REPRESENTATION IN THE APPOINTED STATE: THE CASE OF COUNCILLORS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

by

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ABSTRACT

The rise of indirectly elected institutions, such as the West Midlands Regional Assembly, has democratic implications for notions of accountability, legitimacy and representation. The representative function of these bodies must be explicitly fulfilled if they are to be considered democratic. The conceptual focus of this thesis is the representative function of members of the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

The analysis applies a representative role framework based on Pitkin's "Four Views of Representation" to explore the formalistic and substantive elements of representation through an appraisal of focus, style, role and scope. The results show that there are weak accountability structures in place, leading representatives to adopt a trustee conception of their roles.

A grounded theory analysis is utilised to explore additional factors not covered in Pitkin's framework. This surfaced the structural factors and role motivations that affect role choice. The thesis utilises Weick's concept of sensemaking to explore the interpretation and enactment of different representative roles taking into account the importance of institutions in framing micro sensemaking processes.

This new methodology permits an appraisal of the relative influence of institutional context, structure and individual agency and delivers a new model for understanding the logics of representative action in appointed bodies.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

<u>Representation in the appointed state</u>

The rise in the number of quasi governmental bodies since the 1980s has significantly shaped the British governmental system yet the majority of them remain largely outside democratic political activity. These bodies now pervade all levels of modern government with quangos playing a key role in managing and delivering policy and services across almost all areas of public policy. These bodies exert a high degree of control and influence yet are largely formed on a wholly or largely appointed basis. Traditional political roles are subject to processes of authorisation through election and the ultimate chance of electoral sanction to enforce a basic conception of accountability. The extended use of appointed bodies for a public purpose therefore leads to a problem of a democratic deficit due to the absence of both an electoral process and other mechanisms through which the public can influence the body and hold it to account. Unlike elected politicians quango appointees do not have to go through the process of canvassing, election, lobbying or responding to the individual needs of their constituents. Quangos can be seen to weaken the link between elector and government, a link that is already weakened by the 'first past the post' voting system. Quasi government offers a system within which political activity is carried out by individuals who have neither accountability to nor legitimacy with the citizens.

The tensions emerging due to the democratic deficit have led to the reform of some quangos in terms of their appointed composition. Local authorities have created and become participants in a broad range of non-elected bodies such as public private

partnerships, local enterprise partnerships, and joint boards. These bodies are different from traditional quangos by virtue of their membership being largely or entirely made up by elected local councillors nominated by constituent local authorities. Despite this indirect election Leach (1996:74) perceives such bodies as being located in 'an intermediate position between the direct accountability of local authorities and the opaque accountability processes' of quangos. Leach argues that joint boards offer greater formal mechanisms of accountability than are typically found in quangos due to the information requirements of modern local government. Despite the fact that indirectly elected bodies maintain their roots in elected local government this does not mean that they are any more representative or accountable to the citizens. The conceptual context of difference to traditional elected representative democracy remains, as appointed members are not subject to either electoral sanction or strict accountability mechanisms. The growth in the number of local and regional partnerships also creates a tension in terms of the workloads of the modern councillor and can hamper the capability of members to fulfil their representative function on the bodies to which they are appointed to represent. Councillors appointed to represent their local authority are often not subject to strict mechanisms of appointment or accountability which poses a clear implication for democracy. Without structured accountability mechanisms and members being briefed about their mandate and responsibilities the capacity for councillors to fulfil the representative function on appointed bodies is significantly limited.

Under New Labour a number of regional institutions were created. Some of these such as Regional Development Agencies and Regional Assemblies are formed on the basis of indirect

appointment of local authority members. This has amounted in roles being given to local authority members to fulfil a representative function on behalf of their local authority. The empirical context of the thesis is the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) informed by the research being conducted under the auspices of an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Collaborative (CASE) Postgraduate Studentship (PTA-033-2006-00067) in conjunction with WMRA. WMRA is a partnership of public, private, voluntary and community organisations created in 1999 to undertake the development of public policy and advocacy on behalf of the region and to scrutinise the work of the Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the Regional Development Agency (RDA). The West Midlands Regional Assembly will form the object of analysis of a case study within which the wider issue of indirect representation will be explored. The West Midlands Regional Assembly was chosen in particular for a number of reasons. Firstly, under the auspices of the research funding, the CASE studentship allowed the research in depth access to both assembly members and officer staff. Secondly the West Midlands Regional Assembly is just one in a long line of regional institutions in the West Midlands which allows scope for a comparative historic appraisal of the nature of the institution Finally the West Midlands Regional Assembly was chosen as it is an atypical institution with regards to its constituent political make up.

This chapter starts by introducing the wider historic context of regional governance in Britain as a contested policy space and explains the trajectory of institutions of regional governance since the election on New Labour in 1997. The second part of the chapter discusses the rise of non-directly elected forms of government in the UK and the implications of this in terms of issues of representation, accountability and legitimacy. Through an exploration of the

democratic implications of non-directly elected forms of government the next part of the chapter defines the research problem and outlines the four research questions. The final part of the chapter introduces the structure of the thesis.

To commence, the following section describes the trajectory of regional institutions in Britain to explain the institutional history and context of the WMRA.

Regional governance in Britain: a contested policy space

There is a long history of debate about the place of regions in England however this section will concentrate on institutional developments in the post war period up to the creation of regional assemblies in 1998. The division of England into a number of administrative regions was initially considered by the Government prior to the First World War which amounted in the Third Home Rule Bill in 1912. This bill foresaw granting Ireland self government and consequently further calls were made for similar parliamentary structures to be introduced across Great Britain. Winston Churchill give a speech in which he proposed 10 to 12 regional parliaments suggesting that England could be divided up with London, Lancashire, Yorkshire and the Midlands being natural regions (Peatling 2003). The move to create regional parliaments never became official policy, however discussion of it led to various ideas and conceptions of how England could be divided (Gilbert 1939).

