REALISING THEIR GOVERNANCE ROLE:

COMMUNITY BOARDS IN NEW ZEALAND

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Philosophy (Social Policy)

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March 1996

Abstract

This thesis explores the governance role of community boards in New Zealand. There has been considerable debate on whether community boards have a meaningful role to play in local government. Critics of community boards argue that if the boards are not given additional functions they should be abolished. However this thesis will attempt to show that community boards already have an important role to play, that of governance.

This thesis focuses in particular on the concepts of 'public space', the 'public realm' and 'citizenship'. The mechanisms of participation and consultation are employed to reveal the governance role played by community boards. It is argued that through an appreciation of this governance role, the full potential of sub-local government can be realised.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the community board members who took part in the research - particularly those members of the Auckland Region Community Board Association Executive whom I regard as both my friends and political colleagues.

My supervisors Christine Cheyne and Dr. Mike O'Brien, through their academic support and encouragement, and Christine with her knowledge and insights of the research area, have both contributed to the production of this thesis.

I would also like to extend my thanks to the staff members of the councils within the Auckland region who assisted with the collection of the data, and especially those Auckland City Council staff who have provided both their professional assistance and a listening ear. Sincere thanks must go to the staff of the Auckland City Council Municipal Reference Library for their assistance on many occasions.

I am indebted to June Lee for her critical thinking and philosophical views.

Special thanks to Brian Shackleton for his computer expertise, for providing a 'good example' with his general conscientiousness and attention to detail, assistance with the various edits and preparation of the final document.

Finally, extra special thanks to my children, Rahsaan and Zena, who have watched their mother study and work for the 'common good' since their very early childhood. I hope they understand that this is in some way part of my contribution to their futures.

List of Abbreviations

A.C.C.	Auckland City Council
A.C.L.A.	Audit Commission for Local Authorities
A.R.C.B.A.	Auckland Region Community Boards' Association
C.E.O.	Chief Executive Officer
I.U.L.A.	International Union of Local Authorities
L.A.M.	Local Authority Management
L.G.B.G.	Local Government Business Group
L.G.C.	Local Government Commission
N.L.C.E.D.	Noble, Lowndes, Cullen, Egan, Dell
N.Z.L.G.	New Zealand Local Government
N.Z.L.G.A.	New Zealand Local Government Association
O.C.C.L.G.	Officials Co-ordinating Committee on Local Government

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Chapter One

Introduction

> If ... local government is strong on the delivery of services but weak in the extent to which it provides for local democratic self-expression it ceases to be sufficiently distinct from local *administration* (Widdicombe Committee 1986a cited in Gyford, 1991: 12).

> The political function [of local government] is the management and resolution of the conflict that arises out of the issues involved in the public provision of goods and services. It enhances such questions as the scope, the scale and the quality of the public services and the manner in which their costs should be met. ... If the political function is removed from local government it ceases to be local government (Boyle cited in Gyford et al, 1989: 4).

> ... government derives its shape, strength, and direction from the aspirations of the people it serves. It will reflect and promote the ultimate goals for life that are held by that people and its leaders. Except in a loose empirical way, one cannot really define a form of government by abstract principles, such as universal suffrage, popular control of government officials, and majority rule, for these take on different meanings depending on the social ethos that pervades them. A political institution is not some kind of distinct phenomenon, but is constituted by the quality of the acts of those who administer it and of those who respect its authority (Ryn, 1990: 18).

Community boards occupy the sub-local level of government in New Zealand politics. They were set up as a result of the 1989 local government reforms instituted by the Fourth Labour Government (1984 -1990) in a massive restructuring of the public sector and replaced the previous sub-local level which had consisted of community councils and district community councils. One of the major differences between these two models was the establishment of community boards not only in rural areas but also as part of the local government structure in large urban areas.

The sub-local level occupies a unique place in local government. It is not a third tier of local government nor is it a sub-committee of the local authority. Rather it can be seen as constituting a mechanism for the delegation of some political functions from the local authority to a community base, in a similar manner as the service delivery function has been decentralised to local service delivery centres closer to the communities they serve.

In the 1989 local authority elections, 159 community boards were established in many local authorities throughout the country. By 1992 the number was 156, reflecting both the establishment of new boards and the abolition of others. In 1992 a total of 866 board members were elected, representing 'nearly a million electors', that is 'nearly half of all electors' (Department of Internal Affairs, 1994b: 31).

Section 101ZY of the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989 charges boards with the overview of their local community needs and service delivery functions and the canvassing of opinions from the local community. Section 101ZZ allows the delegation of some duties from the territorial local authority to their boards provided they are not expressly prohibited from doing so by the legislation.

However, an evaluation of the community board concept, duties and process reveals some inherent contradictions. Although the official discourse surrounding the reforms encouraged a high level of participation by the community and a 'hands on' approach to local decision-making, for some community boards the reality in the period since 1989 has been markedly different.

A significant number of elected representatives (especially during the first term of the community boards, 1989-1992) found that their role was restricted to an advisory rather than a decision-making capacity. Some boards were even further restricted by a low level of delegation of functions from their local authority, accompanied by low (or zero) amounts of discretionary spending. Thus, community boards around the country ranged from effective bodies with a significant level of functions and discretionary funding, to those reduced to 'talk-shops' with few resources and little to do. This latter situation led to frustration on the part of some board members and their communities and conflict with the local authority (and particularly with those councillors who opposed the community board concept altogether). One result has been the inability of board members to meet the demands of their communities, not because they were disinclined to do so but because they lacked the necessary powers.

Community boards have both their proponents and detractors. Individual councillors, mayors, chief executive officers, other bureaucratic staff and consultants may be either for or against community boards. Community board members themselves generally defend their position and equate any perceived lack of effectiveness with a lack of resources, lack of respect from the parent council or councillors, and a paucity of delegated powers. The literature on community boards tends to focus on whether or not community boards in particular, or any form of sub-local government at all, should exist

and whether the costs of running community boards are justified. There has also been considerable debate on the exact nature of the community board role. The views of the public have been sought in a limited manner only. However, it is clear from the results of customer surveys, and from the concerns of some community board members, that the 1989 local government reforms are still not widely understood.

The 1989 local government reforms resulted in a radical reorganisation of the structure and functions of local government in New Zealand, the amalgamation of many smaller local authorities, and a more restricted role for elected representatives. It is now six years since the amalgamation policy was implemented and it is clear from my own experience as a community board member and from the opinions expressed by fellow board members in the Auckland region that there are some concerns about aspects of the new system.

This study explores the question, "do community boards have an important role to play in local government - that of governance?". The term 'governance' is defined in this thesis as decision-making by elected representatives with public consultation and participation. In order to answer this question the study focuses on the principles and values of local government, the concepts of community, public space, the public realm and citizenship, and employs the mechanisms of public participation and consultation to explore the governance role at the community board level.

This thesis arises out of my own attempts to understand the community board process in my position as an elected representative. My interest in the process has focused on the area of what constitutes an effective role for the local community representative. Fundamental to an understanding of this function is the value of the democratic process and those principles that both guide and constitute democratic theory as a whole.

In this thesis I argue that the traditional role of the elected representative (that of political governance) is under threat. The neo-liberal economic theories underlying the reforms emphasise the importance of the individual, a market-driven economy, and a reduced role for the state (Boston, 1991: 1-26). It will be argued that there is a move in local government towards a managerial form of governance. The effect of this has been to gradually restrict the role of 'the people's representatives' (who, their critics argue, lack the necessary skills to govern) in favour of a local authority system consisting of a smaller group of more 'competent' councillors (paid at market rates), possibly appointed rather than elected, and a corporate body which both makes and implements policies in the best economic interests of the community. The effect of such a model on the sub-

local level may be the diminution of the community board role to one of a local 'talk-shop' or even the elimination of community boards altogether.

In the light of an empirical study of the activities of community board members, and community consultation and participation at the sub-local level, this thesis seeks to formulate an argument to counter the neo-liberal model of governance. What is at stake is the opportunity for meaningful community participation in political activities and self-government which are achieved through the public sphere. This incorporates the concepts of a 'common world', the world held in common by all people, past, present, and future, and a 'public good'. To deny the existence of this common reality is to deny the ethical and moral perspective of democratic theory and to cause a reconstruction of the 'social reality' by which people live.

In an article on British local government reforms, Dr Graham Bush comments that 'the erosion of local government's sphere of responsibility and freedom to act has been severe and demoralising' (in N.Z.L.G., 1994a: 9). The British reforms of the 1980s contain many of the same elements as those instituted in the 1989 New Zealand restructuring. Commenting on the increasing levels of participation in local governance by appointed rather than elected representatives, Bush notes that appointed representatives 'are neither chosen by the local people, nor are they accountable to them' (ibid: 9) - a statement which could become increasingly applicable to the New Zealand situation. He concludes that the gradual loss of public accountability and associated democracy, 'is all the more threatening in that its impact and consequences are hardly realised by the community itself' (ibid: 10).

The Aims of the Study

This study attempts to demonstrate that the community board system in New Zealand can and does fulfil an important role in local government, that of governance. It is through an examination of the principles and values of local government and the concepts of public space, the public realm, citizenship, and governance that the potential of sub-local government can be realised.

It will be argued that at the community board level there is a unique opportunity for close contact between the public and their elected representatives, the elected representatives and their community, and the provision of a forum for political interchange and collective decision-making.

As already mentioned there has been considerable debate on whether community boards have a meaningful role to play in local government. Critics of community boards argue that without additional functions community boards are unnecessary and may duplicate the functions of council committees and local non-governmental organisations. Proponents of the community board concept promote the benefits of improved representation at the local level and point to the increased opportunity for 'grassroots' input into local decision-making.

The basic questions: "what do community board members do?", "how do community boards consult with their communities?", "how do the public participate at the community board level?", and "what type of issues do the public take to their community board?" have not yet been explored in any depth in the research to date.

Finally, this study seeks to provide material of value to community board members in their attempt to serve their communities in a meaningful, competent, and professional manner. It aims to counter that body of opinion which (often unchallenged) seeks to rewrite the job description of elected representatives without seeking their, or indeed the public's, contribution.

The Structure of the Thesis

Following this Introduction, Chapter Two provides a brief historical background to the development of local government in New Zealand, leading to the establishment of community boards in 1989. This historical account involves reference to the system of local government in Great Britain since this was the model which shaped the New Zealand system. The chapter then focuses on the sub-local level of government: community councils, community committees in Auckland City and community boards. The New Zealand public sector reforms, the accompanying process of decentralisation, devolution and delegation, and the 1989 local government reforms are then examined. This is followed by a discussion on the Local Government Association submission to the local government reform process, extracts from the Transitional Guidelines formulated by the National Transition Committee to facilitate the transition to the new local government system, and an examination of those sections of the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989 that are relevant to the concept and establishment of community boards. It concludes with a discussion of two particular

cases, Devonport's (1974) 'public involvement' policy and the abolition of the Rodney District Council's community boards in 1992.

The literature review in Chapter Three reviews the available literature on community boards up until November 1995. The arguments for and against community boards are introduced and recent studies on community boards are examined and evaluated.

Chapter Four discusses the concepts and perspectives of democracy associated with local and sub-local government. In particular it deals with the principles of local government and the concept of self-government. It then outlines three main theoretical perspectives of democracy: liberal representative; participative (socialist and republican traditions), and radical democratic theory. The terms community and community of interest, the basic units on which local government is based, are presented. The chapter introduces the concepts of public space and the public realm, and discusses the roles of the public in local government, including the notion of citizenship. The chapter concludes with an examination of the governance function and the mechanisms of consultation and participation.

Chapter Five discusses the methodology utilised in this study to examine the activities of community board members, and the methods of community consultation and public participation employed by community boards in the Auckland region. Because of the participant observation aspect of the fieldwork, the discussion includes an outline of Waiheke Island, my role as a researcher and an elected member of the Waiheke Community Board, and participant observation as a method. The chapter then discusses the four data collection methods employed in the study: the keeping of time diaries, content analysis of the minutes of community board meetings, a short telephone interview of community board chairpersons, and a participant observation cameo.

Chapter Six includes the method of data analysis, the results of the research, and the implications of the findings for the research question. Where appropriate, links are made to the underlying theoretical concepts as discussed in Chapter Four. The key themes relating to community boards are identified, namely, the proactive nature of boards, community networking, the use of Public Forum as a 'political space' and the governance role.

Finally, the significant issues that have been raised throughout the research and the outcomes and implications of the study are addressed in the concluding chapter. In

particular, the governance role of community boards is closely examined and it is argued that the sub-local level has the potential to both realise and further develop this function.

Chapter Two

Background

This chapter focuses on the development of the sub-local government structure in New Zealand culminating in the establishment of community boards as a result of the 1989 local government reforms. The chapter is divided into four sections.

First the chapter explores the historical role of local government in Britain in order to understand the roots and role of local government in New Zealand. The development of local government in colonial New Zealand is traced through the provincial era and the county system. Several common themes and arguments can be identified in calls for the reform of these early local government structures. These arguments are similar to those proffered by Michael Bassett, Minister of Local Government (1984-90) during the 1989 local government reform process.

Next the development of sub-local government in New Zealand is examined. This includes community councils and district community councils. During the 1970s some urban areas instituted local community committees for the purposes of local community consultation and participation. The community committee structure was particularly well developed by the Auckland City Council. This Auckland City example is discussed in some detail because the subject matter of the fieldwork is sub-local government in the Auckland region. This section concludes with the establishment of community boards in 1989.

In this thesis I will be looking at community boards and their role in governance. This chapter next examines the theoretical underpinnings of the 1989 public sector reform and the processes of devolution, decentralisation, and delegation. The 1989 local government reforms are then discussed with particular attention given to the Local Government Association submission to the reform process, extracts from the National Transition Committee guidelines, and the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989. The Act is examined in order to explore the governance role of community boards.

The chapter concludes by examining two particular cases which are of relevance to the community board model and the governance role. First, the 'public involvement' policy of the Devonport Borough Council is discussed. In the 1970s, citizen participation in

local government was encouraged and promoted by the Borough Council which initiated a system of Public Forums and allowed participation at the sub-committee level. Second, the abolition of the Rodney Community Boards, (Rodney District Council) in 1992, after only one electoral term, is examined.

The Historical Role of Local Government in Britain

The New Zealand system of local government is derived from the British model. Prior to the passing of the Municipal Corporations Act in Britain in 1835, the existing system of local government consisted of four main categories of authority: Quarter Sessions, Vestries, Municipal Corporations, and special purpose bodies. Each unit was responsible for providing various services to the citizens within its boundaries and exercised some degree of control at the local community level. However, Keith-Lucas (1977) notes that these units were not seen as a coherent system of local government so much as bodies which could be identified as serving the purposes of local administration.

In the 1830s this system was increasingly seen as inadequate as a result of social, economic, and administrative upheavals brought about by the Industrial Revolution with its unprecedented urban growth and concentrations of population. This prompted calls for reform. Keith-Lucas (1977, 10-14) points out that at this time the two main political parties, the Whigs and the Tories, were vying for control of the local government level. The existing Whig Government, under the guise of a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the state and shortcomings of the Municipal Corporations, sought to undermine the Tory control of local administration. He cites the allegations against the Tories as including: loss of contact with citizens, overspending on 'dining and entertainment', incompetence, corruption, lack of useful purpose, and acting in 'self-interest' rather than in the 'public good'.

Consequently, the representation on the corporations changed, with many Tory and High Church leaders being replaced by Whig businessmen whose predominant policy for local affairs was one of thrift and austerity, accompanied by sales of gold and silver reserves. According to Keith-Lucas (1977:14), these Whig politicians felt 'that their duties as Trustees of the Rate Fund transcended any responsibility they might have to provide services in the towns'.

The Whig Government moved to support an alternative system of local government that would allow ratepayers' control of expenditure. The passing of the Municipal Corporations Act in 1835 enabled existing methods of local government to be adapted to a system introducing electoral franchise. This was seen by some observers of the time as providing true representation for the people and furthering democratic principles (Sutch, 1956). Despite a plural voting system which favoured rich land owners over those with minor or singular holdings it was felt that, with control by citizens, the new units would better provide 'representative democracy' (Keith-Lucas, 1977).

Keith-Lucas (1977) argues that the Municipal Corporations Act provided an opportunity to install elected representatives who would act in the interests of the people rather than for particular vested interests such as landowners and the aristocracy. Bush (1980: 11) writes:

> While not as revolutionary as has often been imagined, the [1835 Municipal Corporations] Act was a landmark, signifying the overthrow of the old notions that local bodies, exclusive and irresponsible, could serve some private purpose. They were firmly declared to be henceforth the legal personification of the local communities, with the councils elected by, and responsible to, the inhabitants, practicing government for the good of the governed.

The Historical Role of Local Government in New Zealand

The British system of local government was transported to the New Zealand colony where Maori lived according to a tribal form of government and the initial colonial settlement was small and scattered. Accompanying the local government structure was a policy of thrift and self-reliance which suited a British Parliament unwilling to shoulder heavy investment in the colony and keen to promote a careful, almost parsimonious, attitude to public expenditure. Correspondingly, the new, Auckland based, central administration was reluctant to become involved in what were considered trivial local matters (which included the setting up and maintenance of a basic civilian infrastructure in a newly developing country) (Bush, 1980; Sutch, 1956). However, Governor Hobson stated in 1842 that he believed that 'the habit of self-government in such cases hath been found to keep alive a spirit of self-reliance and a respect for the laws, and to prepare men for the due exercise of other political privileges ...' (cited in Bush, 1971: 24).

Many of the settlers were more concerned with survival than with the intricacies of local level politics. Bush (1971: 20) examines Auckland newspapers of the time, including

the 'Letters to the Editor', and notes that 'most of the settlers were more anxious to avoid financial obligations than to acquire rights of local self government' and were wary of the creation of 'an elaborate civic institution over which "self-taxation" was written'.

Despite instructions from Britain to divide the new colony into districts, counties, hundreds, towns, townships, and parishes, Governor Hobson did not concur and New Zealand was instead initially divided into two provinces and eventually nine, each with an elected council. This structure effectively divided the country into distinct administrative areas with a wide range of functions (Bush, 1980; Dalziel, 1981).

Each province represented a distinct community of interest. Dalziel (1981: 94) points out that 'most [settlers] had emigrated to the "colony" of Wellington, Nelson, New Plymouth, Otago, or to Canterbury, not to the "colony" of New Zealand'. The geographical nature of the country and difficult communications further enforced the settlers' attitudes of self -reliance. The provincial councils provided a focus for both local functions and nationally important matters such as education and immigration. According to Dalziel, (1981: 94), with strong provincial feeling, national subsidies, and representation at the national General Assembly, many of the Provincial Councils seized the initiative in legislation and became powerful elements in politics.

The debate over the roles and responsibilities of the provincial governments persisted over the two decades of their existence. However, central government maintained ultimate control through legislation and any hopes of provincial autonomy were dashed with the abolition of the provinces in 1876 and the installation of the county system, characterised by its fragmented nature. The county local government structure was subject to calls for reform and amalgamation almost from its inception with legislative attempts at reorganisation as early as the 1890s (Dalziel, 1981).

Despite criticisms, the counties became important administrative units, with significant annual turnover, numbers of employees, essential functions including roading, fire services, water supply and sewerage, environmental responsibilities, recreation and community services and amenities, and sometimes social responsibilities in housing and welfare. By 1988 there were 217 territorial authorities (including city, borough, county, town and district councils), 136 community councils, 22 regional authorities, and 453 special purpose authorities - a total of 828 authorities (O.C.C.L.G., 1988: viii, ix).

There are some interesting similarities between those reasons forwarded (in 1876) for the demise of the provinces and subsequent arguments in favour of local government

reforms (up to and including 1989). They contain the common themes of proposed efficiency and revitalised administration. The existing units were seen as being too small, fragmented, ineffective, inefficient, incapable of performing a wide range of functions, handicapped by parochial attitudes, administratively top-heavy and plagued by voter apathy (Bush, 1971; Sutch, 1956). On the opposing side there are similarities between the 'provincialist' argument proffered by Hodgkinson in 1868 and that later submitted by those favouring the retention of local government in smaller units. These arguments include: the need to retain a local power base, keeping decision-making close to the people it most affects, a recognition of community values, and a desire for independence and individuality.

Sub-local Government

The sub-local level of government to which community boards (created under the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989) belong is not a new concept in New Zealand local government. Prior to 1974 there was an existing sub-local structure of roads boards, county towns with their own committees (appointed by the county council), county boroughs with elected committees (created under a 1968 amendment to the Counties Act) and dependent town districts. Bush (1991: 300) describes sub-local government as a 'tier of quasi-governmental community institutions ... the bottom strata in the hierarchy of local administration'.

The Local Government Act 1974 resulted in the abolition of many of the existing sub-local structures and the creation of 'district community councils' or 'community councils', depending on the population of the area, to replace the previous structures. These community councils had a strong, well-defined community consultation role and delegated functions and powers remarkably similar to those of the later community boards. Under the legislation provision was made for the further establishment of such councils as required (Brown, 1993; Bush, 1980; Mulgan, 1989).

Unlike the community council, with its largely consultative role, a district community council was 'statutorily both an electoral subdivision and a committee' of the parent council. However, both district community councils and community councils were prohibited by legislation from borrowing money, striking a rate, holding property, or appointing staff (Bush, 1980: 63).

The main function of the sub-local level of government has been local community representation. Throughout New Zealand there are also many non-governmental local groups and committees, such as residents' and ratepayers' groups, business associations and other lobby groups, which have traditionally existed in communities, and interact with their local authority on matters of concern to their members and locality (Brown, 1993; Bush 1991).

Community Councils

Bush (1991) draws links on the one hand, between the social upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s which favoured grassroots political input, the election in 1972 of the reform minded Third Labour Government (1972 - 1975), the appointment of Henry May (a strong supporter of local community bodies) as the new Minister of Local Government, and on the other, the establishment of community councils.

Bush (1980) identifies the creation of the councils as one of the major features of the 1974 Local Government Act. He sees the setting up of this sub-local level both as providing compensation for the proposed regional tier of local government, which would be more remote from the people, and as a concerted effort by the Labour Government to increase community involvement in local government. According to Bush (1980: 62), May believed that community councils would enhance community involvement, consultation, and liaison, and openness of government.

Community councils were clearly intended to have a strong, well-defined consultative role based on participation by the general public. By legislation, their general purposes were to: 'co-ordinate and express' the community's views on matters within their delegated authority, act in the interests of the community, facilitate activities for the 'general well-being of the residents' and to carry out its delegated functions and powers (Local Government Act 1974, Section 164) (see Appendix 1). By 1977 there were 109 community councils throughout the country (Bush, 1980).

In his address to the seminar, 'Citizen Participation in Local Government' in 1977, Ng (1979: 7), a strong proponent of community councils, saw the councils as having two basic objectives:

> ... to encourage local people to talk to each other, help each other and plan with each other; and to increase responsible citizen participation in local government

> ... together [these objectives] enhance social welfare and democratic citizenship amongst the people.

While the 1974 Act provided for sub-local units in both urban and rural areas, prior to 1974 and after the 1976 amendments (of the National Government), the community council structure was restricted to rural areas and urban pockets within rural districts. The statutory formation of 'formal neighbourhood public bodies in the purely urban context' was deemed to be unnecessary (Highet, 1979: 11). However, this did not preclude urban local authorities from setting up their own community committees by local request.

The difference between rural and urban areas was described not only as a geographic distinction, but also as the perceived existence of more distinctive communities and communities of interest in rural areas compared with urban centres. There was also seen to be a basic difference between the interests of people in rural and in urban areas (Highet, 1979). In addition, some urban areas were seen as already being well-served by voluntary organisations: residents' and ratepayers' associations, business groups, civic and other interest groups which acted on behalf of their members (Bush, 1980; Highet, 1979).

Critics of the restriction on the development of community councils in urban areas saw the 1976 amendments as preventing the full development of the community council concept, with its potential for greater community consultation and increased grassroots participation in local government. Commenting on the emphasis placed on an inherent difference between rural and urban interests, Kearsley (1979: 3) argues that 'knowledge of urban society, however, suggests that equally large differences, perhaps even more fundamental ones, occur within even small cities'. Kearsley (1979: 4) sees the urban community council structure as the formalisation of the neighbourhood community which, he argues, is 'probably the most strongly perceived community of all'.

Community councils were not another tier of local government. They were not to be regarded as 'mini-councils', competing with the 'parent' authority from which their functions were delegated. They were not incorporated and could be abolished if both parties agreed and with the consent of the Local Government Commission. This is consistent with provisions of the later community board structure (Brown, 1993; Bush, 1980; Bush, 1991).

Community Committees in Auckland City

In 1973 the Auckland City Council established fourteen committees based around its suburban areas. Ng (1979: 10) describes the Auckland City community committees as holding a special place in the history of community councils in New Zealand, setting an example by preceding the proposed legislation. Bush (1991: 301) interprets the action of Auckland City as being the result of a combination of factors including: the impending legislation which made provision for the creation of a community level; reaction against a local campaign demanding a ward system (as opposed to an at-large or city-wide voting system) and the perceived need for closer community relations. The then Mayor, Sir Dove-Myer Robinson, outlined the main functions of the committees as being: to report on local matters of urgency, encourage local input, develop a 'sense of community', promote environmental protection, and encourage the 'provision and use of social and recreational facilities' especially for youth (cited in Bush, 1991: 302).

Bush (1991) notes that these community committees were not committees of council, and were seen only as advisory groups. He also points out that it was not until the committees were reviewed in 1975 that the Council formally accepted that the relationship between Council and the community level should be both consultative and advisory. The committees were then allocated discretionary funding, secretarial services, and funding for community newsletters.

Criticism of the community committees focused on their cost and representativeness. Bush (1991: 305) describes the cost as 'negligible'. He notes that despite a small annual increase, the 1983-84 budget allocated to the community committees still represented only fifty cents per head of population. However, he also points out that the committees were plagued with a low voter turnout and by 1982 were subject to accusations by unsympathetic councillors of self-appointment. Equally, members of the committees complained about their lack of powers. In 1985, the committees were substantially weakened, both functionally and financially, as their discretionary funding and support services were cut back. For the next four years community committees were very much in retreat but this was to change with the 1989 reforms which led to the formation of eleven community boards for an enlarged Auckland City Council (Bush, 1991: 305).

Community Boards

Community Boards were not a feature of the original reform proposals of the Local Government Commission. Initially the concept of the Commission was for 'ward committees'. Brian Elwood, Chairman of the Local Government Commission from 1985 to 1992 notes that 'one of the Government's driving philosophies was to spread representation throughout the structural unit, be it city, region or district' (1992: 3). Submissions from the Auckland City Council to the Commission in November 1988 supported the concept of 'ward committees' based on the principles of: local input into decision-making - particularly on local community issues, the capacity to make recommendations on behalf of the ward, accountability to the Council when exercising delegated powers, and acknowledgment of the statutory responsibility of Council to fulfil Council powers and duties. The Council submitted that, in order to 'delegate responsibility to local committees whilst maintaining accountability to Council', Council would appoint ward sub-committees for specific local issues (Auckland City Council, 1988: 3).

The draft reorganisation schemes prepared by the Local Government Commission for the Auckland region in December 1988 subsequently proposed a ward committee structure. The Commission stated its preference for 'maximum local flexibility and decision-making' when considering the identification of areas which justified the establishment of ward committees and service centres, and identified the ward as the 'significant sub-district foundation of the new system'. A ward structure would allow for 'local community identification' and provide a 'centre of focus for electoral, service delivery and citizen involvement purposes' (Local Government Commission, 1988: Section A, 10). Elwood (1992: 3) states that the concept of the ward committee was to underpin the significance of the ward and provide for representation at the 'sub-district' level.

The Local Government Commission then introduced the concept of 'community boards' as an alternative sub-district unit, with the possibility of community boards and ward committees co-existing. However, after further consideration, the Commission decided to opt for community boards and the objectives of this new sub-district unit were adjusted to accommodate the objectives of the original ward committee proposal. Community boards would be representative of identified communities, encourage community involvement in local government, and perform some delegated duties of a local nature (Local Government Commission, 1989).

Elwood (1992: 4) notes that:

> The Government's ultimate commitment to the sub-district system came so late in the process that the Commission was unable to negotiate with all councils the development of specific proposals. The Commission's response was first, to rejig ward committees into community boards; secondly, to throw the decision about the need for community boards over to the new councils. The goal was to foster a partnership between the wider and narrower communities.

Salter (1989: 1), a lawyer specialising in local government, explains that in order to make statutory provision for the constitution of communities and the establishment of community boards, it was necessary to amend the legislation under which the final re-organisation schemes were issued. These provisions, found in the new Part IVB of the Act inserted by the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989, came into effect on 1 November 1989, two weeks after the 1989 local body elections (Salter, 1989).

Sections 101ZY and 101ZZ of Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989, detail the purposes and functions of community boards (see Appendix 2). Under Section 101ZY: Purposes of community board, the general purposes of a community board include: the overview in their community of road works, water supply, sewerage, stormwater drainage, parks, recreational facilities, community activities and traffic management; the consideration and reporting on any matters referred to them by the territorial authority and on other matters of concern and communication with community organisations and special interest groups. Boards must also prepare an annual submission to the territorial authority's budget process on the community's priorities for local expenditure.

Section 101ZZ states the functions, duties and powers of community boards as being to perform those functions and duties delegated to it from the territorial local authority (except for those functions which the territorial authority is prohibited by legislation to delegate). Community boards may not borrow money, strike a rate, make by-laws, undertake property dealings or deal in staffing matters. Thus, the limitations placed on the delegated authority of this new form of sub-local government were virtually unchanged from those included in Section 164 of the Local Government Act 1974, which applied to community councils.

By contrast, under the earlier 1974 legislation community councils had a much broader purpose which emphasised local community consultation and participation. The community councils were charged with the co-ordination and expression of the views of their community to *any appropriate* body or authority and taking action in the interests

of their community 'with respect to any such matter as is appropriate, expedient and practicable' (Local Government Act 1974, Section 163) (my emphasis). Further they were able to take a proactive role in initiating and co-ordinating community activities. However, in subsequent amendments to the Act and in the 1989 legislation the purpose of the sub-local level was redefined, somewhat restricted, and linked more closely to delegations from the territorial authority.

The 1989 local government reforms, under which community boards were established, were an integral part of the overall restructuring of the New Zealand public sector. The economic theories associated with these public sector reforms significantly influenced the nature of the new local government structures, organisation and functions and have implications for the governance role which forms the focus of this study.

Public Sector Reforms

The popular arguments and the supporting theoretical framework for the far-reaching and fundamental reform of the public sector in New Zealand were 'economic', based on a perceived urgent need to revitalise the national economy. The stated aims of the reforms were greater 'efficiency', 'effectiveness', and 'accountability'. However, despite clear statements about increased democracy, the reforms became dominated by economic considerations. Although some 'equity' and Maori issues were also addressed, the reforms took place within a libertarian ideological framework based on the importance of the individual and the minimalisation of the state (Boston et al., 1991; Sharp, 1994). Sharp (1994: 4, 5) describes the public sector reforms as an ongoing 'revolution', one that must be 'seen in a dense context of legal, managerial and economic argument and decision'.

The theoretical perspectives underlying the public sector reforms of the Fourth Labour Government (1984 -1990) have been identified by Jonathan Boston (1991: 2) as public choice theory, the new economics of organisations (notably agency theory), transaction - cost analysis, and managerialism or new public management. These theories, their strengths and weaknesses and continuing influence on the state and the general populace in New Zealand have been extensively discussed in Boston, Martin, Pallot and Walsh (1991), Boston (1995), Boston (1996), Kelsey (1993) and Sharp (1994).

The theories are based on an underlying assumption that individuals act out of self-interest. Further, they have been criticised for their lack of sociological, behavioural,

and constitutional perspectives, restricted explanatory and forecasting capacity, a looseness of definitions, and a failure to recognise the differences of power in society (Boston, 1991: 13-22). Boston argues that these inadequacies render the theories 'at best incomplete, and at worst misleading and damaging'. He writes:

> In short human beings are not merely economic beings, but also political, cultural and moral beings who inhabit an economic system which is profoundly influenced by, and in a sense dependent upon, the attitudes, habits, beliefs, aspirations, ideals, and ethical standards of its members (Boston, 1991: 13).

In the consideration of government and the state, public choice theory has important implications for the role of elected representatives, including the governance function with which this thesis is concerned. Boston (1991: 3, 4) identifies the underlying aims of public choice theory as including proposals for: a minimalist role for the state, the reduced power of politicians, and reduced functions for government agencies. Translated into policy, these may support the separation of advisory, service delivery and regulatory functions; fewer politicians; an increased role for management and the shedding of government functions through contracting out or privatisation.

The belief that people's behaviour is dominated by self-interest has been described as a central tenet of public choice theory (Boston, 1991). This ideological maxim is reflected in the theory in the perceived importance of the individual as opposed to the collective, and in the conceptualisation of people as 'rational utility maximizers'. Sharp (1994: 5) notes that under such a system, the major role of the individual becomes that of consumer, a consumer of services.

Boston (1991: 3) points out that the individualistic ethic precludes the possibility of politicians having any significant level of concern for general societal well-being or the 'common good', bureaucrats subscribing to an ethic of career in public service, and the more general concepts of the public interest and social justice. The main arguments utilised by public choice theorists against the relevance of these philosophical concepts, particularly, the common good and the public interest, are an alleged lack of value or importance and the possibility of sector group capture under the guise of increased public participation (Boston, 1991). Thus, a public choice critique of the political system denigrates democracy and questions its motives.

Boston (1991: 3) reveals one of the inherent contradictions of public choice theorists when he points out that while they assume that:

> ... the pursuit of self-interest in the *economic* marketplace can be expected ... to yield socially desirable outcomes, they argue that similar behaviour in the *political* marketplace can have damaging consequences (emphasis in original).

