++ Being phased out and therefore no entry in 1980

Source: Sutton Education Department document
the authority. Greenshaw, Sutton's co-existing comprehensive school also receives two selective forms of entry each year. Therefore one third of the school's intake are from the 25% of selective pupils in Sutton. The school is undoubtedly the nearest that Sutton has to a genuine comprehensive school and the headmaster and staff remain committed to that principle. Nevertheless it does have a deliberately unbalanced intake which gives it a higher proportion of able children than it used to have before 1974. It remains a very popular school, achieves notable academic successes (including from pupils who 'failed' the selection test) and after over a decade is still visited and admired by educationalists from outside the borough.

Apart from Greenshaw and 'Ilson's the schools which benefitted most from Sutton's policy over this period were the two Roman Catholic schools. Both take children of varying abilities but, as a glance at the proportion of children in their sixth forms suggests, they almost certainly receive a disproportionate number of above-average ability children.

Within the secondary modern sector acute status and academic differences remain although the worst of these are gradually disappearing. 'Tunwood' is already being phased out and it was recently agreed that Sutton Test would stop to take any new pupils from September 1981 and eventually close. In 1979 the 'rebel school' ceased to operate for the first time since 1975. Nevertheless the more knowledgeable parents are well aware that for non-selective pupils the possibilities of pursuing advanced academic courses remains far higher in 'Ilson's, Greenshaw
and the three 6 form entry secondary moderns than in the smaller schools. Furthermore these changes have come too late for the thousands of pupils educated in these schools over this period.

Throughout this chapter size and academic success have been used to suggest status differences between schools. It should not be assumed that these are the only measures of 'a good school'. Small schools can cater for able children and can offer 'a good education' irrespective of academic achievements. In fact, ironically there have been a few parental protests at the planned closures of Elmwood and Sutton West. Nevertheless there is considerable evidence of general dissatisfaction with the small schools in Sutton over many years. The facilities are not as good, the range of examination courses available not as wide and they are clearly not as popular as the borough's other schools.

Above all else this is the result of the instability which Sutton's secondary education system has experienced over fifteen years. Most of these smaller schools have had the threat of closure hanging over them on and off since the 1966 plan. The contents of professionals in the authority speak for themselves. "There were some very inferior buildings in the late 1960s and they're still with us, despite all the schemes and reports.....or perhaps because of them." (Head Teacher). "It's alright if there are periods of uncertainty which result in a decision and things are actually settled. But when you get a situation.....since 1965 with several plans and changes, then it's very hard for the whole educational process." (Senior Officer)
"We think it's a good plan. I personally would be delighted to see that going through."

Interviewer: "But some Conservatives say they will abandon it if there is a change of government."

Interviewee: "If what you say were to come about, that a change of Government would bring the situation back into the melting pot and everyone would be in a state of uncertainty again, then I'd be quite happy at saying split-sites is far better than that."

(Senior officer speaking in April 1973 of the plan to end selection in 1984)

Falling Rolls

The declining secondary school population poses peculiar problems for an LEA such as Sutton which still operates a large selective sector. It provides a good opportunity for Sutton to close some of its smaller secondary modern schools but it creates pressures for a similar reduction in the selective sector. As the total numbers transferring to secondary schools decline a selection rate of 25% will produce correspondingly fewer children for the selective sector.

The response to this situation would be to reduce the number of selective places, possibly by closing a grammar school. In addition it might be thought desirable to reduce the percentage selected at the same time in order to retain the absolute number of children capable of advanced work in the secondary modern schools.

However in February 1980 the Sutton education committee voted to retain the selective sector and the percentage of
selection in Sutton at the same level. As the number of pupils selected fell they decided to offer the residue of selective places to children from neighbouring authorities. These places would probably be advertised and, as an officer explained, "The idea is that the same test procedures could be applied to youngsters outside the borough. There would probably be some sort of payment to take part and places would be allocated on the rank scores."

The effect of these changes on schools over the first three years are shown in table 11.8 which is reproduced from the Director's report. If this arrangement were continued until the trough of the decline arrived as early as five forms of entry or 100 children could be recruited from outside the borough in that year.

This decision is a remarkable testament to the strength of the selection lobby in Sutton and its determination to survive. The implications of this arrangement are far reaching. The selective sector will probably attract a higher proportion of very able children from neighbouring LTHs and effectively will constitute a form of super selection from these authorities.

In deciding not to reduce selection Sutton also ensured continued problems within the non-selective sector. The number of pupils staying on into the sixth form in this sector is already causing concern in some quarters and these numbers are not likely to decline. This virtually forces the authority to concentrate the more able pupils in just a few secondary modern schools and perpetuates the status differences. Even in these schools however, sixth forms of only 30 or 40 pupils are unlikely to provide a good range of courses.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion from a comparison of the secondary school provision in Merton, Richmond and Sutton
in 1980, that the inequalities of opportunity between schools
in Sutton is far greater than in either of the other two LEAs
and has been so for most of the period of this study.
Table 11.3 Approved changes in the source and distribution of selective pupils in Sutton 1980-83

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL YEAR</th>
<th>Number of selective forms of entry for each school from within Sutton</th>
<th>BALANCE FROM OUTSIDE BOROUGH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|             | Nonsuch  Wellington  Sutton  Wallington  Greens 
|             | Girls  Manor  Boys  Ilions |                             |
| 1980-81     | 4  3  3  3  2  2  | 17  | 0 |
| 1981-82     | 3  3  2  2  1  2  | 15  | 2 |
| 1982-83     | 3  3  2  2  1  2  | 14  | 3 |

Footnotes to chapter 11.

1. See page 257

2. Sutton education department document, 1970; see also table 11.4, page 414

3. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 23/9/65

4. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 2/9/65 and election manifesto 1964

5. NUT document; and interviews

6. Joint Group document; and interviews


8. Ibid., p.2

9. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 23/12/65

10. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 22/7/65


12. Report on Consultations by Special Sub-Committee, May 1966

13. Ibid.

14. Submission from the Teachers Committee on 'The Organisation of Secondary Education', 13/11/65

15. Teachers Committee document reporting meeting with special Sub-Committee, 23/3/66


17. Report on Consultations by Special Sub-Committee, May 1966

18. Memorandum from the Chief Education Officer, May 1966

19. Statement by Chairman of Special Sub-Committee, 16/6/66


21. Ibid, p.2

22. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 1/11/66
23. Teacher Committee Document, op. cit.
24. Interviews and Special Sub-Committee Minutes and Documents
25. Interviews
26. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 8/10/66
28. Ibid
29. 'Reorganisation of Secondary Education in the London Borough of Sutton', submission to DES, 30/12/66
30. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 1/11/66
31. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 27/10/66
32. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 10/11/66
33. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 27/10/66
34. Ibid
35. Letter from DES, 3/4/67
36. Ibid
38. Ibid
39. Ibid
40. Letter from DES, 27/7/67
41. Letter from Town Clerk of Sutton to DES, 26/7/67
42. Interviews
43. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 27/7/67
44. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 10/6/67
45. Ibid
46. Sutton Minutes, Education (General Purposes) Sub-Committee, 7/2/67
47. Report on meeting with Mrs. Alice Bacon, 17/10/67
48. Ibid
49. Ibid
50. Letter from Town Clerk to DES, 15/11/67
51. Interviews
52. Conservative group document, February 1968
53. Letter from DES, 16/2/68
54. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 27/6/68
55. Sutton Conservatives' election manifesto, 1968
56. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 11/4/68
57. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 28/9/67
58. Interviews
59. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 19/9/68
60. Letter to DES, 20/3/69; quoted in Sutton Minutes, Council, 15/5/69
61. Ibid
62. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 22/5/69
63. Interviews
64. Interviews
65. Report of the Chief Education Officer, October 1966, op. cit., and interviews
66. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 1/10/70
67. Interviews; and Wilson's Governors' documents
68. Council Minutes, Council, 10/7/69
69. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 26/6/69
70. In "Education and Science in 1969," HSGC 1970, Sutton was not classified as an outright resister
72. Ibid, appendix III
489

73. Sutton Minutes, Education (Schools) Sub-Committee, 24/11/70
74. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 10/12/70
75. Interviews
76. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 21/4/71
77. Transcripts of Secondary Organisation Sub-Committee meetings, and documents presented to that Sub-Committee
78. Ibid
79. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 5/9/70
80. Several interviewees also agreed with this statement.
81. Transcripts of CSO, op. cit.
82. Interviews
83. Interviews and transcripts of CSO, op. cit.
84. Ibid
85. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 15/4/71
86. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 29/4/71
87. Ibid
88. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 14/9/72
89. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 6/5/71, 20/5/71 and 10/6/71
90. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 20/7/71
91. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 5/8/71 and 12/8/71; and interviews
92. Transcripts of CSO, op. cit.
93. Ibid., meeting on 20/8/71; includes questionnaire
94. Ibid., meeting on 15/9/71 and replies to questionnaire
95. Ibid., meeting on 30/9/71 and replies to questionnaire
96. Ibid.; and interviews
97. Ibid., including replies to questionnaire
98. Ibid
99. Ibid., meeting on 16/11/71
100. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 15/11/71; and interviews
101. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 15/12/71; and Sutton
and Cheam Advertiser, 23/12/71

102. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 21/12/71

103. Sutton Minutes, Management Committee, 21/12/71

104. Sutton Minutes, Council, 6/1/72

105. Transcripts of SSCO, op. cit., 6/1/72

106. Interviews

107. Transcripts of SSCO, op. cit., 2/5/72

108. Ibid. 12/6/71 and 30/6/71; and replies to questionnaires

109. Interviews

110. Transcripts of SSCO, op. cit.

111. Interviews

112. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 25/11/71

113. Ibid

114. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 6/1/72

115. Interviews and Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 2/10/72

116. Interviews

117. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 5/10/72

118. Sutton Minutes, Council, 10/10/72

119. Letter from Chairman, Sutton, 27/11/72

120. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 11/3/72

121. 'SCO's observations on the correspondence received from organisations and individuals', August 1972

122. Ibid., p.1

123. Ibid., p.4

124. Transcripts of SSCO, 5/9/72

125. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 13/9/72

126. Ibid and Management Committee, 19/9/72
127. Sutton Minutes, Council, 7/3/73
128. Letter from Chairman of LIBRA
129. Sutton Minutes, Council, 5/10/72; and Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 12/10/72
130. Ibid
131. Ibid
132. Ibid
133. Transcripts of LIB, op. cit., 28/11/72; and interviews
134. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 6/12/72
135. Sutton Minutes, Management Committee, 12/12/72
136. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 21/12/72
137. Sutton Minutes, Council, 4/1/73
138. Interviews
139. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 11/1/73
140. Interviews; see also questions raised in Sutton Minutes, Council, 1/3/73
141. Ibid.
142. Interviews
143. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 15/3/73
144. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 26/4/73
145. Ibid.
146. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 1/5/73
147. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 15/3/73
148. Sutton Minutes, Council 1/3/73; and Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 20/3/73
149. Sutton Minutes, Education, 7/3/73
150. Ibid
151. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 12/4/73
152. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 7/6/73
153. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 19/4/73
154. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 11/1/73
155. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 31/3/73
156. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 28/4/73
157. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 10/7/73
158. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 7/11/74
159. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 31/3/74
160. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 21/1/74
161. Ibid.
162. Report of the OPC, 'Organisation of Secondary Education', 18/2/74
163. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 18/2/74
164. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 11/2/74; and Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 21/2/74
165. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 14/3/74
166. Sutton Minutes, Council, 7/3/74
167. Sutton Minutes, Education (Schools) Sub-Committee, 12/3/74
168. Sutton Conservatives election manifesto, 1974
169. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 18/4/74
170. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 16/5/74
171. Ibid
172. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 9/5/74
173. Sutton Minutes, Education (Schools) Sub-Committee, 5/6/74
174. Sutton Minutes, Council, 18/7/74
176. Ibid
177. 'Reply to circular 4/74', reported in Sutton Minutes, Education (Schools) Sub-Committee, December 1974
174. Report of meeting between deputation from Sutton and Secretary of State, Sutton Minutes, Management Committee, 8/1/75
179. Letter from Secretary of State to Councillor Cox, 2/7/75
180. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 18/9/75; and Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 15/9/75
181. Letter from Leader of the Council to Secretary of State, reported in Sutton Minutes, Management Committee, 7/10/75
182. Letter from Secretary of State to Councillor Cox, reported in Sutton Minutes, Management Committee, 25/11/75
183. 'Capital Building Programme 1965-1975', Sutton Education Department document
184. Ibid, 1976-79 supplement
185. Interviews
187. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 19/12/75
188. 'Allocation to High Schools', Sutton Education Department documents 1973 and 1974; and interviews
189. Interviews; and Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 15/11/75
190. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 19/9/74
191. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 20/3/75
192. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 19/9/74
193. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 13/11/75
194. Observer, 21/9/75
195. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 26/9/76
196. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 3/7/75
197. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 20/3/75; and interviews
198. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 25/3/76
199. Interviews
200. Letter from Secretary of State, 24/11/76, reported in Sutton Minutes, Education (Schools) Sub-Committee, 1/12/76