Following the end of the Second World War, significant developments and policy battles began which have meant local and regional governance systems in England have been in a constant state of flux in the period since. In the late 1940s the Labour Government instituted

the 'standard regions' however this was discontinued as the Conservatives came into power in 1951. The Conservative Party recognised the necessity of strategic planning at the regional level and introduced SERPLAN, a planning body for the South East region whose main functions were to monitor, develop and review regional planning strategy and to advocate strategy to government and other bodies (Wannop 1995). SERPLAN operated around a conference structure which at its greatest comprised of over 140 authorities all contributing councillors. The election of a Labour Government in 1964 brought an end to SERPLAN which was replaced in 1965 with two standard planning bodies, Regional Economic Planning Councils (REPCs) and Regional Economic Planning Boards (REPBs). Labour built upon wide scale criticism of Conservative policy and its over focus on the South East by rolling out REPCs across the whole country to combat the economic problems caused by declining industry in Scotland, Wales and northern England (Lindley 1982). REPCs were consultative bodies formed on the basis of government appointment comprised of professional and non-affiliated members prominent in, and representative of, their regions. REPCs brought together government, business and trade unions to advise ministers about regional investment priorities, but had no formal executive powers. REPBs were set up in parallel alongside the councils to service and support them as part of a wider structure of planning inspired by the National Plan in France which comprised a national plan supported by statutory regional plans (Sandford 2005). REPBs were envisaged as the executive arm of the Councils and consisted almost entirely of civil servants from relevant ministries (the Board of Trade and those concerned with education, housing and transport). The boards were chaired by Under Secretaries who also headed regional offices responsible for detailed work on the preparation of regional plans.

The election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government in 1979 brought about the swift demise of the Labour instituted REPBs and REPCs ruling them unfit for purpose. Indeed, these bodies had become ineffective over a decade before they were eventually abolished (Sandford 2005:21). The Thatcher government moved swiftly to restructure local government passing the Local Government Act of 1985 which abolished metropolitan county councils in a move described as 'curbing local government' whilst increasing the range of government agencies (Urban Development Corporations and Enterprise zones) each taking up tasks formerly delivered by local government (Wannop 1995:39). However no significant changes occurred with regard to regional institutions until the election of John Major in 1992.

The re-emergence of regional institutions

In April 1994 John Major's Conservative government created a set of nine Government Office Regions (GOs) for England, located across England's major cities which offer Whitehall expertise and feedback on the ways that policies are developing and being implemented in the regions (Russell Barter 2002). Before the formal introduction of GOs different central government departments had regional offices but these were based upon different conceptions of region therefore organisation tended to be disorganised and ad-hoc. GOs were instituted as a mechanism to assist central government in rolling out their policies to the regions. In 2008 GOs represented 11 Whitehall departments [1] in the regions. GOs also managed significant funds on behalf of their central parent departments including a number

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[1] Cabinet Office, Communities and Local Government, Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department for Work and Pensions, Department for Transport, Department of Health, Home Office and the Ministry of Justice

of funds from the European Union. As a representation of central government in the regions, GOs operate extensively with other regional bodies and stakeholders and offer a critical tool for policy delivery as well as a structured mechanism for feedback.

The eighteen year period of Conservative government was one of great turmoil as the country witnessed a significant decline in industry and with it an increase in the economic disparities between UK regions. This went hand in hand with a considerable growth in the number of quangos (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations) and government agencies (Russell Barter 2002; Sandford 2005) many of which were instituted in response to economic and demographic challenges. The events of the 1980s allowed arguments for regionalisation to garner support amongst senior figures in the Labour Party. These figures saw the opportunity to use regional units to assist in addressing economic disparities between regions and deliver opportunities to both stabilise industrial decline and help northern regions diversify their economies. This ideal was represented within their electoral manifesto which called for regional institutions that could address these tasks, help the national economy compete globally (The Labour Party 1997) and also address the party's core interest in equality by reducing disparities between regions (Russell Barter 2002). Labour therefore aimed to institutionalise and formalise the regions, building upon the GOs and quangos which already existed at the regional level. The democratic deficit of GOs and quangos, both of which were unelected and poorly coordinated, would be addressed by the institution of transparent regional government which would hold regional quangos to account (The Labour Party 1997; Russell Barter 2002:13).

New Labour in Government

Following New Labour's victory in May 1997 the new government established the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions (DETR) under the leadership of Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott. The first Queen's Speech of the new government contained provisions for the creation of appointed regional development agencies (RDAs), which were to be the cornerstone of Labour's policies for the English regions (Tomaney 2001). There were no distinct measures within the Bill to establish elected regional government despite the clear desire of the Deputy Prime Minister to implement democratic decentralisation in the English regions.

An early Green Paper (DETR 1997) outlined plans to establish RDAs based upon the regional boundaries being utilised by the Government Offices for the Regions. Members of the executive boards of the RDAs would be appointed by the Secretary of State and drawn from trade unions and the public, private and voluntary sectors following consultation with regional stakeholders. In the absence of an elected regional tier of government the Green Paper outlined an aim to institute voluntary Regional Chambers to fulfil the scrutiny role needed to assess the activities of the newly formed RDAs.

Regional Development Agencies in England

A White Paper outlining the powers, functions and resources of the proposed Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) was published in mid December 1997 (DETR 1997). The paper tasked the RDAs with producing Regional Economic Strategies for their region. The contents of the White Paper illustrate the competition between different government departments as

they sought to neither relinquish power nor cede any responsibilities to the regions. The White Paper gave no specific direction to RDAs with regards to them taking on functions relating to regional economic development. Aspects of this remit were given to alternate region institutions with Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs) taking responsibility for post 16 training and education and the Small Business Service (part of the Department of Trade and Industry) playing a significant role in economic development at the regional level (Jones 2001).

The introduction of RDAs came alongside a swathe of reforms and a period of change for sub-national government. The whole package included devolution legislation for Wales and Scotland and an elected assembly for London. The White Paper contained a section by the Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott hinting at a commitment to regional government in the future:

> 'The Government is committed to move towards directly elected regional government in England, where there is demand for it, alongside devolution in Scotland and Wales and the creation of the Greater London Authority. But we are not in the business of imposing it' (DETR 1997:7).

The RDAs became operational in April 1999 with the majority of their functions being allocated from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). Whilst the government saw RDAs as being flagships to deliver economic and productivity growth in the regions strict budgetary controls meant that individual government departments maintained a gate-keeping role over their activities. The newly formed regional institutions were given extensive objectives without having either the power or autonomy to

adequately fulfil them (Robinson 2000). There is a clear gap between conceptions of the role of the RDAs as primarily to tackle the economic problems of their regions through economic and regeneration initiatives and a broader conception of them as an integral part of wider constitutional and regional reforms. The position of RDAs as new institutions in a congested regional policy arena alongside other bodies responsible for the delivery of central government policy (LSCs and GOs) limits their opportunities to fully determine and assert their position. Their role as a mouthpiece for a broad spectrum of regional bodies to lobby for regional funds proved limited as their own budgets were linked to strict national frameworks of priorities and targets hampering their ability to scrutinise and question government policy.