The importance of the individual is also the basis of the primary transactions that take place in agency theory. This theory is based on the idea that social and political life can be reduced to a series of 'contracts' between two parties, called the 'principal' and the 'agent'. In the political realm this means that the principal-agent relationship is activated in the series of relationships (both long term and momentary) that exist between the elected representatives and the voters, the public and the bureaucracy, and the political wing and the bureaucratic hierarchy (Boston, 1991: 4, 5). In the public sector, agency theory encourages the contracting out of previously in-house functions, in an attempt to separate the principal and agent roles, and for alleged greater efficiency. Trebilcock (1995: 5) points out, however, that there are transaction costs inherent in this process, including the costs of monitoring and enforcing contracts, which also need to be considered.

Managerialism or New Public Management is the application of private sector management principles to the public sector. This is based on a misunderstanding of the nature of the public sector. Whereas the private sector is constructed on an ethos of customer satisfaction, the public sector is legitimised by participation, equity, and electoral accountability - or, to use Martin's (1994) term, 'responsibility'. The wholesale transference of private sector principles to the public sector does not acknowledge this and other fundamental differences between the public and private sectors. Among these differences, Boston (1991: 21, 22) includes: the existence of 'multiple accountability relationships', the public service ethic, a volatile political environment, various and sometimes conflicting objectives, and the interdependence of various government departments.

The principles of managerialism include: contracting out and contestability in the provision of public services, a preference for financial incentives rather than non-financial incentives such as ethics and status, an emphasis on management rather than technical or professional skills, and the separation of commercial from non-commercial functions and policy advice from policy implementation (Boston, 1991: 9, 10). In practice, these may impact on the role of the elected representative at both the local authority and community board level. A preference for financial incentives favours a system of market rates for councillors, with their election (or appointment) based on business skills, and ignores non-monetary rewards such as service to the public, ethics and equity, and the democratic elements of representation and participation. An

increased emphasis on management skills in local government supports a managerial form of governance which may conflict with and restrict the role of the elected representative. The separation of policy advice from policy implementation results in a clearer division between the roles of elected representatives and management and perhaps best typifies the governance/management split (Howell, McDermott, and Forgie, 1995).

Devolution, Decentralisation, and Delegation

The concepts of devolution, decentralisation, and delegation of decision-making were part of the theoretical framework that surrounded the 1989 public sector reforms. They were popularly perceived as being features of a participatory democracy, promising a post-reform transfer of some central government power and functions to the local or community level where decisions could be made by those most closely affected by them. However, the processes of devolution, decentralisation, and delegation are also features of public choice theory and agency theory with a transference of functions and responsibilities to the local level and, more particularly, the individual, accompanied by a corresponding minimalisation of the role of the state (Boston, 1991: 20).

McKinlay (1990: 15) notes that discussion of the terms devolution, decentralisation, and delegation encompasses various definitions. Devolution has been used to describe a shifting of power from one level of government to a lower level, or to an outside agency, and implies a high degree of autonomy of the new unit. Decentralisation is generally seen as a process of shifting decision-making from a central agency to the regional or local level with the retention of power at the centre. Delegation allows for only limited decision-making on certain functions at a lower level and is a process of authorisation by the level that has authority to another lower level or person(s). As power and the ultimate responsibility remain with the original area of authority, the delegation may be withdrawn at any time (Bushnell and Scott, 1988; McKinlay, 1990).

Jansen (1995: 1) sees the fundamental difference between devolution and delegation in local government as being the means of transfer of power or functions. He writes that 'devolution involves a legal transfer of powers to a local political body' whereas 'delegation means the transfer ... by administrative means'. He notes that it is easy to both delegate and revoke an authority or power. However, 'it is more difficult to achieve a basis of devolution and even more difficult still to have an <u>assured basis of permanence</u> of devolution' (p. 5) (emphasis in original).

Durie (1988: 37) notes that the theme of devolution received active promotion by various government departments and that subsequent submissions to the Royal Commission on Social Policy (1988) revealed 'clear indications of interest in a move to participatory democracy with more active roles for the public in policy making than a vote every few years at local and national elections'. Bushnell and Scott (1988: 19), also commenting on the report of the Commission, note that the term "devolution" has been used to mean 'local decision-making'.

The political discourse surrounding the public sector reforms suggested the possibility of devolution down to the sub-local government level. Elwood, in a 1988 address on local government reform and devolution, stated that a reformed system would provide 'an integrated, interdependent community sharing common amenities and facilities'. He saw devolution to 'units of community government', that is neighbourhood committees or councils (community boards), as a major factor of democratisation (in Martin and Harper (eds.) 1990: 108). This expectation of greater community control is reflected in some of the submissions made during the public submission stage (Bridgeport Group, 1988). However, the final community board model, created under the legislation, provided for only limited delegation of certain functions from the local authority.

McKinlay (1990: 1) writing on devolution and public sector reforms, notes that:

> Much of the political rhetoric accompanying ...[the New Zealand public sector reforms] ... has focused on less government, on greater community involvement in decision-making ... . This came to be associated with the perception that we were in the midst of a process of devolution - a shift in power from central government to other, subsidiary, levels of government or to institutions or individuals outside the government structure altogether.

However, he concludes that an analysis of the process reveals that there was 'no overall government agenda in pursuit of devolution'. Rather, he suggests that 'the overall agenda has been one of the pursuit of efficiency as perceived by the particular [Government] minister' (McKinlay 1990: 3).

The 1989 Local Government Reforms

In December 1987 Michael Bassett, the Minister for Local Government in the Fourth Labour Government, announced a far-reaching reform of local government as part of the December 17th Economic Statement. This major policy announcement was the catalyst

for the 1989 local government re-organisation and culminated in the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989. The proposed changes were both fundamental and far-reaching. The resulting reforms, including mass amalgamations of smaller local bodies, the creation of new cities, districts and regional units and the abolition of many ad hoc boards, completely changed the face of local government in New Zealand. Bush (1991: 396) describes this overhaul of local government as 'the greatest governmental transformation in the nation's history' and 'so radical as to compel attention on a world scale'.

The Economic Statement makes the following points: that local government should, above all, be accountable to the communities it serves and should function efficiently and effectively in their interests; that central government, in consultation with the public should establish a strong, workable system of local government; and that the necessary restructuring should be based on perceived communities of interest.

The Discussion Document, Reform of Local and Regional Government, or 'The Blue Book' as it became known, was the first step in the development of the policy framework for the local government reforms. The document states that 'the two main values that guide the way we organise our society are fairness and efficiency'. These two values are taken as a starting point for the review and the ensuing discussion on the values of local government concentrates on 'how and to what extent local government can contribute to these objectives' (O.C.C.L.G., 1988: 3).

Issues which relate to the contribution of local government towards the accomplishment of these goals include: the value and benefits to society of permitting large numbers of people to participate in government, and the ability of governments to respond to individual and community needs. The document states that the closer government is to its community, the more sensitive it will be to the community's needs. It also states that closer government may produce better decisions, be more innovative and more receptive to new issues (ibid: 3).

The document contains a strong element of community, collective goals, and community of interest. As Chairman of the Local Government Commission, Brian Elwood played a crucial role in the implementation of the 1989 reforms. In much of his political discourse Elwood places strong emphasis on the importance of the community, local decision-making, and the democratic ethic inherent in increased citizen participation. Under a reformed local government system Elwood envisaged:

> ... a system of government where communities can practice more self-government, achieving both increased efficiency in resource use and service delivery and extended democratic responsiveness [and the achievement of] a greater sense of democracy by participation in more decisions affecting our most obvious collective grouping outside the family unit - the community (Elwood, 1988: 109).

Elwood proposed that local government could facilitate 'locally relevant decisions on local issues because at the local level there is opportunity for social and economic cohesion' (ibid.). In 1988, in an address on local government reform and devolution, he stated that a reformed system would provide 'an integrated, interdependent community sharing common amenities and facilities'. He saw devolution to 'units of community government', that is neighbourhood committees or councils (ultimately community boards under the legislation), as a major factor of democratisation (ibid: 108).

The possible future devolution of some central government functions to the local government level is suggested in the Discussion Document, based on the rationale that local provision of local public goods 'may foster more public participation in decision-making, may take better account of local preferences, and may allow for greater consumer choice and greater efficiency' (O.C.C.L.G., 1988: 5). These are features of a participatory democratic system.

Throughout the document there is tension between the different goals of neo-liberalism and participative democracy, an example being possible 'capture' by interest groups during consultation as opposed to encouraging more public participation in decision-making (ibid: 5). There is also a lack of clear definition of the key terms used in the local government reform process with the result that public expectations of the reforms differed widely.

Marjoribanks (1994) argues that the promise of greater public involvement and accountability smoothed the way for public acceptance of the reform process. The promised transfer of government functions to the local or community level could have been achieved by a process of devolution, decentralisation, or delegation. However, the subsequent legislation for community boards provided for only limited (and revokable) delegation to the community level, not the devolution of powers as suggested by both the Discussion Document and the associated political discourse.

In the Document the discussion on functions of local government focuses on the areas of trading activities, advocacy, social policy, regulation, and local public goods. The advocacy function is regarded as a fundamental role of local bodies. This role is seen as

encompassing the promotion of the 'well-being' of the district, and the representation of the interests and aspirations of the citizens (O.C.C.L.G. 1988: 19). This definition of advocacy is remarkably similar to that utilised in this thesis to describe the governance role - decision-making by elected representatives with public consultation and participation. The Document also states that since the purpose of the advocacy role 'includes the reflection of local views, it seems more appropriately a function of an elected authority than an appointed one' (ibid: 19). Thus, the advocacy role for local bodies is strongly tied back to the democratic election process.

The New Zealand Local Government Association Submission

The submission of the New Zealand Local Government Association to the Discussion Document is significant in that it represents the official view of elected representatives voted into office under the existing local government system and their perceptions of the values of local government. The submission notes that both local and central government are 'statutory creations of Parliament' and as such they are 'partners in the governance of New Zealand' (N.Z.L.G.A., 1988: 3).

The Local Government Association submission advances the following as important aspects of local government: responsiveness to local community needs, the opportunity for citizen participation in decision-making, and the local delivery of local services. I will return to these aspects in Chapter Four when I discuss the principles of local government and self-government.

The submission also cites the following features of local government:

- It is a fundamental component of our democratic system.
- It is government by communities (local self-government) rather than of communities (local administration).
- It accommodates the diversity of needs of various communities.
- It has the ability to be effective (that is to balance efficiency and sensitivity in the provision of activities desired by the community).
- It has significance in its localness, accessibility and constant exposure to influence and change.
- It can be more accountable than non-elected local government and private provision, in some areas of service delivery.

- Its role need not be confined to the actual delivery of services but it may act as a coordinator, agent, catalyst, funder, partner or simply as an administrator of service delivery (N.Z.L.G.A., 1988: 3).

Under the activities of local government the submission provides a more extensive list than that provided in the Discussion Document and includes: community leadership and identity, planning (the establishment of priorities and the co-ordination of activities), guardianship of the local environment, advocacy for the local community, enhancing the local 'quality of life', responding to social needs at the local level, and ensuring the provision of public goods and services in the widest sense (ibid: 4). With the exception of the provision of public goods and services, these activities can clearly be categorised as fulfilling a 'governance' role. The concept of governance is further discussed in Chapters Four and Seven.

The submission suggests that the revised structure of local government should contain provision for a sub-local level, such as 'community committees or associations'. The role of this sub-local level is seen to include: providing community leadership, promoting community identity, providing a channel of communication or means of consultation and accountability between the community and the parent authority, and providing the opportunity for delegation of civic functions by the parent authority (ibid: 8). These are clearly governance functions that, I will argue in this study, can be provided by community boards, at the sub-local level.

The Local Government Association supports its arguments with reference to the 1985 World-Wide Declaration on Local Self Government of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), which proclaims the following:

> ... it is at the local level that the conditions can best be provided for the creation of a harmonious community to which citizens feel they belong and for which they feel responsible.
>
> ... strengthening local government strengthens the entire nation by ensuring more effective and democratic public policies (cited in N.Z.L.G.A., 1988: 14).

It is clear from the Local Government Association submission that local participation in decision-making, community consultation, and governance are dominant themes in local government. In Chapter Four I will be returning to some of the issues raised in the submission when I discuss the principles of local government, self-government and governance.

The National Transition Committee

The National Transition Committee was established to facilitate the transition from the existing to the new local government system. This Committee had an important communications role as the legislation was still being finalised (and amended) up to the time of the 1989 local body elections.

Extracts from the Transitional Guidelines (National Transition Committee, 1989) outline the philosophy underlying the provision for community boards. The boards were to facilitate 'community input [in]to decision making by each territorial authority'. Community boards would consult with their communities and then advise the local authority of their community's wishes (in the form of recommendations or resolutions). These recommendations would then be taken into consideration by the council when decisions were made.

There are two important factors which arise from this process. First, if the issue is clearly of local significance only, then the local authority may delegate these decision-making powers to the community board level (provided these are not prohibited under the legislation). Second, if the process of community consultation achieved through the community board system is to be meaningful, and maintain credibility with both the public and board members themselves, then most recommendations put to the council by the boards would be accepted.

The Transitional Guidelines discuss the 'balance of power' between a board and its council and stress the subordination of the board, the legislative restrictions on delegated responsibilities from the territorial authority and the board's 'significant advisory and communication role'. It is clear from these statements that community boards were intended as primarily advisory bodies but with an important role in community consultation and participation. The advisory nature of the boards does not, however, preclude a governance role for community boards which is the focus of this thesis.

In discussing the separation of roles between local service delivery centres and community boards, the Committee highlights the division between council management and the political structure and states that the 'prime purpose' of the community board is 'reflecting the desires of the residents' in its area (National Transition Committee, 1989: 2). This indicates the importance of the influence of citizens on local decision-making.

The Guidelines emphasise the 'advisory' role of community boards, by reference to the terminology used in Section 101ZY of the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989, to 'consider and report, provide an overview, make submissions and communicate with local organisations' (underlining in original). It can be seen that there is a possible incompatibility or confusion between the 'advisory' role officially envisaged for community boards and the boards having any significant input and influence on council decisions. This is an issue which has led to conflict between some boards and their local authorities. This conflict has been highlighted by Marjoribanks (1994) whose work is discussed in Chapter Three. Another important consideration is that, although community boards are described as primarily advisory bodies, they are also decision-making bodies for some functions, including those which have been delegated from the local authority. Salter (1989: 5), a lawyer specialising in local government, notes that the minimum statutory responsibilities of a board, as specified under Section 101ZY of the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989, may be exercised 'independent of any delegation or referral from the territorial authority' (underlining in original).

The Transition Committee details those factors which may be taken into account by a local authority when deciding on the appropriate levels of delegation to their community boards. These include, statutory considerations, desired degree of decentralisation, community differences, the level of participation desired by a community, the management organisation of the authority, and the local (not authority-wide) focus and impact of community board views (National Transition Committee, 1989: 1).

However, the Committee also states that an authority should 'provide the maximum opportunity for community input to authority decision making' (underlining in original) and accordingly consider the following points: that community boards could perform some of the local councillor's functions, that boards have a 'perceptive overview' of the local community, the potential benefits of council - community board liaison, the possible creation of committees of community boards for some delegated activities, striking a balance between the democratic process and required efficiencies and the statutory responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer (ibid: 1, 2).

The transitional guidelines clearly answer Marjoribanks' (1994) concerns about the nature of the council-community board relationship, the boards have an advisory role. This is reinforced by Elwood's (1992: 3) statement that 'there was no intention of creating a separate, independent legal entity or local body with a distinct set of rights or obligations'. Where there is confusion it is possible that the territorial authority has not clearly stated the degree of delegated powers to their community boards.

Since community boards would be established at the discretion of the local authority, it was automatically implied that the authority, having made the decision to set up the boards, was then prepared to fund them. Thus, boards would be budgeted for in much the same way as for other council services. The level of discretionary funding made available to the boards would be dependent on the policy of the particular council.

The Transitional Committee suggests that community boards could perform some of the local councillors' functions. However, it may be difficult for community boards to carry out any additional delegated functions if this is not matched by a corresponding level of funding and encouragement from the territorial authority.

The Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989

Those sections of the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989 relevant to the concept and establishment of community boards are Sections 37K (stated purposes of local government), 101ZG (constitution of communities), 101ZY (purposes of community board) and 101ZZ (functions, duties and powers of community board).

Section 37K (purposes of local government) is largely based on the notion of community and contains reference to the opportunity for public participation. The concept of community in Section 37K, clauses (a), (b), (c), (g), and (i) is wider than that generally used in local government circles, namely a definition based on locality. The clauses are:

(a) Recognition of the existence of different communities in New Zealand,
(b) Recognition of the identities and values of those communities,
(c) Definition and enforcement of appropriate rights within those communities,
(g) Recognition of communities of interest
(i) For the effective participation of local persons in local government.

Section 101ZG of the Act provides for a geographic area to be constituted as a community, a more restricted and traditional definition of community. The identification of a community is a prerequisite for the establishment of a community board, which is assumed to represent a community (or communities, if the board covers several distinctive areas) of interest.

The purposes of local government (Section 37K) can be grouped into the three categories of: governance (defined as decision-making by elected representatives with public consultation and participation), service delivery, and a regulatory role.

The governance function is inherent in the following clauses:

> (a) Recognition of the existence of different communities in New Zealand,
> (b) Recognition of the identities and values of those communities,
> (g) Recognition of communities of interest,
> (i) For the effective participation of local persons in local government.

The service delivery function is evident in the following clauses:

> (d) Scope for communities to make choices between different kinds of local public facilities and services,
> (e) For the operation of trading undertakings of local authorities on a competitively neutral basis,
> (f) for the delivery of appropriate facilities and services on behalf of central government.

Clause (h) has elements of both governance and service delivery functions:

> (h) For the efficient and effective exercise of the functions, duties, and powers of the components of local government.

Finally, clause (c) refers to a regulatory role:

> (c) Definition and enforcement of appropriate rights within those communities.

The governance function is apparent in Section 101ZY (purposes of community board) in the following clauses:

> (a) The consideration and reporting on of all matters referred to it by the territorial authority or any matter of interest or concern to the community board,
> (b) The overview of road works, water supply, sewerage, stormwater drainage, parks, recreational facilities, community activities, and traffic management within the community,

(c) Preparation of an annual submission to the budgetary process,
(d) Communication with community organisations and special interest groups within the community.

However, Clause (e), to perform those functions delegated from the local authority, may include governance, service delivery or regulatory elements depending on the nature of the functions delegated from the local authority.

Salter (1989: 5) provides a legal interpretation of the term 'overview' as used in Section 101ZY clause (b). He argues that it indicates a 'surveillance rather than a direct operational role' for community boards. As already noted, Salter states that the minimum statutory responsibilities of a board, as specified under this Section, are independent of any delegation or referral from the territorial authority. Hence, community boards have an inherent governance-related purpose that is independent of any delegation (or lack thereof) from the local authority. However, as previously noted, community boards are prohibited by legislation from raising their own funds and are, therefore, dependent on their local authority for both basic running costs and discretionary spending. As sub-local bodies, they are also bound by wider council policy.

Citizen Participation: Devonport's 'Public Involvement' Policy

In 1974 the Devonport Borough Council, in an attempt to institute a system of more 'open government', pioneered the concepts of Public Forum and public sessions at committee and sub-committee meetings. (This initiative pre-dated the 1975 amendment to the Public Bodies Meetings Act which admitted the public and media to all meetings of council and council committees as of right). Councillors felt that members of the public should have access to Council during the formal meeting process if desired. However this access was restricted under the then existing system of Standing Orders (that had been operative since 1901).

The initiatives began with an investigation of the power to co-opt members of the public, such as members of the business community and representatives of the elderly, onto Council sub-committees. The policy of 'public involvement' also came to include: making the council agendas available to the media and for public inspection prior to meetings, street meetings (which allowed free discussion on a variety of issues in an informal setting), letterbox drops of questionnaires and notices on particular local

issues, and wide distribution of information booklets and regular ratepayers reports on council services.

The process of participation at council meetings required those wishing to address the Council to notify the town clerk; who then allocated each individual or group a period of time in which to speak and a speaking order. The Town Clerk also allocated time for public debate (Public Forum) before the council meeting, during which time members of the public could debate issues with the councillors and other members of the public. Pritchard and McDermott (1977: 2, 3, 5) write that this system gave the public an opportunity to present their views and concerns directly to the councillors. They argue that it was beneficial for councillors to have access to this information, to hear the community's views directly and to be able to question the public prior to making any decisions, a process which decreased the individual lobbying of councillors.

The rationale behind this system of more open government was the contribution made by public participation to a process of sound decision-making. It was felt that it was both more practical and time-saving to allow public input at the committee stage when particular matters were first being considered, rather than later when opinions had been formed, and that the public should have an opportunity to be more directly involved in council affairs.

These initiatives by the Devonport Borough Council later received an award from the Institute of Public Administration for communications with the public (telephone conversation with Mike Pritchard, former Devonport Borough Councillor and Deputy-Mayor, Dec. 1995) (Pritchard and McDermott, 1977: 2-13).

The establishment of the Public Forum is an important use of public space, and as will be seen in the cameo of the Waiheke Community Board Public Forum (discussed in Chapter Six) provides a highly visible form of political participation and consultation. The co-option of members of the public onto Council sub-committees provides an opportunity for citizen and community development and is a good example of participative democracy. The long term effect of Devonport's 'public involvement' policy may be a highly politicised and vocal community, and explain, in part, the strenuous efforts since 1989 of the residents of Devonport to de-amalgamate from the North Shore City Council.

The Rodney Example: The Abolition of Community Boards

A recent development in sub-local government has been the abolition of some community boards after a relatively short period of existence. In 1989, 159 community boards were established in 49 of the 73 territorial authority districts throughout New Zealand. By 1992 there were 156 boards, with the decrease reflecting both the establishment of new boards and the abolition of some existing boards (Department of Internal Affairs, 1991: 1; Department of Internal Affairs, 1994b: 31).

The Rodney District Council community boards were abolished in 1992 after only one electoral term. The move to abolish the boards was particularly significant as Brian Sharplin, (General Manager of the Rodney District Council), originally a strong proponent of the community board concept and the 1989 establishment of community boards in the Rodney District, recommended their abolition. The Rodney boards had been given the highest levels of delegation of community boards in New Zealand. However, in 1991 Sharplin proposed their replacement with a system of community committees, which were sub-committees of the council.

In his paper, 'Delegation in Local Government', Sharplin (1989) sees the basic elements of delegation from a local authority to both staff and community boards as being: to establish an atmosphere of internal confidence and trust, to formally assign the delegated functions to the appropriate level, to allocate sufficient authority to perform those functions, and a policy of non-interference once delegation is made. He argues, that since the primary aim of the new legislation was to create a more effective, efficient, economic, accountable, and transparent system, community boards could contribute significantly to this objective, provided they were delegated sufficient powers by their local authority. Sharplin (1989: 3) predicted that the community board structure would provide opportunity for a closer relationship between a District Council and its residents, and felt that the larger community boards 'should be given full power to act, without reference back to the District Council, on all matters which concern solely their particular area'.

In 1991 Sharplin presented a report, 'Local Government in Rodney after 1992', to the Rodney District Council. In this report, Sharplin recommended that the three community boards be abolished and replaced with three 'community committees', established under the council's standing committee structure. He recommended that the membership of each Community Committee comprise all the Councillors elected in that particular Community area with the Mayor being ex officio on each Committee. He

also recommended that 'the powers and functions of the three Community Committees be substantially the same as those which are presently the case for the Community Boards.' (Sharplin, 1991: 8, 9)

The rationale presented by Sharplin for this changed structure, included: decreasing the number of elected representatives, removing the potential for conflict between the elected community board members and the District Councillors appointed to the boards by Council, and the absence of an overall 'community of interest' in the areas covered by each of the boards. This conflict between board members and the council will be more closely examined in Chapter Three in a discussion of Marjoribanks' (1994) study.

Sharplin submits that a major factor involved in the subsequent 1992 restructuring was the composition of the Rodney District:

> It is a combination of different 'communities of interest' without a centre of interest. There is no focus for the district at all. It breaks up into wider, clearly defined 'communities of interest'. The community boards asked to be abolished. We also have a total of 61 residents' and ratepayers', business and other associations in the District and encourage public input into the new structure by putting out reports on all issues, (other than routine matters) for one month, for public discussion and input (telephone conversation with Brian Sharplin, July 1995).

He confirms that his original intention had been to give the community boards the widest delegated powers possible under the legislation. However, he feels that this move was compromised by legislative limitations on the number of councillors who could sit on a particular community board. This left some councillors with no position on a community board at all. While these councillors dealt with district-wide issues around the council table they had no input into local issues over which the local board had wide powers (telephone conversation with Brian Sharplin, July 1995).

Summary

This chapter has provided a brief historical background to the development of local government in New Zealand, leading to the establishment of community boards in 1989. The development of a sub-local level of government is traced from community councils, through the community committees of Auckland City to the establishment of the present community board structure.

Following Boston (1991), the theoretical perspectives underlying the public sector reforms of the Fourth Labour Government (1984 -1990) have been identified as public choice theory, the new economics of organisations (notably agency theory), transaction - cost analysis, and managerialism or new public management. These theories were based on economic arguments and an underlying assumption that individuals are essentially self-interested. Inherent in these theories are: a minimalist role for the state; the reduced power of politicians; the separation of advisory, service delivery and regulatory functions; fewer politicians and an increased role for management. Despite public expectations that the public sector reforms would result in a devolution of some central government powers to subsidiary levels, including local communities, the subsequent legislation provided community boards with some statutory responsibilities and provision for delegated functions.

Under the Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989 community boards are both advisory bodies and decision-making bodies for some functions. These functions include, but are not limited to, those which have been delegated from the local authority as boards have minimum statutory responsibilities. An examination of the legislation reveals a clear governance role for community boards which is independent of any delegation from the territorial authority. However, it is difficult for community boards to carry out this governance role if they have only limited financial support and little encouragement from the territorial authority.

The public involvement policy of the Devonport Borough Council established a precedent for New Zealand local government with a system of Public Forums and enhanced community participation. An examination of the Public Forum process is an important part of the research design of this study. The abolition of the Rodney Community Boards in 1992 leads into the popular debate on community boards, and consideration of arguments both for and against the existence of community boards, contained in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

There is to date very little published material on community boards. Most of the literature is in the form of journal or newspaper articles, unpublished academic or conference papers and small sections of consultants reports or customer service surveys. The key writers on community boards are Elizabeth Brown (1993), K.M. Marjoribanks (1994) and Peter Francis (1995). Their work focuses respectively on the future for community boards, conflict with the 'parent' authority and what community boards are currently doing. Brown (1993) also notes the lack of published material on community boards and comments that her most up-to-date information came from people directly associated with local government. For this reason alone, there is merit in researching community boards. Since the commencement of this research study a steady trickle of literature has become available. This review covers the available material published up to November 1995.

During the initial stages of my research there was no information about the following projects that have subsequently been completed. In my literature review I did not have access to Brown's thesis completed in 1995. I relied instead on her unpublished paper which was circulated among members of the Auckland Region Community Boards' Association (A.R.C.B.A.). Marjoribanks (1994) study was not available until after my own fieldwork was largely completed. The details of Francis's methodology were also not available to me until after my fieldwork had been completed. However, I was aware through the A.R.C.B.A. Executive meetings that Francis was conducting a study of community boards, including those of Auckland and Manukau cities. I spoke with Francis by telephone and he attended one of the A.R.C.B.A. general meetings.

This chapter is structured into two sections. First the popular debate on community boards is examined, with consideration of arguments both for and against the existence of community boards. This discussion reveals the potential for conflict between community boards and their local authority or parent body as a major concern. Many of the arguments echo the public comment and political discourse associated with earlier local government structures and calls for their reform (see Chapter Two).

Second, recent studies on community boards are examined. The Department of Internal Affairs has, to date, conducted two reviews (one published in 1991 and one completed

but not yet published) on the functions of community boards. These are the only official reviews or studies of community boards. Brown's (1993) study entitled, 'Is There A Future For Community Boards?' is then discussed. Brown identifies those factors necessary for the successful functioning and continuance of community boards. The key researchers on community boards are Marjoribanks (1994) and Francis (1995). There is also some limited quantitative data available from customer surveys. Since the sample population of the fieldwork comes from community boards in the Auckland region, recent surveys commissioned by Auckland City are examined. An assessment is made of the quantitative data collected on community boards to date. This discussion highlights a paucity of empirical research on the governance role of community boards, which forms the basis of the research question of this thesis.

The Popular Debate on Community Boards

The popular debate on community boards focuses on their perceived usefulness (or otherwise), cost, conflicts with councillors and the parent territorial authority and value to the community. As noted in Chapter Two, many of these arguments on community boards echo the discourse associated with the calls for earlier local government reforms, both in New Zealand and Great Britain.

Much of the debate is based on personal experience and anecdotal evidence, and often reflects the philosophies and ideologies of those involved. The two major perspectives are those favouring an inclusive or participative approach with an emphasis on 'grassroots input'; and those who oppose a sub-local level of government. Betts (in L.A.M., 1991a: 6) writes that 'whether a person involved in local government is for or against the idea of community boards depends to whom one spoke and from which municipality they came'. Opposition to community boards may also reflect public choice arguments that public participation promotes sector group 'capture' and thereby unequal representation, and unnecessary interference in the political process. Marjoribanks (1994: 100) argues that differing views on the relevance of community boards may be related to the boards' levels of functions, since the legislation is flexible in this respect. Thus, those boards with more functions may receive greater support from their communities.

A British paper (1993) entitled Phoenix Rising - A Study of New Zealand Local Government Following Reorganisation, discusses this mixed reaction of councils to their community boards and notes that:

> ... they seem to work best in rural areas. Some (council) members regard them as possible sources of hostility and resistance, whilst others see them as a valuable conduit of intelligence on local issues (Audit Commission for Local Authorities, 1993: 13).

The Audit Commission notes the views of several Chief Executive Officers (C.E.O.s), who have become increasingly aware of the potential of community boards, particularly 'to foresee and forestall local conflict'. These C.E.O.s perceive community boards as providing a interface with the community, 'absorbing the first wave of complaint and criticism' (A.C.L.A., 1993: 13).

This interface with the community has been likened to working at the 'coalface' of local politics. In 1992 Sandra Lee, then Hauraki Gulf Islands Ward Councillor (Auckland City Council), speaking at a Council meeting commented on the lack of decision-making powers delegated to the community board level and described community boards as 'the wailing wall of the Council'. She argued that while community board members worked at the interface with their community, and generally had a higher level of interaction with both individuals and community groups than either the elected representatives at Council level or many of the bureaucratic staff, they had few real powers.

The issues of the powers of community boards and grassroots democracy are examined by Wall (1995) in an article entitled Grassroots Frustration. He discusses the various viewpoints on what community boards can offer and opens with the following statement:

> They were intended as, arguably, the ultimate in grassroots democracy. Yet as a means of bequeathing power to the people community boards still remain a vexed issue within local government and all too frequently, a source of disillusionment to those serving on the boards (Wall in N.Z.L.G., 1995: 9).

Wall (1995:9) notes that boards which receive discretionary funding and have wide powers of delegation are seen as an example of a more successful model of community board. He also cites the concerns of some board members that the expanded role of council officers (who since 1989 have comparatively greater decision-making powers) may conflict with that of the elected representatives at the community board level.

Grassroots democracy is a theme also embraced by Cooper (Minister of Local Government, 1990-1993). Interviewed in 1992, at the end of the term of the first

community boards, Cooper stated his continued support for the community board concept. He feels that community boards can be an effective force as 'the real grass roots of local government making a community look better and feel better'. Further, he believes that 'the best boards are the ones that have been given the greatest jurisdiction by the territorial local authority' and sees the community board structure as providing people, in a democratic country, with a means by which to express themselves (cited in Ross, 1992a: 9, 10). Elwood (1992: 4) also believes that 'overall, the community boards have worked remarkably well'.

Thornton, a local government consultant and former member of the Greater London Council, also subscribes to this view and argues that since community board members are closer to their constituents, they should have a more clearly defined role and greater delegated powers. He notes that considering the number of elected community board representatives, any abolition of community boards would effectively remove most of the control over local government bureaucracy. He calculates that the abolition of existing community boards in the cities in the Auckland region would result in a loss of elected representatives in each area of between sixty-two and seventy-two percent (telephone conversation, Nov. 1994).

Francis (1995: 2) argues that the provision of community boards allows for greater public participation at the sub-local level than has historically been provided by community and district community councils. This view is supported by Brown (1993: 2, 3) who believes that with the reduction in the number of smaller authorities and ad hoc boards under the 1989 reforms, there is now greater scope for the development of a sub-local level.

The cost of community boards is a subject that attracts a considerable amount of controversy. Some councillors have questioned the cost of community boards and their relative usefulness. Wall (1995: 10) presents the contrasting views of two councillors. Hutt City Councillor Lawrie Woodley describes community boards as 'a luxury his city can't afford'. He believes that community boards 'duplicate the council ward system and create extra work for a council staff with little to show for it'. This compares with the view of Central Otago District Councillor Macpherson who sees each of the community boards as doing more work than the councillors at council level and recommends a lower level of representation at council level.

The cost factor is used by some local authorities and consultants as a reason for discontinuing the community board system. However, as Ross (1992a: 9) notes, 'no

evidence has been found of a community complaining about the cost of its own board'. Gwen Nash, Chairperson of the Auckland Region Community Boards' Association (A.R.C.B.A.) Executive believes that community boards are cost effective and represent value for money. In a Letter to the Editor of the New Zealand Local Government magazine, she writes:

> Critics who quote the cost of Boards should realise they have an economic bargain. Honoraria and meeting fees are much less for Community Board members and they can do a large proportion of the Council work. If all local issues and decisions were delegated to Boards, plus a budget for local projects and works, the Councillors need only concentrate on policy and fund raising issues. This requires fewer Councillors and fewer more costly Council meetings (Nash, 1995a).

Nash (1995a) describes community board members as 'fact finders and resource people subject to use and abuse by the parent Council', and submits that this is a unsatisfactory and frustrating situation for members of both the local authority and community boards. She states that she seeks to destroy the myth that 'Community Board members are somehow less capable than councillors, or lack the same intellect and good thought'. In a press release (1995b) sent to local community papers Nash describes community boards as the 'eyes and ears' of the community. This is a term that is frequently used by community board members to describe one of their main functions.