202. Sutton minutes, Education (Schools) Sub-Committee, 19/1/77


204. Sutton minutes, Education (Schools) Sub-Committee, 3/3/77


207. Ibid


209. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 27/7/77

210. Ibid

211. Ibid

212. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 13/8/77

213. Sutton minutes, Education Committee, 12/9/77

214. Letter from the DES, reported ibid.

215. Further letter from the DES, reported ibid.


217. Ibid


219. Interviews

220. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 15/10/77; and interviews

221. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 22/10/77; and interviews

222. Sutton minutes, Education (General Purposes) Sub-Committee, 12/10/77
223. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 20/10/77
224. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 31/10/77
225. Sutton Minutes, Management Committee, 22/11/77; and Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 24/11/77
226. Letter from DSS, reported in Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 19/12/77
227. Education Committee, ibid
229. Ibid, Appendix II
230. Report of the Borough Secretary on 'The Legal Position', reported in Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 10/1/78
231. Sutton Minutes, ibid and Council, 26/1/78; and observation
232. Ibid
233. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 6/2/78
234. Ibid
235. Letter from DSS, 22/2/78
236. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 3/3/78
237. Order to London Borough of Sutton from Secretary of State, 27/4/78; Report of the Borough Secretary May 1978; and Sutton Minutes, Education Committee and Council, 2/5/78
238. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 13/6/78
239. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, 31/10/78
240. Sutton and Cheam Advertiser, 22/3/77
241. For example the head teacher who moved from Sutton to Werton, see pages 355 and 400; also I made a similar move and knew of several of my colleagues who did the same.
244. Interviews
245. Sutton Minutes, Education Committee, February 1980
246. Interviews
Chapter 12  A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF EDUCATION IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF KINGSTON

This chapter is intended to provide a brief description of the development of the secondary education system in Kingston between 1955 and 1980. It is a system which has remained entirely selective throughout this period. No attempt is made at detailed analysis and to the extent that explanations for this phenomenon are offered they appear in the comparative analysis in chapter 13.

The first section outlines the broad structure of the secondary system during this period. The second section provides a short account of the authority's responses to the comprehensive debate.

12.1  KINGSTON'S SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEM 1965 TO 1980

The character of the selective system which Kingston inherited from Surrey differed in important respects from the other three LAs studied. There were only two maintained grammar schools in the new borough, Tiffin Boys and Tiffin Girls. Both enjoyed extremely high academic reputations including strong traditions of Oxbridge entries. Tiffin Boys is a voluntary aided school and was described by Peter Wilby in his New Society article on Kingston, as the 'Manchester grammar school of the South.'

The headmaster is a member of the Head Masters' Conference, gowns are worn by the prefects and, as Wilby remarked, it is "more than a shirt of the public school atmosphere." He went on to conclude that, "The Tiffin schools are best described as a sort of public school enclave within the state sector."
In the early years of the new authority these two grammar schools each took only 2 forms of entry of pupils from Kingston, representing a selection rate of less than 10%. They also took one form of entry from Surrey. In addition another 5% of Kingston's children went to grammar schools in other LEAs (including Nonsuch in Sutton and Eaynes Park in Ewell). A further 5% of pupils were selected for places in independent and direct grant schools. The majority of these non-maintained places went to two direct grant schools within the borough, Kingston Direct Grant Grammar School for Boys and Ewell High School for Girls (a member of the GDST). In 1971 5.6% of 13 year olds for whom the LEA were financially responsible were in independent or direct grant schools.4

Apart from these places taken by the authority, the privately educated sector in Kingston was small. Only 6.5% of thirteen year olds living in Kingston in 1971 were educated privately.5 That is lower than the other three LEAs in this study and, although about average for the outer London boroughs, remarkably small considering Kingston's relatively affluent population (see table 6.1, page 243).

In 1965 Kingston inherited nothing like the same problem of small secondary modern schools faced by Ewell, Richmond or even Sutton. All schools could take a minimum of three forms of entry and none had less than 350 pupils on roll. For that period the size of the secondary modern schools were reasonable. Nevertheless three or four of the schools had poor facilities and in 1966 the authority immediately planned to close three secondary moderns and expand the rest to 6 forms of entry.6
Table 12.1 Kingston's Maintained Secondary Schools 1965 and 1980

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No. on Poll Jan 1966</th>
<th>Approx Forms of Entry 1966</th>
<th>No. on Roll Jan 1980</th>
<th>Approx Forms of Entry 1980</th>
<th>A Level Passes 1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tiffins</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Girls' Grammar</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffins</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coombe</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Bi-Lateral</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1058</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverley</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1016</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romer's Hill</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>579</td>
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<td>M</td>
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<td>1006</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southborough</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>883</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolworth</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>1023</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holy Cross</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>R.C. Sec Mod</td>
<td>460</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>440</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>540</td>
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<td>3</td>
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</table>

Sources: Education Committees Yearbook 1966 and 1980; and 'A level Results, Summer 1979', Education Department Document.
As with Richmond and Sutton these plans did not develop at the intended rate and by 1970 only one school, had been closed and very little work had been carried out on extending the other secondary moderns. No progress was made in the early 1970s on some of these schools, considerable variations emerged in the popularity and sixth form work available within the different secondary modern sectors.

In the selective sector during this period the Tiffin schools began to take more pupils from Kingston and first the Boys and later the Girls school were expanded to 4 forms of entry. At the same time the number of selective places taken up outside the borough declined although the places at Kingston and Crouch End Direct Grant schools were retained until they were prohibited by the Secretary of State following the 1976 Act.

In 1970 the Tiffin Schools select about 15 of maintained pupils in Kingston, producing some 7½ forms of entry at present. A further ½ form of entry comes from children in Surrey. This low proportion of selective places almost qualifies Kingston as a super-selective authority. Certainly the education offered in the Tiffin schools is geared towards very high academic goals. The Headmaster of Tiffin Boys commented, "we are very much an Oxbridge school. It is the highest aim of our academic programme. In a good average year we reckon to get a couple of dozen people in. We come quite high up the scholarship league table of schools (which includes all Public Schools), more often than not in the top twenty." 7

This low rate of selection also gives the secondary modern
schools a reasonable intake of pupils who want to go on to do advanced academic work. The 'A' level GCE results from some of these schools (see table 12.1) are comparable with many comprehensive schools in other areas. At least one school has a sixth form of over one hundred and sent 12 children to university in 1979 which compares favourably with Sutton's comprehensive school. 9 Milby quotes one secondary modern head as saying, "I don't have very able children, but we have lots of quite able children," and another claimed the range of ability in his school was better than the inner London comprehensive he previously taught in. 10 In fact the leader of the council clearly believes that Sutton is in fact a super-selective, co-existing authority. In the same article he first claimed that the Tiffin schools "are really super-grammar schools, higher academies of the sort they establish in the Soviet Union," and later argued, "We could tidy down all the signs outside our secondary modern schools and call them comprehensives." 11

However this disguises the fact that some of these secondary moderns are less academically successful and have fewer status than others. Two of the less popular schools are due to be merged over the next few years but differences will continue within this sector. Nevertheless the most characteristic differences remain those between the non-selective and selective sectors as table 12.1 clearly illustrates.

Falling Rolls

Sutton's initial reaction to the problem of falling rolls was to propose a more drastic version of the approach which Sutton
selected. A report from the officers suggested reducing by a
half the number of selective forms of entry into the Tiffin
schools from Kingston. By 1964, the plan envisaged just four
selective forms of entry from within the borough and the other four,
120 pupils a year, being made up by pupils from neighbouring
authorities. This would actually reduce considerably the
percentage of selection in the borough (unlike the Sutton plan)
and have the added advantage of improving the top level ability
intake to the secondary modern schools.

Then these plans were made public: the authority apparently
received a considerable volume of complaints from ambitious parents
who objected to a reduction in selection to the Tiffin schools,
particularly as this was to the benefit of children outside the
borough. Partly as a result of these protests the education
committee deferred consideration of this proposal pending further
discussions.13

The other proposal made at this time also merits consideration.
The Director proposed the creation of a 'Kingston Education Trust'
in which the two Tiffin schools would link up with the new
independent Surbiton High School and Kingston Grammar school. The
purpose of this Trust would be to administer entry to these schools
from Kingston and other NHS, including admission under the
new Conservative Government's 'assisted-places scheme.'14

12.2 KINGSTON AND THE COMPREHENSIVE DEBATE

As early as September 1965, at the first education sub-
committee meeting at which circular 10/65 was discussed, the
Conservatives rejected the all-through, middle school and sixth
form college patterns of reorganisation as "inappropriate" to Kinsmen's needs. 15 At a further meeting in December they decided that there were only one pattern they were prepared to consider in detail. This was the decennial type, two-tier pattern of 11-13 and 13-15 schools which the circular had stated was not fully comprehensive and only acceptable as an 'interim' scheme.

The committee, "agreed that, although it was unlikely that there would be unanimity on the latter, it was desirable that one of the schemes outlined should be put forward as a basis for discussion with all concerned." 16

By this time the battle lines had already been drawn. The KTE, the Labour group and KANZ opposed the 2-tier pattern because it was not truly comprehensive. The Joint Four, the local upper and lower conservative group opposed it because it was too much like a comprehensive system. They favoured the status quo.

Boys Tiffin School was already in the forefront of this campaign and representatives of the old Tiffin's association attended the inaugural meeting of the KTE and a KEA branch was established. The full council voted not to "receive" the education committee's recommendation on this exercise, indicating their early opposition to the plan. 17

The consultation process went ahead including several public meetings. The teachers' consultative committee joined those who supported an end to selection but were unhappy about the two tier scheme. In May 1966 the O.E reported on the process and the Conservatives voted to continue with the existing selective system. Although they proposed extending the secondary lemma schools to
6 forms of entry they made no attempt to disguise the difference between this sector and the grammar schools. They informed the DES that selection was to continue (along modified eleven plus lines.)

The DES requested a meeting with the authority. It eventually took place 18 months later after a number of delays. The Kingston deputation agreed to look again at the issue but decided to take no further action. Throughout the period of the Labour Government they were refused approval for any major building projects for secondary modern schools.