RDAs were significantly limited by minimal powers and resources in their attempts to meet their target of increasing GDP per head beyond the national average. Their budgets were initially drawn directly from regeneration funds. These funds were ring fenced with central government imposing extensive restrictions as to how these resources could to be spent (Tomaney 2000). The funding problem hampered efforts to make significant inroads into the challenge of improving social and economic regeneration and as a result of this the Environment, Transport and Regions Select Committee published a report in 1999 recommending that single block grants from Central Government be allocated to regions and introduced a commitment to limit the ring fencing of funds (House of Commons 1997).

The Comprehensive Spending Review of 2000 brought about the next significant change for Labour's regional policy as the government signalled its intent to curb the criticism being

aimed at RDAs. Not only were greater resources allocated to RDAs but the Government also simplified their funding arrangements. The new arrangements meant finance for RDAs was coming through a central fund in contrast to the previous system whereby individual departments each with their own targets and objectives were allocating funds to RDAs

Regional Assemblies in England

The Regional Development Agencies Act which instituted RDAs did not establish a tier of elected regional government across England due to the Government's pledge to gauge public opinion before such a move. However the Regional Development Agencies Act did permit the establishment of voluntary Regional Chambers (latterly Regional Assemblies) (HM Government 1998:s 8.1).

The 1998 Regional Development Agencies Act which set up regional chambers did not specify anything regarding Regional Chamber membership. It stated that a chamber should be 'a body which is representative of those in a Regional Development Agency's area with an interest in its work' (HM Government 1998:s.8.1a). The guidance from Government stated that local government members should be the majority within the chamber with an expectation that non-local government members would comprise no less than 30% of the chamber. Another expectation during the introduction of assemblies was that they should hold an appropriate representative gender and ethnic balance. In practice the majority of chambers have utilised this exact 70:30 split between local government and non government members bar the South East which introduced a 2:1 ratio.

The Regional Chambers were not given any statutory powers with their role focused on providing scrutiny over the activities of RDAs and being a representative chamber to provide cross-sectoral input and feedback across a range of regional policy initiatives (While 2000). An important feature of Regional Chambers was their composition being formed of both local authority members and individuals from social, economic or environmental partners.

The addition of regional chambers to the mix of regional bodies and agencies caused an increase in the complexity of overlapping roles and responsibilities. This led regional bodies to act by drawing up concordats to provide clear frameworks for partnership working and better a coordination and alignment of regional strategies. The first concordat was developed in Yorkshire between the RDA and the regional chamber (Tomaney 2000), while in the West Midlands the concordats partners include the West Midlands Regional Assembly, Advantage West Midlands (RDA), GO for the West Midlands, West Midlands Local Government Association, Regional Action West Midlands, West Midlands Business Council, Culture West Midlands, West Midlands Higher Education Association, West Midlands Learning and Skills Council, Sustainability West Midlands, West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum, West Midlands Regional Observatory, West Midlands in Europe, RegenWM, Strategic Health Authority and the Midlands TUC (WMRA 2006). The concordats provided a framework for coordination which gave clarity in terms of the roles and responsibilities of each of the four key regional institutions amongst the complexity caused by a multitude of territorial boundaries and organisational remits. The complexity of arrangements in terms of both lines of influence and accountability between the key West Midlands regional organisations is shown in figure 1, an organisational chart showing both linkages and overall areas of policy responsibility as defined within the regional concordat.

Figure 1 Organisational Chart of West Midlands Regional Institutions

	Policy Areas
	Regional Planning Guidance
	Transport
	Economic Strategy
	Sustainability
	Culture
	Europe
	Social Inclusion
	Housing
	Life Long Learning & skills
	Health
	Rural Issues
	Crime reduction
	Anti-drugs policy
	Smart Region
	Regional Observatory
	Marketing the WMs
	Business Development
	Urban
	Sub-regionalism
	Equality
	Faith

Lines of influence
Lines of accountability

(Ayres and Pearce 2002:34)

In March 2001 the Government announced that regional chambers would be given an enhanced scrutiny role with regards to RDAs and their budgets were increased accordingly from a £15million central fund. This move was to stave off criticism that despite getting significantly increased public funding there were a distinct lack of accountability mechanisms for RDAs.

The sphere of influence of Regional Assemblies widened in 2000 when they were allocated responsibility for preparing Regional Planning Guidance by the DETR under 'Planning Policy

Guidance Note 11' (PPG11). This role was strengthened further with the initiation of Regional Spatial Strategies introduced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) (latterly the Department of Communities and Local Government DCLG) under 'Planning Policy Statement 11' (PPS11) (ODPM 2004). Regional Spatial Strategies represent a regional level planning framework and emerged from the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which abolished Structure Plans and replaced Regional Planning Guidance. Regional Spatial Strategies are prepared by Regional Assemblies acting as a Regional Planning Board before they go out to a 12 week public consultation and following that are submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. The Regional Spatial Strategies aim to establish a region specific strategy for development and regeneration for a period of up to 20 years ahead and establish regionally specific policies to add to rather than replicate national plans. Whilst replacing the strategic planning function of local authorities these strategies aim to address regional or sub regional issues across local authority boundaries and also include a transport strategy, and a waste strategy. Regional Spatial Strategies are also the documents that report on housing targets and allocations and deliver plans for local authorities to take forward in their Local Development Frameworks.

Elected Regional Assemblies in England

The regional government White Paper 'Your Region Your Choice: revitalising the English Regions' (DTLR 2002) set out the Labour Government's intentions to 'introduce legislation during this parliament to give the people of each region the opportunity, over time, to opt for an elected regional assembly' (DTLR 2002:31). The White Paper spoke of 'decentralising power and bringing decision making closer to the people', 'giving the regions more

flexibility', 'making government more accountable' and 'providing democratic representation in the regions and a new political voice' (DTLR 2002:11).

The White Paper also proposed a significant strengthening of existing regional policy including strengthening the roles and responsibilities of Government Offices, leading to a 'stronger, more far-reaching and better organised presence of central government in the regions' (Jeffery and Mawson 2002:717). RDAs would take forward the responsibilities they had already been given or promised by the Government e.g. working more closely with Learning and Skills Councils. The White Paper encouraged regional chambers to retain their scrutiny function of RDAs, help integrate and coordinate regional strategies and acquire a statutory role as regional planning bodies.