Actual or potential conflict between community boards and the council (both councillors and staff) has been a recurrent theme in the debate on the community board system. Since the establishment of the boards in 1989, there has been several reports of conflict between the sub-local level and the local authority (see for example Ross, 1992a). Some authorities which question the need for their community boards cite perceived ineffectiveness and cost for their opposition, while community board members may blame any poor performance on a lack of delegation from their council, or the desire of some councillors to retain power.

There have also been a number of breakaway movements initiated by small communities attempting to withdraw from their territorial authority, notably Waiheke Island (1991) and Devonport (ongoing) (Thornton, 1994). However, Elwood (1992: 4) cites John Gray, Christchurch City Council Manager, who believes that 'community boards are a cement which had held the City of Christchurch together'. In Elwood's view a similar argument could be applied to Auckland City. He also provides an example where the Hastings District Council created a new rural community board in order to counter a potential breakaway movement from the Hastings District.

Conflict with the local authority is a concern noted by both members of the Auckland Region Community Boards' Association (workshop October 1994) and the South Island Community Boards' Forum (August 1995). Doug Pearson, a member of the Local Government Commission, comments that 'to date 80-85% of the problems [of community boards] handled by the Commission have been personality based problems with the local authority, with the balance [15-20%] being structure-based' (South Island Community Boards' Forum, August 1995: 6).

Cooper places some of the responsibility for the working of the structure at the council level, and states that a supportive Mayor and Chief Executive Officer will act as a catalyst towards a better working relationship with their boards. He feels that if the Mayor and C.E.O. are motivated towards community boards, then there is the potential for effective grass roots local government (cited in Ross, 1992a: 9, 10).

However, in the case of Auckland City, despite the stated support of the Mayor, Les Mills, for the City's eleven community boards and his belief that boards should have more say in how money is spent in their local area, there is still a significant level of discontent among Auckland City's community board members. An Auckland City Council survey of its community board members during the first term of office (1989-92) revealed that forty-three percent of the board members responding to the survey cited their greatest dissatisfaction as being the relationship of their community board with their Council (Betts, 1991a: 7). Among the Auckland City Councillors there is a wide range of views on the boards with varying levels of support for the community board concept (Betts, 1991a; Marjoribanks, 1994).

This theme of conflict between the 'parent council' and community boards is thoroughly explored by Marjoribanks (1994) and discussed later in this chapter. Marjoribanks argues that community boards were established as 'placatory mechanisms' (particularly for those pre-reform authorities and their communities which were amalgamated into larger units), rather then true decision-making bodies, and that their roles and responsibilities were deliberately left vague in the 1989 legislation under which they were established. She further argues that this lack of clarity in the legislation has led to differing interpretations of the roles and functions of the boards - and that this has contributed to conflict between the community boards and their local authorities. In similar vein, Wall (1995: 9, 10) points out that many community boards are viewed by their local authority as 'little more than democratic window dressing', a 'sop from the Labour Government'.

Cooper rejects legislative changes as a solution to the problems individual boards are experiencing and insists that legislation does not change people's thinking (in Ross, 1992a). This latter view is also held by John Banks (1994) the current Minister of Local Government.

The main arguments in favour of community boards are related to enhanced grassroots democracy including increased community consultation and participation, easier access to the local government system, low cost and conflict prevention. However, supporters of the community board structure point out that it is difficult to measure the success of community boards. It is not easy to assess enhanced democracy, conflict prevention, or commitment to the community. Crichton (1991: 35) cites a Christchurch Community Board member, Mrs Evans, who points out that while it is easy for opponents of the boards to focus on such quantitative measures as costs, it is more difficult to calculate better representation.

There is a clear body of opinion that maintains that the limitations placed (by legislation) on the type of activities to be carried out by community boards precludes community boards from making any meaningful contribution to their local authority and the community. Opponents of community boards argue that because they have few or no delegated powers and limited budgets community boards are unnecessary, that they fulfil a purely advisory role with no guarantee that any of their recommendations will be accepted by their council. Board members who have lobbied for additional powers for their community boards have been labelled 'parochial' and accused of wanting to establish 'mini councils' or 'de facto' local authorities (Warren, 1994; Noble, Lowndes, Cullen, Egan, Dell, Jan. 1992; April 1992).

In an article entitled Time for Local Body Pruning, Eagles(1994: 14) argues that with the establishment of community boards in 1989 there has been an unwarranted increase in the number of local body politicians in the Auckland area. He supports Phil Warren's (Chairman of the Auckland Regional Council and former Deputy-Mayor of Auckland City 1989 - 1992) view that community boards serve little purpose. Interviewed by Eagles in 1994, Warren proposes a general reduction in the number of elected representatives at the local level and submits that having fewer politicians increases efficiency and is more cost-effective.

Warren argues that the cost of boards is out of proportion to what they do and notes that the cost of supporting elected representatives includes not only direct payments, through

honorariums and meeting allowances, but also staff time and 'other' factors (in Wall, April, 1995: 10).

Management consultants Noble, Lowndes, Cullen, Egan, Dell (N.L.C.E.D.) have conducted organisation reviews for three territorial local authorities: South Wairarapa District Council (July 1991), the Far North District Council (January 1992) and the Western Bay of Plenty District Council (April 1992). Despite such variables as differing communities of interest, population size and geographic coverage of the authority, the conclusions that they reach regarding community boards within each of the three authorities are remarkably similar (including the wording of some sections of the reports). It is evident from the duplication of statements and similarities in logic that the consultants have adopted a consistent approach of opposition to community boards.

The consultants recommend the abolition of all the community boards in the three areas. They conclude that the boards are expensive, of limited effect, that the local ward councillor can perform the functions being performed by board members, and that some board members wish to recreate pre-reform authorities.

While recommending that the role and functions of the Western Bay of Plenty Community Boards be reviewed by the Council, the consultants anticipate this process and conclude with the following statement, (which also appears almost verbatim in the South Wairarapa report):

> ... if Council is not contemplating an extension to the function of Community Boards and we see no good reason why there should be we see little point in their continuation (N.L.C.E.D., April 1992: 49).

In their review of the South Wairarapa District Council, the consultants comment on the absence of any residents' and ratepayers' groups in the area covered by the community boards. They conclude that the absence of such groups indicates that the 'size of the communities is insufficient to support sustained active interest in local government affairs' and conclude that the areas can be adequately represented by the ward councillor(s) without the need for community boards (N.L.C.E.D., July 1991: 30).

The presence or absence of residents' and ratepayers' groups in an area cannot necessarily be interpreted as revealing a lack of an ongoing, active interest in local body matters as the consultants have suggested. Historically, residents' and ratepayers' groups are those community organisations that have most clearly interacted with the local authorities on matters of interest to their members. These groups have been particularly

concerned with receiving 'value for money' from their rates and are often more active in urban communities. As local pressure or lobby groups they provide an important link between the community and the local body and provide a two-way communication process, both providing local knowledge and expecting consultation.

However, various other local groups and committees (such as Federated Farmers, RSA, Lions and school committees) are active in many communities and also interact with local government on matters of concern to their members and locality (Brown, 1993; Bush, 1991). Elected representatives, particularly in smaller communities, also tend to have strong links with a wide range of local organisations. Thus, the presence or absence of residents' and ratepayers' organisations in a community is not necessarily a good indicator of the level of public interest in local body affairs.

Noble, Lowndes et al. (1992) recommend the phased abolition of all the Far North Community Boards. They suggest the retention of a reduced number of boards for the 1992-1995 term, with the remaining three boards being disbanded in October 1995. This recommendation of a phased abolition is based on the following argument:

> ... there are some distinctive peculiarities of the Far North - related to the diversity of values and cultures - that suggests there is a contribution to be made to the orderly and evolutionary development of the District by the retention of the Community Boards, limited to one more term (N.L.C.E.D., January 1992: 46).

This reference by the consultants to the diversity of values and cultures in the Far North, coupled with their recommendation for the eventual abolition of the community boards, warrants further discussion. Values, beliefs, and cultural attributes generally influence the activities and the priorities of a group or community and may constitute a shared base for social action. It is, therefore, unrealistic to assume that this diversity of values can or even should be institutionalised into the structure of the Council within a three year period. The identification with particular values or culture of a group or locality is likely to indicate a local community of interest, and hence the desirability of community representation and participation in the local authority process. This can be addressed more readily under the community board structure with increased opportunity for input on matters of local concern.

In all three reports - for the South Wairarapa District Council, the Far North District Council and the Western Bay of Plenty District Council - the consultants' arguments and observations are not supported by reference to any empirical data other than the actual

costs of the Boards. Although their research methodology included interviews with the community board chairpersons and members, the only reference made to these interviews is to note the desire of some members to become de facto local authorities.

Ross (1992a: 9) reports that both the South Wairarapa and the Far North District Councils have not accepted the consultants' advice on community boards. He also notes that in the Western Bay of Plenty, all five community boards reacted strongly to the review and felt that the council's reluctance to delegate to the community board level was responsible for the consultants' perception that the boards were unnecessary. The South Wairarapa District Council has since reduced its number of councillors by one, from ten to nine (effective from October 1995). However it is not clear whether this action was connected with the consultants' report.

Department of Internal Affairs Review of Functions of Community Boards (1991)

The Department of Internal Affairs Review of Functions of Community Boards was carried out in 1991, two years into the term of the first boards. This review is the only official review of community boards published to date. The stated objective of the review was not to establish the efficiency or usefulness of the community boards themselves, but to establish a base-line of the level of activity of community boards in different functional areas with a long-term objective of monitoring community board activities and to ascertain future possible delegation from the territorial authority (Local Government Business Group, 1991).

In his Foreword to the report, Cooper (then Minister of Local Government) notes the diversity of views on community boards held by different local authorities. He writes:

> My view is that while the circumstances of different districts vary and thus the role and functions of community boards will also vary, they can be a valuable part of the system of local government. They enable genuinely local services to be provided with a maximum degree of local control, and enable a community input into the broader decision making of larger local authorities, without necessarily imposing significant cost (in L.G.B.G., 1991).

The main conclusions of the 1991 review include the following:

> c. There was, generally speaking, much more community board activity of an advisory nature than of a decision-making nature. Many councils gave no decision-making powers at all to community boards.

> f. Community Boards relatively often exercised decision-making powers in service delivery functions ... most commonly... those with a focus on the geographic area of the community, or alternatively on "community service" eg. refuse collection, community centres.
>
> i. Community boards representing small towns and mixed urban/rural areas tended to carry out more functions than those representing purely rural areas or parts of large metropolitan centres, especially in an advisory capacity (L.G.B.G., 1991: Executive Summary).

The conclusions on the analysis of expenditure of community boards include:

> a. Levels of expenditure by territorial authorities on community boards cover an extremely wide range. However, most territorial authorities spend less than 1% of their annual expenditure on each community board and less than 10% of all their annual expenditure on all their boards (L.G.B.G., 1991: Executive Summary).

For the purpose of analysis, the functions were categorised into four main groups: regulatory, service delivery, town and country planning, and rating and finance. These functions were also divided into advisory or decision making roles.

The concept of governance, as defined in this thesis, is encompassed by the service delivery category in the review. As an example the results of the data collection indicate that 98.5 percent of boards are involved in the function 'liaison community' (sic) and 76.7 percent in 'community advice'. The survey analysis concludes that the service delivery functions that have the highest percentage of decision-making delegation have a predominance of 'social/community' functions, especially those referred to in Section 101ZY of the Act as compared with lower scores for works related functions (L.G.B.G., 1991: 11, 14). These results give support to the argument in this thesis that community boards are involved in governance rather than service delivery functions.

Brown (1993)

As already mentioned, the design for my own research was developed without knowledge of Brown's 1995 thesis. I had access only to Brown's 1993 study on community boards which is reviewed here.

In her 1993 paper, Brown relies on interviews with various people in local government circles for recent information on community boards. She discusses the future of community boards and submits that, theoretically, sub-local government could be used by those within the community of interest as a means of citizen participation and for the expression of local views. However, she qualifies this by questioning the ability of a body which cannot act independently of the local authority to be an effective agent for citizen participation. She asserts that 'participation without the power to influence events is meaningless' and believes that in order to fulfil this requirement, boards would need greater independence and autonomy (Brown, 1993: 7, 8).

Brown (1993: 9, 11) believes, that in order to be successful, community boards must have a balanced role, acting as a two way channel of communication. She describes this process as one of advocacy - advocacy of the community to the council when making input into policy making processes and advocacy towards the community when implementing the agreed policy. However, she notes that in practice, under the existing legislation, it is possible for community boards to range from those with wide powers of delegation, discretionary funds and a degree of independence to those which are ineffective 'talkshops' or neighbourhood advisory committees. She sees this apparent flexibility as both a source of strength and frustration.

Brown (1993: 12) identifies those features required for a successful community board model. These include an easily identified, coherent community of interest and sufficient level of delegation to allow for genuine participation by the community it represents. She concludes that boards that have only limited functions of an advisory nature only, may be subject to criticisms of cost-effectiveness and in these terms, face a challenge from alternatives, such as appointed bodies or council committees.

While Brown argues for sufficient levels of delegation from the territorial authority she overlooks the minimum statutory responsibilities that community boards already have under Section 101ZY of the Local Government Amendment Act as discussed in Chapter Two. Additional delegated duties are obviously desirable, but perhaps of greater immediate importance to the effective functioning of boards is a sufficient level of financial support from the local authority, notably funding for the board's discretionary spending on ward needs and activities.

My study on the governance role of community boards differs from Brown's paper in that I conduct empirical research on the activities of community board members and

explore public participation and consultation at the sub-local level in order to examine the governance role.

Marjoribanks (1994)

Marjoribanks (1994) thesis on community boards entitled 'Community Boards - Control of the Community or Control by the Community' is one of the few research studies on community boards available to date. She focuses on the conflict between the 'parent council' and community boards and argues that, despite calls throughout the Western world for the establishment of a level of local government that satisfied demands for greater public participation, small statutory bodies such as community boards were established as 'placatory mechanisms' rather than true decision-making authorities. Marjoribanks also argues that the stated roles and responsibilities of community boards were deliberately left vague, resulting in a lack of agreement over the 'rules of the game' and subsequent conflict over the question of control over local areas. She notes that there was considerable flexibility left in the legislation for each local parent authority to 'decide what emphasis to place on the boards' roles and responsibilities, what attention to pay to them, or what status to accord them' and that this has lead to conflict between the boards and their councils (Marjoribanks, 1994: 1).

Marjoribanks' research consisted of several case studies of local authorities and their community boards, and a mail survey of every community board and each district/city authority who had community boards in New Zealand. Those questions relevant to my own study focus on the roles of community boards as perceived by both board members and members of the local authorities. Although Marjoribanks discusses the governance role of community boards in passing, this is not the focus of her study. She notes that the results of her survey show a clear divergence of opinion on the role of boards and concludes that there is 'no consensus' on the role of community boards (Marjoribanks, 1994: 106, 107, 129).

Marjoribanks surveyed the councils as to which of the following roles they perceived their community board fulfilling (results in brackets)- an advisory body (81 percent), an extension of the council at community level (58 percent) and a watchdog group for citizens (36 percent). Several councils indicated multiple roles for their community boards. Marjoribanks interprets these responses as showing that boards were seen as having a recommendatory role and not a service delivery function. She found that the views of community board members often differ widely from those of many councillors

who see boards as having an advisory only role. Her survey results show that the main causes of disagreement between local authorities and their boards are: respective roles (71 percent) and areas of responsibility (71 percent) (Marjoribanks, 1994:108). One council saw boards as 'a political structure only' whereas one councillor saw them as a 'training ground for new politicians'. Other comments from the survey suggested other additional roles for community boards which Marjoribanks categorised into: governing, umbrella status, community advocates and extended community advocates (1994: 103).

Responses to Marjoribanks' survey from board members in Auckland City on the role of community boards included: a governing body, community activists and wider community bodies. One respondent saw future boards as becoming the main forum in the council structure with councillors having input only on policy with city-wide significance. Marjoribanks notes that boards who acknowledged a governing role saw themselves as carrying out both decision-making and an overview of council operations in their area. She cites the following response:

> ... the community board's job is to keep the local in local government and to give the personal village type government that small local authorities were so well known for (in Marjoribanks, 1994: 106).

Marjoribanks argues that the governance role and particularly that involving a vision for the future of the community was 'often the sort of action that could lead [community board members] into direct conflict with the council', since there was the possibility of a conflict in policy direction (1994: 127, 130). She highlights the disparity between the roles often expected of community boards and their actual functions and describes this as a 'proactive/reactive mixture'. She writes:

> ... on the one hand they were being encouraged to be largely reactive and advisory, on the other they were being told to be proactive. This latter advice often left Boards with the impression that they were to play a much more active role in making decisions for the community (Marjoribanks, 1994: 127).

Marjoribanks submits that while some of the conflict arose from internal problems such as party politics, personalities, and demands for efficiency and cost-effectiveness, the basic disagreement lay in the expectations of some new community board members that they had been entrusted with some degree of control over local decision-making, a view not shared by members of the local authority (both management and councillors) who saw the sub-local level as largely advisory bodies with control still vested with the local authority (Marjoribanks, 1994: 1).

In her analysis Marjoribanks (1994: 98, 101) notes that responses from community board members indicated their belief that the legislation setting out the functions and duties of community boards should have been more specific. Respondents also claimed that conflicts could only be resolved if community boards were delegated meaningful functions. Marjoribanks notes that the governing role was more prevalent in those boards that had previously been small, autonomous authorities and argues that historical as well as geographical and political factors have an influence on the way boards might operate.

As already noted, my research proceeded without reference to Marjoribanks' (1994) study. Her research into the conflict between community boards and their local authorities has highlighted the divergence of opinion on the role of community boards. Marjoribanks points to the clear division between the advisory and decision-making roles at the sub-local level. She notes the councils' argument that community boards are advisory bodies which contrasts with the views of many board members who see themselves in a more proactive role.

An analysis of the legislation reveals that community boards perform both advisory and decision-making functions (see Chapter Two). The Transitional Guidelines clearly state that boards have an advisory role to the local authority. However, the Guidelines also suggest that community boards could perform some of their local councillors' functions and that the local authority should provide the maximum opportunity for community input to authority decision-making. It is important to note that, for community boards to effectively carry out additional delegated functions they will require a corresponding increase in funding and resources provided by the territorial authority.

Marjoribanks (1994) explores the conflict between the 'parent council' and community boards. She argues that this conflict is due to ambiguity in the legislation regarding the stated roles and responsibilities of community boards and the consequent confusion over the 'rules of the game'. As noted in Chapter Two, Elwood has stated that, in fact, the Local Government Commission had insufficient time to discuss community board proposals with every Council. The Councils were, therefore, left to determine their own community board structure and particular levels of delegation.

Although Marjoribanks does discuss the governance role of community boards briefly, this is not the focus of her study.

Francis (1995)

In 1994/1995 Peter Francis, Community Manager Christchurch City Council, undertook a study of community boards in the cities of Christchurch, Wellington, Manukau, and Auckland. His project examined 'aspects of Community Board responsibility, their interface with the community, the contribution to Local Government decision-making and the effectiveness of this contribution'. By comparing certain functions between the four cities, he hoped to determine whether there are lessons to be learnt by the Christchurch Community Boards and other boards in general.

Francis's report, Community Boards -"The First Five Years And Towards 2000", researches the work of community boards in the four cities by analysing the type and frequency of agenda items and conducting structured interviews with board chairpersons. These four cities were selected because they have a disparate number of community boards, ranging from two in Wellington City, six in Christchurch, seven in Manukau to eleven in Auckland City.

Francis divides the agenda items into twenty-four categories, ranging through areas of delegated responsibility, such as discretionary money, leases, reserves, sports, administration and traffic. He tabulates the type and frequency of Board agenda items, according to City, for a one month period (November 1994) and for the twelve month period 1993/94.

He asked thirty-one interview questions of board chairpersons on many issues including: the community interface, discretionary funding, value to Council, value to the community, the public perception of community boards, community consultation, the profile of community boards, and expectations for their future.

In his analysis of the agenda items Francis notes that the Auckland City boards generally have a higher number of items than the other cities. He suggests that some of these items could be adequately dealt with by the officers. However, it could be argued that the Auckland boards, as part of a large metropolitan city, have to deal with a wider range of issues and be kept informed on a greater number of projects.

His interviews reveal that the main methods of consulting with the community are: having board representatives on community committees including residents' associations, holding public meetings on particular issues, holding Public Forums,

letterbox drops, community newspapers, and council publications (1995: 15, 22). On the question of the importance of the community interface he states:

> All Community Boards view the successful interface with the community as being of prime importance if Boards are to work effectively. It was felt that there would be little point in the Board existing if they were out of touch and not accepted by the community at large (Francis, 1995: 5).

He notes that the board chairpersons saw the existence of community boards as being of value to the council, particularly because of their strong community links. They felt that the community board system serves the community well and was 'the only efficient way of advising and responding to community issues'. The Christchurch Boards were of the strong opinion that 'without Boards the citizens would not easily have the opportunity to talk to Council or to express individual and community views' (Francis, 1995: 20).

On the future of community boards, board chairpersons speak of a changing, evolutionary role for boards. They felt that with more delegation, boards could undertake more responsibility, that boards are 'here to stay', and provide a vital link between the community and Council. Further, it was considered that:

> Through their local knowledge Boards could become involved in advice and support on non-Council issues addressing such matters as health, education and safety in addition to their work for Council (Francis, 1995: 21).

In each of the four cities surveyed, it was felt that the public awareness of community boards needed to be improved. This would create a greater community interface, encourage community participation and lead to a widened role for boards (Francis, 1995: 22, 23).

As stated earlier, although I was aware that Francis was conducting a study on community boards, my research was completed before either his preliminary data or his final study results were available. Francis's work provides valuable quantitative data on the nature of work being undertaken by various community boards and considerable qualitative data from the chairpersons' interviews. The interviews support my findings of the various methods used by community boards to consult with their communities. Francis's interviews reveal that community boards tend to be proactive, network extensively with community groups, encourage community participation and facilitate communication between the community and the local authority. These are themes that were revealed during my own research.

Francis's research methodology focuses on the collation of data rather than a detailed analysis and discussion of the activities undertaken by community boards. The agendas of a sample of community boards are included in the appendices. Although he interviews a large sample of board members and asks a comprehensive range of questions on their activities including public consultation, he does not explore what percentage of time is spent on each activity. Nevertheless the data collected by Francis will be of use to the Christchurch (and other) boards for the purposes of comparison which was one of the main intentions of his research.

There are two major differences between my research design and that of Francis. Francis is a council officer working for the Christchurch City Council. I am an elected member of a community board. Francis does not attempt to measure the level of public participation in sub-local government although he notes the importance of the community board interface with the community. However, his interviews with community board members do reveal a potential governance role which is the focus of my study.

Service Auditing Group (Auckland City Council)

Auckland City Council regularly commissions customer surveys of residents asking a variety of questions on Council services. The June 1994 survey was conducted by the Service Auditing Group. The telephone questionnaire included a sample of 671 residents, (randomly selected, but with a quota for each ward). The questions relating to community boards covered: services provided by community boards, location of meetings, preferred means of advertising meetings, and knowledge of who can speak at board meetings.

The responses indicated a very low level of public awareness of community board activities. 65 percent of the sample are recorded as not knowing what community boards could do for them, with the next highest group (17 percent) stating a community role. The highest level of awareness was recorded in the Hauraki Gulf Islands (Waiheke and Great Barrier Community Boards) and the lowest in Mount Roskill. Other community board roles proffered by the sample population included: information; recreation, sports and parks; local events and applications and complaints. 61 percent did not know who could speak at community board meetings with 25 percent responding that anyone could (Service Auditing Group, June 1994: 3, 4, 5).

In June 1994, the Service Auditing Group also conducted a research survey on the political structure of the Auckland City Council. This research consisted of a telephone survey of a random selection of five hundred residents (again with a ward based quota). The issues covered included: awareness of their local politicians, the communication channels most commonly used by residents when presented with a particular problem, resident awareness of the political structure of Council, a comparison between the numbers of residents contacting politicians as opposed to council officers including the means of communication, and the level of resident satisfaction with the contact.

Again the level of public awareness of local politicians was low. The results of the study also indicated that when presented with a range of problem scenarios the Council offices are predominantly the first point of contact. The scenarios presented to those surveyed were: minor problems with Council facilities such as water leaks, major problems with Council property such as landslips, to get information on certain policies, make objections to Council proposals or plans, and for assistance with an ongoing problem. There was a significant difference in the result relating to a continuing problem which is unresolved. Only thirty-five percent of the respondents would contact the Council offices compared with seventy to eighty percent for the other scenarios (Service Auditing Group, June 1994:4-6).

The major weakness of the research on the political structure is that service delivery oriented rather than 'political' questions were used in all but one of the problem scenarios. In the 'continuing problem' situation the majority of respondents state they would seek the assistance of politicians. This scenario denotes a monitoring or surveillance role on the part of the elected representative which can be described as an element of the governance function.

The low level of public awareness of community board activities revealed in the Auckland City Council research is reflected by the concerns of community board members in Francis's study, and by members of the A.R.C.B.A. Executive, that the profile of community boards needs to be raised. The community board activities that were identified by members of the public in the Auckland City survey are covered in my categorisation of public participation at board meetings (see Chapter Five).

As noted above sixty-one percent of those surveyed did not know who could speak at community board meetings which correlates closely with the sixty-five percent who did not know what community boards did. These figures suggest that there is a comparatively low level of public participation in the community board process. One

aim of my research is to gather empirical data to determine the actual level of participation in the public forum process and ascertain the type of submissions, thus revealing the public's perception of the role of community boards.

Summary

In this chapter I have examined the available literature on community boards. The popular debate on boards is presented, discussing the arguments for and against the continued existence of community boards. The major arguments can be summarised as service to the community as opposed to the cost of running community boards.

Recent studies focus on the functions carried out by the boards and distinguish between advisory and decision-making roles. The results of these studies suggest that the community board role is not clearly understood by board members, the local authorities and members of the public. As Marjoribanks (1994) notes there is a clear divergence of opinion and 'no consensus' on the role of community boards.

In my research I explore the governance role of the sub-local government level. Although the other studies mention in passing a potential governance role, with particular reference to community liaison and consultation, to date there has been no specific research on this role for community boards. Similarly there is little empirical data on the actual level of public participation in the community board process. The role of governance is further developed in the next chapter where I will look at the theoretical concepts and perspectives of democracy associated with local government.

Chapter Four

Concepts and Perspectives of Democracy

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the theoretical concepts and perspectives associated with local government and, more particularly, sub-local government in New Zealand.

First, the principles of local government and the concept of self-government are discussed, with particular reference to the relationship of local government to democratic theory. Three key variants of modern democratic theory, namely, liberal representative, participative (socialist and republican traditions), and radical democratic theory are examined and their relationship to the sub-local model is then considered.

Next, the concepts of 'community' and 'community of interest', on which the structure of local government is based, are introduced. For the purposes of local government, community and community of interest are usually defined in geographic terms. However, these traditional concepts of community are under pressure with the acknowledgment of a pluralistic society and the tension that has arisen between liberal democracy and participative democracy.

Discussion of the term 'political community' leads into an exploration of Arendt's concepts of 'public space' and the public realm. These two concepts are particularly important since they provide an underlying theoretical perspective for the Public Forum process and public participation in general. The many different roles the public adopt in their interaction with their local authority are examined, including current debates about citizenship and the notion of the 'consumer-citizen' split. The consumer's interests are largely based on economic transactions, whilst the citizen has a political role to play.

In local government, local decision-making and policy-making are generally seen, by the public, as being functions of the elected representative. For the purposes of this study, the term 'governance' has been defined as decision-making by elected representatives with public consultation and participation. Several definitions of governance are presented and discussed. The relationship between governance and management, and governance and responsible decision-making are then explored.

Since the 1960s there has been a marked increase in public demands for greater involvement in government. These demands have continued into the 1980s and 1990s. The main mechanisms facilitating this involvement in local government are consultation and participation which are considered in the final section of this chapter.

Principles of Local Government

Local government is, first and foremost, to be distinguished from central government. It is the form of government closest to the people and is associated with self-government - where individuals have the opportunity to be directly involved in decisions affecting the locality in which they live. Local government is thus in a unique position to encourage, symbolise, and supplement democratic government (Burns et al, 1994; Bush, 1980; Hill, 1974; Mulgan, 1989).

According to Hill (1974), the basis of local government is local initiative, flexibility, and control over decisions and equal access to local services. The value of local government lies in the closeness of elected representatives to their communities and the opportunity for a direct channel of communication between public opinion and the local authority. The need for local government is tied to the practicalities of providing local services (Hill, 1974: 16). On the subject of what constitutes 'sound statecraft' Hill writes:

> The citizen judges this effectiveness in terms of efficiency (the cost and quality of services) and convenience (services should be close and comprehensible). He is also concerned with democratic control, which means that his representatives must be accessible, responsive - and removable (Hill, 1974: 16).

Three key themes emerge from Hill's discussion on the principles of local government:

- The importance of local decision-making,
- Increased opportunities for participation at the local level,
- Consultation with the community.

These themes were also identified by the New Zealand Local Government Association in their submission to the Discussion Document (1988) (see Chapter Two).

The importance of local decision-making, increased opportunities for participation, and consultation with the community are features of a system of 'self-government' -

concerned with self-reliance, developing the capabilities for self-rule and self-governance. Self-government also involves developing a sense of responsibility, expressed either directly (through participation) or indirectly (through a system of representation and lesser participation), that comes from being involved in the local community (Olssen, 1953: 149, 150). This notion of self-government forms the basis of much of the discourse surrounding democracy and the democratic process (Held, 1987; Hill, 1974; Mouffe, 1992).

In order to explain the importance of local government to the concept of self-government Olssen (1953: 146-162) discusses the historical relationship between central and local government. He notes that the British system of central government (which New Zealand has inherited) evolved from the practices of a local government system, established well before the Norman conquest in 1066. He regards 'the survival of the ancient tradition of local self-government [as] a survival of the greatest importance' since the practices of local government (particularly those of consulting the local community and the election of representatives) were eventually extended into the central or national system of government.

Olssen (1953: 149) believes that a national system of responsible self-government depends on the existence of a 'strong and vigorous system of local government'. He further defines 'self-government' as a system whereby people obey laws, not because they are forced to by a dictatorship, but because they have contributed to the policy-making by virtue of 'a process of free discussion' in which they have shared. He observes that:

> ... those who uphold self-government do not necessarily claim that it gives more efficient results ... Efficiency may be gained at the cost of liberty, but those who value self-government are not prepared to pay that price [the loss of liberty] for efficient government (Olssen, 1953: 149).

Dalmer and Southern (1948) express similar sentiments when they write:

> ... only with strong local government can a democracy exist and a state be created where the interest of the citizen is held and his freedom safeguarded. Self-government is better than good government (Dalmer and Southern, 1948: 82).

Democratic Theory and Local Government

The above discussion suggests that local government is an important check on the functioning of a democratic society. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Municipal Corporations Act (1835) passed by the British Government (and later to form the cornerstone of New Zealand local government) was regarded as 'a great triumph for democracy and liberty' (Keith-Lucas, 1977:5). Ryn (1990: 195) highlights the close link between democracy and local government when he asks:

> ... must not democracy if it is to be conducive to truly human values, keep the control over public decisions as close as possible to those who are affected by them?

Defining Democracy

The nature of democracy and democratic theory has been the subject of many treatises over the centuries and much discussion in recent years. It is generally accepted that 'there is no agreed theory of democracy and no precise definition of the word itself' (Hill, 1974: 20). However, it is widely acknowledged that the fundamental aim of modern democracy is 'government by the people'. This popular understanding of democracy is supported by the following dictionary definition:

> 1. government by the people or their elected representatives. 2. a political or social unit governed ultimately by all its members. 3. the practice or spirit of social equality. 4. a social condition of classlessness and equality (Collins Concise English Dictionary, 1993).

People expect that the system under which they live will be fair, that is, free from discrimination and dishonesty, and conforming to a set of mutually understood rules and standards. In order to achieve this system there must be a process, procedures, and structures in place, which can be described as democratic.

Democracy, as a process, is subject to various interpretations, based on particular philosophies and ideological biases. Those who wish to restrict the power of the people will choose a restricted or minimalist definition of democracy; those who wish to increase it will prefer a more open-ended or inclusive definition (Mulgan, 1989).

It can be argued that in New Zealand the term democracy is fundamental to an understanding of the political system as a whole. It prescribes not only how a government is chosen, but also the process by which political decisions are made and the ways people can participate (Mulgan, 1989). For the purposes of his study on the democratic nature of New Zealand politics Mulgan adopts the following definition: 'the exercise of political power by the people'. He sees this definition as encompassing the main principles of democracy, namely, equality, majority rule, and power sharing (Mulgan, 1989: 16-21).

A basic distinction can be made between two forms of democracy: representative (or indirect) democracy and participatory (or direct) democracy. The political system in New Zealand is based on the Westminster system of representative parliamentary democracy. People may stand for political office or elect someone else to be their representative. In practical terms, citizens in a representative democracy expect equal access to their elected representatives. They assume that when decisions are made by their representatives, public input will be taken into consideration, and that any decisions made will reflect the views of the majority while safeguarding the interests of the minority.

Modern Theories of Democracy

Three key variants of modern democratic theory are considered in this thesis. They are: liberal representative, participative (socialist and republican traditions), and radical democratic theory. The application of each of these democratic theories to the practice of local and sub-local government results in varying interpretations of the importance and desirability of public involvement, and public debate.

Liberal Representative

The characteristics of liberal representative democracy include multi-party competition, mass electorates, and a limited number of hierarchally controlled parties (Hirst 1988: 2). Bachrach and Botwinick (1992: 20) argue that a liberal democracy consists largely of a representative system in which office holders who have won their positions in freely contested elections are seen as then having a mandate to govern, including making public policy, without further ongoing consultation. Brown (1993: 4, 5) notes that liberal democratic theory sees active continuous public participation in government as

'undesirable and destabilising' and argues that liberal democratic theory supports a 'case against community boards and other vehicles for grass roots participation in government' (my emphasis).