By the early 1970s there was growing concern about the lack of A level work in some of the secondary modern schools and the Kingston Parents Association (KPA) was formed, along the lines of the Richmond organisation to campaign for an end to selection. In 1971, following discussions with the head teachers, the CEO suggested looking again at a two tier arrangement in which 13 year old children could transfer according to their 'school's recommendation' from schools without sixth forms to those with them. The idea was rejected by the Conservative group.

In 1972 the KPA presented a petition containing over 15,400 signatures calling for an end to selection.

In 1974 the authority again began consultations over the issue following the arrival of circular 4/74 and further campaigning by the KPA. The consultations revealed a majority of teachers' groups and PTAs favoured reorganisation but there was also considerable support for the status quo and the final report on the process declared it "inconclusive". Following the presentation of a petition of 2,400 signatures by the KPA supporting the retention of the grammar schools, the Conservatives again rejected
reorganisation. 22

The council were finally required by the 1976 Act to produce a reorganisation plan. The authority used the results of the 1974 consultations to show than an 11 to 10 pattern was the most popular. The scheme they proposed excluded Tiffin Boys school, which it was stated would "make their own arrangements." It was submitted "under protest" and included the phrase that selection would be ended "possibly in 1982." 23

Mrs Williams rejected the plan on its use of resources and the date. She requested a further plan ending selection in 1979. The Conservatives held a meeting with Mrs Williams and claimed afterwards that agreement had almost been reached. In fact Mrs Williams had agreed to some of the proposed changes previously rejected and to a compromise date of 1980. However, after taking legal advice the Conservatives stuck to their original 1982 date and refused to answer questions about whether the plans would be dropped if the Government changed hands.24

These decisions came under frequent attack not only from Labour and Liberals but also teachers' and parents' groups. In March 1977 the Kingston NATU adopted a resolution condemning the council's delaying tactics and calling for an end to selection in 1980. They also wrote to Mrs Williams expressing these views.25

A new parents' group, the Parents Action Committee on Education (PACE), was formed in 1976 to campaign against the condition of the poorer secondary modern schools in the north of the borough and for an end to selection. They organised a sophisticated questionnaire on the issues and reported 60 of
parents in favour of a 1980 date for the end to selection. The group, which is still active, has a largely middle class membership, is well organised with an articulate leadership and has received attention in the national press.

This has had little impact on council policy. Kingston were awaiting court action when the 1979 election intervened. The Conservative group withdrew their plan and in January 1979 re-affirmed their commitment to a fully selective system.

Summary

Kingston is the only existing LFA in England never to have voluntarily submitted any sort of comprehensive plan to the DES. According to the DES it is also the only LFA without a single comprehensive school. Although this issue has frequently been raised inside and outside the council, the ruling Conservative group have been uncompromising, within the law, in their support for selection.
Footnotes to chapter 12


2. Ibid; this is a sentiment I would endorse having visited the school.

3. Ibid.


5. See appendix 1.


8. Ibid.


11. Ibid.


13. Kingston Minutes, Education Committee, 8/1/60; and Surrey Comet, 12/1/60.

14. Memorandum from the Director, op. cit.


17. Surrey Comet, 2/1/66.

18. Kingston Minutes, Education Committee, 2/2/66.


21. A deputation from KPA leading to a request for a report on selection is reported in Kingston Minutes, Education (Schools and P.H.) Sub-Committee, 28/3/74.
22. Kingston Minutes, Education (Schools and F.E.) Sub-Committee, 23/2/75
23. Kingston Minutes, Education Committee, 10/4/77
24. Surrey Comet, 22/7/70
25. Surrey Comet, 16/3/76
26. Surrey Comet 29/7/78
27. Milby, op. cit.
28. Surrey Comet, 17/11/79
Chapter 13  COMPARATIVE ANALYSES OF RESISTANCE AND REFORM

This chapter re-analyses the case studies presented in chapters 9 to 12 from a comparative standpoint and in terms of the three broad theoretical perspectives outlined in chapter one. Each of the patterns of explanation which emerge is presented in a somewhat stylised form for purposes of clarity. In particular the pluralist and elite theory accounts have been interpreted as purely actor-orientated explanations while the structuralist model specifically avoids actor-level variables.

13.1 A PLURALIST EXPLANATION

The explanation advanced in this section does not follow any one particular pluralist perspective but draws on those factors, from a variety of pluralist sources, which seem best to fit the evidence gathered in this study.

The essence of pluralist theory is that despite the fact that the vast majority of individuals are not actively involved in the political process most of the time, that process is nevertheless an open and democratic one which in general reflects citizens' preferences. This is possible because of the wide dispersal of power. There are a variety of channels of influence on decisions and a wide range of opportunities for citizens to express their views if and when they wish to do so.

A pluralist explanation of the policy responses found in this study can be constructed by focusing on the complex interplay of influences through three particular channels.
1. The Party System

The party system ensures responsiveness by the governing party to the wishes of the people. The existence of elections and party competition enables the voters to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the performance of particular parties.²

In all four LAs the comprehensive issue featured prominently in the policy statements of the major parties in a particular time as one of the dominant local political issues. For at least nine of the period under study in all LAs the two main parties presented clearly alternative positions on reorganisation. It was also a common theme of debate at public meetings, in the press and during election campaigns. Decisive electoral influences were possible in Merton where political control of the council was uncertain.

In the other LAs, which most observers would expect to be solidly Conservative, there remained marginal areas and authorities could be reduced to levels which might make life difficult for the ruling party.

There is some evidence in this study of election results which influenced aspects of the reorganisation debate. In Merton the Labour group were a significant force at the time of the decision to go comprehensive and the policy of taking up places in the non-maintained sector was directly related to changes in party control there. In Sutton a large Labour group played an influential role in the choice of a middle school pattern and in getting the initial comprehensive plan through the council. In Richmond the parents group put up a credible by-election
performance and the Labour and Liberal groups were important after 1971 in assisting in the defeat of counter attacks against reorganisation.

Nevertheless it is clear that in ULMs which were largely one party dominated electoral competition was not a major influence on the spin reorganisation decisions. Indeed there are a number of inconsistencies between election results and policy decisions. For example in Richmond the Conservatives decided to re comprehensive only after they had ensured every seat on the council on a platform of retaining the grammar schools! In addition the voters were not always presented with a clear choice on the issue. Finally there is evidence that local elections are overwhelmingly influenced by the national standing of the parties, and the consistent swings at elections across the four ULs tends to confirm this.

However the pluralist case does not necessarily rest on changes in party control. The dominance of one party locally can be seen as a reflection of a general satisfaction with the performance of that party across a range of issues at either local or national level. With comprehensive education is just one. Therefore in such ULs the attention of pluralists focuses on the way in which the ruling party conducted the debate, once the issue arose, so as to ensure sensitivity to citizens' preferences. In this respect it is important to note that, despite the evidence to the contrary, local politicians may actually believe that their electoral fortunes are determined by their performance over local issues.
The leader of the majority group and the committee chairman are the key figures in the intra-party decision-making process. These are democratically elected posts within the party and open to challenge. The fortunes of these leading figures were important in determining the responses to reorganization. In Victoria the group was solidly behind Talbot, in Richmond after a long debate Hill and Cameron gained a small majority for reorganization, while in Sutton when Hill attempted to pursue reorganization in a divided party he was eventually defeated. In all three LFA's there are examples of individuals on leadership positions who were 'swept away' in some cases reversed previously held positions on this issue. For pluralists this is evidence of an open and flexible process in which the leaders are responsive to opinion within the council as a whole (including the minority 'right' and from outside.

There were many sources of outside opinion for the majority were heeded on. This included formal consultation processes such as written submissions, meetings with interested bodies within working parties or special sub-committees, and public meetings. Officers and politicians in all LFA's stressed the need to obtain the views of the public. In all three LFA's the council debated the issue and provided a channel of opinion through the letters page. In addition councillors themselves received letters, complaints and comments in various forms from their contacts with the public. Finally the intraparty debate was also responsive to the preferences of citizens through the activities (or inactivity) of pressure groups.
2. The pressure Group Process

According to pluralist theory the ruling party is able to make decisions between elections with constant reference to the voters. However, the pressure group process allows those citizens who are not afraid to say or feel most strongly about particular issues to influence these decisions. 3

In this study a relatively high level of pressure group activity was evident in at least three of the four PAMS. Groups representing a variety of interests on both sides of the controversial issue were active and influential. Pressure groups were involved directly in the consultation processes in all PAMS. They also engaged in a variety of other activities that were able to gain some media attention. Furthermore, the direction and intensity of group activity were frequently consistent with the decision on reorganization in each PAM.

The main groups involved were those representing teachers and parents.

Teacher's groups were almost always closely involved in the decision-making process on reorganization and in most cases their views were consistent with the outcome. In both the FER and FET (respectively the largest and perhaps the most influential associations in all four PAMS) the majority of teachers in each PAM favored an end to reorganization from the outset. In Richmond reform occurred after the main teachers' associations changed from supporting selection to opposing it. In division west teachers' groups supported the middle school scheme a proved in the early 1970s.

However a correlation between the views of teachers' groups
and the council's decisions is not evidence of actual influence. Indeed there are also examples of decisions being made which went directly against the views of teachers' groups. In Kingston the association of the largest teachers' associations in selection has had no impact and in Sutton since 1974 the case is true. In fact in all three detailed case studies senior politicians argued that they could not go ahead with their respective decisions, at least on the principles of selection, even against the opposition of teachers. They usually emphasised the view that the interests of the children (and their parents) were paramount and teachers' interests were not necessarily the case. In any case teachers' opinions were almost always divided and it was not always clear that teachers' leaders were reflecting the views of their rank and file (e.g., the NUT in Sutton and Kingston in the post-74 period). However this did not mean that teachers were ignored and in some cases, such as the NUT's growing dissatisfaction with selection in Richmond, their views probably did play a part in the decision to reconsider. In addition, once the decision in principle had been made, there is rather more evidence of teachers' influence over the particular pattern of comprehensive schooling adopted and the detailed senior staff within each school. For example, it is clear to teachers and college principals the NUT's support in Richmond and the strong opposition of all teachers' groups in Sutton may have been important. Also in all three TMs which approved reorganisation plans a clear majority of teachers' associations supported the scheme. Nevertheless even where the particular measure adopted in each TM initially emerged from officers and politicians without
any particular enthusiasm from teachers. In general therefore, 
although teachers grew more consulted and occasionally 
influential over the educational details of the schools, they did not 
have an impact on the race issues or reorganization. This 
could be seen as perfectly consistent with pluralist theory, 
particularly if their limited influence was an expression of strong 
influence for parents.

Statistically, no representatives of the minority race or 
education were more central to the pluralist core but there is 
considerable evidence in this study for pluralists to draw on. They 
from this had a number of ways and three in particular linked to 
the "W". The "W" was a group of parents and schools involved 
and others of how groups were set up and socially around this 
issue.

In fact, Richmond and "W" certain parents' groups were 
exceedingly active and extremely influential. In Richmond it 
could be argued that there was a strong representation of parents 
who were "directly affected" by policies being pursued and felt 
strongly by family approval. They were able to express their dissatisfaction 
in a variety of ways and in each case the local political process 
responded.

In Richmond the "W", a large, well-informed group, united 
with the "C" to form a smaller, but articulate and influential group. 
Despite the reservations expressed in chapter 10 about the full 
extent of their influence, pluralists could still claim that the 
clarification of dissatisfaction with selection by these groups, combined with the absence of a strong grammar school
defence campaign, helped undermine the existing system and aided the Conservative leadership in gaining approval for reorganisation from their group and from Mrs Thatcher.