Chapter four onwards of the White Paper (DTLR 2002) outlined the functions, funding, constitutions and boundaries of the potential Elected Regional Assemblies. The proposed responsibilities offered in the White Paper were something of a 'mixed bag', reflecting the competing agendas of John Prescott and individual government departments (Adams and Tomaney 2002). The White Paper proposed that Elected Regional Assemblies would have the following functions and powers:

- Overall responsibility for RDAs (including appointing a Chair and Board Members and publishing the Regional Economic Strategy).

- Oversight of regional bodies (e.g. Regional Cultural Consortium).

- Allocating financial resources for functions such as housing, regeneration, local transport, tourism and EU structural funds.

- Responsibility for regional strategies that deal with: economic development, skills and employment, sustainable development, spatial planning, housing, transport, waste, public health management, culture (including tourism); and biodiversity.

Assemblies would also take on an influencing role which covers:

- Advising the Government on the allocation of local transport funding.

- Requesting the call-in of strategic planning applications.

- Scrutinising impact of higher education on economic development.

- Taking on role making appointments to other regional bodies (LSCs).

- Co-ordination of regional activity by drawing together different agents, and delivering more effective policy at the regional level.

The plans for regional assemblies aimed to build upon the emergent partnerships within existing regional chambers and aimed to ensure that a broad range of both economic and social partners played an active role within the work of regional assemblies in the future. The rationale for the Government was twofold: to strengthen representative forms of democracy, and continue to support a more pluralistic approach to regional governance.

The Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 made provisions for referendums to be held to create elected assemblies and to simplify the structure of local government in areas where these referendums took place. It was planned that three referendums would occur, in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber regions. Local Government Minister Nick Raynsford announced on 8th July 2004 that a referendum within the North

East region would be held on 4th November. The proposal for an elected regional assembly for the North East was overwhelmingly rejected, as shown in table 1 below (Rallings and Thrasher 2005).

Table 1 North East Referendum Result (4th November 2004)
Question: 'Should there be an elected assembly for the North-East Region?

Response	Votes	Percentage
No	696,519	77.93%
Yes	197,310	22.07%
Turnout	893,829	47.05%
Electorate 1,899,742 (rejected ballots 12.538)		

This was a significant blow to proposals to devolve power to other English regions and on 8th July Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott ruled out holding further referendums in the regions for the foreseeable future. Despite the lack of public support for the idea of regional government in England the interim regional chambers remained in place unelected, now renamed regional assemblies and went on to gain further functions. In 2006 regional assemblies were designated as regional housing boards with responsibility for providing advice to ministers on strategic housing investment priorities through the preparation of regional housing strategies. Whilst elected regional assemblies would have had powers to precept on council tax finance, appointed regional assemblies remained reliant upon central government grant and subscriptions from local authorities. Initially regional chambers were funded by local authority subscriptions which created a degree of tension between councillors and 'other stakeholders' about the legitimacy of 'other stakeholders' to participate when they were neither elected nor making financial contributions to the institution. Other examples of the dominance of councillors were played out with chambers exhibiting a local authority style of decision making (Mawson 2007:556). Latterly additional

finance to the value of £0.5m per annum has been delivered by central government through DCLG. This funding arose from the Strengthening Regional Accountability Consultation paper in March 2001 which recommended the provision of support for regional assemblies to undertake regional planning and scrutiny activity (DETR 2001). As the empirical context of the thesis it is useful to consider how the West Midlands Regional Assembly considered its role and responsibilities and how these capabilities were financed. In 2000 the West Midlands Regional Assembly conducted a review of its role and responsibilities and redefined its purpose as follows, to:

- Articulate a single, coherent voice on important issues and events affecting the region,

- Provide a lobbying authority to protect and advance the social and economic interests of the region,

- Provide for the co-ordination, oversight and endorsement of regional strategies,

- Be the principal consultative mechanism for activity and the arbiter of partner inclusivity in regional structures,

- Contribute to and scrutinise the work of AWM, in accordance with the provision of the Regional Development Agencies Act in 1998,

- Make regional policies more transparent to the public.

(Mawson and Saunders 2001)

Compared with other regional institutions the regional assemblies total funding is small at around £3 million as opposed to £14 million for a Government Office and £23 million for an RDA (Tomaney 2007). The West Midlands Regional Assembly is supported by a regional

secretariat shared with the West Midlands Local Government Association whose work is funded on the same basis as other public sector organisations. A break down of income for the West Midlands Regional Assembly for the financial year 2004-05 is shown below (see Table 2).

Table 2 West Midlands Regional Assembly income, 2004—5 (£ millions)

Region	Total income[a]	Total ODPM income[b]	Planning Delivery Grant[c]	Chamber Fund[d]	Regional Planning Grant[e]	Subscriptions[f]	Other[g]
West Midlands	2.4	2.1	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.3	<0.1

Notes:
[a] Total income is made up of Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) income plus all other income.
[b] Total of Chambers Fund, Planning Delivery Grant and Regional Planning Grant
[c] One off payment following transfer of the function of Regional Planning Body (RPB) to assemblies.
[d] Announced in 2001 to support Assembly scrutiny of RDA activities and work to coordinate regional strategies (DETR 2001).
[e] Annual receipt from the ODPM to support ongoing role as RPB.
[f] WMRA receives subscriptions from local authorities, the RDA, ERN and Sustainability West Midlands
[g] Other income includes revenue from training enterprises, consultant fees, and interest from investments, publications and transfers from other regional bodies.

Data from Jeffrey and Reilly (2004)

The Sub-National Review and Abolition of Regional Assemblies

On 17th July 2007 the Government published the Review of Sub-National Economic Development and Regeneration (HM Treasury 2007). The review brought forward plans to significantly alter the structures of regional governance in England. The main impacts of the review are that regional assemblies 'in their current form and function will not continue' (DCLG 2007:5) whilst RDAs will take responsibility for developing the single regional strategy. The scrutiny role held by assemblies will pass to local authorities and responsibilities with regards to spatial planning will pass back to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The rise of non-directly elected forms of government in the UK

This section moves from the specifics of the policies and progress of regional governance in England to consider Regional Assemblies as a form of quango. The formation of the WMRA is an example of a non-directly elected form of government and follows on from a period of considerable change in governance institutions in the UK. As such it represents a key area for both knowledge generation and theoretical study. The following section will explore the growth of quasi governmental bodies (quangos, joint boards and partnerships) in the UK.