Criticisms of representative democracy include the low levels of accountability and public influence on decision-making between elections. In addition, the elected representatives may not accurately reflect the composition of their community. The profile of the majority of elected representatives in New Zealand is white, male, middle-aged, with above average income and educational qualifications (Department of Internal Affairs, 1994a). There may also be low voter turnout, particularly at local body elections, as voters fail to exercise their right to vote (Department of Internal Affairs, 1994b).

The desire for more open government presents a challenge to representative government. Hirst (1990: 1) writes that 'central to the student movements of the 1960s was a rejection of representative democracy in favour of participatory and direct democracy'. He argues that:

> ... modern representative democracy has predominantly functioned as a means of legitimating governmental power rather than of making government effectively accountable and open to public influence (Hirst, 1990: 3).

Passerin d'Entreves (1992: 161) echoes this theme when he notes that Arendt:

> ... saw representation as a substitute for the direct involvement of the citizens, and a means whereby the distinction between rulers and ruled could reassert itself. When representation becomes the substitute for direct democracy, the citizens can exercise their powers of political agency only at election day, and their capacities for deliberation and political insight are correspondingly weakened.

Participative Democracy (socialist and republican traditions)

Participative democracy is a democratic system that encourages, facilitates and promotes the active participation of the public in the democratic process (Pateman: 1970). During the 1960s there was widespread dissatisfaction in Western democracies with the existing system of representative democracy which was seen to be dominated by the 'establishment'. Representative democracy was seen as favouring middle-class interests and was broadly challenged by a working class movement. Calls were made for more

open government and greater public involvement at all levels. The development of local communities became another focus. Sub-local government was an obvious means for achieving 'grassroots' participation which, as discussed in Chapter Two, led to the formation, in New Zealand, of community councils and committees, including Auckland City's urban community committees.

Bachrach and Botwinick (1992: ix) describe participative democracy as 'a Rousseauian concept that re-emerged during the intellectual turmoil of the 1960s [and] has been developed by social scientists in recent years into a full-blown theory of democracy'. (Rousseau was an advocate of direct democracy.) They note that participatory democracy theorists regard the system of representative democracy as 'fundamentally flawed because it fails to recognise [ongoing] political participation as an essential value in itself necessary to the growth and full development of all citizens' (1992: 20).

There is a basic distinction between two approaches to participatory democracy: the 'socialist' approach, which is class based, emphasising the challenge to middle-class interests by a more highly politicised working class; and a revival of the 'civic republican' view of politics (which originated in Greek and Roman thinking), favoured by the 'communitarians', which also encourages active citizen participation in civic affairs. The theme of active participation is promoted under civic republicanism to become a civic duty.

The Greek (and Roman) city-states were places where citizens engaged in direct democracy. This republican tradition in democratic theory emphasised the notion of a 'public good' and the 'public interest'. As the city-states grew, participatory democracy was superceded by representative democracy. In more recent times, dissatisfaction during the 1960s with the system of representative democracy led to calls to empower people. This has been interpreted as a rekindling of classical republicanism.

The socialist and civic republican approaches both differ markedly from the liberal view of politics which is based on the importance of the individual and reduces the role of citizenship to that of formal legal status. Burns, Hambleton, and Hoggett (1994: 19) believe that true participatory democratic theory should reflect the development of a more vocal society and the sectionalised nature of the modern political system. They argue that, whereas representative democracy is symbolised by the elected representative, 'participatory democracy is symbolised by the activities of the countless groups and communities within the local civil society' (pp. 265-266). Burns et al. extend their concept of participatory democracy and self-government to include the

activities of non-governmental organisations, and the participation of these organisations within local public institutions.

The major criticism of participatory democracy lies in the results of many surveys and empirical studies that reveal the public are generally politically inactive and poorly informed (Bachrach and Botwinick, 1992: 21). Despite the opportunities provided by a system of participatory democracy, only some people participate. The liberal perspective therefore argues that under a participatory democracy, with its low levels of participation, there is the potential for 'capture' by sector groups and the over-representation of sectional interests who may purport to speak for a wider group than they actually do. It is argued that such a system could lead to a highly factionalised society made up of many different groups lobbying for their own interests and without a general sense of common direction.

However, Bachrach and Botwinick (1992: 42) counter this by arguing that a factionalised view of citizen participation is not necessarily justified and that the participatory system does not automatically downgrade the importance of political leadership.

Participative democratic theory provides the theoretical framework underpinning the concept of sub-local government, emphasising the importance of local decision-making, public participation and consultation with the community. In her discussion on community boards Brown (1993: 3, 4) identifies participative democracy as encouraging 'substantial and active citizen participation in government as an essential element of the authentic democratic polity'. Since participative democracy came to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s public expectations of meaningful involvement in the political process have remained high.

Radical Democratic Theory

There is a number of strands of thought within participative democratic theory with objectives ranging from a simple desire for greater involvement in the democratic process of government, to a more radical theory of empowerment that encourages an awareness of how to change the structures that have caused the disempowerment of some people. Freire's (1974) process of 'conscientisation' emphasises people understanding the political and economic structures that constrain them and becoming aware of how to change these. For Bachrach and Botwinick (1992: ix) radical

democratic theory starts in the workplace, with the objective being as full a participation as possible in order to ultimately achieve a more egalitarian redistribution of power, and a greater democratisation of the entire political process. They argue that equal participation in policy determination is essential, the aim being a political transformation into a more participatory society, and contend that involvement in this struggle will also serve to revitalise the democratic process itself. They see this form of participatory theory as providing the opportunity for maximum self-development and a wider concern for mankind (Bachrach and Botwinick, 1992: 2 - 21). In Mouffe's (1992) view, those favouring radical and plural democracy are simply advocating that liberal democratic societies be held accountable for their professed ideals and that they extend the principles of equality and liberty in a pluralistic manner.

Those participating in sub-local government in New Zealand are unlikely to achieve political transformations of a structural nature.. The community boards are largely advisory bodies, operating under legislation and the 'umbrella' of the local authority. As Marjoribanks (1994) points out, the establishment of community boards was achieved within the existing local government structure.

Community

'Community' is the basic unit of the structure and system of local government. For the purposes of local government the constitution of a community is based on locality. As discussed in Chapter Two, the identification of a community is a prerequisite for the establishment of a community board.

The fundamental basis of community is that something is held in common, that there is some unifying element or identity. Webber (1964: 302) notes that 'community' and 'communication' both derive from the Latin *communis* - 'in common' - which is reflected in the description that 'communities comprise people with common interests who communicate with each other'.

However, Burns et al. (1994: 224) point out that community is not necessarily a single unifying concept:

> On the one hand, community is a unifying concept, the expression of common interest, solidarity, integration and consensus (*Gemeinschaft* in sociological theory). On the other, community is not a singular concept but in reality represents a mere umbrella under which shelter a multitude of varying,

> competing and often conflicting interests. The politics of community in the second model are pluralistic rather than consensual, with the role of the authority in the community one of mediation of interest and the management of complexity rather than representative of a single 'community'.

Ryn (1990: 195) argues that people are most likely to find a sense of meaningful belonging and personal worth in smaller autonomous groups in society such as family, church, community, school, interest, and work groups. Thus, 'a feeling of community thrives in associations of small, manageable proportions'.

Olssen (1953: 155) explains that the word community, as it is used in local government today, originated in England in the thirteenth century. Summoned by the King, the Knights and Burgesses sat together at meetings, which became known as the Commons (communities) with each member originally representing a community. As early as the thirteenth century, this assembly, consisting of the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the sovereign, was referred to as a Parliament (a word originally derived from the Old French *parler* to speak).

Community can also be variously defined according to the theoretical framework in which it is located and definitions vary from the concrete to the symbolic, from the geographical to the sociological and spiritual (Pearson, 1994; Ryn, 1990; Worsley, 1970). The term community has been utilised by a variety of different disciplines and incorporates a number of meanings and concepts. In a modern pluralistic and highly mobile society with different patterns of interactions a definition of community based on locality is being challenged by new groupings based on place of employment, interests, and culture.

Peters and Marshall (1988: 684-686) suggest a set of criteria for the identification of community. These are: community as location, community as socio-political networks, community as local association, institutionalised forms of community, community as social structure, community as sentiment, and community as culture. Other writers identify similar criteria such as, community as values, community as a moral goal for society, the political community, and community as workplace (Arendt, 1958; Bachrach and Botwinick, 1992; Mouffe, 1992; Passerin d'Entreves, 1992; Ryn, 1990).

Community development initiatives may aim to transform the structure and nature of local neighbourhoods and communities through participation and collective action. Lackey and Dershem (1992: 220) combine the viewpoints of both participative and radical democratic theorists and argue that 'sustainable community development

involves civic competence and empowerment through community members managing the development of their own communities'.

Shirley (1982: 21) identifies six perspectives of community development as: process, programme, movement, profession, social process, and methodology, that is, a means towards an end. However, he highlights the absence of goals and a vision within these perspectives, and the lack of acknowledgment of inequalities, and the social and political context in which community development must be achieved. He notes that the objectives of community development are thereby limited to creating a community that is 'more cohesive, more effective', no matter what the objective.

The term 'political community' is enjoying current usage as a term particularly relevant to local government. Burns et al. (1994) argue that citizens are members of a political community by virtue of being members both of a particular grouping and a particular locality. In contrast, Mouffe (1992: 233) defines a modern form of political community as one held together by 'a common bond, a public concern'. She writes that the political community 'is therefore a community without a definite shape or a definite identity and in continuous re-enactment'.

Passerin d'Entreves (1992: 151-153) incorporates Arendt's (1958) concepts of citizenship, the 'spatial quality of public life' and the 'public sphere' to develop a definition of the political community and its creation through a common public space (Arendt's concepts will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter). He argues that the creation of a political community is dependent on the existence of a common space where individuals may see and talk to others in public, share their views and their differences and partake in democratic debate. He notes that Arendt believes that a particular sense of unity could be 'attained by sharing a public space and a set of political institutions' (Passerin d'Entreves, 1992:153).

Community of Interest

'Community of interest' is a term employed in New Zealand local government almost since its inception. Community and community of interest form the basis of local authority units.

Just as the term community incorporates a variety of meanings and concepts the phrase 'community of interest' is perceived differently by different interest groups. Thus, there

may be many different factors to be considered when determining a particular community of interest. Within a geographically or area based community there may be additional areas of commonality for residents including: a common area of administration and service provision, socio-economic status, political characteristics and heritage, and neighbourhood links. As Burns et al. (1994: 228) note people have 'multiple linkages' in their communities.

In 1988 during the local government reform process Elwood (1988:6) identified several linkages within communities, including social, service and economic, and a sense of belonging:

> Generally the [Local Government] Commission sees the need to identify the spatial boundaries of communities of interest in human terms as to where people live and work, and in the allocation of functions by taking account of their areas of impact and availability ... the community of interest is the area to which one feels a sense of belonging and to which one looks for social, service and economic support ... [it] can often be identified by access to the goods and services needed for ordinary everyday existence.

The Public Realm

As discussed above, Passerin d'Entreves (1992) argues that the creation of a political community is dependent on the existence of a common space. This concept of a 'public space' is examined in detail by Hannah Arendt, a twentieth century civic republican theorist. Arendt (1958: 26-78) explores the concept of public good through a discussion of 'the public and the private realms', 'public space' and 'political space'.

Arendt (1958: 28, 29) notes that in the Greek city states there was a distinct division between the two spheres of the home and family (*oika*), and the political (*bios politikos*). This division is analogous to the division between the private (or individual) and the public (or communal) realms. The *polis* (public-political space) represented a 'sphere of freedom' distinct from the satisfaction of material needs which was focused and restricted to the realm of the household. While the political realm was based on equality and the 'pursuit of excellence', the household was based on an unequal, hierarchical system and was the realm of 'property'. Of the *polis* Arendt (1958: 26) writes:

> In the experience of the *polis* which not without justification has been called the most talkative of bodies politic, and even more in the political philosophy which sprang from it, action and speech separated and became more and more

> independent activities....To be political, to live in a *polis* meant that everything was decided through words, and persuasion, and not through force and violence.

Arendt (1958: 27-33) highlights, what she terms, a profound misunderstanding, which has resulted from the Latin translation of the Greek 'political' as 'social' and its subsequent incorporation into modern usage in this latter form. In this altered context, 'social' (society) is used to describe a 'collective of families' and in its political and organisational form a 'nation'. This contrasts markedly with the original concept of the Greek *polis* which was quite distinctive from the sphere of the household. She compares this clear distinction with the modern understanding of politics in which the 'social and political realms [the private and the public realms] are much less distinct'.

Arendt notes that with the 'admission of household and housekeeping activities [economic considerations] to the public realm' the original function of the *polis* as a space for equality and public (and political) discourse has been displaced. She maintains that:

> ... our capacity for [political] action and speech has lost much of its former quality since the rise of the social realm banished these into the sphere of the intimate and the private [household]. This curious discrepancy has not escaped public notice, where it is usually blamed upon an assumed time lag between our technical capacities and our general humanistic development (Arendt, 1958:49).

This public arena for the development of political debate was reclaimed in the 1960s and 1970s when groups (particularly students) met to discuss contemporary political and social issues. This discourse spilled out into the wider public arena with mass demonstrations and local community initiatives and the call for greater grassroots participation in government (Burns et al, 1994; Bush, 1980; Gyford, 1991).

Arendt (1958:50-58) argues that the public realm, that is 'everything that appears in public', constitutes a 'reality' which is missing from the private sphere. She bases her argument on the uniqueness of the 'public space' that is created and shared when people of different views gather together and listen to the same words, sharing 'sameness in utter diversity', and argues that only then can the 'worldly reality truly and reliably appear' (Arendt, 1958: 57). She further contends that:

> Only the existence of a public realm and the world's subsequent transformation into a community of things which gathers men [sic] together and relates them to each other depends entirely on permanence. If the world is to contain a public space, it cannot be erected for one generation and planned for the living only; it must transcend the lifespan of mortal men [sic] (Arendt, 1958: 55).

Without this element of permanence, Arendt (1958: 55) asserts that 'no politics, strictly speaking, no common world and no public realm is possible'. She describes the 'common world' as that which:

> ... transcends our life-span into past and future alike; it was there before we came and will outlast our brief sojourn in it. It is what we have in common not only with those who live with us, but also with those who were here before and with those who will come after us. But such a common world can survive the coming and going of the generations only to the extent that it appears in public (Arendt, 1958: 55).

Arendt (1958: 55, 56) argues that the public realm is integral to the survival of the 'common world'. She writes:

> ... the reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which no common measurement or denominator can ever be devised. ... Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life (Arendt, 1958: 57).

Thus, for the common world to exist and continue to exist there must also exist a public space that provides for and acknowledges its reality. In Arendt's (1958:49) view, the public realm is essential and 'neither education nor ingenuity nor talent can replace the constituent elements of the public realm, which make it the proper place for human excellence'.

Passerin d'Entreves (1992) describes Arendt's conception of the public sphere as twofold, incorporating both the 'sphere of appearance' and a shared reality, and the constitution of the 'common world' and summarises it as follows:

> ... the public realm as a space of appearance provides the light and the publicity which are necessary for the establishment of our public identities for the recognition of a common reality and for the assessment of the actions of others (Passerin d'Entreves, 1992:147).

This 'space of appearance' provides opportunity for the development of public participation and political leadership. Thus the 'space' that is created can be seen to provide an underlying framework for many organisations, including political institutions.

It can be argued that the community board Public Forum process provides such a 'space of appearance'. This opportunity for people to be seen and heard by others in the political arena is significant in that people from differing viewpoints can participate in the decision-making process. This process accommodates the pluralistic aspect of modern society. Members of the public are also able to assess the actions of their elected representatives and the opinions of other members of the community. The research findings have revealed that, over a period of time, Public Forum has the potential to increase public participation and political awareness.

Elected representatives are sometimes criticised for not having the skills to fulfil the governance role but if they (and the public) do not have the opportunity to participate in the realm of public space and to develop related skills, then the pool of public knowledge, skills, expertise, leadership, and excellence for democratic governance is denied. Allen (1990: 20) echoes this development theme and notes that 'devolution of policy making power to elected local authorities is potentially an ideal school for democracy'. It gives not only the elected representatives but also the community in general, 'plenty of opportunity to practise, and learn to understand, the full process of political decision-making'.

Writing out of a concern about the political conditions that had allowed the Holocaust to occur, Arendt (1973: 474) argues that a lack of active public engagement in politics contributed to totalitarian government. She believes that without the opportunity for political contact, in the absence of a public sphere where a collective decision-making process can take place and people can 'act together in pursuit of a common concern', there is the potential for a form of 'pre-totalitarianism' in the political system.

Roles of the Public

In a participative democracy the public may play an active part in local government. Members of the public interact with the local authority in many ways, and assume different roles according to the particular interaction. People may be residents and ratepayers, commuters who come into the area to work, absentee landowners, long term residents as compared with newcomers, visitors, holiday-makers and those who currently reside in an area compared with future populations (Burns et al., 1994; Gyford, 1991). Gyford (1991) terms this the 'multiple publics'.

As will be discussed in Chapter Six, people interact with their council in many different roles as individuals and as members of groups or organisations. As individuals they may be, among other things, parents, motorists, pedestrians, students, sports players, library users, voluntary community workers, dog owners, and shoppers. Closely linked with each role is an expected pattern of behaviour and demands. The nature of the groups and organisations that people are involved in, and that interface with the local authority, are also varied. They may be political, environmental, business, ratepayer, recreational, or gender or culturally based. They may also be voluntary, charitable, or pressure groups, brought together for a single purpose or an ongoing issue (Gyford, 1991: 1, 2, 8, 37).

In their interactions with their local authority, the public may also be categorised as: customer, client, consumer, and/or citizen. Each of these roles incorporates different values, priorities, and focus. Gyford (1991: 16-19) notes that the roles of customer and client are more traditional and passive. The customer role is based on service and the axiom that 'the customer is always right'. This contrasts with the role of client which is perceived to be one of dependence on the professional, whether it be a planner, elected representative, or a consultant. The roles of consumer and citizen are seen to be more active; the consumer's interest is based on economic transactions, whilst the citizen has a political role to play. Gyford (1991) draws on Arendt (1979) who perceives the consumer as having 'interests' and the citizen as having 'opinions'. The consumer operates as an individual while the citizen is seen to belong in the public sphere. However, these two roles need not be exclusive. A person may function as a consumer, a citizen, or in both roles simultaneously.

Gyford (1991: 162) also draws on the work of Pollitt (1988) who identifies a 'consumer-citizen' model. Pollitt distinguishes between the two elements of the model, identifying both an 'instrumental' and a 'developmental' approach to the political process. The instrumental approach, based on addressing personal wants and needs, emphasises consumer satisfaction. This contrasts with the developmental approach which is more concerned with developing the concepts of citizenship, self-government and 'civic consciousness', and creating 'an informed, committed and developing citizenry'.

In the consumer-citizen model, the consumer is seen as individualistic, and having an instrumental approach, that of self-interest. This contrasts with the role of the citizen which is collective and denotes a developmental approach. As noted above, participative democratic theory provides the theoretical framework underpinning the concept of sub-local government. Using this consumer-citizen model, community

boards are, therefore, concerned with the collective response, and the development of the public as citizens.

Citizenship

Sub-local government is concerned with public participation and consultation and self-government. Crucial to the functioning of such a model is the role of the public as citizens. Passerin d'Entreves (1992: 145), in discussing the current wide usage of the concept of citizenship by British politicians of a variety of political persuasions, notes that not only is the term subject to a range of 'conflicting interpretations with respect to its meaning, scope and political implications', but that it has 'become the focus of philosophical debate on the nature and limits of the liberal-democratic conception of politics'. The debate lies between the 'communitarian' concept of citizenship which emphasises 'civic engagement and active political deliberation', (in a manner similar to the civic republican tradition) and the liberal concept which is restricted to the 'legal rights and entitlements' of the individual. This is the key issue for local government in New Zealand in the 1990s - and for political theory.

Passerin d'Entreves (1992:146) discusses Arendt's (1958) conception of citizenship in terms of three major themes: 'the public sphere', 'political agency and collective identity', and 'political culture', in an attempt to show that her 'conception remains important for contemporary attempts to revive the idea and the practice of democratic citizenship'.

Mouffe (1992: 225-238) subscribes to the radical democratic position on citizenship and argues that the concept needs to go beyond that adopted by both the liberal and civic republican traditions. She draws on Sandel (1982), a communitarian, who employs the terms 'instrumental' and 'constitutive' communities. 'Instrumental' community describes the liberal tradition in which a citizen 'enters' or becomes active in the community for the purposes of furthering individual interests. Mouffe sees this as reducing citizenship to a 'legal status' with social co-operation serving only to facilitate individual achievements. This contrasts with the term 'constitutive' community used to describe civic republicanism. In the 'constitutive' community, individual identities form the community itself which is based on the notions of public spiritedness, the importance of civic activities and political participation, and the 'public good'.

Mouffe (1992: 226-228) then combines the concepts of liberal democracy and classical republicanism to formulate her own definition of citizenship. She combines those

factors of liberal democracy, such as the rights of the individual, with those of classical republicanism, such as public-spiritedness and a sense of the common good. She draws on Skinner (1984) who demonstrates that 'there is no basic necessary incompatibility between the classical republican conception of citizenship and modern (liberal) democracy'. Rather it is only through active participation in government that citizens can ensure that their individual liberty will continue. Mouffe (1992: 228) concludes, therefore, that 'the idea of a common good above our private interests is a necessary condition for enjoying individual liberty'.

Governance

Although participative democratic theory provides the theoretical framework underpinning the concept of sub-local government, local government still operates under the Westminster system of representative democracy, in that the public elects individuals to be their representatives every three years. As discussed earlier in this chapter, three key themes are associated with the principles and importance of local government: local decision-making, public participation, and community consultation. For the purposes of this study, the term 'governance' has been employed to describe these functions.

In local government, local decision-making and policy-making are generally seen as being functions of the elected representative. These political functions contrast with the role of senior management in local government who carry out policy advisor and/or policy implementation roles.

For the purposes of this thesis a distinction is made between two possible forms of governance, 'managerial governance' and 'political governance'. Managerial governance is defined as having an administrative role within the organisation, particularly in the private sector. Of particular interest in the public sector is the working relationship between elected representatives (in their political governance role) and senior administration on whom the elected representatives rely for professional advice and policy implementation.

Boston, Martin, Pallot, and Walsh (1996: 181) comment on the importance of council committees (in which much of the council's business is conducted) in the governance structure of local authorities and note that these forums 'are the meeting point for the exchange of information between elected representatives and officers'. This interaction

between elected representatives and the officers was evident in the participant observation fieldwork conducted at the Waiheke Community Board meeting and noted in the participant observation cameo.

It can be argued that political governance is the preserve of the elected representative by virtue of their status as a representative of the people. The democratically elected representative is elected by and is accountable to members of the public, and can be de-elected at the next election. The constitutional nature of political governance should not be confused with the authoritative role of managerial governance.

The authority or legitimacy that the governance function derives from the democratic election process is also acknowledged by Boston et al. (1996: 179) who define governance as:

> ... the set of arrangements by which the affairs of an institution are ordered, [which] is in the case of local government underpinned by the legitimacy conferred by the democratic process.

The word governance derives from the Latin, *gubernare* - 'to steer' which is also the root of government and governor, both terms associated with political rule or authority. Governance can be commonly described as the 'action, manner or system of governing'. It also refers to the concepts of 'government, control or authority' (Collins Concise English Dictionary).

As with the previous discussion on democracy, it is possible to provide both a minimalist and a wider definition of the term governance. Howell et al. (1995: 5) provide a minimalist perspective. They define governance as 'ruling with authority' which 'implies the exercise of authority with responsibility'. Drawing on Hunt and Walcott, (1990) they write that '[g]overning in a representative democracy is about collective decision-making for which authority derives from the representative nature of the decision-makers'.

Dahl (1961: 1-3) however, notes the limitations of representative democracy and the concept of governance. He points out that although a political system may include a universal franchise there may also be an unequal distribution of 'knowledge, wealth, social position, access to officials, and other resources'. He notes that the vast majority of American citizens agree that "[d]emocracy is the best form of government" and asks:

> What, if anything, do these [democratic] beliefs actually mean in the face of extensive inequalities in the resources different citizens can use to influence one another? (Dahl, 1961:1).
>
> And if, because they are unequal in other conditions, citizens in a democracy are unequal in power to control their government, then who in fact does govern? (Dahl, 1961: 3).

Reid (1994) favours a wider definition and draws on the governance descriptions of Stewart (1993) and Hambleton (1993) two British theorists. According to Reid, Stewart writes that '[g]overnance is the means for collective action in society, responding to and guiding change that is beyond the capacity of private action ... It enables values to be realised ... ' (cited in Reid, 1994: 2). Reid (1994: 2) develops this definition further and states that:

> Governance involves the notion of a collective voice, an avenue for resolving questions of values and determining the "public interest," or the now out of fashion term, the "common good".

Reid (1994: 2-5) argues that local government offers a means of protection for its citizens and ensures them the opportunity to exercise basic democratic rights. He describes this as the governance function. He sees governance as a function which includes elements of collective decision-making, public participation, and consultation, the notions of 'the public good' and 'the common world' and is conducted in 'the public realm'. Governance is a role that incorporates representation, collective goal setting, policy making and the monitoring of policy implementation. It requires a community overview and civic 'leadership' and encourages active public consultation and community participation.

This understanding contrasts with that of Howell, McDermott and Forgie (1995: 64) who, in their paper 'Governance and Management in New Zealand Local Government', argue that the governance role must be debated with regard to 'efficiency and effectiveness [of the elected leaders] to do the job, rather than by an appeal to an abstract ideal' or historical precedent.

Governance and Management

The 1989 local government reform process made a clear separation between policy making (to be the responsibility of elected representatives) and policy implementation (the domain of management and staff) (see Chapter Two). The division is concerned

with providing clearer lines of accountability, although it must be noted that policy advice to the elected representatives is generally given by staff from within the organisation. This division is also a separation between governance and management. One of the most notable effects of managerialism on local government has been the adage that managers should be left to manage and a corresponding reduction in the role of politicians (Boston, 1991: 21). In both Britain and New Zealand this trend has led to observations of the 'depoliticisation' of government (Boston et al., 1996; Burns et al., 1994; Bush, 1994a; Gyford, 1991). Martin (1991: 274) argues that the theoretical perspectives underlying the local government reforms impinge on the traditional role of elected representatives and asks:

> ... how in practice is the political responsibility of elected councillors to be reconciled with the strong management role expected of the chief executive?

Given this division there is the potential for tension, even contradictions, between the drive and demand for organisational effectiveness and efficiency and the political governance role, particularly when increased public participation is valued (Howell et al., 1995: 5, 6; Martin, 1991: 270). Moreover, Reid (1994: 4) points out that in some areas the governance role has become linked with 'civic boosterism', or 'civic hype' (Burns et al, 1994: 165), and the promotion of image and growth, which represents not only a shift from policy making to service delivery but also from service delivery to economic development and promotion, more usually associated with the private sector.

Howell et al. (1995: 3) argue that the distinction between the roles of governance and management based on the separation of policy making and policy implementation, a feature of managerialism, has failed 'both in concept and practice'. They examine the practice of governance at the local government level through an evaluation of the roles and relationships between elected representatives and management. They argue that the role and issues of governance are becoming 'increasingly problematic' and cite conflict between the principles and goals of 'organisational effectiveness' and the demands of citizen participation. In their study of a sample of New Zealand local authorities they report 'a mix of practices and procedures which indicate a limited understanding of the difference between governance and management' (ibid: v).

These writers go on to examine five models of governance including both public and private sector models and conclude that the Carver model (U.S.A.) would best suit the New Zealand situation. This model consists of a process based on a set of principles which produces four different policy types associated with the governance role. These are: ends to be achieved, means to those ends, the board-staff relationship and the

process of governance. Each council is encouraged to develop their own model of governance based on their particular requirements. One of the advantages of the model is seen as its emphasis on 'the role of councillors in policy making as it relates to governance, not policy [making] for the whole organisation' (ibid: 55).

It is clear from this study that the writers envisage a more restricted governance role for the elected representative, which does not involve policy-making for the whole organisation. While they suggest that 'councillors are too heavily involved in detailed policy and not sufficiently focused on direction setting' they also suggest a greater role for management with the statement that 'management participation in direction-setting may be an important contributor to the effectiveness of policy' (ibid: vi). This would represent a further minimisation of the role of the elected representative in local government.

Commenting on the introduction by the 1989 reforms of new 'planning procedures and structures to facilitate incorporation of community views and values, including annual plans and community boards', Howell et al (1995: 60) argue that:

> ... good strategic and management processes can provide much better information about community preferences that are far superior to reliance on representation at the Council table.

The writers, therefore, favour fewer elected representatives at Council level, councillors who are more 'capable' and 'competent', and who are remunerated at market rates, possibly in the form of a salary only (so that councillors are not encouraged to maximise their meeting allowances) (ibid: 60).

Governance and Responsible Decision-Making

Governance is about accountability or 'responsible decision-making'. It can be argued that since elected representatives are elected by the people and are therefore accountable to them, then it is the elected representatives who should have a clear control of policy-making and guide this process. Community boards, by facilitating public access to the local government process, contribute to the accountability process.

Other means for ensuring accountability include legislation encouraging more open government. Accountability and participation are encouraged by statutory mechanisms such as the Official Information Act 1982 with recourse to the Ombudsman, the Local

Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987, and by statutory consultation processes such as submissions to the local authority's Annual Plan and budget. Such accountability mechanisms supplement a system of representative democracy (Boston et al, 1996; Ross, 1992, 1993).

Such means of accountability are widely perceived as important and necessary. However, in themselves they are not sufficient to promote community participation. Although they are important processes for the accountability of local government, they generally provide formal mechanisms for individual complaints and concerns. The inherent nature of the governance role, particularly that of community boards, is that it provides a mechanism and forum for collective participation.

Consultation and Participation

As already discussed, there is currently wide political debate on the concept of the 'active citizen' in the political sphere (Gyford, 1991: 170). Consultation and participation are both mechanisms by which the citizen is involved in the political process. They are therefore fundamental aspects of sub-local government and indeed of democratic government. Gyford (1991: 80) terms consultation and participation as 'the right to be heard' and 'the right to take part'. He argues that the consultation process must acknowledge that 'the public has a right to be heard even if it does not take a direct part in the decision-making' (ibid: 53). Bush (1994b: 2) describes consultation as an 'essential prerequisite if commitment to participation is a genuine objective' and notes that there is an important definitional issue as to whether consultation 'is simply a desirable prerequisite for participation' or is actually 'one form of participation'. He defines consultation as 'the process of seeking information, advice, or counsel', which implies a concern for determining people's interests or concerns (Bush, 1995b: 2).

Bush (1994b: 4, 5) provides an underlying rationale for the consultation process, that is, the wisdom in seeking other perspectives on an issue, and the possibility that active consultation will both give the local authority a favourable public image, and elicit support in principle from stakeholders in the early stages of a project which may reduce their opposition at a later stage. These are all themes that are identified in support of the community board process, providing an opportunity for the expression of diverse viewpoints, promoting the local authority, and providing the arena for the debate (and possible resolution) of issues at an early stage in the proceedings (see Chapter Six). Gyford (1991: 54) writes:

> ... neither the professional wisdom of the officers nor the electoral credentials of the councillors can necessarily provide all the raw material needed for decision making. Some sources of knowledge, of expertise or of opinion may not be tapped through the formal channels.

Bush (1994b: 2) considers the following points essential for effective consultation:

- That those being consulted have all the relevant information
- That they may freely express their views
- That the input is listened to and clarification sought if necessary
- That the input is taken into consideration when decisions are made
- That the outcomes of the process are conveyed to those who have made input.

Foster (1994: 2, 3), a Wellington City Councillor, also specifies the need for sufficient time being allocated for the consultation process and argues that the provision of background information should be appropriate to the needs of the particular group of consultees. He bases these requirements on his contention that, in the past decade, there have been many changes in New Zealand society which have proceeded without any or limited consultation. He argues that action without adequate consultation, although 'easy' in the short term, invites difficulties in the longer term. He sees these difficulties as including: lack of 'community ownership' and commitment, possible outright opposition, a loss of alternative viewpoints and public expertise, and a limitation of checks and balances on the policy direction.

However, the relative importance of consultation and participation may be dependent on the democratic perspective employed. Under representative democracy there may be less incentive to educate and empower people to make their own decisions and learn the necessary skills so that they can participate in their own decision-making, as the elected representatives have been given the mandate to make the decisions between elections (Gyford, 1991). This contrasts with participatory democracy where consultation and participation are closely related, actively encouraged and ongoing.

For consultation to be meaningful it must be genuine. Bush (1994b: 2) notes that those initiating the consultation process have a responsibility to make their expectations and objectives clear from the outset. He suggests that these could best be described as 'the devising of a policy which meets the community's expressed needs'. Any statement that indicates predetermination of the results of the process or implies that the consultation is being undertaken only because it is a statutory requirement makes a mockery of the

exercise. This argument is supported by Burns et al (1994: 165) who use the term 'cynical consultation' and caution against 'treating participation as a charade or limiting it to trivial matters'.

Bush (1994b: 5) points out a contradiction inherent in the consultative process:

> ... the act of consulting implies that in reaching decisions some account will be taken of the views received. [However] it is the local body not the consultees, which must live with the legal, financial and political consequences of actions formally taken.

Participation can be defined as 'the process of participating or sharing in something: it implies an active involvement in the area of question' (Bush, 1995b: 2). He argues that the bottom line of participation is the axiom that:

> ... people assign their right to govern themselves to accredited agents (local bodies), but only on condition that they are given meaningful rights to participate in that process as and when they see fit (Bush, 1995b: 6)(underlining in original).