In Sutton the activities of the various grammar school defence campaigns provided a highly visible and well-organised local opposition to the middle school comprehensive plan. They were influential not only in terms of Mrs Thatcher’s selection of a vital part of the plan but also in the movement in which the rejection section of the Conservative party was stronger and within the entire comprehensive scheme.

In Kingston there was a mixture of group activity at various times on both sides of the issue. None of the groups were very large. The Conservatives carried out consultations on at least two occasions and concluded that opinion was divided. Despite the opportunities to do so, the vast majority of parents did not express strong views and therefore, pluralists could argue, were satisfied with the existing policy. As a result the Conservative decision to retain selection (while being prepared to re-examine the issue periodically) could be seen as consistent with pluralist theory.

In Herton, parent group activity was far more limited. However, the opportunities for expressing opinion were there and the lack of strong views could be interpreted as an indication of general satisfaction with the reorganisation decision.

Overall, pluralists can claim that the activity or inactivity of parents was an important influence on the decision taken. Groups hold opinions expressed by a significant number of parents directly involved in the issue had an impact. The lack of response
at other times and in other places indicated general satisfaction
or only the low saliency of the issue in the minds of most
parents.

3. National Level Influences

The national level influences discussed in part 2 of this
study are also elements in the pluralist explanation of local
decision-making. One of the ways in which pluralism is reflected in
a society is through the existence of different tiers of government.
The influence of a democratic central government on local decisions
helps to maintain balance between national and local needs and
interests. In a comprehensive education in one dimension of national
party differentiation, pluralism may have a role of national voting
in some part of determining the national standing of the parties pluralists
could argue that central control should have some influence over
local policy.

Evidence of such influence in this study includes certain
areas of central 1066 and the generality of the "fair" in improving
building projects assisted in the decision to reconstruct. In
"industrial" Sutton the pressure on the selective phase were
increased by the refusal of building proposals. In Sutton the
"secretary of state" played a direct role in rejecting viable parts
of the application made and in the late '70s the Conservative
camp nationally encouraged resistance until then around the
survival of grammar schools in Sutton and Kingston.

In addition the influence of national educational opinion,
expressed mostly through central government but also through the
national local government system and the professions, is also
included in some pluralist accounts. They argue that as long as the coalitions and ideas are expressed through groups and individual committees to a public interest ideology and remain under ultimate democratic control, it is a valid alternative source of influence on public policy. Some evidence of the influence of national educational opinion on the comprehensive decisions in Hertford, Richmond and Sutton was uncovered in this study. Examples include Coote’s advocacy of the middle school system in Hertford, Hill’s conversion to the comprehensive idea in Sutton and the influence of the sixth form college concerns from other towns in Richmond. In addition, the decline in the enthusiasm for comprehensives and the emergence of the ‘colonialists’ issue gave support to the resistance of Kingston and others in the late 1970s.

On the other hand there are many examples of comprehensive schools in London as both of central government (for example early resistance in Richmond, Sutton and Kingston) and the trend in national educational opinion (for example Kingston’s resistance throughout the 1960s and early 1970s). In fact, the conclusion to part 1 of this study was precisely that national influences can not account for the variations in policy, but a central theme across all eleven cases was an element in a pluralist explanation.

Pluralist Model of Resistance and Reform

Individually, each of the sources of influence discussed above (the party system, pressure groups, central government and national educational opinion) offer explanations for some of
the decisions made but fall down on others. However, the essence of the pluralist case is that decisions are made on the balance of influence from a wide range of sources. Therefore, a pluralist model has resistance to unified actions, bringing to bear on these sources of influence to provide an overall explanation. This is seen in Figure 15.1 which includes a model for one of the four life cycles. The pluralist hypothesis is that decisions are made by the balance of influence at a moment in the issue or trend. In every case the reader is expected to hypothesise.

Inorton reconsideration took place at a time when the central government was away on recess and the Conservative group had been unwilling to accept the idea. There was no strong evidence of group activity and the theme then slipped into public. Furthermore, only onceorton took rather longer to take up the idea; at that initial point, the trends in national educational opinion favouring reconsideration had become clearer. The merits of the middle school plan in particular were led into the city through the enthusiasm of the education officer and the central government who gave the blessings to this action just before the education committee had made a proviso.

It is evident the inclusion of the middle school plan in the education act, as a middle group brought an early reconsideration decision. However, in 1970 the balance of pressure group activity led socialist, conservatively against selection, national educational standards still strongly pro-comprehensive and the Conservative position was somewhat restored (partly by the experience of 1964–65).
Figure 13.1 A Pluralist Model of Resistance and Reform

A. Merton

Reorganisation Decision

Central Government
National Educational Opinion
Local Pressure Groups
Majority Party Opinion


B. Richmond

Pro-Selection Pro-Selection Reorganisation
Decision Decision Decision Decision

Central Government
National Educational Opinion
Local Pressure Groups
Majority Party Opinion


C. Sutton

Pro-Selection/ Co-Existence Reorganisation Pro-Selection Pro-Selection
Decision Decision Decision Decision

Central Government
National Educational Opinion
Local Pressure Groups
Majority Party Opinion

Figure 13.1 continued

D. Kingston

<table>
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Central Government

National Educational Opinion

Local Pressure Groups

Majority Party Opinion

Key

/// Support for reorganisation

XXX Support for selection

--- Uncertainty, lack of activity or roughly equal support for each option.

Key decision points
thus producing a clear balance of influences favouring reorganisation.

In Sutton in 1965 and '66 central government policy came up against a Conservative group which supported the grammar schools. Pressure group activity was limited at this stage and educational opinion was only just starting to come out clearly in favour of reorganisation. This produced a co-existence proposal. By the early 1970s although central government pressures had been removed, the leading figures in the Conservative group had been converted to the comprehensive cause. This was partly through clear links with the national local government system which in turn reflected the strength of educational opinion favouring reorganisation. In the absence of pressure group activity the balance of influences was against selection and the council agreed to go comprehensive. However this decision produced a strong grammar school defence campaign. Further out the central government's support for grammar schools by this stage was shown directly in a decision to reject part of Sutton's comprehensive scheme. By 1974 the Conservative group, which had always been divided on the issue, contained a clear majority in favour of reorganisation and the educational support for comprehensives was weakening. As a result the comprehensive in the Conservative area was being forced to produce a comprehensive plan by the 1976 Act, Sutton again abandoned it after 1979 when the central government and the Conservative group clearly favoured a selective system.

In Kingston (where the evidence is rather lean) the early period seems to have been one in which Conservative group opinion
and greater school defence groups outweighed central government pressures. By 1974, these pressure group activities were increasingly divided, central government pressure was less evenly balanced against Conservative opposition from the likes of the Staines Group, and maintained. In 1977, a Conservative council of control took over and the council gave a clear balance in favour of selection events and pressure group activities in the end in favour of more candidates.

The pluralist model in such policy is that the balance in the balance of pressures brought through various means of democracy, can be used to explain the variations in response to the accommodation issue found in the four cases in this study.

13.2 The Basis Within Each Case

Much of modern elite theory particularly at the local level has been developed in the context of a debate with pluralists. It is in this tradition that elite theory approaches prove most useful for this study. As a result, this section focuses on a series of criticisms of parts of the pluralists' views presented above. An overall elite theory explanation of the variations in policy emerges from this but at the end, some suggestions are made about the directions which such an explanation might take.

The essence of elite theory is that power is concentrated in the hands of a few individuals who are relatively immune from democratic influences. These individuals control the political agenda and make decisions in their own interests and the interests of other members of the elite. Thus elite theory is in direct
o position to pluralist claims that power is widely dispersed. Using evidence from the case studies elite theorists will question the open and democratic nature of each of the channels of influence highlighted in the pluralist model.

The first system:

At least three of the four LAs in this study were once party dominated. The largely individual nature of the total lead of voting behaviour, the low salience of local elections and the tendency for voters to refer to general national level images of the parties combine to make the nucleus of the Conservative group in all four LAs largely immune from electoral defeat. 11 To the elite theorist elections legitimise elite rule. 12 They note for example that they have been involved not only in the leadership to justify its decisions, but in fact the outcome of the election has never been in doubt and the decisions remain unchallenged on the result.

Hutton provides a good example of this. In 1971 the Conservatives achieved a landslide victory on a three-line whip and had initially pledged them to "retain our four great war councils". 13 At least three in the period following the elections the Conservative leader publicly rejected reorganisation on the grounds it would be "dishonest to desert frontrunners who did in the election". 14 However, before the next election the Conservatives had voted to cut back. Their success in retaining power in 1974 could then be used to show that the voters' support of their handling of the issue. Similarly in Sutton in 1971 the Conservative
manifesto said the party would abide by Mrs Thatcher’s decision (in which just two grammar schools were retained) and consider in detail a sixth form college option. Immediately following the election they rejected completely any form of reorganisation and defended all four grammar schools. Subsequently the decision to defend these schools was justified by reference to the Conservatives’ continued electoral success in Sutton.

Given this insulation from most electoral influences there was also little need for any systematic mechanism for ensuring that the intra-party processes reflected the views and opinions of citizens. Elite theorists would claim that most of the evidence from this study tends to support the view of local parties as hierarchical structures in which loyalty, the acceptance of apprenticeship norms and party discipline ensure that all the important decisions are made by a small leadership group.15

Although debates took place within the group and in committee the leadership’s control over the agenda, access to officers and the pressures of loyalty were usually decisive. Thus in Merton and Kingston and for most of the time in Richmond and Sutton, it was the committee chairmen and party leader who effectively controlled the response to reorganisation almost unopposed.

The divisions and wide ranging debates which became apparent within the Conservative groups at a particular time in Richmond and Sutton and the leadership changes in the latter could be seen as an important challenge to this view. (Pluralists would argue that the lack of opposition to the leadership most of the time reflected a consensus that the issue was being handled
fairly by them and that these challenges were evidence of the responsiveness of the intra-party process when strongly held opinions outside the council diverged). However elite theorists could argue that these isolated challenges were part of a periodic struggle to gain entry into the elite and that they bore little relation to the interests and opinions of the mass of citizens in those LEAs. Furthermore in both cases the leadership was successful in the end (although only because it changed hands in Sutton).

Finally the claims made by each LEA to have consulted outside opinion is dismissed by elite theorists as almost entirely cosmetic. These consultations were largely designed to make people feel they were participating in the decisions when in fact their views had no impact. In Merton for example the main consultation process took place after the crucial decisions had been made. Large petitions against selection in Richmond in 1966 and Kingston in 1972 had no effect and petitions against reorganisation in Sutton were dismissed as fraudulent. The general consultation processes among parents in Sutton in 1971 suggested a majority opposed reorganisation and in Kingston in 1974 a majority in favour, yet both were interpreted as inconclusive or unrepresentative. None of the decision-makers interviewed in this study, including those who changed their views, attributed the position they adopted to the results of outside consultation.

The Pressure Group Process

While acknowledging the existence of many pressure groups, elite theorists can present a number of criticisms of the pluralist
interpretation of their significance.

First it can be argued that most were entirely ineffective. The political elite in safe one-party areas is simply able to ignore most pressure group demands (although some pretence at listening to them was usually made via formal consultation processes). Thus for example KAASE, SAASE and the more recent PACE (in Kingston) had no impact. Even in Richmond it can be argued that the large and vociferous RPA campaign was largely ineffective. As an 'outsider' group it was not granted access to the decision-making arena and as its methods became more militant it was increasingly regarded as an illegitimate group and discredited for acting 'irresponsibly'.