The WMRA as a quasi autonomous non-governmental organisation (Quango) is just one example of the 'spectacular growth in this appointed sector of government since the late 1980s' (Skelcher 1998:1). By 1994 over 2,000 non-elected governmental bodies had emerged at the local level since 1979 formed of 50,000 appointees (compared with 23,000 councillors) all making governmental decisions at the local level (Weir and Hall 1994). Quangos is the name given to a class of organisations which have considerable responsibility for developing, managing and delivering public policy objectives under governing boards of a wholly or largely appointed, or self appointing nature (Skelcher, Weir et al. 2000:6). Quangos have also been known by alternate names including 'Non-Departmental Public Bodies' (NDPBs) (Pliatsky 1980) or Extra Governmental Organisations (EGOs) (Weir and Hall 1994). Quangos have formed the dominant mechanism for bringing representatives from voluntary groups, local interest lobbies and the business sector into the policy making process. This in turn places decision making at arms length to elected politicians. The growth of the quango state has generated significant academic and political debate regarding their composition, function and ability of such bodies and their members to be accountable despite their

formation on the basis of appointment, external to the transparency and integrity standards demanded within traditional local and central government.

Defining quangos and their growth

Within the UK context the term quango has been broadly applied to numerous bodies all varying in size, function and scope. Doig (1979) neatly summed up the difficulty in the definition of quangos:

> 'by the fact that there is no one characteristic or lack of characteristic that distinguished quangos or non-departmental public bodies from other organisations in the structure of government'.

In 2009 the Cabinet Office classified quangos into four categories (see Table 3).

Table 3 Cabinet Office Classification of Quangos (2009)

Executive NDPBs	Established in statute to carry out administrative, regulatory and/or commercial functions. Examples include Environmental Agency, Regional Development Agencies and national museums and galleries.
Advisory NDPBs	Provide independent and expert advice to ministers on topics of interest. Examples include the Low Pay Commission and the Committee on Standards in Public Life
Tribunals NDPBs	Have jurisdiction in a specialised field of law. Examples include Valuation Tribunals.
Independent Monitoring Boards	Formerly known as Boards of Visitors. Includes Prisons, Immigration Removal Centres and Immigration Holding Rooms.

(Cabinet Office 2009)

However this categorisation in quite restrictive and others have endeavoured to explore a more expansive definition leading to confusion and heated debate (Hogwood 1995). Wilson (1995:182) commented that the term quango 'is an umbrella beneath which a tremendous variety of organisations shelter'. A great deal of academic attention has focused on the systematic classification of quangos. Rhodes (1988:12) placed quangos under the broad

definition of 'sub central government', whereas Stoker (1991:59) developed a six fold classification of non-elected local government bodies (see Table 4) from all those situated in the 'governmental space between, on the one hand, central government, its territorial ministries and departments, and on the other hand, elected local government'.

Table 4 Stoker's categorisation of non-elected local government

Type	Resource Provision	Management Committee	Examples
Central government's 'arm's-length agency	Mainly through central government	Composition largely dictated by central government	Health authorities, arts councils, urban development corporations, training and enterprise councils
Local authority implementation agency	Mainly through local authority	Composition controlled by local authority	Enterprise boards, local authority-owned bus companies
Public/Private partnership organisation	By public and private sector participants	Nominated by public and private sector participants	Local enterprise agencies, Stockbridge village trust
User organisation	Mainly from public sector sources	Composition dominated by service users	Housing management cooperatives
Inter-governmental forum	As sanctioned by public sector participants	Composed of representatives from public sector participants	London and South East Regional Planning Conference
Joint boards	By a precept raised from participant local authorities (subject to central government imposed limitations)	Nominees of participant local authorities (plus one third magistrates in police joint boards	Police, Fire and Transport Joint Boards in metropolitan areas post 1986.

(Stoker 1991:65)

Weir and Hall (1994) included regional and local bodies such as housing associations, grant maintained schools, training and enterprise councils and police authorities in their definition of quangos. Weir and Hall (1994) asserted that the main features of quangos are that they

are created as a result of government action, have no direct electoral accountability and are responsible for either a) commissioning, purchasing or delivering certain public services, or b) adjudicating over individual decisions made by public policies, or c) advising policy makers.

The growth in the number of quangos over time has been the subject of significant attention (Hood 1973; Hirst 1995; Davis 1996). Hall and Weir (1994) discuss how both Labour and Conservative Governments utilised appointments to quangos as a way of furthering party policy. The creation of appointed bodies and the patronage power given to ministers can be seen as a lever of ideological control over policy a point which is alluded to by Hogwood (1995) as a 'possible explanation' for their growth. However this idea is critiqued by Payne and Skelcher (1997) who when considering the growth of local quangos find that a) only a minority of members of local authorities are directly appointed by a minister and b) nominations for appointment to local boards often come from the chair of that board as opposed to the minister (Skelcher and Davies 1995). In their paper Payne and Skelcher (1997) evaluate different explanations for the growth of local quangos and track the trajectory of the local executive bodies in the UK (see Table 5) exhibiting their purposive introduction in different phases to resolve the 'pressure points inherent in the British state' (Payne and Skelcher 1997:220).

Table 5 Payne and Skelcher's Phases in the growth of local executive appointed bodies

	Ideological dimension	Managerial dimension	Local quango type
Phase 1: 1960s/ 1970s	• Acceptance of pluralism in local public policy • Local authority de facto main local service provider	• Administration of growing services and budgets • Professional dominance of services	• Health authorities comprising 'representative' boards with local authority rights of nomination • New Town Development Corporations ministerially appointed
Phase 2: 1980s	• Intolerance of pluralism in local public policy • Governmental action to support business interests • Desire to bypass Labour local authorities • Success to be manifest through physical development	• Party politics seen as an impediment to efficient and effective public management • Desire for efficient use of capital investment for urban regeneration • Desire to increase speed of decision-making	• Urban development corporations, with investment and planning powers • Small board appointed by minister • Strong business representation • Local councillors may join board in individual capacity • Limited community representation
Phase 3: 1990s	• Pre-eminence of the 1990s market, even in relation to public services, applied through collective exit, contracting, etc. • Demonstrate that quality of non-privatized local public services can be improved • Legitimate Major Government in wake of Thatcher era. Poll Tax debacle, etc. • Undermining of citizenship in public services and replacement by notions of consumerism	• Contribution of private sector management expertise and techniques • Creation of quasi-markets to stimulate increases in efficiency and performance in local public services • Devolution of power to operational units and their decoupling from large bureaucratic structures • Ascendance of managerialism over professionalism at senior levels in organizations • Remote or indirect control of operational units through target setting and performance monitoring	• Use or emulation of company structures for local quangos, e.g. executive and nonexecutive board structures for NHS bodies, TECs as private governmental agencies, etc. • Introduction of self appointing bodies regulated by contract or inspection, e.g. FE corporations. Careers Service Pathfinders • Removal of local authority nomination rights, e.g. to district health authorities, further education governing bodies, etc. • Limited incorporation of community and tenant representatives on city challenge and housing action trusts.