As noted earlier, calls for increased public participation in the political process were a feature of the 1960s and 1970s, and participation in local government has been discussed at length since that time (Burns et al, 1994; Bush, 1980, 1995b; Gyford, 1991; Hill, 1974; Lucas, 1976). The issues that arise from these discussions on participation include questions of process and procedures, possible structures, the policy of the local authority regarding participation, the citizenship role, public accessibility, power, influence, credibility, resource allocation, effectiveness, and cost.

Many theorists draw on Arnstein's (1971) 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' in their discussions of participation in the political process (Burns et al, 1994; Bush, 1994b; Gyford, 1991). The ladder was originally developed to describe the degrees of involvement the public could have in planning issues, ranging from non-participation through degrees of tokenism to ultimately, degrees of citizen power. The ladder has become widely used in ensuing discussions on community participation and the relationship between a community and its government. However, Arnstein's model has been critiqued by Burns et al (1994), noting that the ladder focuses on the relationship between citizens and specific government programmes. They have, therefore, developed another model, 'a ladder of citizen empowerment', based on a number of spheres of influence on the political process including individual, neighbourhood, local government, and national governance.

Bush (1995b: 1) identifies the problems of participation at the local level as including the need to identity the community, whose views should prevail, the disinclination of a large section of the community to get involved (inactivity or non-participation), majority rule which ignores minority interest, and the prevalence of sector interests. He also differentiates between the 'active' and the 'inactive' citizen. This distinction involves the basic choice of people to participate in an active fashion or, equally, to be non-participants.

Once a comprehensive process of participation has been adopted it can change the role of the elected representative, potentially irreversibly:

> ... the right of citizens to be heard is now widely recognised in local government. Moreover, some local councillors in our experience, are now increasing likely to see themselves as catalysts, encouraging citizens to make their views known. The days of 'we know best, leave it to us', councillors may be numbered (Burns et al, 1994: 168, 169).

Mechanisms for participation are many and varied. They may include general meetings with provision for public input, public meetings, the submission process, working groups, co-option, and the development of new consultative processes. Many of these mechanisms have been adopted by community boards, which are proactively developing new means of community consultation.

Summary

The theoretical concepts and perspectives introduced in this chapter contribute to an understanding of the concept of local government and more particularly sub-local government in New Zealand. In this chapter I have identified some of the major themes associated with sub-local government, as they relate to community boards and the governance role.

The basic principles of local government and the concept of self-government have been identified as, the importance of local decision-making, increased opportunities for participation at the local level, and consultation with the community. These principles are consistent with the features of local government proffered by the Local Government Association in their submission to the local government reform process (see Chapter Two), notably government by communities, accessibility and accommodation of the

diversity of needs within a community. Further, since local government is the form of government closest to the people it can provide an important check on the functioning of a democratic society.

Three key variants of modern democratic theory: liberal representative, participative (socialist and republican traditions) and radical democratic theory have been discussed. The application of each of these theories to sub-local government results in varying interpretations of the importance and the desirability of public involvement. Participative democracy provides the theoretical framework underpinning the concept of sub-local government and encourages active citizen participation in local government.

The acknowledgment of a pluralistic society has challenged the historical definitions of community and community of interest based on geographic locality. New aspects of community include the notion of a political community, a community without a definite shape or identity. The creation of this political community is achieved through participation in a common public space, where individuals may share their views and differences and engage in political debate. Arendt's (1958) concepts of public space and the public realm, which are enjoying renewed interest, are particularly important since they provide an underlying theoretical perspective for the Public Forum process and public participation in general.

The public has many different roles in their interactions with local government. These roles may be 'active' or 'passive'. Two of the active roles have been identified as that of the consumer and the citizen. The consumer's interests are seen to be based on economic transactions, whilst the citizen has a political role to play. The consumer is perceived as having 'interests' while the citizen has 'opinions'. This division is further defined by the individualistic nature of consumer interactions with the local authority, in contrast with the public activities of the citizen. However, these roles are not exclusive and may operate simultaneously.

Under a system of representative democracy individuals are democratically elected to local bodies on a three year basis to represent the interests of the people. In local government, local decision-making and policy making are generally seen as being the function of the elected representative and have traditionally been associated with a governance role. For the purposes of this study, the term governance has been defined as decision-making by elected representatives with public consultation and participation. There are various definitions of governance, ranging from the minimalist role, favoured by representative democracy, where the representative has the mandate to govern for

their term of office without further input from the public, to broader definitions of governance which include not only community consultation and participation but also a wider guardianship role which encompasses not only the local community but also the perspective of a common world.

The relationship between governance and management has been examined. It is noted that there is a potential source of conflict between the political responsibility of elected representatives at the council level and the strong management role now expected of council management. Some writers have called for a more restricted governance role for the elected representative, and a greater governance role for non-elected management. However, as noted in the Introduction, it can be argued that 'if the political function is removed from local government it ceases to be local government' (Boyle cited in Gyford et al, 1989: 4).

The 1960s marked an increased demand for greater involvement in government. Consultation and participation are both mechanisms whereby the citizen can become involved in the political process. At the sub-local level, community boards provide an opportunity for the expression of different viewpoints and an arena for debate (and possible resolution) of contentious issues at an early stage. In the next chapter I will discuss the methodology and research design of this study in which public consultation and participation are employed to measure the governance related activities of community boards.

Chapter Five

Methodology and Research Design

This thesis explores the proposition: that community boards have an important role to play in local government, that of governance. The term governance is defined in this thesis as decision-making by elected representatives with public consultation and participation. The field research sought to identify what activities community board members perform, how they consult with the public, and how the public participates in the community board process, in an attempt to discover if a governance role exists for community boards.

Four methods were used to gather data: time diaries, a participant observation 'cameo', analysis of community board minutes, and telephone interviews. This data collection was enhanced by my own experience as a community board member and thus there is a degree of participant observation method throughout the fieldwork. A strength of the research design is this opportunity to combine both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection with the perspective of an insider in order to achieve the triangulation of methods or method combination favoured in participant observation (Denzin, 1970; Jick, 1983; Sieber, 1982).

To answer the research question, consideration was given to conducting participant observation research of community boards in the Auckland region through attendance at the monthly board meetings, face-to-face interviews with the community board members, and collection of data on public input and board activities through analysis of the board agendas and minutes. Such field research would have provided a wide range of data with which to answer the research question. My attendance at the various board meetings and the greater opportunity for contact with more community board members in the Auckland region would have contributed to one of the basic assumptions of the participant observation method, that the researcher partake of as many of the subjects' activities as possible (Denzin, 1970).

However, this was not possible given the scope of this research, the time available, and the limitations of the public transport system in Auckland. An additional problem was the scheduling of other board meetings at the same time as my own Waiheke Community Board meetings. It was, therefore, necessary to adjust and limit the data collection while taking care to maintain the focus of the research.

The data collection for this research project was consequently divided into four parts. First, quantitative data about public consultation was gathered through time use or time budget diaries, kept by a sample of community board members from throughout the Auckland region (for the month of July 1995). Second, I conducted participant observation fieldwork at the July 1995 Waiheke Community Board meeting while I was engaged in duties as a Board member. Third, the minutes of all community boards in the Auckland region (for the twelve month period 1st July 1994 to 30th June 1995) were analysed in order to establish the potential level of public participation at the board meetings and the topics or issues raised by the public. The final method of data collection consisted of a short telephone interview with each of the community board chairpersons in the Auckland region.

In view of the participant observation aspect of the fieldwork, it is important, from the outset, to outline the researcher's role and perspective as a Waiheke Community Board member. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I outline the ethical considerations of the study and the survey population. I then introduce participant observation as a research method and discuss the sampling methods and external and internal validity of the research. The relationship and role problems associated with field research are examined. The four data collection methods: time budget diaries, the participant observation 'cameo', analysis of board minutes and interviews with community board chairpersons are then introduced, with discussion on the research design, data collection logistics and development of the categorisation system used for the time budget diaries and the analysis of minutes.

An Outline of Waiheke Island and my Role as a Researcher and Elected Representative

I was elected to the Waiheke Community Board (part of the Auckland City Council) in the October 1992 local body elections and re-elected for a second term in October 1995. I have lived on Waiheke for almost twelve years and have been heavily involved in the community.

Waiheke Island is a small community of approximately 7,500 permanent residents. The population swells during the summer months by over 25,000 people. Historically Waiheke has had a significant number of off-island ratepayers and holiday home owners. However, in recent years there has been a rapid population growth (particularly

in the higher income bracket) as Waiheke becomes more a dormitory marine suburb of Auckland, and the visitor season has increasingly become a year-round industry. Despite these changes Waiheke can still be described as having a significant and well-defined community of interest and a small town - village ambience.

Community Board members and the Ward Councillor are known personally by many of the residents and generally make themselves available to constituents as and when required. The area represented by the Waiheke Community Board is the same as that covered by the pre-amalgamation authority, the Waiheke County Council. It can be categorised as Urban/fringe under the Department of Internal Affairs category system for communities (L.G.B.G., 1991: 7).

Auckland City delegates a wide range of functions to the community board level (see Appendix 3) and provides its community boards with discretionary funds for distribution to community groups, Small Local Improvement Projects (SLIPs), and functions and receptions. The level of discretionary funding is based on the population of the community.

The monthly Waiheke Community Board agenda contains many items requiring either consideration by the Board or more formal input by way of written submissions. 'Matters for Information', items which may be of general interest to Board members, or background material, may also be included. The physical location of the community in the Hauraki Gulf means that many issues of a regional or national nature are also clearly of local importance.

In addition to the monthly meetings and any special meetings called, Waiheke Community Board members may also, take part in working parties or sub-committees, sit on the Waiheke Planning Committee (abolished by the Auckland City Council in November 1995), be appointed as Planning Commissioners, perform delegated duties on behalf of the Board, sit on City-wide committees or working parties, keep a watching brief on Council committees, accompany officers on official business, attend training sessions, workshops and conferences, attend other territorial local authority briefings and prepare and present submissions of local, regional and national significance both on behalf of the Board and in a support role for community organisations. However, any submissions to regional and national bodies must be made through the Council Committee structure.

My own extra duties are numerous. I have represented the Board on a number of local community organisations, the Hauraki Gulf Islands Committee (abolished by the Auckland City Council in November 1995), and other city-wide groups. I also deal with constituent enquiries; read agendas, minutes and correspondence; research various issues; and attend official functions. I believe that the Waiheke Board members are generally pro-active and can be described as playing many roles in the community.

The remuneration for a Waiheke Community Board member consists of a salary or honorarium of $3,150 per annum (based on the population of the community) with $90/day meeting allowance (budgeted for a maximum of 15 community board meetings per year) and reimbursement of travel costs. Administrative and secretarial support expenses are met by the Ward office from the Hauraki Gulf Islands Ward budget. The Hauraki Gulf Islands Ward has two community boards: Waiheke and Great Barrier. The costs of running the Community Boards are included in the ward budget.

Every year an initial budget estimate for the coming financial year is prepared by the local Ward officers, based in part on current service levels. The proposed budget then goes through an approval process with the community board and then the Auckland City Directors. Finally, it is taken (in its amended form) with the other nine ward budgets to the full Council for approval and inclusion in the proposed City's Annual Plan and Budget. At this special Council meeting the Councillors argue for the re-inclusion of projects and items of expenditure that may have been dropped during the budget approval process.

Ethical Issues

The proposal outlining the details of this research project was submitted for peer review by staff of the Social Policy and Social Work Department in April 1995. Those ethical considerations of particular importance to this study were to make a clear statement of the nature and purposes of the project, have the informed consent of the participants, to advise the participants of their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, to have their privacy and confidentiality protected, and to be informed of the possible use of the research results. The information, diaries and interview notes, were kept confidential and stored only until the evaluation was completed. A summary of the findings was made available to all participants in the diary-keeping process. These ethical considerations are discussed further in the sections on data collection methods later in this chapter.

There are also issues arising from my own role as a participant and observer. As an elected representative as well as a researcher, it was of particular importance to introduce myself in both roles.

Research Sample

This research project involved a study of a sample of community boards. For ease of access and proximity, boards in the Auckland region were selected. The local authorities in the Auckland region are: Auckland City Council (with 11 community boards), Franklin District Council (2), Manukau City Council (7), North Shore City Council (6) and Waitakere City Council (4). Papakura District Council and Rodney District Council do not have any community boards; no community boards were established under the Papakura District Council at the time of the 1989 amalgamations, and the Rodney District Council abolished its boards in 1992 and instead established community committees as sub-committees of the Council as noted in Chapter Two. There is therefore a total of thirty community boards in the Auckland region (listed in Appendix 4). The minutes of all community boards over a twelve month period were analysed and telephone interviews held with the chairperson of each board. The methods of analysis will be detailed in Chapter Six when I discuss the findings.

The sample population for the time use diaries was drawn from members of the Auckland Region Community Boards' Association (A.R.C.B.A.) Executive. Although representatives of the community boards in the Auckland Region had met annually since 1989, they did not set up a formal organisation until March 1994, when the decision made to set up an Auckland regional association. All community board members in the constituent local authorities are members of the Association and the executive is drawn from this membership.

The A.R.C.B.A. was the first official regional grouping of community board members in New Zealand, an initiative which has been followed by the establishment of a Wellington regional group in 1995 and a South Island Community Boards' seminar to be held annually (the inaugural meeting being held in August 1995).

The A.R.C.B.A.'s stated aims include: the distribution of information of general interest to community board members, networking, promotion of the role of community boards, providing a united front when lobbying, addressing the legislative rights and duties of

community boards and 'developing consistency of community board delegated responsibilities' (A.R.C.B.A.: 1995).

The Association has conducted workshops which have highlighted areas of concern to members including: conflict with councillors, too few delegated powers from the parent authority, little or no funding, a higher level of decision-making required on local matters, a possible change of title of board members to 'community councillors', and the need for education on the role of community boards and their place in the local government structure.

The A.R.C.B.A. Executive consists of twenty members. It cannot be considered representative of the wider population in terms of class, race, or gender, but its composition does reflect the traditional profile of local government representatives - largely male, middle-class and of NZ European/Pakeha[1] ethnic identity (Department of Internal Affairs, 1994a).

The sampling method was largely 'opportunistic' (Honigmann, 1973: 81) in that Association Executive members were asked to join the study. It was not possible, therefore, to select a variety of participants from within the sample population. However, the sample does consist of at least one member from each of the constituent authorities and one from each category of community: urban/fringe, town, rural and mixed (L.G.B.G., 1991, 7).

I chose to work with a sample of A.R.C.B.A. Executive members rather than with a random sample of community board members from throughout the Auckland region because I was already known to members of the A.R.C.B.A. Executive and had, therefore, already completed the introduction phase. The time use diary process can be relatively time consuming (even for one month) and I believe requires the participants to have some degree of interest in the final results, either for personal interest or for the furtherance of knowledge about community boards. I decided not to work with a sample of members from my own Waiheke Community Board, since holding an elected position on the same board might create a competitive situation, more so in a small, highly politicised community such as Waiheke, and especially in what was an election year.

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[1] The term NZ European/Pakeha is used by the Department of Internal Affairs in the document Local Government Candidates: 1992 as a number of responding candidates objected to the use of the term "Pakeha" in the questionnaire.

It is possible that members of the Association are the more proactive members of their boards and are more interested in the future of local government. Some were members of their local council before amalgamation and are acutely aware of the differences between their present roles, responsibilities, and powers as compared with the pre-1989 structure.

The participant observation aspect of the study consisted of a 'cameo' of the July 1995 meeting of the Waiheke Community Board. The meeting was documented as a case study of public input into the community board process through the Public Forum. The study also outlines the process used by the Waiheke Community Board to deal with public submissions.

This cameo was included because it was a valuable means of collecting data on the Public Forum process which was also useful for triangulation of the data. Burns, Hambleton and Hoggett (1994) used this method in their British study of decentralised democracy and the neighbourhood model of public participation in the Tower Hamlets area. Their study revealed that one limitation of the neighbourhood model in this particular area, which has a high racial mix, was that the model gave insufficient attention to other communities and communities of interest within the geographic area covered by the local authority. The writers noted that there was also a distinct 'class divide' between the middle-class elected representatives and Council officers and the working class public (Burns et al, 1994: 228). Community and community of interest have been discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

Participant Observation as a Method

Denzin (1970) and Whyte (1984) outline the nature and significant features of participant observation. Denzin (1970: 186) defines participant observation as a 'field strategy that draws simultaneously on a variety of resources and disciplines, combining document analysis, respondent and informant interviewing, direct participation and observation and introspection'. As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, this project involves all of these methods as well as the keeping of diaries.

Denzin (1970: 205-215) outlines eight basic steps employed in participant observation, noting that they do not necessarily occur strictly in order. These begin with a definition of the problem, adoption of a theoretical perspective, review of the relevant literature and an initial statement of the research and theoretical objectives. *Entree* to the research

setting is gained and initial contacts , explanations and observations are made. A number of methods are employed for the data collection process. As the information is gathered, theoretical formulations are tested, hypotheses are formulated and tested and categorisation, coding, and analysis systems are designed. Propositions, links and an explanatory network are also developed. The study concludes with 'role disengagement' and withdrawal from the field. Some recording of the historical perspective may be required (post-study) and supplemental data sought. A more intensive stage of writing up then follows, compared with the day-to-day notetaking or observations that have been kept until this point, in order to provide a perspective for the research.

The participant observation research method is usually associated with the study of a particular research setting and population over a longer period of time and conducted in a comprehensive fashion, with the observer either covertly or overtly participating in the daily lives of the participants and collecting data by various methods, including the researcher's own field notes and introspection. Despite the limited exploratory nature of this particular research project, there is a clear element of participant observation in the data collection because of my own intimate knowledge of and on-going involvement with the Waiheke Community Board.

A critical characteristic of participant observation is the quality of interaction between the observer and the observed. The researcher has a certain obligation to see the world through the eyes of the subject population, there is 'a commitment to adopt the perspective of those studied by sharing in their day-to-day experiences', thereby 'avoiding the fallacy of objectivism' (Denzin, 1970: 185). As a sitting community board member, I already share a similar perspective to the subject population - community board members. During the course of the study I continued with my own board activities: attending all Waiheke Community Board and A.R.C.B.A. Executive meetings, carrying out my regular board and community activities, and campaigning for re-election to the Waiheke Community Board in the October 1995 local body elections. I used my own diary notes to assess my level of activity as a board member and to help me develop a categorisation system for board members' activities.

Participant observer roles may range from overt to covert, with five variations including observer as participant, participant and participant as observer (Denzin, 1970; Whyte, 1984). The role I adopted is best described as participant as observer, in which the researcher makes his/her purpose known (to a greater or lesser degree) to the participants and develops relationships with the subjects, both as respondents and informants. My involvement on a day-to-day basis with my own local community board

and other Auckland City board members, and my regular meetings with members of the A.R.C.B.A. combined to constitute the participant-as-observer role adopted in this research.

Both the development and maintenance of an observer-observed relationship require attention. Denzin (1970:190) notes that researchers recognise several phases in the primary stages of contact with the subjects, including initial hostility, being treated as a stranger and a newcomer, and superficial initial encounters. As I was already an established member of the A.R.C.B.A. Executive these phases were minimal. Neither were these stages significant during the telephone interviews with community board chairpersons. At the outset of each interview I introduced myself as a member of the Waiheke Community Board and a Masters student, conducting a research project on community boards in the Auckland region.

During my first meeting with the A.R.C.B.A. Executive (September 1994), as one of the six representatives from Auckland City, I stated my academic interest in the subject of community boards. At a later meeting I verbally expressed my interest in studying this particular group as a research project. No formal approach or consent was sought at that early stage, since the parameters and specific objectives of the research were not yet finalised. However, with the permission of the participants I kept notes at the early workshop sessions in order to establish those issues or themes that were common to boards and board members from different areas.

Whyte (1984: 26) comments that participant observation has the potential 'to enable the field worker to place individuals in a group context and gain a realistic picture of the dynamics of individual and group behaviour'. In addition to the essential economic and time advantages of conducting research within the Auckland region, the opportunity exists through the A.R.C.B.A. grouping to study representatives from a cross-section of cities, communities, and populations.

Participant observation can be carried out by either quantitative or qualitative research methods. This project employs both methods. Denzin (1970: 186) notes that the participant observation method 'is deliberately unstructured in its research design so as to maximise the discovery and verification of theoretical propositions', allowing a continual revising and testing of hypotheses.

Triangulation of methods or multiple methods, including the collection of quantifiable data, is seen as essential to maintain the credibility of participant observation research.

In his definition of participant observation, Denzin (1970: 185) refers to the use of a combination of data collection methods. He argues that it is important to both gain perspective on the study area and put events in a temporal context. This requires both qualitative and quantitative methods, that is a triangulation of methods. Jick (1983: 137, 138, 144) submits that qualitative methods serve to create a more holistic approach, giving a more 'hands on' effect, clarifying, and expanding on the patterns created by the quantitative methods.

As previously stated, this research employed several methods of data collection, both quantitative - in the form of weekly time use diaries and analysis of community board minutes, and qualitative - through telephone interviews and a case study. This is supported by my own observations and introspection as a board member actively involved in the community board process.

Writers on participant observation suggest that in order to maintain perspective, the researcher should leave the research setting periodically, keep a personal diary and invite input and comment from colleagues (Denzin, 1970; Sarantakos, 1993; Whyte, 1984). It was not possible for me to leave the general area of research during the project. As a community board member, active in my local community, I am on call seven days a week. Because Waiheke is a small community, I (like other board members) am always accessible to local residents, whether out shopping, travelling on the ferry, working, doing voluntary work, socialising or in the dentist's chair as happened recently. In this particular case, while having a dental check-up the dentist asked me about a local property issue. On completion of my examination we further discussed the matter and then went next door to inspect the site and met another affected business person. I was invited for coffee and spent an hour discussing this and other related matters. I then made several phone calls on their behalf. This unplanned interaction is a common occurrence for board members in small communities.

Although I did not keep a diary noting my personal observations and feelings about the research itself, my daily diary notes on community board activities, constituent enquiries and the research process helped me reflect on the data.

I did not invite comment from my fellow Waiheke Board members for the reasons already noted, it was election year and the situation became very competitive. However, I found my fellow A.R.C.B.A. members offered support and encouragement. I believe this can be attributed to several factors: there was no element of competition in our relationship since we came from different areas and different community boards, our

involvement as members of a regional organisation may signify a wider interest in community boards than our immediate political involvement and local focus, many of the members are in an older age group (over fifty-five), and some have been members of pre-amalgamation local authorities which gives them experience of other local government structures. Many of the members who took part in the diary keeping process were enthusiastic about communicating the research results to other elected representatives, their council officers and the wider public.

Sampling Methods - Generalisability or External Validity

The measure of external validity is the degree to which observations can be generalised to other populations. Denzin (1970: 200) notes that the main criticism of participant observation in this respect is the possibility of 'bias inherent in the cases chosen' for study. He argues that the researcher must 'demonstrate that the case(s) he/she studies (including research sites and settings, subjects and principal informants) are representative of the class of units to which generalisations are made'.

While acknowledging that community boards would be faced by different local issues and concerns, prior to conducting the research I had assumed that most community boards in the Auckland region operate in a similar manner to that of the Waiheke Board, particularly with regard to the Public Forum process.[2] However, it soon became clear through my informal discussions and networking with community board members from the other territorial local authorities, that although there is a certain uniformity of community board functions and processes within each Council, this is not necessarily reflected between the various Councils. Each community board responds to the needs of its own community in different ways. This is reflected in the issues of local importance and the manner in which board members conduct their duties. It was also evident that individual board members (including those on the Waiheke Community Board) interpret their role and approach their duties in highly individualistic ways.

Most members of the A.R.C.B.A. Executive are proactive in their communities, both as board members and as individuals; some can be described as having more radical views whereas others play a conservative role. Some board members see the new local body structure in the context of the wider reforms of New Zealand politics. They question the system under which they are operating and strive for both greater decision-making

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[2] Public Forum is the period of time generally set aside for members of the public, at the beginning of meetings, to address their elected representatives.

powers and a clearer definition of the powers that community boards currently hold. A few executive members are more deferential to the powers and position of the Council bureaucracy and the decisions of Council. The A.R.C.B.A. Executive has had one resignation on the grounds that, in voicing its desire for a greater powers of delegation from local authorities to community boards and supporting a basic level of delegation for all boards on a national basis, the Association was becoming 'political'. The same criticism was also received from one of the constituent community boards in their written submission to the Association's workshop process.

Although the research sample was small, it included members from community boards in all the constituent councils of the A.R.C.B.A.: Auckland City, Manukau City, North Shore City, Waitakere City and Franklin District Council. It included members from both urban and rural boards, chairpersons and other board members, male and female members, first time board members (1992 - 1995), members who had served two terms on community boards (1989 - 1995) and pre-amalgamation authorities (prior to 1989). Some of the participants have been particularly proactive on the A.R.C.B.A,. assisting with the setting up of the Association, while others have taken a less active role. Some have attended all the A.R.C.B.A. meetings, others have not. There was therefore a wide range of characteristics among the sample surveyed.

The interviewing of all community board chairpersons in the Auckland region provides a representative sample of community board activities in the region. However regional differences may preclude the generalisability of these results to other regions of the country. The sample of A.R.C.B.A. Executive members provides grouping of elected representatives from the cross-section of constituent cities, communities and populations throughout the Auckland region.

There are several factors which may preclude wide generalisation of the results of this study. These include: the varying degrees of delegation of authority by local bodies to their boards (within the existing legislation); the particular relationship between a board, its council and the community; and the characteristics of the particular community and community of interest. There may also be differences between the roles and responsibilities of community board members in urban, urban/rural, rural and mixed communities. There are also individual differences in the amount of time board members allocate to board activities. These demands on members' time may be 'externally imposed' or 'self-generated' (Widdicombe, 1986: Vol. I, p. 59). Board members bring with them varying degrees of enthusiasm and aptitude. Different communities also have different expectations of their elected representatives.

However, the particular sampling method selected may in fact enhance the generalisability of the study. Honigmann (1981: 82, 85) uses the term 'non-probability' sampling (as opposed to 'probability') which is sampling in the broadest sense of the term. The setting, population, respondents, informants and observed events 'choose themselves'. Honigmann also uses the terms 'opportunistic sampling', or 'chunk sampling', in which 'the researcher resourcefully seizes any handy chunk of the universe that promises to reward him [sic] with relevant information' (ibid: 81). However, he suggests that a clear specification of the relationship between the 'sampling frame' and the 'target universe' must be made (ibid: 85-87).

By virtue of my position as a community board member and an Auckland City representative on the A.R.C.B.A., the research population presented itself. The sampling method can therefore be described as opportunistic. The selection of members onto the Executive can also be described in these terms. Members have been delegated by their boards to the position, for a variety of reasons. These could include, having a particular interest and enthusiasm in serving on such an organisation, acting as a monitoring agent for their board, availability or 'drawing the shortest straw'.

Sampling Methods - Internal Validity

Denzin (1970: 217) notes that the very advantages of participant observation, studying 'change' and 'process' mean that careful attention must be paid to internal validity. There are factors that are intrinsic to the participant observer operation, but that are also potentially 'biasing' and 'distorting'. Those relevant to this research project include: subject maturation - that is a change in the subject's responsiveness over the period of the project; subject bias - that is the bias present in the sample population; subject mortality - that is, subjects who withdraw from the study; reactive effects of the observer - changes in participant response because of the presence of the observer; changes in the observer - changes in the attitudes of observer over the period of the study; and peculiar aspects of the situations in which the observations were conducted (Denzin, 1970:201).

1995 was an election year and, as such, there was potential for distortions of the research process arising from the election campaign. The time budgets were kept for the month of July in the last year of a three year term. The opening day for nominations for the local body elections was the 2nd of August and election day the 15th of October,

only two and a half months later. These factors may have affected the relative level and type of activity, both of the boards themselves and of individual board members. It may also have produced differing responses from those members who were standing for re-election and those who were not. Gyford et al (1989: 59) note that there is a 'silly season' before upcoming elections.

In my case, I found that my board activities fell from a forty hour week recorded in my pilot time use diary undertaken for the month of May 1995, during which the Board had extra meetings to hear draft reserve management plans and applications from local groups for discretionary funds, to twenty-two hours and twelve hours recorded during two weeks respectively of July. I was also aware that the amount of time I spent on board activities during August and September, during the campaign period, declined dramatically. This observation was also made by one of the participants in the study.

The participants in the diary keeping process showed an increasing interest and enthusiasm for the project over the time they were involved. One participant, who had indicated that they were too busy with board activities to take part in the project was particularly interested in receiving a copy of the preliminary results and at the end of the process expressed the view that the results should be made available to city management and the local paper.

Relationship and Role Problems in Field Research

As I hold a similar position to members of the A.R.C.B.A. Executive and to other community board members whom I observed during the course of the research, I was very much a peer, an insider. There are significantly more men than women on the Executive but the gender of the researcher did not appear to be of any significance. The chairperson is a woman and the female members of the committee are articulate and pro-active. As a woman in my early 40s, I am generally younger than the average committee member, but I am not the youngest.

Data Collection Method 1: Time Budget Diaries

Research Design

In order to establish how the elected representatives (community board members) consult with the public, data was collected through the keeping of time budgets (diaries) for a period of one month (July 1995) so that the monthly meeting cycle was covered. This diary method has been used previously in British studies (Gyford et al, 1989: 68). Prior to the fieldwork, I kept a diary of my own community board related activities for one month (May 1995), recording both the type of activity and time spent on each. Based on my own diary entries over the month, the diary sheet and category system were finalised (see Appendix 5).

The diary keeping process was kept as simple and straightforward as possible, so that it would not encroach too much on participants' time. During the introductory phase, conversations with some A.R.C.B.A. Executive members had indicated that they were busy people who tended to spend a lot of time on local community as well as community board business and were often in full or part-time employment as well. I considered it important that the research project did not cause undue inconvenience.

Participants were assured of the confidentiality of the research process. Each participant was allocated a code number, and all evaluation and analysis was done by code number, not name. Thus, the information collected is not be traceable to any individual. The raw data was available only to my supervisors and not to any other third party.

Data Collection Logistics

At a special A.R.C.B.A. Executive meeting in June, all members of the sample group were handed an introductory letter explaining the research project and asking if they would like to participate (see Appendix 6). A consent form was attached and participants were asked to complete and return this before the commencement of the diary keeping (see Appendix 7).

The sample was chosen by self selection, with those members who were interested in taking part in the project, signing and returning their consent forms to me. A total of twelve community board members from the initial sample of the fourteen who agreed to take part actually completed the diary keeping process.

When all the consent forms from those wishing to take part had been received the first covering letter (see Appendix 8) and two diary form sheets (and a spare) were sent out for the two weeks Saturday 1st July - Friday 7th July and Saturday 8th July - Friday 14th July. Participants were asked to fill in the diary sheets with their community board related activities according to prescribed categories and to submit their completed forms on a weekly basis (a stamped self-addressed envelope was enclosed for each week). A weekly return of the completed forms was chosen so that the clarity and accuracy of the individual's record keeping could be checked as soon as possible and corrective advice given if required. The weekly return of time budgets also enabled the data analysis to commence earlier.

The second mailout consisted of a second covering letter (see Appendix 9) and diary sheets for the remaining two and a half weeks of July. One member of the sample population did not return any of the diary sheets, despite the second mailout and a phone call as a reminder. Another returned only one. I therefore considered that they had withdrawn from the research project. While the withdrawal of these two participants from the study has some implications for bias in the generalisability of the findings, it should be noted that one of these participants was not a regular attendee at the A.R.C.B.A. Executive meetings (attending only two meetings during the twelve month period) and the other had indicated that they may be 'too busy' to participate for the entire period. Three of the other participants required one or two reminder calls before they returned the fifth and final weekly sheet. When all five completed forms were received, a letter thanking the respondents for their participation in the research project was posted out.

When a preliminary analysis of the data collection had been completed, a letter was sent out (see Appendix 10) with the preliminary results to each of the participants according to my earlier undertaking. The results included: a pie chart showing the percentage of time spent by community board members on the various activities (see Appendix 11) and a histogram showing the number of hours spent per month by members on board activities (see Appendix 12).

System of Categorisation

The ten categories (developed from my own experience as a community board member) and used in the pilot study were: meetings, reading agendas and minutes, working

parties, attendance at official functions, representing the board (on other organisations), meetings and discussions with officers, research, and dealing with constituent enquiries (face-to-face, by telephone, and letter). This is a wider category system than that used by the Widdicombe Committee (cited in Gyford et al, 1989: 62). In further detail these categories cover:

- **Meetings**: including monthly board meetings, special meetings, small neighbourhood meetings, larger public meetings.
- **Reading agendas, minutes** and other board related material,
- **Working parties** - that is meetings of either the whole board or some board members to discuss a particular issue or to prepare submissions,
- **Official functions:** attending functions in their capacity as board members and community representatives,
- **Representing the Board:** representing the board on other community organisations as part of delegated responsibilities either from the board or the local authority, on either a regular or one-off basis,
- **Meetings and Discussions with Officers:** including following up issues, sharing knowledge, site visits, seeking advice, setting the agenda. This may include both face-to-face and telephone contact,
- **Research:** Reading both extra general reference material on community boards and local government and single-issue material related to the board's functions. Discussions with fellow board members on board related matters,
- **Constituent enquiries, face-to-face:** both from the constituent to the board member and vice versa in the case that an issue is being followed up or monitored, or seeking information,
- **Constituent enquiries, telephone:** as above,
- **Constituent enquiries, letter:** either receiving or sending a letter from or to a constituent.

Constituent enquiries were divided into three sub-categories for reasons of comparison. A recent customer services survey conducted for Auckland City indicates that the favoured methods of contacting the council service centres and area offices are by visiting the centre personally (57 percent) and calling by telephone (35 percent) (Radford Group, 1994: 6). A similar survey on the political structure of Auckland City indicates however that the telephone is the preferred method of contacting elected members, including the mayor, councillors and community board members (Service Auditing Group, 1994b).

Space was left on the diary sheets for comments, extra material that participants might wish to append as notes.