The only clearly effective pressure groups were those in Sutton set up to defend the grammar schools. However these groups had direct links with the majority party and their demands were in line with the views of a substantial section of that party. Furthermore it could be argued that, of the Richmond groups, RAASE was the more influential, and here again there were Conservative councillors who were also members of the group. Therefore the only successful pressure groups in Sutton and Richmond were those with elite links.

Finally elite theorists would be particularly concerned that most parents in all four LEAs were never organised and took no part in the decision-making process. In Merton there was very little pressure group activity at all and in the other three LEAs those groups which did exist seem to have been overwhelmingly
middle class in membership and particularly leadership. The study found very little evidence of any significant numbers of working class parents joining or being active in pressure groups. An elite theory approach rejects the pluralist claim that this was a sign of satisfaction or simply lack of concern with the decisions being made. It argues that many parents were almost certainly concerned (at least in terms of how any proposed changes would directly affect their children) and in some cases had specific grievances. However most did not have the knowledge, economic resources or the organisational or leadership skills necessary to mount and run an effective campaign. It is quite clear that parents in most LEAs did not have the sort of resources available, for example, to the RPA (finance, intellectual leadership, media connections, etc.) In addition many concerned parents may simply have felt powerless to influence decisions. If the elite theory view of the concentration of power is accurate then it would be quite realistic for most parents (particularly working class parents in a Conservative dominated authority) to conclude that there was little point in expending energy and resources only to be ignored. Such a fatalistic approach can soon lead to an attitude which pluralists might mistake for lack of concern.

It is difficult to provide evidence to show that parents were concerned and yet felt unable to act. The growing appeals against selection in Sutton shows some level of dissatisfaction there, although even then knowledge and confidence in the appeals procedure probably affected these numbers. In addition, when anti-
selection groups were got off the ground by middle class parents in Kingston and Richmond some working class parents did apparently join these groups. Overall the evidence is slim, but, elite theorists could respond, the pluralist claim that inactivity reflects lack of concern or satisfaction is itself merely an assumption not based on empirical evidence.

Finally it may be that some issues are easier and more productive to organise around than others. In general it may be easier to defend a specific institution than to campaign for a general principle. Thus the defence of grammar schools in Sutton was a cause which was easily identifiable, offered some prospects of success and provided an immediate pay-off for parents whose children were at those schools (and for teachers employed there). In contrast a campaign for comprehensive reorganisation throughout an LEA such as Kingston was a more diffuse cause with few obvious and immediate payoffs.

Overall elite theorists would argue that the pressure group process was characterised by unequal resources, differential incentives and restricted access to the elite. It offered few genuine opportunities for citizen participation and served mainly to reinforce the power and advantages of an already privileged minority.

National level Influences

It is much more difficult to construct a coherent elite theory response to the role of national level influences. In particular it must account not only for conflict between national
and local elites but also for a genuine competitive party system at the national level in which the issue of comprehensive education produced clear party divisions.

Nevertheless elite theorists could claim that the continual interplay between national and local influences served mainly to confuse rather than open up the decision-making process. The lack of any clear demarcation in practice left elites at national and local level free to fight it out or agree in their own interests and then justify their decisions as 'democratic' by any one of a number of conflicting criteria. Thus for example in the Sutton case Mrs Thatcher could have found a justification for either accepting, rejecting or modifying the middle school plan submitted to her on the grounds of local, national or (as she chose) 'grass roots' opinion respectively.

In addition the role of national educational opinion can be interpreted in elitist terms. Those involved in formulating and disseminating such opinions can be seen to constitute part of an administrative, professional and intellectual elite which exercises considerable influence without democratic accountability. Although this study found very little evidence of the 'dictatorship of the official' at local level, the influence of national educational opinion was expressed through links with local elites. Examples include Hill's links with the AEC in Sutton and Cooper's advocacy of the middle school pattern in Merton.

In general the intergovernmental process is relatively closed, effectively insulated from popular control and may be
characterised as one of "inter-elite bargaining." Thus the negotiations for example between Sutton's political leaders and officers and the D.I were carried on in considerable secrecy without the knowledge of the full council or even the full Tory group. Similarly the visits to other authorities from Richmond involved very few individuals and the discussions and information obtained were never made public.

Possible Elite Theory Explanations

Although elite theory is able to offer specific criticisms of parts of the pluralist model it is more difficult to construct a coherent alternative explanation within such a perspective. Elite theorists would not necessarily dispute the full pluralist model in Figure 13.1. However under their interpretation pressure group influences would seem less important and the decisions made would be interpreted mainly in the context of the interaction between national and local political leaders with some administrative influence. These few individuals make all the key decisions on reorganisation and the mass of citizens had no influence over them. Cutback pressures only became significant when the interests of part of the local elite in Sutton were threatened by the decisions being made. In this case the intervention of elite-sponsored pressure groups brought about a power struggle within the elite which reversed the decision.

However such an analysis of decision-making within individual

This does not provide any clear explanation for the variations in policy between L.I.A. Two possible suggestions for such an
explanation are worth examining briefly.

The first depends on being able to establish that the elite in each LEA had different interest at stake in the reorganisation issue. It is unlikely that this issue would directly involve significant economic interests but it is possible that different educational interests were at stake. This would include the extent to which members of the elite had links with particular schools in particular sectors of the education system. For example if a key figure was a former pupil of a prestigious grammar school and had their own children in that school they could be expected to oppose reorganisation. On the other hand if they or their children were educated in the private sector then they might approach comprehensive education in a more detached manner.

Unfortunately there is not enough evidence from this study to pursue such an explanation very far. Nevertheless, speculating from what little evidence of this sort that does exist, it is possible to suggest what that explanation might look like.

In Merton Sir Cyril Black was a former pupil and governor of Kings College School and Talbot whose son had failed the eleven plus, became a governor and eventually a fee-pay parent of that school. Assuming there were very few links with the grammar schools from other key individuals then the pressures from the national level to reorganise could be accommodated without damaging elite interests. In Richmond a number of Conservative councillors were former pupils of Hampton Grammar school and Hall, the leader, was one of the governors. Reorganisation took place here only after this school had been excluded from the plans and later joined an already
substantial private sector where, perhaps, the bulk of other elite interests lay.

In Sutton there is even less evidence but the leading figure in the Wallington High School for Boys Parents' Association which was at the forefront of the anti-comprehensive campaign was a Conservative Greater London Councillor. If other elite figures in Sutton had grammar school ties then this could help explain the fierce opposition to reorganisation there. ²²

Finally Kingston can be interpreted as an example of a modified form of elite non-decision making. ²³ It seems probable that there were at least some Conservative links with the Tiffin Schools in Kingston. It could be argued that by ignoring or deflecting the demands of outside pressure groups and, if not actually keeping the issue completely off the agenda, ensuring that reorganisation was never debated in the same detail as in other LEAs, the political elite continually safeguarded the position of these schools.

These are only suggestions however and the very slim evidence presented may well be entirely spurious. The difficulties of collecting the appropriate evidence, not to mention the British libel laws, ²⁴ make it unlikely that such explanations could be systematically pursued. Nevertheless elements of the structural explanation offered in the next section do bear some relation to this argument.

The other possible explanation for the variations in policy which can be, (although does not necessarily have to be) derived from an elite theory perspective, is quite different. Having emphasised the role of key individuals and faced with the
difficulties of explaining resistance and reform in such similar LEAs there is the possibility of falling back on essentially idiosyncratic explanations, particular ones based on 'personality' or simply 'chance'.

Such explanations were the most common advanced by those interviewed for this study and by some of the academics who read and commented on the early evidence collected for this study. Their comments are sufficient to give an idea of what such explanations are like. "I'd say it was ultimately a question of personalities. I'm convinced that if Talbot had been the leader in Sutton then we would be comprehensive now." (Senior Conservative politician in Sutton).

"I think it's a question of the right person in the right place at the right time." (Senior Conservative in Merton)

"You see the fact that we had the few individuals capable of and with the skills and contacts, to organise that campaign. That was what was crucial and what was lacking in other places such as Sutton." (Senior Conservative in Richmond).

"It looks to me as if there are certain key individuals who largely determined the direction speed and other aspects of the decisions in these areas." (Academic having read early drafts of chapters on Merton and Sutton).

"I wouldn't mind betting that you'll find it comes down to personalities in the end." (Academic confronted with early evidence on the variety of responses).

13.3 A STRUCTURAL EXPLANATION

There is a diverse range of theoretical and empirical work which can be regarded as adopting a broadly structural perspective
on society. Despite often fundamental differences between some of these studies there is a 'family resemblance' which justifies considering them together as providing a distinctive approach to decision-making. The essence of this approach is that the behaviour of individuals and groups is decisively constrained by the economic, social, political and ecological structures within which they operate. Of course, some of these structural influences are identified by some pluralist and elite theorists and to the extent that the previous two sections have avoided these factors they are deliberately narrow interpretations of such theories. However pluralists and elite theorists usually do not examine structural influences in any systematic manner and play them down in favour of behaviourist or actor-orientated analyses of decision-making. Structural theories in contrast attempt to show the way in which the options open to actors in the political process are heavily restricted by certain structural variables.

Just which of these variables is considered most important depends on what variety of structuralism is being applied. Among these the 'liberal' aggregate data analysis approach focuses on a number of 'background' variables which may be ecological, political or economic. Then there are the more theoretically based approaches which emphasise the impact of basic social conflicts. These include Marxist-inspired theories which see class conflict derived from a particular economic structure as the dominant force shaping decisions in society. Weberian approaches on the other hand see social conflicts developing from a wide
range of sources including political and ecological as well as
economic.28

The model developed here is a low level form of structuralism
which draws on aspects from each of these approaches. Its
modest aim is to provide a contrast with the actor-orientated
explanations reviewed above, and a point of departure from which
the potential for more sophisticated and theoretically specific
structural accounts might be assessed.

What emerges is an explanation for the varied responses to
reorganisation based on the constraints imposed by a continual
struggle for access to educational privilege within each LMA.
In this struggle the interests of middle class parents were
dominant. In Conservative controlled LMAs at least, this group
is crucial because of its central position in the social base of
support for that party. 29 Furthermore a substantial part of the
political elite in these LMAs was almost certainly middle class30
and, if not actually parents themselves, their immediate reference
group (for example work colleagues and friends) was likely to
include many middle class parents.

The differences in response to reorganisation were determined
by variations in three key factors.

1. The distribution of the children of this dominant group among
the different sectors of education, namely secondary modern, grammar
and private.

2. The perceived status and success of those sectors.

3. The perceptions of middle class parents of the likely impact of
reorganisation on the system in relation to where their interests lay.
The optimum configuration of these factors for producing the two 'pure' outcomes would be as follows:

For reorganisation - high status private sector with a high middle class involvement, low status grammar schools, ineffective secondary modern schools, and middle class perceptions that reorganisation in that LEA would pose them few threats. This configuration would produce a strong anti-selection lobby among those middle class parents in the secondary modern sector and little resistance from parents in the grammar schools or in the private sector.

For resistance - low status private sector with little middle class involvement, high status grammar schools, effective secondary modern schools and middle class perceptions that reorganisation would be a threat to their interests. This would produce a vigorous grammar school lobby and little middle class parental pressure against selection.

Various other configurations are possible producing pressures of varying strengths towards these two outcomes (or some intermediary position).