(Payne and Skelcher 1997:221)

The growth of quangos in terms of both numbers and spending power prompted New Labour to develop a distinctly anti-quango polemic whilst in opposition, with Party leader Tony Blair pledging to 'sweep away the quango state'(Blair 1995). However in power many of the constitutional reforms advocated by the party in opposition failed to arise. Since taking office in May 1997, the Labour Government has embraced the 'agentification' process (Skelcher, Weir et al. 2000:18) as part of its wider partnership agenda. Indeed the introduction of RDAs and Regional Assemblies added to the mix of partnerships at the sub-national level contributing to what Skelcher has called the 'congested' state (Skelcher 2000).

Democratic Implications of Quasi-governance

Deep concerns remain about the character of 'quasi-governance' and its problems of accountability, transparency and coordination (Skelcher, Weir et al. 2000; Blackman and Ormston 2005; Allen and Cochrane 2007). The following section will explore academic consideration of the implications of 'quasi-governance'. Academic attention on quangos has focused on two areas in particular. The first area is a critical evaluation of quangos as a type of government body. Debate has been shaped by investigations and assessments of the governance structures and operational characteristics of quangos (Stewart 1992; Davis and Stewart 1993; Painter, Henry et al. 1994) with a great deal of attention focused on the accountability, openness and probity of both the institutions and their members. Further studies have explored the characteristics and attitudes of those appointed to boards (Greer and Hoggett 1995; Skelcher and Davies 1995). The second stream of academic attention has focused on analyses of the impact of quangos on the governance of specific policy areas, including training and enterprise councils (Peck 1993) and urban development corporations (Imrie and Thomas 1993). Further streams of analysis have evaluated quangos in their local

context with studies exploring the North East (Robinson and Shaw 2001) and Wales (Morgan and Roberts 1993).

Critical evaluations of quangos have surfaced particular concerns on a wide range of democratic themes including patronage and representativeness, legitimacy and accountability. Debate has often concentrated on the composition of and the mechanisms for appointment to quangos particularly since an increase in the number of local bodies which were self appointing as opposed to being formed on the basis of ministerial patronage (Davis and Stewart 1993). The system of public appointment to quangos traditionally overseen by ministers came under public scrutiny in the early 1990s due to the preponderance of business people with links to the Conservative party appointed to the boards of quangos and suspicions of ministerial bias and patronage.

The next stream of analysis looked comparatively at the differences between elected and appointed bodies in terms of both structures and types of member. The structure of local appointed bodies has been subject to criticism due to their lack of an institutionalised opposition, which would allow alternative perspectives to be incorporated (Emmerich and Peck 1992). Skelcher and Davis (1995) also noted that non-executive board members other than the chair had a limited role in decision making and compared with local councillors and Members of Parliament do not operate in an environment that encourages the expression of opposing views. In their study of appointed boards Skelcher and Davies (1995) suggest that the creation of specialist bodies with small appointed boards which are closed to public view and minimise internal opposition are a post-Fordist response to councillors and the

machinations of party politics. In a later study Skelcher again contrasts the appointment of quangos members selected on the basis of expertise, objectivity, professionalism and fit with the aim of the quangos, with the rather mismatched groups of individuals that can emerge from competitive elections (Skelcher, Weir et al. 2000:48). Skelcher compares how systems of election can deliver members who contradict the objectives of central government whereas the system of appointment allows the boards of quangos to be composed to fit the demands of the prevailing orthodoxy.

Flinders describes quangos as 'viewed at best as democratically suspicious and, at worst democratically illegitimate' (Flinders 2004:898). However it should be noted that in an era of falling electoral turnout and low levels of trust in politicians, elections cannot be seen as the sole provider of legitimacy which can instead be derived from alternative sources (Sullivan 2003) e.g. expertise, experience, objectivity and professionalism (Beetham and Lord 1998). The question of legitimacy is particularly important in regard to quangos as they are bodies which are often relatively closed to public influence yet have significant impacts on localities and populations. One source of increased legitimacy according to some academics is through better descriptive representativeness (Mansbridge 1999; Atkeson and Carrillo 2007; Leslie and Dallison 2008) i.e. if a quango's board reflects the characteristics of those it serves then it is more likely that this pluralistic basis will ensure the representation of a wider range of interests.

Problems of accountability and representation are at the heart of academic criticism of quangos. In Britain, representative democracy offers a clear chain of accountability for

elected governments, in theory at least which forms the basis of contrast with quangos. Traditional institutions of central and local government are democratically accountable to the electorate even if in practice this accountability is far from perfect. Whereas councillors go through candidate selection processes, campaign on a manifesto and are judged via elections, quango members evade all these elements. The increasing number of unelected bodies and quango-esque hybrids (Skelcher, Weir et al. 2000), governed by board members appointed by ministers or selected by existing board members, poses a significant 'democratic deficit' (Weir and Beetham 1999). This 'democratic deficit' is in terms of both poor upwards accountability to ministers and downwards accountability as board members cannot be removed by the electorate, however badly they are performing or unpopular their actions. The scope for downwards accountability is weakened further by a 'knowledge deficit' (Robinson and Shaw 2001) as most people have little knowledge or understanding of the structures and processes of governance. Whilst elected councillors and MPs are fairly open and bound by significant safeguarding legislation to deliver considerable levels of information, the accountability and visibility of many quangos is less clear cut and often confused by multiple accountabilities. The Nolan Reforms (Committee on Standards in Public Life 1995) and Quangos: Opening the Doors proposals (Cabinet Office 1998) made efforts to make quangos more open and to a limited extent, more accountable through increasing public access to board meetings and instituting publicly available registers of interests. Most unelected bodies now make the majority of their minutes and policy papers available on request however some bodies including some RDAs still hold their meetings behind closed doors.