Data Collection Method 2: Participant Observation Cameo

This data collection method employs participant observation research and consisted of an account of the regular monthly Waiheke Community Board meeting held on Wednesday 26th July 1995 which I attended as a member of the Board. The reporting of this meeting follows the cameo example utilised by Burns et al (1994: 229-234). Particular attention is devoted to the Public Forum section of the meeting.

The participant observation cameo will be used to triangulate the other data collection methods, notably the minutes of the Public Forums from the community boards and the interviews with the board chairpersons.

As already stated, Public Forum is a period of time set aside for members of the public, at the beginning of meetings, to address their elected representatives at either council or community board level. It is a mechanism pioneered by the Devonport Borough Council (see Chapter Two) and adopted by councils to facilitate community input. There is no legislative requirement for local authorities to provide for Public Forum and no legal framework that says how it should be conducted. For the purposes of hearing the public, Standing Orders are suspended, and then reinstated when the public input is completed. There is, therefore, no formal requirement that minutes be kept for this part of the meeting and this was later found to impact on the analysis of the minutes.

On Waiheke Island, the Public Forum process is an important and vital part of the Community Board meetings. Public Forum was established by the Waiheke County Council in the mid 1980s. It was set up to allow the community direct access to the councillors at council meetings. However, there were soon two distinct groups of people making submissions: those who came to Public Forum to speak directly to the councillors over particular issues and those who used Public Forum to attempt to hold the councillors accountable (telephone conversation with Jenny Barre, former Waiheke County Councillor, Dec. 1995).

Data Collection Method 3: Analysis of Minutes

Research Design

Data on public participation at community board meetings was initially gathered through an analysis of the minutes, particularly the Public Forum section, of all the Community Boards in the Auckland region for the twelve month period 1st July 1994 to 30th June 1995. The minutes of the community board meetings were analysed in order to calculate the number of members of the public present at the meetings, the number of people giving submissions to the board (including delegations and petitions) and the subject of the submissions. However, it should be noted that regular monthly board meetings are not the only official forum available to the public for their participation. Other forums include: planning hearings, reserve management hearings, Annual Plan and budget meetings, discretionary funding allocations, special issue based meetings and open workshop sessions.

I was aware through my contact with board members throughout the Auckland region, that some boards will only accept pre-arranged delegations to address the board and will not receive individual submissions on a casual attendance basis. Other boards prefer that the topics raised by both individuals and delegations be presented as an agenda item and that any public input be made during the board's discussion on the agenda item (even though the meeting is operating under Standing Orders). Thus community boards use a variety of procedures to facilitate public input, even within a particular local authority.

Different boards record public input to the board meetings in a variety of ways. However, the layout of the minutes and the degree of detail in recording public attendance and submissions is usually uniform for all boards within a particular local authority. It was apparent from the outset of the research that the data collection method would need to accommodate these differing reporting standards.

Data Collection Logistics

To obtain minutes of the community board meetings I phoned all the community board secretaries or liaison people in each of the Councils and requested copies of their minutes for the relevant twelve month period. I introduced myself as a Waiheke Community Board member and a Master's student doing research on community boards

in the Auckland region. I offered to pay both photocopy fees and postage, or to visit their offices personally if they felt they were unable to help. Most board minutes were forwarded to me over a period of three weeks following the initial phone call. Some follow-up reminder calls were necessary. In two cases I eventually rang the Area Manager and in one case the Mayor's Office to escalate the request for the information.

System of Categorisation

The purpose of identifying and categorising the type of issues or enquiries raised at board meetings is to gather empirical data on the issues that members of the public bring to community boards, and, thereby, what their perception is of the role of community boards. This analysis should indicate whether members of the public perceive community boards to have a service delivery and/or a governance focus.

In order to design a system of categorisation of the type of submissions made to community boards, I researched the minutes of the Waiheke Community Board for the twelve month period April 1994 - March 1995. These minutes record that 138 members of the public participated in board meeting raising 266 topics. Some people covered a range of subjects or included a variety of requests in a single presentation, particularly if they were representing an organisation such as a local residents' and ratepayers' group. For the purposes of data collection the total number of submissions was, therefore, calculated as one per topic or issue rather than one per person.

Not all members of the public attending board meetings make submissions to the board. Some may attend in a supporting role, especially if there is a delegation of people or a petition to be presented. Some members of the public on Waiheke for example, attend on a regular basis, sometimes presenting submissions or supporting submissions, at other times attending as observers. In order to gain some indication of the level of participation by members of the community at these forums, it is therefore necessary to collect public attendance figures. It was found that only Manukau City recorded these public attendance figures (on the cover of the community board minutes). The other cities did not keep these records.

Based on my informal observation of the range of submissions that are presented at Public Forum on Waiheke, I originally intended to categorise the topics of the submissions according to the following system: environmental, request for funds, reports from groups, comments and requests regarding service levels (including public

relations), congratulations and complaints about the board's performance, and requests for or provision of information. However, my trial categorisation proved these preliminary categories to be inadequate. The majority of submissions, 179, fell within the category - Comments and Requests regarding Service Levels (including Public Relations) and therefore a further breakdown was required.

After a discussion with the Waiheke Customer Services Manager, who recommended a system used by Hauraki Gulf Islands Ward officers for the purposes of customer surveys, the system was subsequently amended to the following ten categories which provided a more even breakdown:

- Planning and Enforcement,
- Service Amenities (including: bus stops, seating, signage),
- Traffic, roading and footpaths,
- Public Health (including: water, waste water, sewage, chemical use, rubbish, police matters and noise),
- Reserves and Recreation,
- Leadership Roles and Projects,
- Requests for Funds,
- Group Reports,
- Requests for or to Provide Information,
- Congratulations or Complaints on the Board's Performance.

These categories were subsequently used in the data analysis.

The purpose of this research was to gather statistics from the monthly general meetings common to all the boards. As already noted, community boards may also hold special board meetings and public meetings on an issue by issue basis. Some cities allocate a fixed amount of discretionary funds (and Hillary Commission funds) to each of their boards on an annual basis for distribution to local groups. Applications for funding are more likely to come through special meetings rather than in an ad hoc nature through the monthly meetings. Similarly, public submissions on planning issues, reserve management plans and the City's Annual Plan and budget will be made through hearings or special meetings set up to discuss these issues. The public input through these forums has not been collected as part of this research project.

Data Collection Method 4: Interviews with Community Board Chairpersons

As the analysis of the minutes did not reveal as much information in some cases as expected (particularly as there is no formal requirement that minutes be kept for the Public Forum section of board meetings), this research was followed up with a short telephone interview of all the chairpersons of the Boards in the Auckland region to discuss the issue of community input and consultation within their area.

The names of the community board chairpersons were obtained from the administrative sections of each city. One council provided me with some incorrect information, omitting one name and substituting another past chairperson from a different community board. This error only became apparent during the phone calls to the chairpersons. Since these interviews were conducted in the final weeks of the community boards' term (August - September 1995) I deemed it inappropriate to contact the missed chairperson once the 1995 local body election campaigns were underway.) I therefore contacted twenty-nine community board chairpersons, not thirty.

I explained to each chairperson that having studied the community board minutes I was seeking further clarification on their methods of community consultation. The participants were advised that I would be taking notes of their responses.

I asked each chairperson the following three questions:

(1) Does your Board and community use the public forum process for community input?

(2) In what ways do you and your Board consult with your community?

(3) What particular methods do you feel are the most effective for your community?

The interview material was taken down verbatim during the interview. Any quotations recorded in this thesis are reproduced with the permission of the participants. The words were read back to the participants and their permission asked for the quotation to be included in the thesis. The transcripts were subsequently analysed according to the main themes that presented themselves during the interviews.

Summary

Participant observation is a research method based on the actual participation of the researcher in the research setting. It utilises a variety of methods of data collection in an attempt to address the research question.

Four methods of data collection were employed in this research project: time budget diaries were kept by a sample of community board members from throughout the Auckland region; participant observation fieldwork was conducted at the July 1995 Waiheke Community Board meeting; the minutes of all community boards in the Auckland region for a twelve month period were analysed; and a short telephone interview conducted with each community board chairperson in the Auckland region.

The various data collection methods used ensured that both quantitative and qualitative material was able to be obtained. This allowed me to develop a wider perspective of the activities of board members than has sometimes characterised the research on community boards. My position as a community board member allowed me to have quicker access to the research area. It also meant that I had an understanding of and affinity with board members, with their work as community representatives, the variety of board activities and the range of demands made on them.

A weakness in the research design was the means of measuring public input into community board meetings. The information required - public attendance figures and the number and type of submissions - was not always clearly available from the minutes of the meetings. As will be detailed in Chapter Six, the minutes of the Manukau City Council community boards, which contained particularly full information on public input, alerted me to the fact that a low number of submissions did not necessarily indicate a low public attendance. Some boards allowed public input during agenda items and this was usually not recorded in the minutes. As the analysis of the minutes did not reveal as much information as expected I followed this up with short interviews of the board chairpersons in order to gain a greater understanding of the methods of public consultation and participation used in each area.

The results of the field research are detailed in Chapter Six. The findings for the different methods of data collection are triangulated and compared with each other in order to reveal key themes on the roles and activities of community boards and to explore the governance role.

Chapter Six

Findings and Discussion

This study explores the proposition that community boards have an important role to play in local government, that of governance. The purpose of the field research was to identify what activities community board members perform, how they consult with the public, and how the public participates in the community board process, in an attempt to discover if community boards have a governance role. The research results are grouped into the categories of governance, service delivery and regulatory. The category of 'governance' has been created for the purposes of this study using the definition of governance - decision-making by elected representatives with public participation and consultation.

This chapter is arranged into three distinct sections. First the method of analysis used for each form of data collection are discussed. Second, the results for each data collection method are then presented and triangulated with the results of the other methods in order to reveal the roles and activities of community boards. Finally, the key themes emerging from the research are identified.

How the Data was Analysed

Data Collection Method 1: Time Budget Diaries

The participants completed the time budget diaries using the ten categories determined from my own experience as a community board member and from the pilot study. For the purposes of analysis these categories were grouped into those directly concerned with public consultation and other community board activities. The results were tabulated and presented in a pie chart of the percentage of time community boards spent on each activity (see Appendix 11).

The total hours spent on community board activities during July 1995 by each participant are presented in a histogram (see Appendix 12) again using the groupings of public consultation and other activities. The participants were divided in two categories, chairpersons and other board members, in order to assess any significant differences in their levels of activity.

As shown in Chapter Two there has been a history of sub-local government in rural areas, with lesser legislative support for community committees in urban areas. The participants were, therefore, divided into urban and rural boards to see if there were any significant differences in the level of activity.

The time budget results were then reviewed again, this time grouping the ten categories into service delivery and governance roles as follows. Discussion with officers was seen as more likely to be a service delivery function, discussing policy implementation issues with operations and secretarial staff (the service deliverers). Research could be either service delivery or governance orientated. Constituent enquiries, meetings, reading agendas and minutes, working parties, attending official functions, and representing the board were all seen as being governance functions.

The other studies discussed in Chapter Three: Department of Internal Affairs (1991), Brown (1993), Marjoribanks (1994) and Francis (1995) did not include detailed information about the activities of community board members. Therefore, it is not possible to compare this data with the results of their studies.

Data Collection Method 2: Participant Observation

The participant observation fieldwork was conducted at the July 1995 Waiheke Community Board meeting. The meeting was analysed primarily in order to reveal the process by which the public participated at the meeting, and how the Board responded. Therefore, I have focussed on the Public Forum section of the meeting where the public are able to have direct input into the meeting. The roles that the public and Board members adopted during the meeting were examined and the interactions between the public and Board members noted. The presence of Council officers and members of the press at the meeting is also considered. Of particular interest was the manner in which the both members of the public and Board members made use of the 'public space' created by the community board meeting. The cameo is described in full in Appendix 16.

Data Collection Method 3: Analysis of Minutes

The minutes of the community boards in the Auckland region were analysed according to: public attendance figures at Public Forum, the number of people giving submissions to Public Forum and the number and type of submission (according to the category system discussed in Chapter Five).

The results were tabulated and a pie chart presented of the percentage of each type of submission presented to the boards (see Appendix 13). A histogram of the number of people making submissions during public forum was also prepared (see Appendix 14).

As noted in Chapter Five, the analysis of the minutes did not reveal as much information in some cases as expected (particularly the keeping of statistics on the Public Forum process). It is evident from the minutes of the various boards that some cities, for example Auckland City, have a clear presentation in the minutes of the input made by submitters to the Public Forum process. The board secretaries record the name of the submitter, the subject of submission and the decision taken by the board, either in the form of a resolution or note of action to be taken. However, some other boards, for example in Manukau City and Franklin District Councils, also allow members of the public to address the board during an agenda item. It is not, therefore, always possible to measure this public input (separate from the Public Forum section of the meeting) through the minutes.

Some boards record the attendance of delegations not by name and number (Mr Smith and twenty-nine others) but by the plural (Mr Smith and others). It was therefore not possible to ascertain an accurate assessment of the actual number of people making submissions. For this reason it was not possible to include three of the community boards in the histogram contained in Appendix 14.

It had also been hoped to make some analysis of the members of the public actually attending board meetings, that is the total number of public present (including those who did not wish to speak). These figures were clearly recorded only by the Manukau City Council boards and the Franklin District Council boards (who record the names of the public present at the meeting on the front page of the minutes). Several other boards started to record these statistics during the twelve month period being researched which could not be included in this study. The figures for some other boards were recorded in the Area Activities report but these totals also included the numbers present at special meetings which were not the subject of this research.

Finally, an attempt was made to review the submission categories, this time grouping the submissions into those relating to service delivery, governance, and regulatory functions as follows. Planning and Enforcement was seen as a regulatory function. Service Amenities (including: bus stops, seating, signage); Traffic, roading and footpaths; Public Health (including: water, waste water, sewage, chemical use, rubbish, police matters and noise) and Reserves and Recreation were viewed as service delivery and/or governance roles (depending on the nature of the submission). Leadership Roles and Projects, Requests for Funds, Group Reports, Requests for or provision of Information, and Congratulations or Complaints on the Board's Performance were seen as governance roles.

It is clear that it will not be possible to make a clear distinction between service delivery and governance functions from the public submissions. The differentiation between these two functions is not always obvious and the actual content of the submission may not be recorded in the minutes of the board meeting.

Data Collection Method 4: Interviews with Board Chairpersons

The final method of data collection was the telephone interviews with board chairpersons. Each of the community board chairpersons in the Auckland region was contacted and asked three structured question on participation and consultation methods used by their board.

Not all chairpersons answered all three questions or answered them in full. Some were eager to discuss not only their boards but their relationship with their local authority, the experience of other boards, community boards in general and the upcoming elections. Others did not share much information. The phone calls ranged in duration from three minutes to thirty minutes. The material was taken down verbatim during the interview and written up as transcripts.

The main points raised by each board chairperson were then tabulated and are recorded in Appendix 15. The number of public present at the board meetings (where available), the number of people making submissions, and the number and type of submissions made, as recorded by that board's minutes during the year were compared with the chairperson's perception of the level of public participation by their board. The key

themes coming through the interviews were then identified and are discussed in further detail below.

Results of the Time Budget Diaries

It was found that overall sixty-four percent of community board members' time is spent in public consultation, that is, meetings, functions, representing the board and constituent enquiries (see Appendix 11). The balance of thirty-six percent of board members' time is spent on other board related activities: reading agendas and minutes, working parties, and research and discussions with officers. Although these four latter activities are not public consultation, these activities are a necessary function of the community board member, who needs to be up-to-date on issues and as fully informed as possible. It can be argued that these activities may in fact be necessary back-up functions to support the consultative activities.

Interestingly, only thirty-eight percent of community board members' time is spent in direct contact with council officers (meetings and discussions with officers). Officers may also be present at working parties, board representations, and official functions but this contact is deemed to be indirect. This suggests that community board members may be working relatively independently of the officers, and working on different matters.

The main functions that denote a networking role are: representing the board (13%), and attending official functions (2%). Meetings (22%) could be construed as an opportunity for networking with members of the public, assuming there is a significant level of public attendance.

The analysis of the hours worked by community board members revealed a range in hours from 40.5 hours/month to 217 hours/month with an average of 84 hours/month, that is, approximately 19 hours/week (see Appendix 12). This corresponds with British figures for the hours worked by councillors. The Widdicombe Report (1986: Vol. II, p. 41-42) notes that the average time in 1985 spent by councillors on council business was found to be 74 hours per 'typical month'. Although the lowest and highest monthly hours worked figures were achieved by board chairpersons, 40.5 hours and 217 hours respectively, the average monthly hours worked by chairpersons was 99 hours/month as opposed to 63 hours/month for other board members. Therefore, board chairpersons work fifty-seven percent longer hours than ordinary board members.

There was little difference between the monthly hours worked figures for urban and rural community board members. The urban board members averaged 86 hours/month while the rural community board members averaged 80 hours/month. These figures indicate the urban and rural community boards require much the same level of input from elected representatives. This would seem contrary to the argument of P.M. Willis (1980) who made a distinction between rural community councils which he saw as having a significant on-going function and urban community councils which may centre on 'issue-based concerns' of a sporadic nature and 'lose (their) effectiveness when there are no major current issues' (cited in Brown, 1993: 6). If Willis is in fact correct in his rural/urban analysis, this would imply that the urban community boards were all dealing with issue-based concerns during July 1995.

When the time budget results where grouped into service delivery and governance roles it was found that at least seventy-eight percent of the community board members' time was spent performing governance functions. Board members spent sixteen percent of their time in Discussions with Officers (service delivery) and six percent was spent doing research (service delivery and/or governance). It is clear from these figures that community board members are performing a significant governance role. An important and unique aspect of this research has been to measure the time spent by community board members on governance activities.

As noted in Chapter Five, the ten categories for board members activities were based on my own experience as a board member. This category system is wider than that used by the Widdicombe Committee (cited in Gyford et al, 1989: 62). However, the participants in the diary keeping process noted three other possible categories:

(1) Talking/conferring with other board members: which in my trial I had categorised as Research if it was board related. If it was a conversation of a general political nature the time spent was not recorded.

Since the participant who had made the comment did not complete the project and the issue was not raised by any of the other participants, I did not feel that it was necessary to re-categorise this activity. A similar point was raised by another participant in the third week of the project when they wrote a comment that they had categorised telephone discussions with other board members as constituent enquiries (telephone). It was not possible to discern these conversations from true constituent telephone contact,

so it was not possible to correct the figures. However a category of 'conferring with other board members' could be included in future studies.

(2) Site inspections: which was an activity that I had only carried out as part of a meeting process, for example visiting a site during a planning or a reserve management hearing, or at the beginning of the three year term as part of the familiarisation process. This activity was noted by three of the participants. For the purposes of my study this time was categorised as Discussions with Officers.

(3) Writing reports. One participant created a new category in their first week's diary of Writing Reports. I rang the participant to ascertain whether the report writing was associated with holding a representative role for the board, and as it was I categorised this as Representing the Board.

Comments noted by participants on their diary sheets included:

(1) the queries on categorisation (as noted above).

(2) an explanation from a board member in a rural area that, because of the distances involved, most of the constituents enquiries and concerns were related by telephone rather than face-to-face, except where a site visit was required.

(3) another rural board member noting that small community meetings had been categorised as face-to face constituent contact.

(4) Three of the participants were 'out of town' for a period of several days during the month and noted they would not be available for board activities for those days. In the calculations of hours spent per month on board activities, I have not compensated for the time lost by participants from possible board activities by scaling that week up to the average of the other weeks.

Elected representatives are not classified by the Department of Inland Revenue as being in employment and receiving a salary or wage. Rather, they receive an honorarium and meeting allowances and expenses (depending on the policy of the local authority). The time a board member spends or is expected to spend on board related activities can be seen to be flexible. It is unreasonable not to expect a board member to take some time off and my non-compensation of the figures for these days 'out of town' reflects this view.

(5) One participant commented that (in the week Saturday 15th July - Friday 21st July) board work was at a 'low ebb' because of the coming elections. The participant nevertheless recorded 17.5 hours work that week, just under the average hours worked per week for the survey.

(6) Four participants noted that they were attending extra meetings that month or were kept busy with constituent contact because of the Annual Plan process. This is compensated somewhat by the three board members being unavailable for community board duties during part of the month.

Reflections on the Participant Observation Cameo

As noted above the participant observation fieldwork was conducted at the July 1995 Waiheke Community Board meeting. The cameo is contained in full in Appendix 16.

Several insights can be gained from an analysis of the cameo. The Public Forum is a well established 'public space' on Waiheke, with Public Forum dating back over ten years to the days of the Waiheke County Council. The July meeting was well attended by both Council officers from town (who had to travel to Waiheke Island by ferry) and members of the public. Because of the ferry timetable, those Council officers who were present for the entire Board meeting had to stay on the Island overnight.

The Public Forum is conducted in a friendly yet formal environment. The submissions from the public are heard at the start of the meeting, before consideration of the other agenda items. (In the early days of Public Forum on Waiheke discussion of the public submissions by the Board was held after the mid-evening meal break. The public were required to wait until then in order to hear the Board's deliberations and did not have any refreshments provided for them at the meal break. These policies were changed after complaints from the public (see Appendix 16)).

The Public Forum process is relatively flexible, accommodating the wishes of members of the public who may wish to leave early. The provision of light refreshments for the public and press helps include them in the process of the meeting. The meal break also provides an opportunity for Board members to network with the public present, and for members of the public to talk informally with Council officers and the press over refreshments.

Several of the submitters to the Public Forum had made presentations to the Board in the past, but there was no obvious sign of 'capture' by a pressure group or section of the community. Rather, the submissions were made by the public in their various roles in the community including: residents and ratepayers, parent, motorists, representatives of local groups, local marae representative, professional caregiver, property owners, having specialist knowledge and concerned citizens. The roles of the public and the associated concept of citizenship have been discussed in Chapter Four.

The presentations made during the Public Forum were generally of a high standard. A number of submitters 'played to the audience' (and the press), as did community board members during one agenda item. It could therefore be argued that a 'political space' was being created in the public realm. As discussed in Chapter Four, Arendt (1958) maintains that the creation of a political space allows for political discussion - words and persuasion. Thus, the individual and collective capacity for political speech and action is enhanced by participation in the public arena. It was clear from observation of the audience (all the other people present) that those participating in the meeting (whether as board members, public or officers) made a public impact with their particular contributions. This can be seen to correspond with Arendt's concept of the reality that is created in the public space when people of different views gather together and listen to the same words. As she argues, the public realm, and public space provide an opportunity for people to be seen and heard by others, a situation which is made even more significant since of those present 'everybody sees and hears from a different position' (Arendt, 1958: 147).

There was an effective exchange of information between the submitters and the Board members. This interchange was not restricted to verbal conversation, but also involved non-verbal language exchanged between Board members and individuals during the meeting such as nods of appreciation and smiles of acknowledgment from members of the public. The Board spent considerable time, almost three hours, hearing and then discussing the fifteen submissions made to the meeting. The Public Forum process is clearly a popular and important component of Waiheke Community Board meetings. The right to be heard at Public Forum is vigorously defended, as is illustrated by a recent Letter to the Editor in the local weekly paper.

> I am appalled at the attitude of a new elected community board member who addressed the chairman that he was fed up with the submissions I bring forward, saying it is like a cracked record. Seems he is for the council officers and for letting them decide on Waiheke requirements. However I suggest if he is not

> satisfied, not wanting to listen, then he should tender in his resignation and let another person [onto] the community board [to] take over for the interest of ratepayers. The chairman said that we members of the public have the right to put forward our complaints. Another Community Board member agreed in my favour (Gulf News, 2 February, 1996).

The submissions made to the meeting were categorised according to the system used to analyse the minutes of other community boards. However, in this case, it was possible to better clarify whether the submissions were either service delivery or governance, as the intention of the submitter was clearer to me as a participant and an observer rather than attempting to interpret the information from the minutes.

A total of twenty-two topics were included in the submissions. Thirteen (59%) were governance related, six (27%) were regulatory, and three (14%) were service delivery. Clearly the members of the public were making submissions to the Board in its governance capacity, looking for the Board to make decisions, and take action, on their submissions. The three service delivery related topics were unresolved problems which had been brought to the board at previous meetings.

These results will be triangulated against the minutes from the other boards across the Auckland region, and the insights compared with comments made by the Board chairpersons.

Results of the Community Board Minutes

The results of the percentage of each type of submission presented to the community boards in the Auckland region for the twelve month period are contained in Appendix 13. Across the four major councils the top three categories of submissions for the twelve months were:

Auckland City:	Traffic and roading issues (125 submissions)
	Request for/providing information (117)
	Planning and enforcement (105)
Manukau City:	Traffic and roading issues (42 submissions)
	Request for/providing information (38)
	Service levels and amenities (23)

North Shore City: Traffic and roading issues (78 submissions)
Planning and enforcement (48)
Service levels and amenities (33)

Waitakere City: Request for/providing information (61)
Traffic and roading issues (45)
Planning and enforcement (23).

Across the region the top three submission categories for the twelve month period were: Traffic and roading (290 submissions or 23%), Request for/providing information: (245 or 20%) and Planning and enforcement issues (195 or 16%).

Analysing the submissions according to the categories of: governance related, service delivery and regulatory revealed that 37% of the submissions were clearly governance related, 47% governance or service delivery, and 16% regulatory. The total percentage of the possible governance related submissions is therefore in the range from 37% to 84%.

It is interesting to note, though not statistically significant, that the midpoint of this range is 60.5%, i.e. if the 47% governance or service delivery submissions were equally divided between governance and service delivery, the total percentage of governance functions would be 60.5%, very close to the 59% governance submissions made at the Waiheke public forum. This can be explained in part by the fact that Waiheke had the highest number of public submissions made of all the constituent community boards, so shifting the average towards the Waiheke figures.

With many of the submission categories it is not possible to determine whether the submission is clearly service delivery or governance, given that the full content of the submissions may not be recorded in the minutes. However, it is clear from the figures noted above that members of the public are bringing submissions to public forum that are governance related.

Twenty percent of the submissions related to requests for or provision of information. Community boards are involved in supplying/receiving information on the local community and on wider city and regional issues, thereby creating a pool of community information. This information interchange is conducted in the public space and

facilitates a collective decision-making process. Over a period of time the community board develops a 'collective member experience' (Gyford et al, 1989: 57).

The number of people making submissions during the actual Public Forum at various community boards in the Auckland region during the twelve month period (see Appendix 14) ranged from three to 138. However, as noted above the lowest figure should be treated with some caution as some community boards allow members of the public to address the board during agenda items. During this period the board which received only three submissions during the twelve month period recorded an attendance of sixty-five people. Hence, it is not always possible to assess public input through the minutes of the Public Forum.

It should also be noted that the numbers making submissions does not necessarily correlate well with the actual number of people attending community board meetings. The public attendance at the Manurewa Community Board during the twelve month period was 113, although the number of submissions presented during the same period was fifteen, presented by thirteen persons.

In fact all the Community Boards in Manukau City record relatively high levels of attendance with a comparatively lower number of submissions. (Manukau City is one of only two Councils to record public attendance figures.) Total attendance for the seven community boards is 753 compared with 180 submissions. This corresponds with the limited figures available for the Tamaki and Maungakiekie Boards (Auckland City Council) where the attendance figures kept for a five month period are significantly higher than the number of submissions made: Tamaki had fifty-five attend with eleven submissions made and Maungakiekie fifty-seven compared with ten submissions made. Possible explanations for this include: attending in a supportive role for other people presenting submissions - particularly petitions; attending as part of a delegation; monitoring or 'watchdog' role; or a general interest in a particular agenda item. However, the attendance of additional members of the public, even as observers, highlights the importance of the public space where members of the public can observe the actions of their elected representatives, hear the views of other members of the public, and be part of the political process.

The assumption that public participation is accurately measured by attendance at Public Forum and the number of submissions made may be flawed for another reason. Access to Public Forum may be restricted by the Chairperson, who may require requests to address the board to be made in advance of the meeting, or may deal with the issue away

from the meeting itself. The implications of this restricted access to Public Forum are discussed in greater detail below.

The analysis of the community board minutes show that a total of 1,005 people made submissions to the monthly (ordinary) board meetings in the Auckland region during the twelve month period July 1994 - June 1995. This equates to an average of thirty-four submissions per community board.

With the actual number of people making submissions during Public Forum at the various community boards ranging from three to 138 over a twelve month period it is clear that Public Forums are being used in varying degrees by different communities. This could be explained by the development of a clear community of interest, a high level of political awareness by the community, the relationship between the community board and the community, the level of delegation to and financial support for the community board, and the effective operation of the community board itself.

The three community boards with the greatest number of people making submissions were Waiheke - Auckland City Council (138), Glenfield (101) and Albany (80) both North Shore City Council. Waiheke and Albany have certain characteristics in common, a certain lifestyle population in the 1970s and 1980s, and now experiencing rapid development. However, there is no obvious reason for the high numbers of people making submissions in Glenfield. The Glenfield Community Board Chairperson stated that 'some' members of the public attend Public Forum. They described the community as a dormitory suburb with associated concerns and problems such as traffic and growth. The high numbers of people making submissions to the Glenfield board is not matched by the actual number of submissions which total only sixty-four. The discrepancy in the totals possibly due to the total number of people in a delegation being recorded in the minutes.

The attendance figures for the Manukau City boards are certainly greater when a petition or particularly contentious item is presented to Public Forum, often by one submitter with the support of like-minded residents. At the August 1994 meeting of the Papatoetoe Community Board, seventy-three members of the public were present. Submissions were made on four different topics including the possible closure of a local underpass, a proposal about which 'various members of the public and the Board spoke very strongly' in support (as noted in the minutes).

It should be noted that the relatively poor record-keeping of statistics on public participation at some board meetings makes it difficult to use these statistics for research purposes. Although the information recorded by the board secretaries may be sufficient for Council reporting purposes it does not facilitate any detailed analysis. The attitude conveyed by some Council staff in several areas, during the data collection phase of this study, indicated that they did not regard the recording of these statistics to be of any importance.

If the content of the submission is not accurately recorded in the minutes it is difficult, after the event, for board members and Council officers to follow up on issues and for the public to monitor progress. This inadequacy of record-keeping also denigrates somewhat the input and efforts made by the member(s) of the public to contribute to the political process.

Telephone Interviews with Community Board Chairpersons

As already stated, each of the community board chairpersons in the Auckland region was contacted and asked three structured question on participation and consultation methods used by their board. The chairperson's perception of the level of public participation and consultation by the board was compared to the minutes of their board's Public Forum. The key themes coming through the interviews were then identified and are discussed in further detail below.

The chairpersons' responses showed a relatively high degree of uniformity. The main themes coming through included: some community boards being proactive in nature, formal and informal networking with the community, that the Public Forum process may be used for more contentious items -as one chairperson expressed it 'to make a political point', that public meetings do not attract a high attendance unless they are issue based (and contentious), and that interest in board activities tends to be greater if input is actively sought from the community.

The themes coming through the chairpersons' interviews in detail were:

(1) The proactive nature of many community boards who were taking steps to 'go out into the community', actively inviting groups to attend board meetings, delegating board members to represent the board on other community organisations, and attending functions in the community.

(2) Community boards provide the public with access to Council management through their elected representatives.

(3) Community board members build networks with the community, both in their role as board members (which often include a variety of delegated duties) and as active individual members of the community. Local organisations may be invited to meet with the board on an introductory or an on-going basis. The board may host functions or receptions for these organisations.

(4) Board members representing the community board on local organisations and committees may form the strongest, most common link with the community.

(5) Public Forum may be used by the public to monitor the performance of their elected representatives and fulfil their citizenship role by taking part in the political process. The Forum may also be used for political purposes (to make a political point) or for 'theatre' -to draw public attention to a board policy, action or the community viewpoint. Often this course of action is adopted when the issue is contentious, or a member of the public is not satisfied with the service they have received from staff or with answers from the elected representatives.

(6) General public meetings are not strongly supported. Successful public meetings tend to be issue based and contentious. (Traffic issues were mentioned by several chairpersons as being contentious during the twelve month period.) This raises the question: is it more effective to encourage people to attend regular board meetings or meet with the public in the community on a particular issue?

(7) One chairperson mentioned the 'different patterns of communication' required in their area because of the presence of various ethnic groups.

> Some ethnic groups may have difficulties with a different administration system; therefore they will go to their church leaders first, who will then come to the community board (Chairperson).

(8) The use of the media can be a double-edged sword. The media can provide a vital means of communication and education for the community, promoting public discussion and involvement. However, the media may misrepresent and/or trivialise a board's activities by focussing on controversial issues and/or by distorting the information.

The coverage of board meetings, and notably submissions to Public Forum, may be reported in the local paper. Board activities and general council information may be carried in council publications, newsletters and leaflet drops. One board provides a 'factual' weekly column to the local paper. One chairperson briefs the local reporter the day after the meeting and they jointly prepare a report for the paper. Another board finds the local coverage very selective and often controversially presented with occasional distortion of the facts. Both examples have potential drawbacks when assessing whether the coverage is 'adequate', the first because the report is sanitised information rather than a true reflection or analysis of events, and the second misleading (especially as a means of community development) as it may not give a true picture of the board discussion and decisions, and trivialises the work of the board. One board chairperson commented that board members should be trained to deal with the press since the media were only interested in controversial issues.

(9) Interest in board activities tends to be greater if input is actively sought from the community. An example of this is the experience of the Waiuku - Awhitu Community Board, which was 'deluged' with submissions to the Annual Plan after a newsletter inviting input was delivered to every household.

(10) Residents' and Ratepayers' Associations and other groups may send a representative to community board meetings on a regular basis. One chairperson noted that some Residents' and Ratepayers' representatives in their area regularly travelled long distances to attend the board meetings.

(11) The public relations role of community boards, publicising the work of the boards, was mentioned by two chairpersons.

> We like to look after the P.R. side of it. We are particularly sensitive to keeping the public informed (Chairperson).

Comparison of the chairpersons' responses with the Public Forum statistics from the minutes highlighted two points. The chairpersons' perception of high or low public participation were not always reflected in the figures, possibly due to the difficulties with record-keeping. Second, some chairpersons restrict access to Public Forum.