The precise configuration of these factors in each LEA was influenced by a wide range of variables. Two of the factors, the status of each sector and the likely impact of reorganisation, are largely subjective and would be bound to vary between middle class parents within each LEA. Furthermore the status of individual schools within each sector would be likely to vary. Nevertheless the argument on which this explanation is based is that there
are five key variables which operate consistently within each LEA but vary between the LEAs to determine the different configurations of these factors listed above and therefore to determine the policy response to reorganisation. These five structural variables are:

A) The Selection Rate. The percentage of state maintained pupils who are selected for grammar school places has a direct effect on the ability or likely achievement level of pupils entering both grammar and secondary modern schools. A high selection percentage will tend to dilute the average level of ability in the grammar schools and deprive secondary modern schools of the higher achieving pupils essential for the development of sixth form work. A low selection rate produces more academic children for the secondary modern schools and a greater concentration of high ability children for the grammar schools. The extent to which these trends operate depends on the interaction of this variable with the ability range in the population (see 4 below), the private education rate (see 2 below), the size of schools (see 3 below).

B) The Private Education Rate. The percentage of children living in the authority who are educated in the private sector will influence the state sectors. Although entry into independent schools is not based mainly on ability, it is closely related to social class which in turn is related to achievement. As a result there is likely to be a disproportionate number of high ability as well as middle class children educated privately. If the private education rate is high this will tend to weaken
the state schools. If, for historical reasons, the independent sector has a high status anyway these trends will be exaggerated. On the other hand a low status and small intake to the independent sector will tend to boost the status and high ability intake of the state schools, particularly the grammar schools. In each case the extent of the influence will depend on the interactions of this variable with the social class composition and ability range of the population as a whole. (See 4 below)

C) The Size of State Schools. The relationship between size and status of a school is complex. Size on its own may be an influence. Other things being equal, larger schools are simply more likely to produce more successful pupils in absolute terms. Size becomes particularly important in relation to the ability intake to a school. In particular a high selection rate combined with small schools will tend to weaken the average status of the schools in that sector. For secondary modern schools this is particularly crucial as it will affect the possibilities of providing sixth form work. Size of schools also influences the pattern of comprehensive education which is most likely to be adopted. Large schools tend to suggest an 11 to 18 all-through pattern, while small schools might encourage the adoption of alternatives, particularly the middle school pattern. This is important because ironically the large, all-through comprehensive apparently had a poor image among many middle class parents and Conservative politicians. Comprehensive schools do not need to be as big as secondary modern schools in order to provide sixth form work because they normally contain more higher ability children.
D) Social Class Composition. The social class composition of an LEA is firstly a rough indication of the proportion of middle class parents in the area. However in addition it is a rough guide to the ability range of children in the authority. A high proportion of middle class parents (as one would expect to find in a Conservative LEA) is likely in itself to encourage a relatively high selection rate (to cater for more higher ability children) and a high proportion of privately educated children. In these cases the private sector is likely to have high status and significance within the area. However, if for historical or other reasons selection and/or private education rates are low then this will tend to boost the ability range, status and importance of grammar schools and the effectiveness of secondary modern schools. On the other hand a low percentage of middle class parents combined with high rates of selection and private education would produce a weak state sector and an important private sector.

E) Socio-Spatial Characteristics. The spatial distribution of social classes in an LEA may have an influence on the perceptions of the impact of reorganisation in a particular area. To the extent that most comprehensive schemes involved some degree of neighbourhood schooling and catchment areas, parents may well assess the impact of reorganisation in terms of the likely status and pupil intake of schools near their home. The issue is a complex one but certain socio-spatial patterns are more likely to increase the resistance to reorganisation than others. For example an LEA in which there are fairly large clusters of one
social class with these clusters well segregated might expect to produce catchment areas dominated by one class. In these circumstances resistance to reorganisation would tend to be lower than in an LEA with the opposite pattern. This would be the case of an LEA with small social class clusters close together. In such low class segregation areas reorganisation might appear to pose more of a threat to middle class parents in terms of likely catchment areas and therefore generate greater opposition.35

None of these five features are likely to be sufficient on their own to explain the response of LEAs to reorganisation. However particular combinations do provide strong pressures towards certain outcomes. Figures 13.2 and 13.3 are models of two possible ideal type LEAs for producing reform and resistance respectively. These are only very simplified models of hypothetical LEAs. Furthermore not all of the influences set up by these interactions operate in the same direction. It will be noted for example that figure 13.3 depends on a negative relationship between the middle classness of the population and selection and private education rates. Nevertheless the models are useful as guidelines to some of the key variables and relationships which suggest particular responses.

Application to the Case Studies

In the strip above and below each box in figures 13.2 and 13.3 are indicated the extent to which the LEAs in this study correspond to the suggested variable in the model. Full shading indicates full correspondence with the model, half shading indicates
Figure 13.2 Ideal Reform Model

Exogenous

- Small state schools
- High E.G.S. Selection
- High E.G.S. in Ind. Schools
- High socio-spatial segregation

Ineffective sec. mois.

- Low status G.S.
- Strong opposition to selection

Weak G.S. Lobby

Good fit for alternative comp. patterns

Comprehensive Reorganisation

Key

Major influences
Lesser influences
Merton
Richmond

Good correspondence
Some correspondence
Little correspondence
Figure 13.3 Ideal Resistance Model

Exogenous

- Large state schools
- Low % G.S. selection
- Low % in ind. schools
- Low socio-spatial segregation

Exogenous

- Effective sec. mods
- High Status G.S.
- Weak ind. sector

High % Middle class in pop.

Exogenous

- Low opposition to selection
- Vigorous G.S. lobby
- Resistance to reorganisation

Key

As for 13.2 except,

Kingston
Sutton
some correspondence and no shading indicates no clear correspondence. The evidence for some of these assessments of the 4 LEAs is contained in table 13.1. However the table also includes additional data with which to fill out the picture of the structure of educational privilege in each LEA and to trace the constraints and dynamics operating in each case.

Using the table and the models it is possible to analyse some of the relationships between variables which determined the status and support for each sector of education in each LEA.

**The Independent Sector** (Columns A,B,E,J,J,K). The models suggest that in areas in which a high proportion of middle class parents make use of the independent sector, reorganisation is more likely to occur. In such circumstances the issue may be seen in a more detached manner by these parents and particularly the political elite. Furthermore reorganisation is less likely to be vigorously opposed where the independent sector offers a strong local alternative. The evidence from the table supports this initial proposition. The authorities which reorganised had the largest proportion of children in private education (A) and more prestigious independent schools within their boundaries (I and J).

In the reform model high middle classness is itself related to a strong independent sector and this appears to be the relationship in Richmond. However in Werton the authority seems to have fewer middle class parents (at least in comparison with the other three LEAs). Here a slightly different relationship is set up.
Table 13.1 Features of the Structure of Educational Privilege in 4 LEAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEAs</th>
<th>% of 13 yr olds in LFA educated privately</th>
<th>% of LEA maintained 13 yr olds in non-maintained schools</th>
<th>% of 13 yr olds in grammar schools</th>
<th>Total % in privileged schools (A+B+C)</th>
<th>% in Professional + managerial occupations</th>
<th>Col. A as % of E</th>
<th>Col. A - (P-C)</th>
<th>Col. D - E</th>
<th>No. of Independent Schools in LEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KINGSTON</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>+9.8</td>
<td>-5.5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUTTON</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>+3.1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHMOND</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>-14.3</td>
<td>+15.0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MERTON</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>-7.9</td>
<td>+6.6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1969 figure)

(continued over)
Table 13.1 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEA3</th>
<th>Prestigious Schools</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>No. of G.S.</th>
<th>Av. size of G.S. (pupils)</th>
<th>No. of Sec. Mods.</th>
<th>Av. size of Sec. Mods</th>
<th>Socio-Spatial Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KINGSTON</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Surbiton Kingston Tiffin Boys Tiffin Girls</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>Low segregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUTTON</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Sutton (Wilson)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>Low segregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHMOND</td>
<td>Lady Eleanor Hollis St. Paul's (Hampton)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>Relatively Homogeneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WENTON</td>
<td>Kings College School Timbladen</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>High segregation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Q</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(Columns A - I relate to 1971, columns J - P to 1965)

in which a particularly high proportion of middle class parents in the authority must use the private sector. This is illustrated in column F in the table. It shows the proportion of privately educated pupils as a percentage of the proportion of middle class males in the population. This reveals an even clearer correlation with the reorganisation responses in the four LEAs. It suggests that a higher proportion of middle class parents in Merton and Richmond used the private sector, and as a corollary a high proportion in Kingston and Sutton relied on the state sector.

The proportion of children who were maintained by the LEA in independent or direct grant schools is recorded in column B. The influence of this is unclear and was not included in the models. The figures are in any case distorted by places in independent denominational schools which are not always in the same category as other such places. In Richmond and Sutton in particular, two or three per cent of pupils were in this position. Other things being equal a high proportion of such places might be expected to exert pressures against reorganisation while a low proportion could easily be accommodated within a comprehensive system or simply abandoned without damaging many interests. This interpretation is at least consistent with the experiences of Kingston and Merton respectively.

The Maintained Selective Sector (Columns C,G,L,M,N). The models suggest that higher rates of selection are more likely to produce reorganisation. The evidence in the table supports this hypothesis.
Although the precise selection rates varied from year to year, column C provides a useful guide to the relative differences between the four LEAs. The biggest contrast is between Richmond (whose selection rate actually rose to 39% in one year and was often over 30%) and Kingston (where the grammar schools catered for just 10' to 15' of pupils.) The figures for Sutton and Merton are also consistent with the model, although the differences are slight.

When selection rates are combined with the size and prestige of schools in this sector (see columns L, M and N) the fit with the models is better. At one extreme, in Kingston a low rate of selection was combined with just two large grammar schools. This was likely to boost the status and as a result the defence of that sector. In Merton an average selection rate was spread among five grammar schools only one of which (Rutlish) was even moderately large and the status of the selective sector suffered correspondingly. In Richmond a very high selection rate was distributed among schools varying considerably in size so that while one retained a high status (Hampton) the rest were weakened. While Sutton's selection rate was much the same as Merton's, it was combined with four fairly large grammar schools whose reputations were correspondingly quite high.

In addition the models suggest that the status of the selective sector will be influenced by the rate of private education and the middle classness of the authority in relation to the selection rate.
Column G is an attempt to provide some measure of this. Taking the percentage of privately educated pupils (A) away from the middle classness of the LFA (E) produces a rough guide to the relative middle classness of those still in the state sector. The difference between this figure and the selection rate (C) provides a measure of the likely relative differences in the intake to the grammar schools. A high positive figure suggests that selective schools will recruit a large percentage of middle class, higher ability children. A negative figure suggests a weakening of the grammar school intake and a high negative figure indicates a low ability intake and a low proportion of middle class children in the grammar schools. The figures in column G support the logic of the models on this point. The grammar schools in Kingston and Sutton recruited more selectively from a higher social class and ability range than those in Richmond or Merton. In Richmond the very high rates of selection and private education had the effect of lowering the pool of middle class pupils available to the grammar school there. Furthermore one grammar school, Hampton, probably attracted a disproportionate share of the remaining high ability children thus further weakening the other grammar schools. In Merton although selection was not particularly high, nor was the proportion of middle class parents. Combined with a high private education rate this produced a relatively weak grammar school sector.

Finally the models suggest a two way relationship between the status of independent schools and grammar schools. If the grammar school sector is strong and has a high status this will
tend to attract parents, including the political elite, who might otherwise use the independent sector. If the grammar schools are weak the opposite may occur. Once these processes have begun they become self-reinforcing as one generation of middle class parents influence the status of each sector for the next generation.

In general the models and the table suggest that in Kingston and Sutton the grammar schools were the focus of educational privilege while in Richmond and Merton the independent sector channelled off a large proportion of middle class and elite interests (with the exception of Hampton school in Richmond which eventually joined the private sector anyway).