Governance in the West Midlands

The wider growth of quangos throughout the UK has been significantly increased by the creation of a number of quangos organised on the basis of region. The increasingly 'congested' state is exemplified by the West Midlands. The growth of regional based institutions since 1990 has been particularly evident as highlighted by a review of regional government in 2000 which revealed

> 'a density of regional decision making … [a] wide variety of organisations: in form and scale, in administrative boundaries and in range of functions. Virtually all policy areas employ regional structures of some form…' (DETR 2000:13)

The increasing number of organisations operating alongside each other across a broad range of policy areas led the West Midlands Regional Assembly to develop a concordat (WMRA 2006) to clarify boundaries and organisational remits and provide a framework for co-ordination for the whole region. Ayres and Pearce (2002) attempted to map out the network of organisations operating in the West Midlands (See Figure 2). The research identified 50 public bodies responsible for an annual total expenditure of over £22 billion (including £8-9 billion of transfer payments through the social security system). This contrasts significantly with the 38 local authorities in the region who were responsible for a combined budget of £6 billion.

Figure 2 The congested region: A map of the institutions of governance in the West Midlands.

(Ayres and Pearce 2002:16)
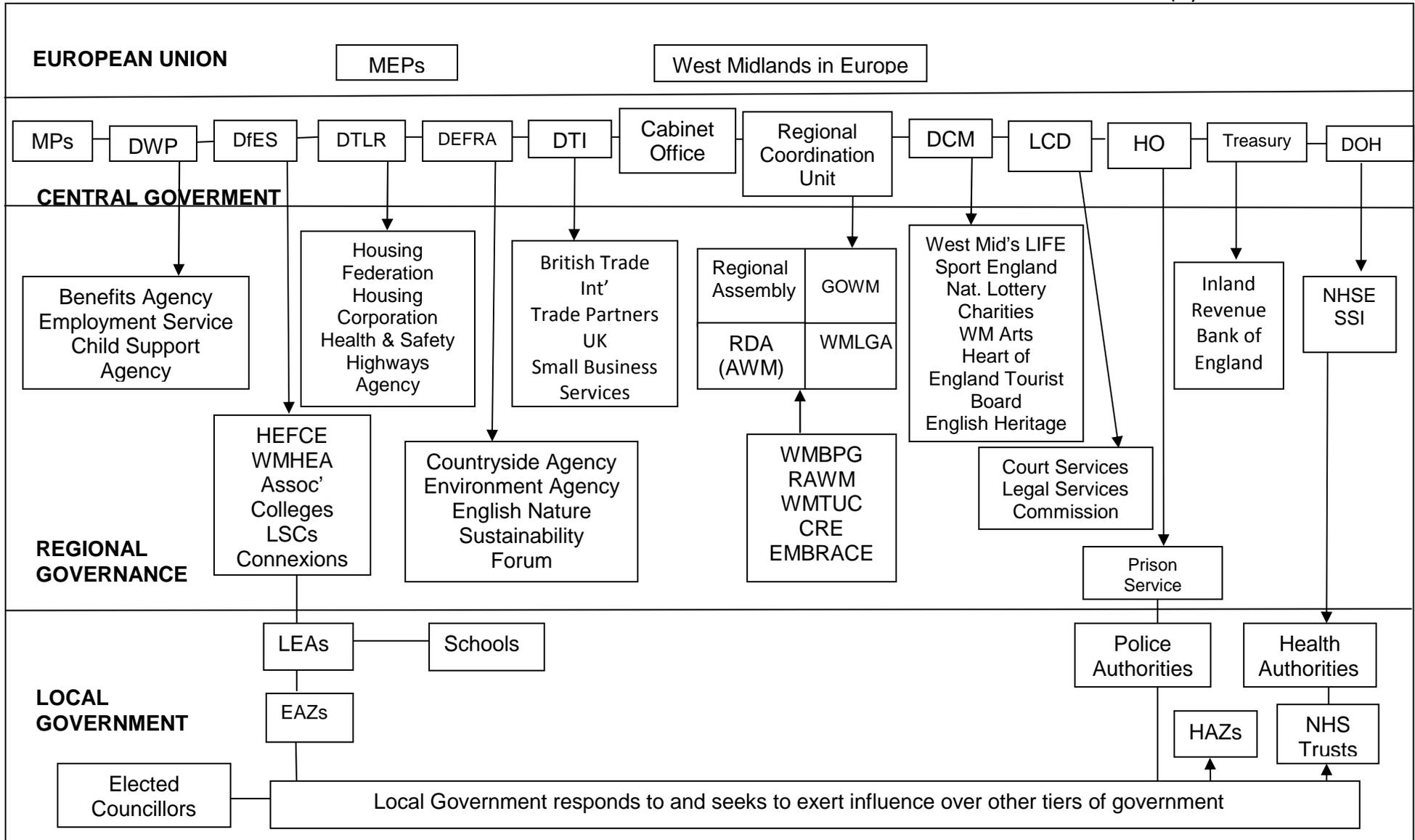
Regional Assemblies have been the site of academic attention both as a new hybrid form of quango but also with regards to how they fit within wider systems of governance (Pearce and Ayres 2007). A number of policy papers and evaluations have been conducted which have tracked the development of assemblies over time particularly with regards to junctures at which the capabilities of regional assemblies have increased or changed (Jeffery and Reilly 2004; Mawson and Snape 2004). Others analyses have more explicitly considered functional aspects of the work of regional assemblies including scrutiny functions (Snape, Ashworth et al. 2003), rural policy making (Pearce, Ayres et al. 2005) and spatial planning (Pearce and Ayres 2006). Assemblies are seen as part of the wider partnership agenda encouraging organisations to work collectively to achieve more effective outcomes and benefit from additional funding streams. Assemblies therefore rather than relying on traditional hierarchies must engage in partnership working with other representative or interest organisations to achieve their objectives. This represents a new environment for councillors as they operate in a realm of governance that is ultimately less hierarchical, more fluid, networked and multi-level (Rhodes 1997; Bache and Flinders 2004; Haughton and Counsell 2004; Bogdanor 2005). The Regional Assembly is an arena defined by partnership working and collaboration and it is within this 'new' context that councillors have to fulfil a representative function on behalf of their local authorities. Joint working in the West Midlands however is not a particularly new phenomenon. The West Midlands unlike other regions has a long unbroken tradition of strategic planning associations since the 1960s organised on a regional rather than metropolitan or city-region basis (Thomas 1999). The institutional collaboration between the conurbation (Birmingham, the Black Country towns, Solihull and Coventry) and shire authorities emerged in the early post war period in order to