The chairpersons of some boards discourage members of the public from addressing Public Forum on an ad hoc basis, preferring instead that the submitter approach the chairperson in advance of the meeting so that the issue can be put on the agenda

accompanied by officers' remarks and other relevant research or material. In other cases, if the chairperson believes that a matter can be dealt with outside of the public arena, they may direct the member of the public to the appropriate officer, or offer to take up the issue on their behalf.

One chairperson feels that because board members spend a lot of time with the public, face-to-face and through telephone contact and correspondence, 'it is usually possible to deal with issues without them "becoming a drama" ' This statement was made in reference to the Public Forum process. The chairperson of another community board states that they will not open Public Forum unless they are notified before the meeting, but will check with people present to ascertain their concerns and make referrals for them if the chairperson feels it is required.

This latter approach contrasts with that of another community board chairperson in the same Council area who actively encourages public participation. They explain that while the public in their area may speak both at Public Forum or during an agenda item, it is more usual for the public's concerns to be established before the meeting and for an agenda item to be prepared. Significantly, this chairperson will contact members of the community who may be interested in a particular agenda item and invite them to the meeting to have some input.

Other board chairpersons also took this initiative and contacted individuals or groups to invite them to have input on issues in which they had a particular interest or expertise. One chairperson wrote to approximately fifty community organisations asking for their input on the Annual Plan.

The minutes of the Tamaki Community Board (Auckland City Council) note instances where prior requests were made to address the board at Public Forum but the requestors did not attend the meeting, for reasons that are unstated. This process of prior notification of intention to speak at Board meetings may serve as a deterrent to public participation.

Although the approach of dealing with matters outside the board meeting may, in some cases, provide a more simple, direct and efficient method of addressing a constituent's concern and constitute both an adequate and appropriate response, there is inherent in such a screening process the potential for a loss of transparency and accountability in the democratic process. The opportunity for a collective response from the board as a whole is lost.

> People generally come to Public Forum when a situation is unsatisfactory. The impact on a Community Board is presentation. A Board member can deal with an issue themselves but it can be quicker and more transparent if the Board as a whole is addressed (Chairperson).

Several issues arise from the comments made by the chairpersons during the interviews.

(1) The degree of formality at community board meetings may be a barrier to effective public participation or may serve to educate people in the procedures of government.

(2) Different communities have differing expectations of participation in local government. This may be because some communities are more politically aware, or less well-served, and therefore more vocal. One chairperson described a section of their community as 'informed and demanding'. Another described their community as 'fiery'.

(3) The control over community board agendas may hinder the democratic process. Two chairpersons would not allow other board members to put items on the agenda stating that all agenda items should go through the chairperson. (This is not a problem if relations on the board are amicable, but may be problematic if there are basic philosophical or personality differences between board members.)

(4) Some people may not take part in the community board process because they are satisfied that the people they voted in to represent them will keep an eye on the issues that particularly concern them.

The Key Themes

Four key themes have emerged from the research. These are:

- the proactive nature of community boards
- community links and networking
- the use of Public Forum as a political space
- the governance role of community boards.

Theme 1: The Proactive Nature of Community Boards

Several of the community board chairpersons noted that community boards need to be proactive, going out into the community. Some chairpersons will ring or write and ask people in the community to come to Public Forum if there is an issue which the chair believes may be of particular interest to them or may affect them. Several boards appoint their members as board spokespersons for particular issues or on a 'locality' basis. One board advertises the names and contact numbers of these board spokespersons in the local paper so that constituents may take their particular problems directly to them. Several community boards make letter box drops to canvass public opinions on different issues and one also puts its own information in the public notices section of the local paper.

The chairperson in one rural area noted that since their area was 'very scattered', the Board needed to be proactive. The main means of consultation for this Board is through on-site meetings, 'we go to them rather than them coming to us'. The Board members and Councillors in this area take responsibility on a locality basis, covering the area where they live and taking any recommendations from these site visits back to the full Board.

The chairperson of one urban community board felt that, in general, future community boards should be even more proactive, helping to establish local community organisations by providing seeding funds and encouraging the setting up of local residents' and ratepayers' groups if there were none already in the area.

Community boards will hold public meetings as required. Public meetings on particular issues, especially contentious ones such as traffic, are usually well attended. One chairperson reported attendance at some of these meetings of 'up to 200 people'. Other public meetings of a more general nature, as a means of taking the board out into the community, are not well attended. A few board chairpersons also attended group or house meetings (issue based) as required. One board in particular had spent considerable effort on organising these meetings:

> An issue recently under study has been traffic volumes. The Community Board initiated public meetings on a neighbourhood basis, providing childcare facilities and transport for the participants. One such meeting was held in the local Citizens Advice Bureau rooms (Chairperson).

Clearly some boards are particularly proactive, particularly on issue-based concerns or if the nature of the community requires it, such as in rural areas. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, Marjoribanks (1994) notes that it is the proactive nature of community boards that can lead sometimes lead them into conflict with their local authority.

Theme 2: Community Links and Networking

Many boards have formally delegated duties for their board members onto other community organisations. Examples given include: local event committees, community committees, community houses, local Trusts, Neighbourhood Watch, Mainstreet committees, Police Advisory Committee, Historical Society, Healthy Cities, Citizens Advice Bureau, local S.P.C.A., Pony Club, Visitor Board and Arts facilities. The community networking carried out by boards serves as an important means of community consultation. One chairperson pointed out that 'this representation on local community groups gives good feedback to the Board on specific community needs'. Representation on local groups and committees may also allow board members to give professional advice and assistance to those organisations.

> There has always been a general networking throughout the area. Board members attend all Residents' and Ratepayers' [meetings] in the area. A number of Board members have community affiliations, such as the local fire brigade, Rotary, School Boards, Federated Farmers and the Boating Club (Chairperson).

Local organisations may be invited to meet with the board on an introductory or an on-going basis. The Waiheke Community Board Chairperson hosts a meeting each month of representatives from all the Residents' and Ratepayers' groups on the Island. Community boards may arrange functions or receptions for local organisations. Some boards, on occasion, hold functions for volunteer groups to thank them for their services to the community. One board introduces itself to other local community organisations such as business, school and church groups. Another board regularly hosts a particularly wide range of local groups including sports teams and school boards of trustees. It would seem that community boards have an important to play in public relations, both for themselves and on behalf of the Council.

Community board members are continually involved in informal networking and spend a lot of time communicating with the public.

> The best form of community consultation that board members have is through personal contact, for example, when shopping or socially. The Community Board is the 'eyes and ears' of the community (Chairperson).

Theme 3: The Use of Public Forum as a Political Space

Public Forum is an important feature of the community board process. It fulfils a vital democratic function. One chairperson reported that the meetings of their urban community board had been described by a member of the regional council, a regular attendee at community boards throughout the metropolitan area, as 'a fitting example of democracy at work'.

Public Forum provides an opportunity to deal publicly with contentious issues. Members of the public may use the space for political purposes, drawing public attention to their concerns. As already seen, Public Forum may be used when there is an 'unsatisfactory' situation, an issue that has been unresolved for a period of time, or if a member of the public is dissatisfied with the service they have received from Council staff or with the answers from their elected representatives.

> Public Forum has developed in this Ward. People are starting to see that if they go to the officers and don't get satisfaction then there is another avenue whereby they can consult directly with their politicians and put their point of view and their reasons why they want a particular outcome. People in this ward are saying "We live here, don't make decisions for us, ask us what we want". People expect to be asked. This is the message coming out of this City. People expect results (Chairperson).

Public Forum provides a 'voice' for the public. In one rural area, because of the distances the public has to travel to attend board meetings, it is common for Board members to leave the table during Public Forum and make submissions either in their capacity as representatives of other groups or on behalf of other individuals or organisations.

> Some members of the public do not necessarily have the confidence or the experience to stand up and make their submissions, therefore they will ask a board member to do it on their behalf (Chairperson).

A small number of people are regular attendees of Public Forum. These people tend to be members of residents' and ratepayers' organisations or individuals who have adopted

a 'watchdog' role, monitoring the decisions made by their elected representatives over a period of time.

While Public Forum is a mechanism adopted to facilitate community input into councils, and is used in various ways by community boards in the Auckland region, there is no legal framework that says how it should be conducted, or recorded in the minutes. The chairperson of one board stated that records of Public Forum submissions were not necessarily kept since they were not legally required to do so. This statement is of concern. If there is to be adequate monitoring and follow-up of an issue then the submission should be recorded fully.

The minutes of Public Forum also record public opinion on issues. If the person has taken the time to attend the meeting and bought a matter to the attention of the elected representatives, they have expressed a desire to take part in the decision-making process of their community. Selective record keeping may favour certain members or groups within the community or, in the extreme constitute an attempt to rewrite history. Sanitised minutes may only note the 'easy' issues, rather than those of a controversial nature. Inadequate minutes may make it difficult for all involved to follow up issues at a later stage.

It has been noted that the recording methods used by some boards did not facilitate data gathering on levels of public attendance and input. If public attendance figures are not recorded then there is no way of ascertaining the true level of public participation at the meeting. If the Public Forum process is recorded in a clear and comprehensive way then credibility is added to the process.

Theme 4: The Governance Role of Community Boards

A focus of this research study has been to identify what community board members are actually doing. When the time budget results were grouped into service delivery and governance roles it was found that at least seventy-eight percent of the community board members' time was spent performing governance functions.

> The Community Board is virtually first call. If there is a problem and people can't get satisfaction, a Community Board member is called on to assist. The Board fulfils both a caring and a caretaker role. Board members are mediators, called in to straighten out situations (Chairperson).

An equally important focus (and a powerful cross reference) has been to determine what the public perceive the role of the community board to be. Underlying the public's participation in the community board process will be their perception of what they see as the community board's role. This is revealed by the topics covered in the submissions that are brought to Public Forum.

While there were problems analysing the minutes of the various community boards, in that it is not always possible to determine from the topics of the submissions whether they are referring to the service delivery or governance aspect, there was clear evidence that members of the public are bringing submissions to Public Forum that are governance related. In the case of the participant observation cameo of the Waiheke Public Forum, it was apparent that the members of the public were making submissions to the Board in its governance capacity. When members of the public participate in local government it is sometimes difficult to establish whether they are acting out of individual self-interest or a wider community concern. It is clear, however, that many of the submissions made by members of the public to community boards contain an element of the public good.

Summary

Four key themes have emerged from the research on community boards, namely: their proactive nature, the importance of community links and networking, the use of Public Forum as a political space and the governance role of community boards.

Community boards are generally proactive, particularly on issue-based concerns such as traffic and planning. In rural areas community boards may adopt innovative approaches to community consultation such as holding on-site meetings with local groups; 'we go to them rather than them coming to us'. However, it is this proactive nature of community boards that has the potential to lead to conflict with the local authority.

Boards play a vital networking role in their communities and have been described as the 'eyes and ears' of the community. The analysis of the minutes of board meetings reveals a high 'information networking' role with members of the public both requesting and providing the board with local information. Twenty percent of all the submissions to boards concerned the exchange of information. Community boards serve as a two-way conduit between the community and the local authority, and may act as a reservoir of local information providing both an historical perspective and a valuable resource.

Board members may be delegated by their board onto a wide variety of local groups and committees. This is a practice common to most boards in the Auckland region. This representation allows board members both to assess the needs of the community better and to give professional advice and assistance where required. There is a particularly high level of regular interaction between community boards and the residents' and ratepayers' groups in their area.

Public Forum is an important mechanism for public participation in the community board process. The Forums are currently being used to varying degrees by community boards in the Auckland region and are clearly a vital aspect for some communities, where the right to be heard is vigorously defended. It is significant that several community boards are consciously diverting members of the public away from participation in the Public Forum process. The reasons for this include the contentious nature of some public submissions and what appears to be a desire on the part of some board chairpersons to 'control' the political process.

The importance of Public Forum is that it provides a 'public space' in the public realm for community participation in local affairs. This public space provides an opportunity for people to be seen and heard by others while participating in the political process. People from differing viewpoints can actively participate, while at the same time acquainting themselves with the views of other members of the community. The research findings have revealed that, over a period of time, Public Forum has the potential to increase public participation and political awareness, as members of the public become more familiar with the formal meeting process and more confident in making public presentations, in making their views clear. As was discussed in Chapter Four, there is a significant body of opinion that supports the wisdom of seeking the community's views at an early stage in the proceedings, thus facilitating and promoting an effective consultation process. In addition, the discussion on Arendt's (1958) concept of public space has revealed her contention that this 'space of appearance' provides opportunity for the development of public participation and political leadership.

A focus of this research study has been to identify what community board members are actually doing. The analysis of the time budget results showed that at least seventy-eight percent of the community board members' time was spent performing what can be categorised as governance functions. Community boards clearly fulfil a 'caretaker' or guardianship role maintaining an overview of community activities and concerns. Board members are also mediators, often called in to assist with the resolution of

ongoing problems with the local authority, particularly when problems have not been satisfactorily addressed by the Council administration.

An equally important focus of the research has been to determine what the public perceive the role of the community board to be, reflected by the types of submissions being brought to Public Forum. While there were some problems analysing the minutes of the various community boards, there was clear evidence that members of the public are bringing submissions to Public Forum that can be described as governance related, asking the community board for leadership and direction.

The research has identified that community boards are playing an important governance role. However, whether community board members and the public understand this role is by no means clear. In the final chapter I will draw together the conceptual material and empirical material, discuss the criteria for effective governance and argue for a governance role for community boards.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion: The Governance Role of Community Boards

> Which government is best? That which teaches us to govern ourselves. Ruling is easy, governing difficult (Goethe, cited in Bush, 1980).

This thesis has attempted to explore the question, "do community boards have an important role to play in local government - that of governance?". The term 'governance' has been defined for the purposes of this thesis as decision-making by elected representatives with public consultation and participation.

It has been argued that the principles and values underlying the development of local government provide the historical basis for the consideration of governance as the basic activity of local authorities. The governance role at the community board level has been explored using the concepts of community and community of interest, the public realm, public space and citizenship. For the purposes of data collection, the mechanisms of public participation and consultation have been employed.

Using four methods of data collection, namely time budget diaries, a participant observation cameo, analysis of community board minutes and telephone interviews, the field research sought to identify what activities community board members perform, how they consult with the public, and how the public participates in the community board process. The research population consisted of both a sample of community board members from the Auckland Region Community Boards' Association Executive and the thirty community boards in the Auckland region.

The data collection was enhanced by my own experience as a community board member and there is a degree of participant observation throughout the fieldwork. This approach provides an 'insider' perspective of the community board process. A strength of the research design was the opportunity to combine both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection with the perspective of a sitting community board member in order to achieve a triangulation of methods. However, a weakness of the research design, which became evident during the analysis of the minutes, was that public participation statistics, that is, the numbers of the public attending meetings, the number of people making submissions and the total number of submissions, were not always available. This difficulty was overcome by conducting short telephone interviews with

the community board chairpersons in order to clarify the public participation and consultation processes used in their areas.

Four key themes emerged from the research on community boards, their proactive nature, the importance of community links and networking, the use of Public Forum as a political space and the governance role of community boards. These themes can be linked to provide an insight into community board activities. Both the proactive nature of boards and their networking role serve to promote the community board structure at the sub-local level and encourage active participation and consultation in local government. Arendt's (1958) concepts of public space and the public arena are created at the community board level through public participation in the Public Forum process. The Public Forum mechanism can both provide for and encourage an active citizenship role. As has been discussed in earlier chapters, it is this citizenship role that is most closely associated with the governance function of the elected representative.

The research revealed that community boards are generally proactive, notably on issue-based concerns. Boards adopt their own unique approach to community consultation based on the needs of their particular community. Some rural boards respond to the dispersed nature of their communities by initiating on-site meetings with local groups - going out into the community rather than expecting the community to come to them. Many of the boards host local groups and involve the wider community in their activities.

The interviews of the chairpersons revealed that one of the major activities of community boards was the comprehensive networking role they have with their communities. The expression 'eyes and ears of the community', that is often used by board members to describe their role, was found to be particularly apt. The analysis of the minutes of board meetings also revealed a high 'information networking' role with members of the public both requesting and supplying the board with local information. The exchange of information constituted twenty percent of the public submissions made to the boards. In this capacity, boards may act as 'gatherers' of local information, providing, over a period of time, both an historical perspective and a valuable resource for local decision-making.

Board members have many roles in the community including an advisory and advocacy role, giving advice and assistance as required. Most community boards have a system of delegating board members as their representative onto a wide variety of local groups and committees. Board members may also assist with the empowerment of individuals and

groups, sharing their knowledge and expertise. Representation on local organisations provides a direct link for groups to convey their concerns and needs to the community board.

The research showed that Public Forum is an important mechanism for public participation in the community board process. Although incomplete record-keeping on public participation by many of the boards precluded a full analysis of the public's input, it was evident that the Forums are being used to varying degrees by community boards in the Auckland region and are clearly a vital aspect for many communities. However, it is significant that several community boards are consciously diverting members of the public away from participation in the Public Forum process. The reasons for this included the contentious nature of some public submissions and what appears to be a desire on the part of some board chairpersons to 'control' the political process.

There are advantages of the Public Forum process over approaching elected representatives on an individual basis. Presentations made to the full Board provide for collective decision-making and a more transparent process. People from differing viewpoints can actively participate, while at the same time acquainting themselves with the views of other members of the community and their elected representatives. As Arendt (1958: 57) argues:

> Being seen and heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life.

Over a period of time, the provision of Public Forum has the potential to increase public participation and political awareness. Members of the public can become more familiar with the process of political decision-making and, through practice, become more confident in making their own views known.

An important focus of this research has been to identify what community board members are actually doing. The analysis of the time budget results showed that at least seventy-eight percent of the community board members' time was spent performing governance functions, including contact with constituents, attending meetings, workshops and functions, and representing the board. In some communities and for some members of the public, community board members are often the first point of call. Since community boards are at the interface between the local authority and the community, boards may absorb the 'first wave' of criticism of the local authority, often assisting with the resolution of ongoing problems.

A useful cross-reference has been to determine what the public perceive the role of the community board to be. This is reflected in the types of submissions being brought to Public Forum. The total percentage of the possible governance related submissions was in the range from thirty-seven to eighty-four percent. These include asking the board to make decisions and initiate projects, and to provide funding, reports, and information. Despite the difficulties noted in the data collection there is clear evidence that the concerns that members of the public are bringing to Public Forum can be described as governance related, asking the board to exercise a leadership role.

The Governance Role

The analysis of the legislation establishing community boards has revealed a clear governance role for community boards, independent of any delegation from the territorial authority. The sub-local level has the potential to both realise and further develop this governance function.

Reid (1994), in his paper 'Local Government - Service Delivery or Governance', argues that the governance function is unique to elected local authorities and therefore should be considered its 'core' activity. He employs the 'consumer' and 'citizen' roles of the public to illustrate the differences between service delivery in local government and the 'governance function' which affords people a 'means of protection and an opportunity for the exercise of basic democratic rights' (Reid, 1994: 2).

By acknowledging the division between service delivery and governance, and highlighting the unique nature of the function of governance, Reid vocalises the argument of community board members that community boards have a special place in local government. He notes the dominant nature of the new managerialism which has driven many of the changes in local government over the past six years and writes:

> To talk about "governance" is to fly in the face of current orthodoxy which reduces government to the role of service delivery agent of "last resort" or at best one of enabling individuals to make unfettered choices. In addition, the governance function fits uncomfortably with many "new" and "operationalised" public sector concepts such as contestability, contracting-out, privatisation, performance measurement, user pays, the private good/public good split and the measurement of benefits (Reid, 1994: 2).

Drawing on the work of Stewart (1993) and Hambleton (1993), Reid establishes a broad definition of governance that is consistent with the principles proffered by Ryn (1990) in his discussion of an ethical interpretation of democracy, which recognises the value of the common world as a democratic ideal. Reid's (1994: 2) definition includes: provision of the means for collective voice and action in society; the recognition of values and democracy; the limitations of purely private, individual actions; public participation and citizen development; and the concept of activities or functions being 'in the public interest' or for 'the common good'.

However, this definition could be critiqued as being so broad as to be almost nebulous. In order to implement a governance role incorporating those characteristics highlighted by Reid, it is necessary to develop both structure and processes to give these features practical application.

Criteria for Effective Governance

There are a number of criteria for community boards to successfully fulfil a governance role. Although the existence of a clear community of interest is an advantage, an acknowledgment of the plurality of modern society and the 'multiple linkages' members of the public have in their communities is essential. Boards need to be proactive and network extensively with community organisations and individuals.

The level of delegation from the local authority to the board and adequate financial support for community board activities are strong determinants of the effective operation of the community board, and whether the board can meet the needs and expectations of the community. Boards must engage in meaningful consultation and promote the active participation of members of the community. Mouffe (1992) argues that active participation in government is essential if citizens are to ensure that their individual liberty will continue. She goes further, and contends that individual liberty can only be enjoyed if the idea of a common good is raised above private interests (Mouffe, 1992: 228).

The extent to which people will participate in local government depends on its perceived ability to influence policy (Chandler, 1993). In the case of community boards this is a matter of some debate. If boards are restricted in their activities by limited delegation from the local authority, or fail to realise their own governance potential, they may be confined to trivial matters which may discredit their operation and discourage

public participation. As noted in the Introduction, if local government is 'weak in the extent to which it provides for local democratic self-expression it ceases to be sufficiently distinct from local administration' (Widdicombe Committee 1986a cited in Gyford, 1991: 12).

This thesis has revealed the governance role of community boards. It has been argued that local government is an important component of a democratic society and can function to encourage citizen involvement in the decision-making process. Reid's (1994: 2-4) understanding of the function of governance and the principles of local government includes a plurality of publics; collective choice and goals; the public interest; providing a forum for community expression; a policy of inclusion; managing and accommodating differences; stewardship for future populations; and a leadership role. These are all features that have been identified during this research project.

Elwood (1992: 4), a former Chairman of the Local Government Commission, states that 'in a small country like New Zealand, [there is] the need to recognise small communities on the one hand yet [on the other] retain competent, strong governmental units'. He argues that 'the reality of "communities within communities" had to be given an outlet'. This was achieved through the creation of community boards.

As Allen (1990: 119) writes:

> If any nation desires to harness these latent energies [of its people] for the general good it must give them outlet at the local level, in the neighbourhood communities where people live and work and are known. That is why local government really matters.

Appendix One

Local Government Act 1974

163. Purpose of community council - The general purpose of a community council shall be -

(a) To co-ordinate and express to any appropriate body or authority the views of the community which it represents on any matter within the jurisdiction of that body or authority; and

(b) To take such action in the interests of that community with respect to any such matter as is appropriate, expedient, and practicable; and

(c) To undertake, encourage and co-ordinate activities for the general well-being of the residents of the community; and

(d) To perform such functions and exercise such powers as may from time to time be delegated to it by the territorial authority under section 164 of this Act or under any Act.

164. Delegated functions and powers - (1) Subject to section 163 of this Act, a community council may perform and exercise such functions and powers as may from time to time, by resolution, be delegated to it by the territorial authority within whose district the community is situated:

Provided that the territorial authority shall not delegate to a community council -

(a) The powers and duties conferred or imposed on the territorial by the Public Works Act 1928, the Urban Renewal and Housing Improvement Act 1945, or the Town and Country Planning Act 1953; or

(b) The power to borrow money, to make a rate or a charge in lieu of a rate, to make a bylaw, to enter into a contract otherwise than in accordance with section 4 of the Public Bodies Contract Act 1959, or to institute an action; or

(c) The power to acquire, hold or dispose of property; or

(d) The power to appoint or remove staff.

(2) The territorial authority may at any time, after consultation with the community council, revoke any delegation made under this section to the council.

Appendix Two

Local Government Amendment Act (No. 2) 1989

Purposes, Functions, Duties and Powers of Community Boards

[**101ZY. Purposes of community board** - The general purposes of a community board shall be -

(a) The consideration of and reporting on all matters referred to it by the territorial authority or any other matter of concern to the community board:
(b) The overview of road works, water supply, sewerage, stormwater drainage, parks, recreational facilities, community activities, and traffic management within the community:
(c) The preparation of an annual submission to the budgetary process of the territorial authority for expenditure within the community:
(d) Communication with community organisations and special interest groups within the community:
(e) To perform such functions as are delegated to it under the authority of section 101ZZ of this Act.

[**101ZZ. Functions, duties and powers of community board** - (1) A community board shall perform such functions and duties and exercise such powers as are delegated to it by the territorial authority from time to time.

(2) A territorial authority may delegate any of its functions, duties or powers to a community board, except -

(a) The powers and duties conferred or imposed on that territorial authority by the Public Works Act 1981 [[or those powers listed in section [34(2)] of the Resource Management Act 1991]]:
(b) The power to borrow money, to make a rate or a charge in lieu of a rate, to make a bylaw, or to enter into a contract otherwise than in accordance with section 4 of the Public Bodies Contracts Act 1959:
(c) The power to institute an action for the recovery of any amount in excess of $5,000:
(d) The power to acquire, hold or dispose of property:
(e) The power to appoint, suspend, or remove staff.

(3) *Repealed, as from 1 October 1991, by s.362 Resource Management Act 1991 (1991 No 69).*

(4) Nothing in this section shall restrict the power of the territorial authority to delegate to a community board power to do anything precedent to the exercise by the territorial authority (after consultation with the community board) of any power specified in the subsection (2) or subsection (3) of this section.

(5) To the extent that a community board is unable for any reason to exercise or perform, in relation to the community under its jurisdiction, any of the powers and

duties conferred or imposed on it by subsection (1), of this section, those powers and duties may, at the request of the community board, be exercised or performed by the territorial authority on behalf of the community board.

(6) The territorial authority may, at any time, after consultation with the community board, revoke any delegation made under this section to the board.

Appendix Three

Community Boards - Delegated Functions (Auckland City Council)

1. To make submissions on legislation with only local significance directly to the Legislation Committee.

2. To provide input to District Plan reviews and Council's strategic plan.

3. To recommend local parking, planning and implementation.

4. To hear objections to and determine road closures of only local significance.

5. To advise Council on local urban design proposals.

6. To make recommendations on local capital works priorities.

7. To make decisions on small local improvement projects (S.L.I.P.S.) in accordance with an annual grant from Council and in accordance with the guidelines established.

8. To make budgetary submissions on local community activities and resources during the annual estimates process.

9. To determine expenditure on local service levels above the basic city-wide standard determined by Council and within the annual budget allocated for this purpose (e.g. frequency of grass berm cutting, inorganic refuse collection service etc.)

10. To allocate any funds given to the Board for "community support" purposes.

11. To approve signs on Council property in accordance with the guidelines.

12. To liaise with the Police Department on local traffic control in terms of the Council's contract.

13. To monitor matters relating to dog control.

14. To set local guidelines for the leasing of halls and other public facilities.

15. To approve local recreation programmes and similar promotions.

16. To make grants from 60% of Hillary commission funds attributable to the local Ward.

Note:

The balance of Hillary Commission funds (40%) will be distributed city-wide by Council's Grants Committee in accordance with Hillary Commission guidelines, after consultation with Community Boards.

17. To advise Area Managers on the effect of planned events on local neighbourhoods.

18. Responsibilities and powers of Council under Section 344 of the Local Government Act 1974. (This refers to gates and cattle stops across roads)

19. To hear and determine objections to the provision of vehicle crossing (Section 335 Local Authority Act)

20. To hear objections under Section 54 of the Dog Control and Hydatids Act 1982 and the power to confirm, modify or cancel the notice given under Section 54 (1) (b).

21. To make all local decisions and to exercise the powers of the Council under the Reserves Act 1977 or any other statute, or regulation or bylaw, relating to the maintenance and operation of parks and reserves, except where the exercise of powers:

(a) has been delegated to Council officers or;
(b) would have significance beyond the community Board's district or;
(c) would commit the Council to unbudgeted expenditure

22. The naming of new streets, new reserves and new parks in accordance with the agreed procedures.

23. (a) Consider and determine all applications for street trading activities of local significance other than those delegated to the Regulatory committee and to Development Services Managers.

(b) To set fees for all street trading activities other than where street trading activities are to take place city-wide or in more than one Ward area, taking into account the City Valuer's recommendations based o current market values.

24. To hear and determine objections to bus shelter placement within the Ward (Section 339 Local Government Act)

25. In respect of the Proposed District Plan or any changes or variations to it, the power to make submissions on it, but not the right to appeal a Council decision to the Planning Tribunal.

26. To appoint a Board member as a tree spokesperson with whom Council Officers can consult on planning applications for the removal of trees.

27. To appoint a Board Member with whom the Planning Applications Subcommittee or the Development Services Manager or other officer can consult as to whether a non-complying land use application should be notified or not and whether it is of minor significance or otherwise.

Appendix Four

List of Community Boards in the Auckland Region

There are thirty community boards in the Auckland region which is made up of seven city or district councils.

Auckland City Council: (11)

Avondale
Eastern Bays
Great Barrier
Hobson
Maungakiekie
Mount Albert
Mount Eden
Mount Roskill
Tamaki
Waiheke
Western Bays

Franklin District Council: (2)

Tuakau
Waiuku/Awhitu

Manukau City Council: (7)

Clevedon
Howick
Mangere
Manurewa
Otara
Pakuranga
Papatoetoe

North Shore City Council: (6)

Albany
Birkenhead
Devonport
East Coast Bays
Glenfield
Takapuna

Waitakere City Council (4)

Henderson
New Lynn
Massey
Waitakere

Note:

Papakura District Council and Rodney District Council do not have community boards. The Rodney District Council abolished its community boards in favour of council sub-committees in 1992.

WORK DIARY for: _____ **Week beginning:** _____ **Code Number:** _____

Categories: M = meetings, AM = reading agenda/minutes, WP = working parties, F = official functions, REP = representing board, O = discussions with officers, R = research, CEF = constituent enquiries (face-to-face), CET = constituent enquiries (telephone), CEL = constituent enquiries (letter).

Time:	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
A.M.							
8.00 - 8.30							
8.30 - 9.00							
9.00 - 9.30							
9.30 - 10.00							
10.00 - 10.30							
10.30 - 11.00							
11.00 - 11.30							
11.30 - 12.00							
P.M.							
12.00 - 12.30							
12.30 - 1.00							
1.00 - 1.30							
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6.00 - 6.30							
6.30 - 7.00							
7.00 - 7.30							
7.30 - 8.00							
8.00 - 8.30							
8.30 - 9.00							
9.00 - 9.30							
9.30 - 10.00							

Comments:

Appendix Six

Introductory Letter to Prospective Participants

31 Pacific Parade,
Waiheke Island.

10 June 1995

Dear

I am a postgraduate student, presently completing my Master of Philosophy (Social Policy) degree with Massey University.

A requirement of this degree is to undertake a research project and I have decided to research community boards in New Zealand.

The question that I seek to explore in this research is:

> "How do community boards enhance public participation in local government and facilitate consultation at the sub-local government level?"

To this end I intend to:

(i) outline the mechanisms by which members of the public participate in the community board process (eg. by documenting participation by the public at community board meetings in the Auckland region) and,

(ii) establish how the elected representatives (community board members) consult with the public.

I am inviting members of the Auckland Region Community Board Association executive to participate in the second part of this project.

To establish how community board members consult with the public, I will be asking you to keep a diary for a period of one month (July). I will supply you with several blank diary sheets, each covering a seven day period. I would ask you to submit your completed forms on a weekly basis, so I can commence the data analysis earlier.

You will be asked to categorise your activities into different areas: eg. research; reading minutes and agendas; dealing with constituent enquiries; meetings, working parties,

attendance at official functions; delegated duties (representing the board to other groups) and meetings and discussions with officers.

As a community board member myself, I hope the results of my research will promote the continued development of community boards in New Zealand. I will therefore, provide all participants with a summary of the study results.

I would like to emphasise that the confidentiality of participants will be protected. The information collected will not, in its final published form, be traceable to any individual and the weekly diaries will be identified by number, not name. No information about individuals will be made available to a third party, although my supervisors may wish to refer to the raw data at some stage. The original documents will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

I would also like to emphasise that participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and acknowledge that participants are free to withdraw at any time.

If you are happy to take part in this research project, please complete and return the attached consent form. I would be grateful if you could mail this back to me by 17th June.

If you have any questions about this project, or would like further information, please contact me on (09) 372-9702.

Alternatively, you may like to contact my supervisors, Dr Mike O'Brien, Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University, Albany Campus on (09) 443-9768. or Ms Christine Cheyne at the Palmerston North campus on (06) 350-4300.

I acknowledge that your participation in this project will require some time and effort, but am sure that the results will be of interest to you, in your role as a community representative.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this research project.

Yours faithfully,

Faye Storer

Appendix Seven

Consent form used for the Research Project

CONSENT FORM

Research Project into Community Boards.

I have read the enclosed information sheet from Faye Storer dated 10 June 1995 and agree to participate in this study on community boards. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. I understand that my privacy will be protected and the research material, when presented, will not be attributable to any individual party.

My participation in this study is entirely voluntary and I am aware that I am free to withdraw at any stage by advising Faye Storer.

Signed:_____

Name: _____
(please print clearly)

Date: _____

Appendix Eight

First Covering Letter to Participants

31 Pacific Parade,
Waiheke Island.

26th June 1995

Dear

Community Board Research Project

Please find enclosed two blank diary sheets (and a spare) to cover the first two weeks of July starting on Saturday 1st July.

To simplify filling in the diary I have divided the activities into eight categories which you will see at the top of each sheet.

To complete the diary simply write the appropriate letter(s) in the time slot.

Ideally the diary should be filled out during the day. However if you do not have time, I suggest you complete it each night (perhaps from your own diary).

I have also enclosed two stamped self-addressed envelopes, so that you can post me back the completed diary sheet at the end of the week.

I would be grateful if you could send the diary sheets back as quickly as possible.

In two weeks time I will send you the diary sheets for the rest of July.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to ring me on 372-9702.

Thank you once again for your participation in this study.