The Secondary Modern Sector (D,H,O,P) The models suggest that LEAs with high selection and private education rates will produce a low status and ineffective secondary modern sector, particularly if the secondary modern schools are small. Such a situation will tend to produce strong opposition to selection and encourage reorganisation.

Once more the table supports these suggestions. Column H shows the difference between the middle classness of the authority (E) and the proportion of children in privileged schools (D). This provides a guide to the ability range and class composition of pupils available to the secondary modern sector in each LEA. A negative number suggests a significant proportion of middle class and higher ability children available to this sector. The higher the positive number the lower the proportion of middle class and high achieving children likely to be in secondary
modern schools. The resultant figures in each LEA are consistent with the responses predicted by the model.

The size of schools in the non-selective sector \((0, \infty)\) added further to the differences in status between LEAs. In Kingston, a fairly large middle class intake was accommodated in large secondary modern schools encouraging the development of advanced level work. In Sutton there was a considerable variation in the size of schools within the secondary modern sector. The middle class pupils in this sector were almost certainly concentrated in the larger schools which were then able to develop reasonable sixth forms. In Richmond and Merton a lower ability range was spread among more, smaller secondary moderns weakening their academic effectiveness and increasing opposition to selection.

A Future Comprehensive Sector. To a large extent the perceptions of a future comprehensive system are directly tied to the support for and satisfaction with the state selective system described above. However there are two variables which the models suggested would directly affect perceptions of the status of a future comprehensive sector.

The first of these concerned the size of schools and its relation to possible patterns of reorganisation. The cases of Merton and Richmond are consistent with the idea that small schools tend to produce patterns other than all-through comprehensive schools. In Kingston an all-through pattern was far more likely and this may have damaged the image of any future comprehensive system. The size of Sutton's schools is also consistent with the uncertainty which saw at least three different patterns considered at various times.

Column Q describes the socio-spatial characteristics of
each LFA. This is difficult to quantify and instead a general assessment is provided. This is backed up by figure 13.4 in which certain class related characteristics of each LFA are broken down into wards. As the catchment area of a secondary (or middle) school would always be considerably larger than one ward this provides a guide to the clustering of classes as it might affect reorganisation. The figure suggests some fit between each LFA and the models. Merton's clusters are well segregated in the East and West of the borough while in Kingston and Sutton strong middle class areas immediately back on to and even surround working class strongholds. Richmond appears relatively homogeneous in a way which seems consistent with low resistance.

Structural Explanations for each LFA, including non-local influences

The structural influences analysed so far will now be broken down to give an overall explanation for each LFA. In addition the non-local influences from what was essentially a structural explanation of trends in part I of this study are introduced. Although the central government and the national educational debate were not decisive in determining the variation in policy responses they did play important roles within the parameters set by the local structural factors outlined above. Thus the struggle for educational privilege within each LFA provided the conditions for opening up some LEAs to non-local influences at certain times while cutting off these influences in other LEAs and at other times.

**MERTON**

Merton is the least middle class of the four LEAs in this
Figure 13.4 Socio-Spatial Characteristics of LEAs by wards, 1971

study. The upper middle class in particular is concentrated in Wimbledon, an area which includes many independent schools including the prestigious Kings College School. A high proportion of children living in the borough are educated privately, particularly in relation to its class composition. As a result the middle class intake to the grammar schools in 1965 was almost certainly low. Selection was around the national average (20%) and spread over five fairly small grammar school. The reputation and status of these schools was only moderate, although that of the voluntary controlled Rutlish School was rather higher than the others. The authority took up very few places in independent or direct grant schools. Merton also had the largest number and highest proportion of small secondary modern schools. The academic and middle class intake to these schools was likely to cause problems for the development of any advanced level work.

In these circumstances the influence of non-local pressures for reform was greater than in any of the other three authorities. Furthermore although the circular itself was a common factor to each LDA, the influence of the early wave of opinion favouring reorganization was fed into the political system in Merton more directly than elsewhere. This came first with the arrival of Cooper, an officer with experience of comprehensive education. In addition the growing criticisms of eleven-plus selection were felt directly by one of the key members of the political elite, Alderman Talbot, when his child failed at that hurdle. The prospects for reform were further enhanced when the suitability of the
middle school pattern to the size and location of Merton's schools became clear. Such a pattern also represented a challenging innovation for the authority which would be likely to boost its reputation and further the professional advancement of its chief officers.

When the plan was unveiled very little opposition emerged inside or outside the council. Many middle class parents never felt threatened by such a move because they used the private sector, several others had this as an alternative should reorganisation prove to be a threat. For middle class parents with children approaching the eleven plus or already in secondary modern schools the move was probably welcome. The grammar school lobby proved almost non-existent, consistent with the low status of most of these schools. The only opposition which did emerge came from parents of children at Rutlish School, but even this proved weak and ineffective. The lack of opposition may also have been partly due to the perceived impact of reorganisation. The high level of socio-spatial segregation between the two ends of the borough meant that reorganisation posed less of a threat to middle class interest. It was always likely that Wimbledon would end up with more middle class and academically successful comprehensive schools than Mitcham (and this turned out to be the case). In addition the choice of a middle school option ensured that the comprehensive schools available were only moderate in size and yet still able to provide relatively large and academically strong sixth forms, particularly in Wimbledon.
Richmond is the most middle class authority in this study and, using the figures for awards for higher education, has the highest proportion of academically successful children in the country. A remarkably large proportion of those children are educated privately, even considering the social class composition of the area. Richmond also has the largest number of independent schools within its boundaries of the four LEAs.

At the same time in the 1960s the authority maintained by far the highest rate of selection found in this study, ranging from 26% to as much as 39% of eleven-year-olds. Even with a large middle class population this figure was very high, particularly given the proportion of children educated privately. The five grammar schools varied widely in size and status. At one extreme Hampton was a large, prestigious, voluntary aided school while at the other there were two schools with under 400 pupils.

Given such a large selective sector and an academically ambitious population it was initially inconceivable to challenge the position of the grammar schools, particularly Hampton. (It was at this school that a national pressure group for defending the grammar school was formed.) The non-local pressures for reform in the mid-1960s found little encouragement in such circumstances and were easily defeated by the political elite.

However the authority also had a considerable number of small secondary modern schools. At its peak the selective and private sectors 'creamed off' over half the children in the borough. Even considering the social class composition of the
authority it was inevitable that very few 'academic' children were left to be spread among these secondary modern schools. The stark contrast between the examination successes at selective and non-selective schools led to considerable parental protests and put pressure on the selection procedure itself. This pressure resulted in allowing more and more children through which served only to accentuate the problems. The small secondary modern schools became increasingly unpopular with parents and teachers whose promotion prospects were poor in what was one of the most expensive areas of the country to live. Meanwhile the academic intake to the grammar schools was being increasingly diluted. This was felt most heavily by the lower status grammar schools while Hampton continued to flourish.

By the late 1960s the financial constraints imposed by central government were seriously curtailing the ability of the authority to tackle these problems. Elsewhere the tide of reform was spreading fast and the pressures of educational opinion were being felt in Richmond via the activities of RAASE and the discontent of some Conservative backbenchers, notably Timothy Raison, a former member of the Flowden Committee. In these circumstances the pressures to reconsider reorganisation were considerable.

During the considerations two further influences came into play. First the size and location of schools indicated the need to consider patterns of reorganisation other than the 11-18 school. Secondly the inter-authority influences which emerged after seeing comprehensive schemes in Merton, Southampton and Luton suggested
the 6th form college pattern. This pattern was not only a 'good fit' for existing buildings but provided the academic status to match the high expectations in Richmond.

Nevertheless the interests of many parents and members of the political elite were still linked with Hampton school. These countervailing pressures suggested an intermediate solution in which Hampton was made a special case. Middle class and elite opposition to reorganisation was reduced by retaining Hampton as a selective school within an otherwise comprehensive system. This was also consistent with new central government constraints emerging at the time against the reorganisation of prestigious state schools.

Some opposition still existed, particularly from the large girls grammar school in Twickenham. However this was counteracted by the strong support for reform from a combination of an intellectual middle class, feeding national educational opinion into Richmond, and those parents who had suffered personal frustrations with the selective system and the poor secondary modern schools. The decision remained controversial but the forces compelling it were strong. Throughout the build up to the decision, the reform influences were helped by the large proportion of middle class parents, and probably the political elite, who were less directly concerned because of their involvement in the private sector. When Hampton eventually joined this sector it served to strengthen that tendency, although if that response had been openly advocated at the time of reorganisation it would probably have generated rather more opposition.
Finally in such a relatively homogeneous area the academic standards and social class intake of the comprehensive schools were not likely to be perceived as such a serious threat by the middle classes within the state sector.

Two other related decisions also resulted from strong structural pressures. The change to a tertiary college came after the decline of the technical college and worries about the viability of one of the 6th form colleges. The abandonment of the policy of taking a substantial number of places in non-maintained schools came after severe economic restraint had been imposed on the authority by central government at a time when the LEA's own schools were operating well below capacity.

SUTTON

The proportion of children in Sutton who are educated privately is considerably lower than in Richmond and, in relation to the social class composition of the area, Werton also. As a result in 1965 the four, fairly large grammar schools provided most of the prestigious schooling in Sutton. Combined with an average or below average selection rate, this ensured that the academic intake to these schools was quite high. This militated strongly against reorganisation when the non-local influences began to suggest such a move in the mid 1960s.

Nevertheless the authority was under some pressure from an expanding population. Financial incentives from central government at the same time as the general pressure for reform persuaded the council to develop one purpose-built comprehensive school and extend the provision of denominational education (which was minimal at the time) in all-ability schools.
Sutton had fewer small secondary modern schools than Richmond or Merton and probably a higher ability and larger middle class intake for these schools. On the other hand a more rapidly expanding population and an uneven development of sixth form work did begin to create problems of inequalities in status within the non-selective sector. In addition by the late 1960s the non-local influences encouraging reform, began to be felt in Sutton, particularly through the experiences of members of the political elite who were active in the national local government system. These pressures prompted a reconsideration of the comprehensive option and, as in neighbouring Merton, the middle school pattern proved a 'good fit' for Sutton's existing schools.

However the key position of the grammar schools in the struggle for educational privilege in Sutton meant that the defence of these schools was far stronger than in Merton or Richmond. The pressure group campaign which emerged revealed a clear link between middle class parents and members of the political elite in this struggle. Opposition was further fuelled by the low level of socio-spatial segregation in Sutton. This was particularly true in the Carshalton and Wallington area of the borough and this was where the grammar school lobby proved strongest. In addition the one coexisting comprehensive probably served to placate some of the pro-comprehensive lobby. The intervention of central government effectively blocked the reorganisation scheme but by then the grammar school forces had already gained the upper hand in the authority.
The problem created by the poor secondary modern schools continued and spawned its own pressure group. To some extent the improvements to some of the secondary modern schools, the coexisting comprehensive and the growth of the non-selective denominational schools accentuated the problem by increasing the inequalities within that sector. However these higher status non-selective schools also provided an acceptable alternative for most middle class parents unable to get grammar school places.

By the time the 1976 Act came into force the selective system in Sutton had been bolstered up by the arrival of 'Ipsos', another highly prestigious school. In addition it is possible that the authority had attracted some teachers, administrators and parents who were supporters of selection while losing opponents of the system. Although the Act compelled Sutton to produce plans they were able to delay full compliance partly as a result of this increased commitment to selection but also by working closely with other Conservative LEAs resisting the Act. The Conservative Government of 1979 finally ensured the continuation of selection in Sutton. By then closures and improvements aided by a declining school population eased the problems with the poor secondary modern schools. This trend in population together with the existing forces defending selection led to the introduction of selection from outside the authority. These changes will serve to further strengthen the pressures favouring grammar school education in Sutton for the future.

Kingston

Kingston has almost as large a middle class as Richmond
and yet the size of its selective sector and the proportion of children educated privately is the smallest found in any of the four LEAs in this study. The authority has just two grammar schools both of a very high status. Tiffin Boys is almost certainly the most prestigious state school in the four LEAs studied (and one of the most prestigious in the country). In 1965 the LEA also took up quite a high proportion of places at non-maintained schools. The bulk of these were at two direct grant schools within the authority and were regarded as an integral part of the selective system to a much greater extent than similar schools in other LEAs. The low percentage of children in private schools and low rate of selection in such an affluent borough provided a very strong academic intake to the grammar schools, which as a result, were the focus of educational privilege in Kingston.

At the same time many of the secondary modern schools were already quite large even in 1965 and for similar reasons had a higher middle class and ability intake than any secondary moderns in the other LEAs. Their status and academic achievements were correspondingly higher. By 1980 the larger secondary moderns had sixth forms of around one hundred. This was larger than Sutton's comprehensive school and probably larger than many of the comprehensive high schools in Merton.

There was some discontent at the lack of selective places and, in the 1970s particularly, at the inequalities between different secondary modern schools. However these trends were far outweighed by the forces supporting the status quo. Any
attempt to reorganise the Tiffin schools would have provoked great hostility and the significant proportion of places at the direct grant schools presented a further problem for such a reform.

A campaign to defend the grammar schools such as that in Sutton was not necessary because reorganisation was never actually proposed. The crucial position occupied by the Tiffin schools represented such a powerful constraint that the political elite never seriously contemplated reform. 38

Furthermore the mass of parents never questioned that situation. Those middle class parents, and there must have been many of them, who did not obtain places in what was effectively a super-selective system were, satisfied by the standards of the secondary modern schools. 39

The strength of the local structural influences in Kingston far outweighed most of the non-local influences brought to bear. As with Sutton the 1976 Act did force the authority into producing a plan but working closely with other resisting LEAs and the Conservative Party in Parliament the selective system was retained. Population changes have also forced some modifications. The response has been to make plans similar to those in Sutton by which the grammar school ability intake remains high without weakening the secondary modern sector.

Power and Educational Privilege: A Summary

A variety of structural influences have been identified in this section which appeared to play some part in producing the specific policy responses in the four LEAs. These include
population movements, the size and location of schools buildings and non-local influences from central government, other local authorities and national educational opinion. However central to the overall structural explanation advanced here is the class related struggle for educational privilege. Each LEA began in 1965 with a different structure of educational privilege based on the differences in status of the education sectors and individual schools. The struggle to maintain and increase advantages within these structures was dominated by middle class parents and it was where their interests and values lay in relation to the particular educational structure of each LEA which provided the decisive constraints and dynamic influences which determined policy.

The corollary to such a view is the powerlessness of the mass of, particularly working class, parents and children. They had appeared to have little or no influence over events in any of the four LEAs. Indeed they remained largely passive and uninvolved in processes which nevertheless affected them directly. This state of affairs is consistent with a number of conflict-structural theories.

Marxists such as Bowles and Gintis and Althusser have argued that the education system itself plays an important role in legitimizing inequalities and encouraging those who do not do well within the system to accept their lot. The fact that working class children consistently do relatively poorly at school leads them to accept (and perhaps even see as fair and
natural) a situation where they do not have access to the better or higher levels of education. They come to perceive the education system as not primarily for them or their benefit and therefore, in terms of this study, they accept a situation in which decisions about the structure of that system are made by others.

More generally Lukes referred to the same process in discussing his three-dimensional, or structural view of power. He wrote, "Is it not the most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable." 41

Thus, the explanation developed in this section suggests that various structural pressures helped determine reorganisation in such a way that the mass of parents and children (rightly) perceived the decisions involved as outside their effective control.

13.4 KEY CONCLUSIONS

The extent to which the different perspectives and the explanations outlined above are mutually exclusive is open to debate. It is clear that there are some overlaps. The pluralist and elite theory approaches are both concerned with the behaviour of particular actors, and in most cases the same actors, in the political process in each LAL. The differences lie as much in the motives and intentions of these individuals as anything else.
In addition there are links between elite and structural explanations, particularly in relation to the political elite's own stake in, and relation to, the education system in each LEA. Finally to the extent that pressure groups are a manifestation of forces constraining the activities of the political elite there is also some similarity between pluralist and structural explanations.

However there remain clear and crucial differences between the explanations offered here. The pluralist interpretation argues that most, if not all, citizens were able to express their preferences over this issue through a variety of channels and that the policy outcomes reflected the balance of these preferences. The elite theory approach denies that most citizens were able to influence the decisions and argues that they were made by an unrepresentative and largely unaccountable elite without reference to the preferences of any but a minority of citizens with elite connections. Finally the structural explanation rejects the actor-orientated assumptions of pluralist and elite approaches and argues that policy was largely determined by the structure of educational privilege in each LEA and the class related struggle for access to such privilege.

At its most strict and deterministic a structural explanation is fundamentally incompatible with any actor-orientated approaches. Nevertheless some structuralists do allow a degree of freedom of manoeuvre for individual actors which may offer some scope for a synthesis of the approaches in this study. Lukes for example argues that "although (human) agents operate within structurally determined limits, they none the less have a certain relative autonomy and could have acted differently. The future, though it is not entirely
open, is not entirely closed either." Saunders is also prepared to acknowledge some discretion for decision-makers. He argues that "the precise limitations on such discretion can only be settled through empirical investigation." 43

The case studies and analysis presented here have confirmed Saunders' optimism in one respect, namely that detailed evidence of relevance to this debate can be obtained and applied in a theoretically inspired form. Yet this evidence has also allowed the individual theories to be articulated so successfully that a simple decision between them or the development of a synthesis from them remains as difficult or remote as ever. However, progress in such an area should be measured less by the degree of controversy remaining than by the contribution made to refining or shifting the focus of the debate. In the end, rather than claiming to have resolved the argument between these positions, the hope is that this study has made such a contribution and is presented in a form which allows each reader to judge its implications in the light of his or her own values and theoretical commitment.
Footnotes to chapter 13


2. See Schumpeter, op. cit.; and Downes, op. cit.


5. See Dahl, op. cit.


7. This is in contrast to many other studies which have not found much parent group activity. See James, op. cit., chapter 3; and Peterson, op. cit.


13. Richmond Conservatifs Election Manifesto, 1968
14. Richmond Times, 17/5/68
15. See Dearlove, op. cit., chapters 6-7; Newton, op. cit., chapters 5 and 6
16. See Dearlove, op. cit., chapters 3 and 8; P. Saunders, Urban Politics, Penguin, 1980, chapter 5; see also pages 362-366
17. See Newton, op. cit., chapters 4 and 9
19. Dunleavy, 'Theories of the State...', op. cit., pp25-34
20. Ibid., p.22
21. Saunders, op. cit., did find a link between economic interests, education policy and the political elite in Croydon. This was via an educational trust which sold off some of its land for commercial development. See pp 250-258
22. One other interesting feature in Sutton along these lines is that Hill was an active Roman Catholic and played a key role in bringing denominational schooling into the authority.
23. See Bacharach and Baratz, op. cit.
25. For example Dahl, op. cit., is particularly aware of a number of political structures influencing decisions and Crenson, op. cit., recognises the importance of socio-economic structures.
28. For example, J. Rex and R. Moore, Race, Community and Conflict, Oxford University Press, 1967; R. Fahl, 'Stratification, the Relation between States and Urban and Regional Development', in International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, no. 1, 1977; see also Saunders, op. cit., part 1
29. See for example D. Butler and D. Stokes, *Political Change in Britain*, Macmillan, 1975

30. Saunders, op. cit., p.215, estimates that 30% of Conservative councillors in Croydon were in Professional and Managerial Occupations.

31. The term 'ability' is used frequently in the following section, partly because it is a term commonly used by those involved in this issue. However it should not be assumed that ability as it is used here, is an objectively measured concept. In fact the term 'achievement' or 'likely achievement' is probably a more accurate one, although also rather clumsy.


33. See the early opposition to large 11 to 18 comprehensive schools in all 3 detailed case studies, for example in Merton, p.278.

34. See Halsey, op. cit., for evidence of the link between class and educational achievement.


36. Support for the arguments about the importance of social-spatial factors and the private sector was revealed in an interview with a senior Conservative in Merton. He did not live in Tidmoleon and volunteered the comment that had he done so he would have been happy to send his children to the comprehensive schools there but that he opted for the private sector in preference to the comprehensive schools nearest to his home.

37. Given the fact that Hampton was an all boys school it is not surprising that the opposition which did arise came from the girls school which probably attracted the most able pupils in the state sector of that sex.

38. There is an interesting parallel here with the study by Crenson, op. cit. The importance of the Tiffin schools for the educational interests in Kingston is similar to the relationship between U.S. Steel and economic interests in the city of Gary in Crenson's study. In both cases when outside pressures were suggesting reform (in the case of U.S. Steel because it was the main polluter in the city) the local structural pressures ensured that they were left alone.
39. The satisfaction of middle class parents with the secondary modern sector in Kingston is well illustrated by the case of the leader of the Conservative group there. His daughter attends one of the secondary moderns, a school with a sixth form of one hundred which got twelve pupils into university in 1973 (including one to Oxford). In Peter Wilby's article he is quoted as saying, "I don't feel my child's education would be better if the grammar schools were swept away", P. Wilby, 'Flying the Grammar School Flag', in New Society, 6/11/72.


41. S. Lukes, _Power: A Radical View_, Macmillan, 1975, p. 24. The three theoretical perspectives applied in this chapter can be likened to the three dimensions of power analysed by Lukes.

42. Ibid, p. 54.

43. Saunders, op. cit., p. 196.
Appendix 1

The Calculation of the Private Education Rate

After considerable investigations no source of data on the number of children from individual LEAs who are educated in the private sector could be discovered. However a method for calculating a rough estimate of this figure for 1971 did emerge. The 1971 census provided a figure for children aged 13 on census night in each LEA. The ONS annual statistics provided a figure for the number of 13 year olds for whom each LEA were financially responsible on January 1st of that year. However this latter figure excluded special schools. Although the Greater London Statistics gave the total number of children from each LEA in special schools on January 1st it did not provide an age breakdown. As an estimate of the number of 13 year olds a figure of ten per cent of the numbers of all ages in special schools was used. By adding the special schools figure to the figure in the ONS statistics and subtracting this from the census figure an estimate of the number of 13 year old pupils not maintained by each LEA was obtained. The figure is only approximate because the census is conducted in April and the education statistics refer to January and because of the need to estimate the special school figure. However there is no reason to believe that any of the minor distortions which these factors might introduce would have any significant effect on the relative difference between the private education rates of the four LEAs. It is these relative differences which are important for the arguments advanced in this study.
Table 7: The Calculation of the Private Education Rates in Four LEAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population of 13 year olds</th>
<th>No. of 13 yr. olds for whom LEA financial responsible</th>
<th>10% of special schl children for whom LEA financial responsible</th>
<th>Column 1 minus Columns 2 + 3</th>
<th>% of 13 year olds not maintained by LEA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>1585</td>
<td>1432</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merton</td>
<td>2145</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1586</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton</td>
<td>2220</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column No.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Column 1, 1971 census
Column 2, DES, Statistics of Education 1971, Vol 1
Column 3, GLC, Greater London Statistics, 1971
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