Regards,

Faye Storer

Appendix Nine

Second Covering Letter to Participants

31 Pacific Parade,
Waiheke Island.

12th July 1995

Dear

Community Board Research Project

Thank you for returning the first diary sheets so promptly.

Please find enclosed three blank diary sheets (and a spare) to cover the remaining two and a half weeks of July:

Saturday 15th July	-	Friday 21st July
Saturday 22nd July	-	Friday 28th July
Saturday 29th July	-	Monday 31st July.

I have once again enclosed stamped self-addressed envelopes so that you can return the completed diary sheet at the end of each week.

If you have not yet returned your consent form, could you please enclose it with your next mail back to me. If you require another one, please ring me so that I can send one to you.

Please feel free to add any extra notes or comments to the sheets, for example, why it has been a particularly busy/slow week, particular issues requiring your attention, etc.

Thank you for your participation in this study to date. I hope you are finding the process an interesting one.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to ring me on 372-9702.

Regards,

Faye Storer

Appendix Ten

Letter to Participants with Details of the Preliminary Results

31 Pacific Parade,
Waiheke Island.

18 September 1995

Dear

Please find enclosed the preliminary results from my research project on community boards.

These results have been gained from the keeping of diaries for the month of July. As you can see a total of twelve community board members from throughout the Auckland Region completed the diaries in full.

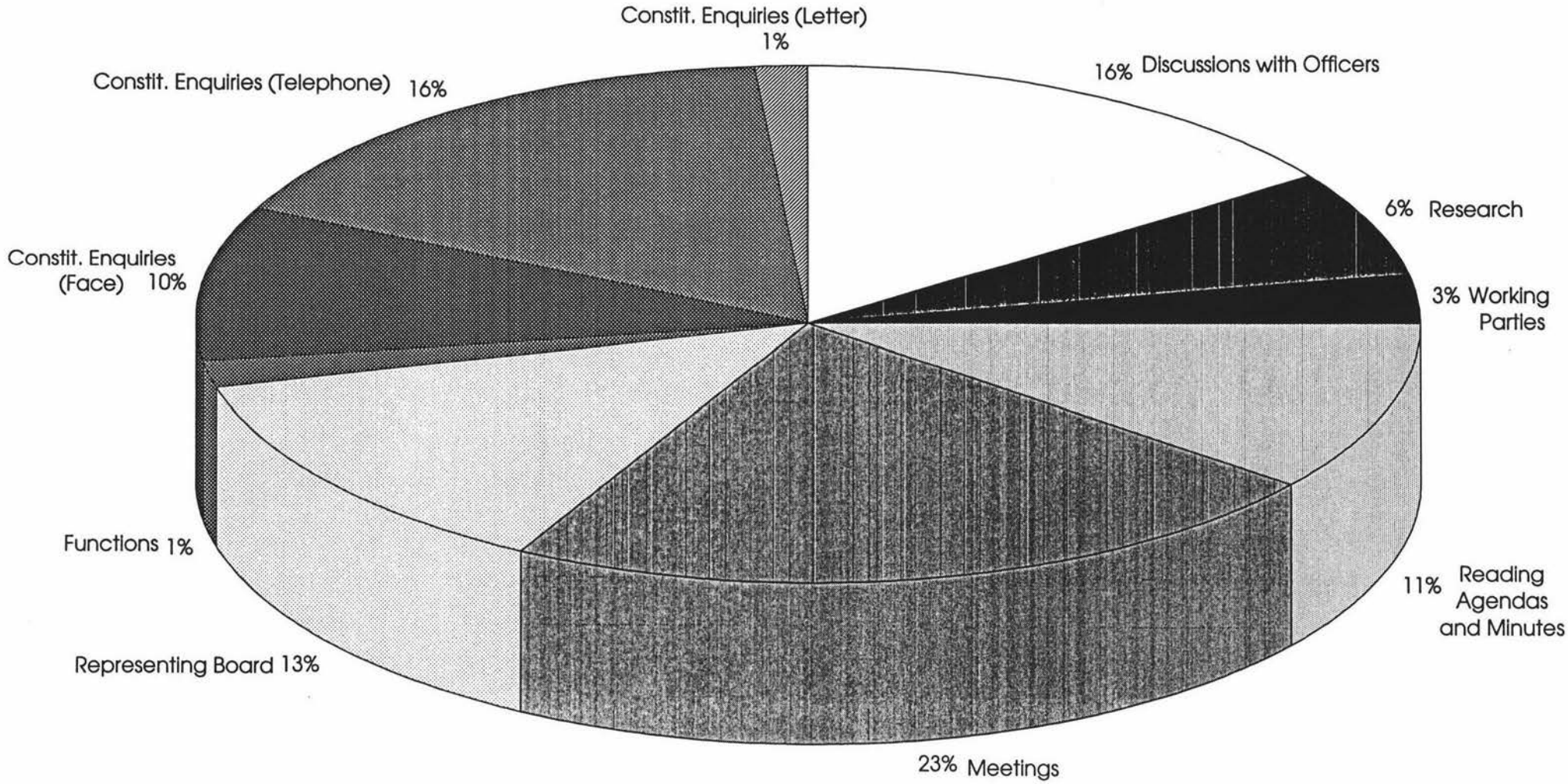
Because the focus of this project is on community consultation and participation at the community board level, the results have been divided into those activities that are of a direct consultative nature (meetings, functions, representing the board and constituent enquiries) and those that are based around other background duties (reading minutes/agendas, research and talking with officers).

I hope that these results will be of interest to you.

Regards,

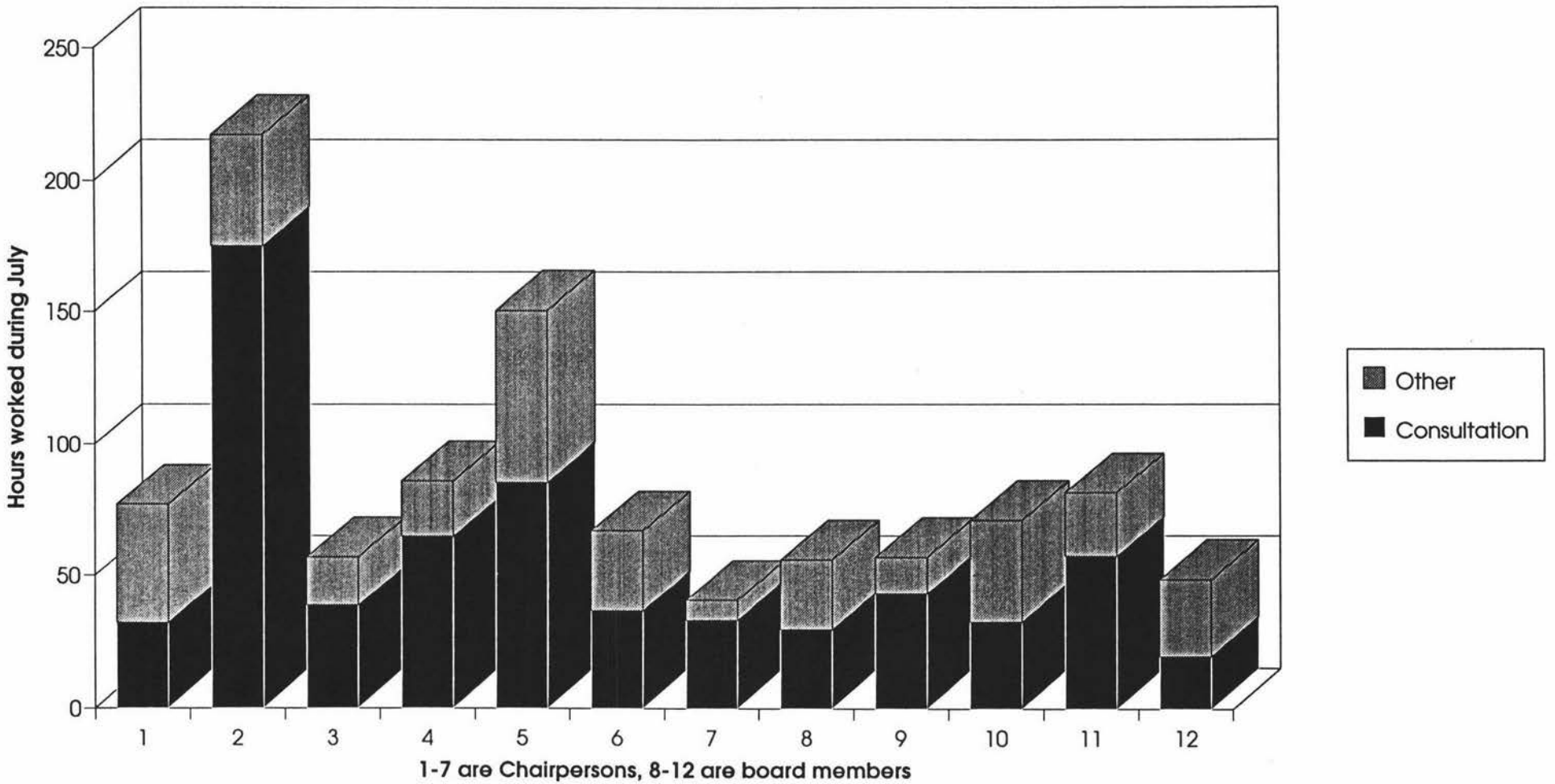
Faye Storer

Appendix Eleven
% of Time Community Board Members Spent on Activities (July 1995)



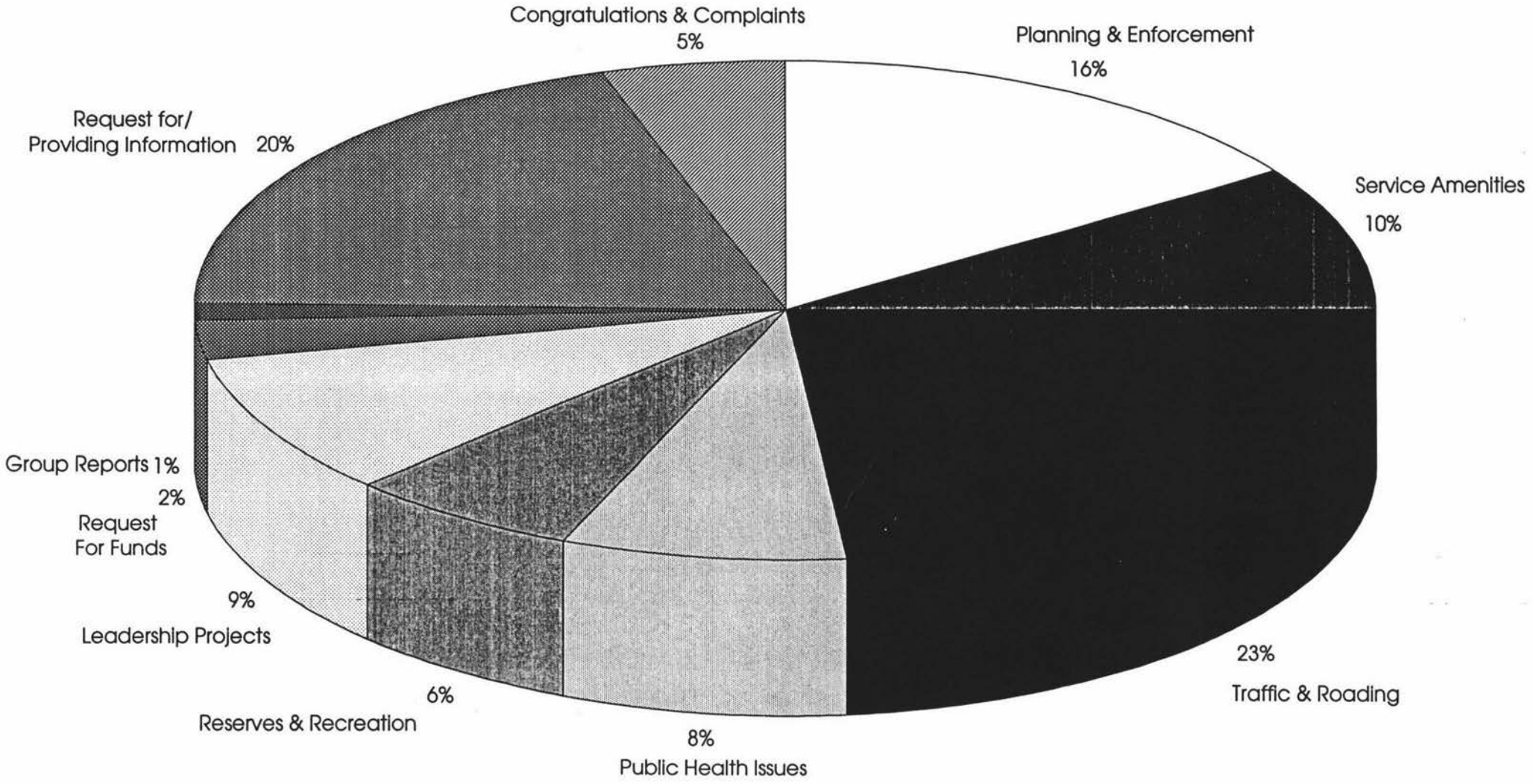
64% of time spent in public consultation (meetings, representing board, functions and constituent enquiries).

Appendix Twelve
Hours Worked by Community Board Members during July 1995

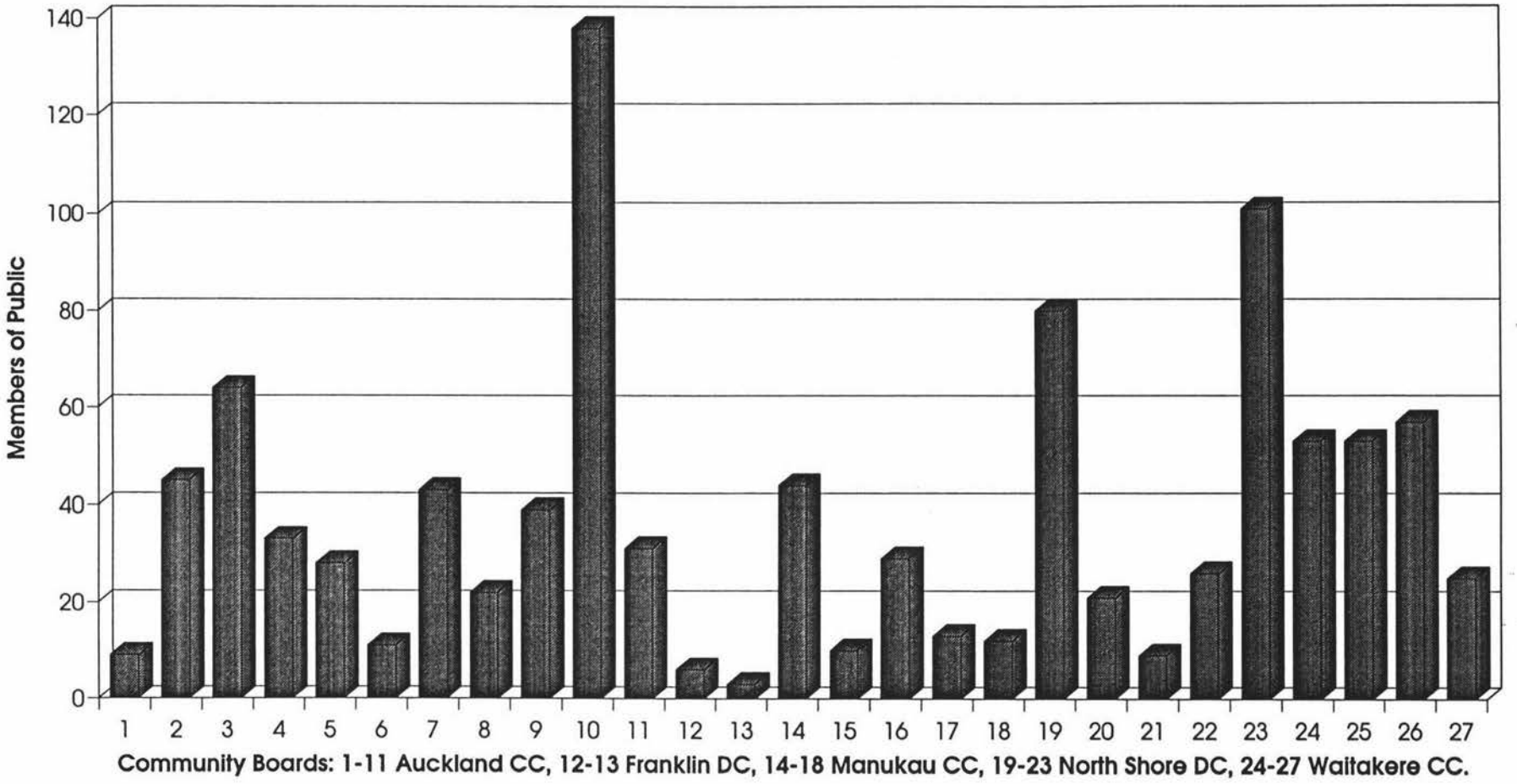


The numbers used on the X-axis do not reflect the code numbers allocated to participants.

Appendix Thirteen
Analysis of Public Submissions to Community Boards in the Auckland region



Appendix Fourteen
Numbers of Public Making Submissions to Community Boards during public forum
(July 1994 - June 1995)



Appendix Fifteen

Telephone Interviews with Community Board Chairpersons

Notes:

Board Number = code number assigned to the Community Board
Number Submiss = number of submissions made during Public Forum for the twelve month period July 1994 - June 1995.
Number Submitt = number of people making submissions during Public Forum for the twelve month period July 1994 - June 1995.
UTD = Unable To Determine

Attendance Figures, where available, are indicated in brackets in Question 1 (Does your Board and community use Public Forum?)

Board Number	Number Submiss	Number Submitt	Does your Board and community use the Public Forum process?	In what ways do you and your Board consult with community?	What methods are most effective for your community?
1	9	9	Some come as individuals.	Public meetings are an option.	Board needs to be proactive.
2	26	33	Some public input. Public usually approach individual Board members, items then put on agenda.	Hold public meetings - issue based.	Board tries to be proactive.
3	33	45	Not stated.	Board members delegated onto community groups. Public and house meetings.	Board likes to be proactive. Introduces itself to other groups.
4	25	31	May be used to make 'political point'.	Public meetings - issue based.	Board members spent a lot of time communicating with the public.

Board Number	Number Submiss	Number Submitt	Does your Board and community use the Public Forum process?	In what ways do you and your Board consult with community?	What methods are most effective for your community?
5	29	28	Yes.	Board members delegated onto community groups. Host functions. Neighbourhood meetings. Database of local groups.	Delegated duties onto local groups.
6	25	22	Not widely used.	Regularly host local groups.	Host many local groups.
7	266	138	Well used.	Regular chairperson's meeting with R.& R. group reps. Public meetings and workshops. Board members delegated onto local groups.	Through Board members' personal contacts with the community including face-to-face, phone and correspondence.
8	18	39	Some public input.	Board members delegated onto community groups. Board holds four public meetings/year at different locations.	Attendance at public meetings now increased.
9	11	11	Not stated.	Board holds public meetings once/month at various local halls (often poorly attended). Some special meetings.	Tried to be proactive but need to reach out even more into the community.
10	42	43	Generally used when a situation is unsatisfactory, particularly when it directly affects the person.	Chairperson will invite people to come to Public Forum if there is a situation that may affect them.	Invite members of the public to address the Board as a whole. Issues are dealt with quickly and process is more transparent.

Board Number	Number Submiss	Number Submitt	Does your Board and community use the Public Forum process?	In what ways do you and your Board consult with community?	What methods are most effective for your community?
11	102	64	Attendance limited by long distances and difficult terrain. Board members may make submissions on behalf of individuals or groups.	Monthly meetings at different locations had limited success. Community Board news in City publication and local paper.	Through Board members' personal contacts with the community and as members of other local groups.
12	58	44	(98) Definitely used. Some regular attendees but contentious issues bring out extra people.	Board members attend all local R. & R. meetings. General networking. Board members also members of other local groups.	General networking with the community and Board members having other community affiliations.
13	9	10	(77) Yes. Public may also speak during meeting to particular agenda item.	Board members delegated onto community groups. Strong liaison with local R. & R. groups. Issue based public meetings. Host community leaders. Public workshops. Letterbox drops. Info. in public notices of local paper.	Board looks after public relations aspects. Keep the public informed.
14	34	UTD	(154) Yes. But more usual for public to speak during meeting to particular agenda item.	Board members work with various community groups. Board sub-committees may hold public meetings and workshops. Chairperson will invite individuals and groups to meeting to speak to particular items.	Board members offer professional assistance to community groups. Invite public to meetings for items of interest to them.
15	11	12	(53) People come for particular issues.	The community needs the Board as an avenue for their needs.	Board members and meetings address people's particular needs.

Board Number	Number Submiss	Number Submitt	Does your Board and community use the Public Forum process?	In what ways do you and your Board consult with community?	What methods are most effective for your community?
16	15	13	(113) Numbers vary.	Board members delegated onto community groups. Members of public may be co-opted onto working parties.	Not stated.
17	36	29	(102) Some public input.	Board update in local paper once/month. Public meetings had limited success. Community leaders come to Board.	Not stated.
18	17	UTD	(156) Public input on contentious issues, but not many of these.	Board members have direct contact with public. Chairperson informs members of public about items of interest.	Board is proactive. Members have a lot of direct contact with public.
19	3	3	(65) Some public input. Public may be invited to join in Board's discussion.	Board members attend Local R. & R. group meetings. Board members personal contact with residents.	Main contact with community is through R. & R. groups and Board members personal contact.
20	6	6	No Public Forum as such. Public may be invited to join in Board's discussion.	Board news in local paper. Contact with community through local R. & R. groups. Occasional newsletter.	Not stated.
21	71	53	Public Forum has developed.	Board members direct contact with public.	Board is proactive.
22	43	53	Doesn't reflect range and depth of issues brought to Board.	Letterbox drops. Public meetings. Board members follow up constituent concerns.	Board is proactive. High degree of input required by Board members in community consultation.

Board Number	Number Submiss	Number Submitt	Does your Board and community use the Public Forum process?	In what ways do you and your Board consult with community?	What methods are most effective for your community?
23	25	25	Not used much.	Board members attend local R. & R. group meetings. On-site meetings include local groups. Networking. Telephone contact with constituents. Board & community newsletters.	On-site meetings. Board goes to public.
24	63	80	Particularly useful on contentious issues. Some regular attendees. Board also allows public participation during agenda items.	Local paper covers meetings Board members attend local R. & R. group meetings.	Local paper.
25	36	26	Board holds two meetings/month. One primarily for public input.	Issue based public meetings. Board members appointed as spokespersons on particular issues, names and contact numbers advertised.	Some public meetings particularly well attended. Constituents take particular problems to relevant spokesperson.
26	64	101	Some public input.	Board members have a 'portfolio' based on locality or particular issues. Chairperson may write to community groups asking for input on specific issues.	Board members link with community through their 'portfolios'.
27	19	UTD	Recently no-one has attended. People appear when issues arise.	Public meetings twice/year at different localities. Board members direct contact with public.	Board members direct contact with public: face-to-face, phone and letter.

Board Number	Number Submiss	Number Submitt	Does your Board and community use the Public Forum process?	In what ways do you and your Board consult with community?	What methods are most effective for your community?
28	9	9	Not stated.	Board holds weekly clinic. Issue-based public meetings with letterbox drops. Weekly column in local paper.	Weekly Saturday morning clinic.
29	59	21	Yes. Board also allows public to join in discussion on particular agenda items.	Public may participate in board meetings.	Board meetings provide opportunity for public input, and access to both elected representatives and management.

Appendix Sixteen

Cameo of July 1995 Waiheke Community Board Meeting

This section of the participant observation research consists of an account of the regular monthly Waiheke Community Board meeting, held on Wednesday 26th July 1995 which I attended as a member of the Board. The reporting of this meeting follows the 'cameo' example utilised by Burns et al (1994: 229-234).

The Scene

The meeting took place in the boardroom of the Waiheke Service Centre at Ostend, Waiheke Island. The tables were laid out in an T shape with the chairperson of the Community Board, the secretary and her assistant at the head table. The other five Board members, the Ward Councillor and the Area Manager were seated around another longer table. Nine other officers (from the Service Centre, the Area Office and the Auckland City Corporate Office) and a representative of the local press were also present and were seated both at another table parallel to the long table and in seating along the wall. On this third table was a pile of agendas which were available for the public.

There were seventeen members of the public present at the meeting. They were all aged over thirty, with the predominant age-group being from forty to sixty years. The public sat around two walls of the room. One person sat on the floor.

The style of the meeting

The chairperson presided over the meeting except during the presentation of public submissions on one agenda item, and later during the discussion of this item, when she left the room declaring a 'conflict of interest' and handed over the chair to the deputy-chairperson. Before the meeting the secretary's assistant passed a register around the members of the public so that their name, address and topic of submission could be recorded. This was then handed to the chairperson for her reference during the public forum.

The meeting began at 5.30 pm with the chairperson calling the meeting to order. She called for apologies. Then the minutes of the last monthly Waiheke Community Board meeting were confirmed as a 'true and correct record' and three items of extraordinary business were identified for discussion at the end of the set agenda items. The chairperson introduced three of the officers (one new 'local' staff member and two officers from the corporate office) to Board members and the public. The chairperson then stated that she was suspending standing orders to allow members of the public to speak to the Board.

[Actual public participation in the Waiheke Community Board meetings is restricted to one hour (or less) for public input with each member being allocated five minutes speaking time. However, the length of time taken by this section of the meeting tends to vary as Board members are entitled to ask each member of the public questions on their submission. At the end of the Public Forum standing orders are reinstated. The Board members then discuss the matters brought before them by the public and pass resolutions on the action that will be taken, before considering the other agenda items. (However if the matter raised during the Public Forum refers to an agenda item, any discussion by the board is deferred until that item). Items may be brought forward on the agenda if members of the public, through their submission, express an interest in the outcome of the Board's deliberation.]

The chairperson's style and the atmosphere during the meeting can be described as formal but friendly with all members of the public known to some Board members. The meeting can be clearly divided into four phases.

Phase 1: Public presentations and subsequent questions from Board members during Public Forum.

Phase 2: (standing orders reinstated) Discussion by Board members of each submission, input from the officers for the purposes of clarification and the passing of resolutions by the Board or a note made in the minutes of the action to be taken and by which officer or Board member.

Phase 3: Meal break.

Phase 4 Consideration of the other agenda items.

Phase 1: Public Participation (Public Forum)

This phase lasted for one hour and forty minutes. It was noted verbally by Board members at the end of this session that this was a particularly long Public Forum. Although the speaking time for each member of the public was limited to the usual five minutes, two of the items provoked extensive questioning by Board members of the several submitters addressing these issues. The two major items were : the presentation of a petition of over 1400 signatures asking for a reduction of the speed limit after a near fatal road accident, and the second regarding private access over public reserve land (relating to an agenda item).

The chairperson began by describing the Public Forum process to the public present (each person would be allowed five minutes speaking time, that a bell would be rung by the secretary after four minutes and then at five minutes, that if the submitter had any written material that they wished to table it would be photocopied by the secretary's assistant for distribution to board members, and that when Board members were asking questions there was to be no cross-questioning or replies from other members of the public).

The speaking order was called by the chairperson after her first establishing whether any member of the public needed to 'get away early'. Each submitter stood to address the Board beginning with the statement 'Madam Chair and Board Members' and then proceeding with a verbal or presenting a written statement. Some tabled copies of their submissions for Board members and the press.

The submissions were presented in a confident manner. (Several of the submitters had made submissions at Public Forum in the past. The standard of presentation at Waiheke Public Forum is generally very high as the process has been in place for over ten years). The presentation of one of the submissions could be described as emotional and almost theatrical, and attracted applause from other members of the public and words of appreciation from the Board members. Several people speaking to another topic referred board members to material in the agenda and to a map pinned to the wall. Four of the submitters were very concerned about the issue of chemical spraying, with two conveying their impatience with the consultation process. Another submitter stressed that they had been highlighting the same issue for several months and did not feel the officers were dealing adequately with their concerns and made a forceful presentation, raising their voice and pointing their finger at Board members.

Each person was thanked by the chairperson for their submission. Fifteen members of the public made submissions, eight by men and seven by women. Two people referred to more than one topic and two presented the petition of over 1400 signatures. A supporting statement from a member of the public who was not able to attend the meeting was read out by another submitter.

At the completion of each presentation the chairperson asked the submitter if they were available to answer questions from the Board. Questions were asked of most of the submitters, mostly seeking points of clarification.

The submissions were as follows:

- sought community board declaration of support for Anniversary of Hiroshima Day and sponsorship of advertising and materials for a community day of commemoration,
- two submissions expressed concern that letter box drop on a major item of local interest (chemical spray moratorium) was incomplete,
- an omnibus submission on under-resourcing of the Waiheke Works Unit, quality of road metal, flooding in Surfdale, roaming dogs and opposing the proposed bylaw limiting the number of cats per household,
- one person stating that the wording of a council leaflet was incorrect and that this could have a major bearing on the outcome of the issue (chemical spray moratorium),
- one person stating that a recent community board workshop process (on the chemical spray moratorium) that he had taken part in was flawed,
- presentation of a petition of over 1400 signatures calling for safer roads on Waiheke and a reduction of the speed limit,
- supporting submission on the above petition,
- a representative from the local marae addressing an agenda item on shellfish numbers and thanking the Council and the Board for their support with a recent event,
- a composite submission on shellfish beds and the agenda item on private access over public reserve land,
- four further submissions and one read out in absentia on the agenda item on private access over public reserve land,
- a representative of Waiheke Forest and Bird seeking financial support for Conservation Week.

Phase 2: Board discussion of the Public Forum items

This phase of the meeting lasted one hour and fifteen minutes. The Chairperson began by reinstating Standing Orders. She then read out the first submitter's name and the subject of their submission for discussion by Board members. All members were given the opportunity to make input. Several board members worked from notes made on the written material tabled by some of the submitters. (This written material was later attached to the minutes.) Resolutions were then made on the submission.

The members continued to work their way through the submissions in similar manner. Board members frequently asked questions of the officers present, addressing their questions through the Chairperson. Some items were resolved quickly. However, during the discussion of particular items, most of the Board members spoke several times, often at length. (Had a strict meeting procedure been followed, each board member would have been permitted to speak only once to an item unless they were introducing new arguments into the discussion.) Their input took the form of a free-flowing discussion. Some members followed strong lines of questioning and discussion with the officers, often seeking points of clarification. In general, board members displayed clear areas of interest and were obviously well informed on these.

Members of the public did not have speaking rights at this stage. (In the past members of the public have attempted to speak at this stage of the meeting, either in response to the Board's discussion or to refute an officer's explanation. The Chairperson's response has been to use the gavel and remind the individual that Standing Orders have been reinstated.) The public generally sat in silence, occasionally speaking to each other in low voices.

Glances were exchanged between Board members and individual members of the public during discussion of their submission. At times there were nods of agreement, appreciation and smiles of acknowledgment from members of the public. Several submitters were congratulated for their initiative and contribution to the community when their particular submission was discussed.

The discussion on the petition for a reduction in the speed limit included an address from the Traffic Operations Engineer from the Corporate Office, who had come to the meeting at the request of the Chairperson. (The Chairperson had been given prior notice

of the petition by the submitters.) Discussion on this item revealed some competition between board members. It appeared that several board members wanted to be seen, by both the members of the public (and the press) present, as the person bringing the problem to a satisfactory conclusion. There was some frustration among Board members that the matter had first been brought before the board two years earlier by another member of the public. The information given to the Board at that time was that the Board did not have the power to take any action. (While this was strictly correct, it was possible for the Community Board to request the Council, in the form of a recommendation, to create a by-law).

Discussion on the other major item, regarding private access over public reserve land, was held over until the relevant agenda item was considered after the meal break.

Phase 3: Meal Break.

The meeting was then adjourned for twenty-five minutes for a meal break. Members of the Board and Officers mingled briefly with members of the public before retiring to the staffroom for dinner. A member of staff brought a tea trolley into the Boardroom with refreshments (tea, coffee and sandwiches) for the public and the member of the press. Some members of the public left at this stage, one returned after buying takeaways from a local shop. The member of the press left and was replaced by another reporter after the break. The nine members of the public who stayed, had refreshments and chatted among themselves.

Phase 4: Consideration of the other Agenda Items.

The meeting was reconvened at 8.50 pm and continued (with one five minute break) until 12.10 am. Members of the public stayed on for varying lengths of time, with the last leaving at 11.00 pm. The member of the press stayed until the end of the meeting.

Eight of the officers present remained until after the agenda item(s) for which their input was required. Those officers attending from 'town' indicated to the Chairperson when they left that they were leaving to catch the ferry back to Auckland.

During this part of the meeting, the other agenda items were discussed. Items with public input included three letters received by the Chairperson from members of the

public were attachments to the agenda. These letters dealt directly with agenda items, these were:

- a letter from a local organisation conveying their thanks for recent work on a bridle path (Area Activities),
- an invitation from the RSA to attend VJ Day celebrations (separate agenda item),
- a letter offering assistance towards reserves enhancement (Small Local Improvement Projects -SLIPs - for Waiheke).

The only other agenda item that had public input was that regarding private access over public reserve land. The Chairperson left the meeting for consideration of this Agenda Item, declaring a 'conflict of interest'. The Deputy Chairperson assumed the chair for this item. A lengthy discussion ensued.

The matter before the Community Board was whether or not the Board considered it appropriate for the application for private access over public reserve land to proceed to the stage of public notification and, following that, a hearing (in this case a special meeting). It was clear from the outset that two Board members opposed the application proceeding. An officer spoke to a report in favour of the application and recommended that it proceed. It was emphasised by two other Board members that the application would still require public notification and that there would be further opportunities for public submission. However, this did not placate the two Board members' concerns. After considerable debate the motion, recommending that the application proceed, was put and carried. A subsequent motion outlining two points of particular concern to Board members was also carried. One of the objecting Board members called for a division and the names for and against the motion were recorded in the minutes. The objecting members, one of whom expressed annoyance at the decision, said that they would be making personal submissions to the subsequent hearing.

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