find regional planning solutions to cope with the population, housing and urban growth of Birmingham (Hall, Drewett et al. 1973). Arrangements for local authority collaboration have been subject to continuous adaptation to the changing regional context (Mawson and Skelcher 1980). For example during the economic downturn of the 1970s most anticipated that collaboration would cease but instead a strong joint commitment to urban regeneration emerged as regional leaders considered the implications economic and social decline would have for the wider region (Marshall and Mawson 1987). The Regional planning bodies preceding the Regional Assembly were the West Midlands Planning Authorities Conference (1968) and the West Midlands Forum of County Councils (subsequently included District Councils) (WMRF 1993). This forum also prepared the region's first European Strategy in 1993 exhibiting a willingness and capacity for local authority collaboration on an emergent policy issue (WMRF 1993). The next strategic planning body which emerged was the West Midlands Regional Economic Consortium (WMREC 1997) which brought together local authority members and stakeholders from the business community, training and enterprise councils and trades unions to deliver a single cohesive voice for the regions interests in London and Brussels. Indeed the form and function of the WMREC was a strong precursor to the potential success of the West Midlands Chamber (latterly West Midlands Regional Assembly).

The West Midlands Chamber formed in 1999 was renamed the West Midlands Regional Assembly in 2001. The Assembly aims to represent a range of democratic, economic and social interests in the West Midlands and the governing body (the Assembly Council) is

formed of a voting membership of 100 nominees. The full breakdown of representatives is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Breakdown of West Midlands Regional Assembly members
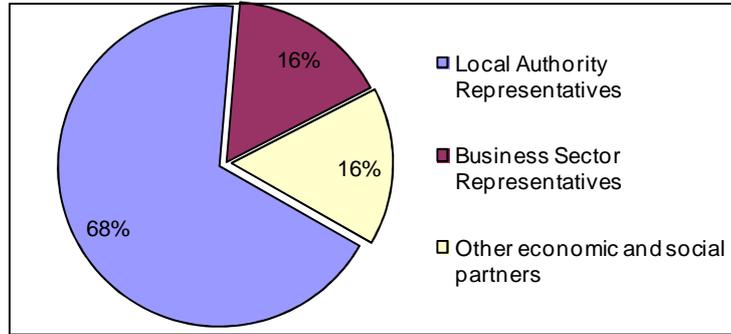
The local authority make up of the assembly (68 councillors) is formed via nomination by the regions constituent councils with the WMLGA playing a significant role in the co-ordination of local government representation. Local authority members are chosen to reflect the geographic and political balance of the region. In this way seats at the Assembly are allocated on the basis of the regions six sub-regions (see Table 6).

Table 6 Seat allocations by sub-region at the West Midlands Regional Assembly

Sub-regions	Number of Seats
Birmingham	13
Black Country	14
Shropshire and Telford	6
Staffordshire and Stoke	13
Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull	13
Worcestershire and Herefordshire	9
TOTAL	68

Research evidence on local authority nominated assembly members is limited. Some qualitative work has been done with assembly members on the effectiveness of the regional scrutiny function (Ashworth, Snape et al. 2007) however the only significant research

focusing on the views and experiences of assembly members is a survey of all regional assembly members commissioned by the English Regions Network (ERN) (Aulakh, Snape et al. 2005). Aulakh, Snape and Mawson (2005) conducted a postal survey which was administered to all regional assembly members (outside London) between November 2003 and January 2004. The questions examined the nature and level of member involvement in the work of regional assemblies and aimed to build up a profile of members, their motivations for joining and the time they devoted to assembly business. The survey delivered an overall response rate of 64% although the West Midlands region only delivered a 33% response rate. With regards to descriptive representation the overwhelming majority of assembly members were men (81 per cent), over the age of 44 (63 per cent) and white European in ethnic origin (96 per cent) (Aulakh, Snape et al. 2005:13). The majority of members had attended three quarters of the plenary meetings of the assembly and at the time of the survey 7 out of the 8 Chairs were held by local authority members. 58 per cent of the total sample rated their level of participation with the Regional Assembly as very/fairly active. The survey revealed a telling statistic regarding the calibre of members. Contradicting the criticism that assembly roles do not attract the more powerful and senior local government politicians (Pearce 2005:15-16), over half the local authority respondents to the survey were leaders or deputy leaders and furthermore they were predominant in executive decision making roles. The data on the motivation of assembly members for joining the Regional Assembly showed the primary motivating factors to be to 'promote the overall wellbeing of the region' and other motivations which suggested a strong orientation towards representation (focus on representing or raising the profile of their 'home' organisation). Over 58% of all councillors reported they became members to represent their individual

local authority (Aulakh, Snape et al. 2005:15). Further to this 'desire to represent', the ability to conduct this function could be limited by the statistic that 72% of regional assembly members agreed that 'regional assemblies are not connected to and make little impact on the general public' (Aulakh, Snape et al. 2005:37). Questioned on the role for the regional assembly 85 per cent of respondents thought that influencing central government policy and the allocation of resources should be the priority, while 80 per cent give a high rating to assemblies' role as the representative body for the region. Whilst those engaged with the assembly rated its value highly, an Audit Commission survey of council leaders (54 per cent response rate) yielded a contradictory conclusion:

> '...the majority of councillors feel that regional assemblies provide poor value for money for councils comparing the money and councillor and officer time that Councils contributes to the benefits that they obtain from their involvement (Audit Commission 2007:5)'.

The contrast between these ratings exhibits that Regional Assemblies are just as contested as other aspects of regional governance in terms of both their legitimacy and worth.

The problems of appointed representation: gap / research problem

The critical issue within much of the literature focuses on the juxtaposition between the prevalence and significance of quasi governmental organisations and their position largely outside political activity. Skelcher sums up the concerns on democracy and accountability that emerge from the creation of quangos.

> 'Overall, the transfer of responsibility and power to tertiary bodies poses major issues both for the theory and practice of public governance and management.

It removes centres of decision-making further from elected political structures, increasing their distance from citizens and often becoming invisible to public view' (Skelcher, Weir et al. 2000:13).

The growth of quangos has significant implications for democracy with regards to the nature, mechanisms and transparency of the process for the appointment of members and the need for both the upward and downward accountability of quango members. In suggesting methods to strengthen accountability Skelcher (1998:165) suggests an indirect election model whereby councillors are appointed to boards. This model was applied to the joint boards created in metropolitan counties following the abolition of county councils in 1986. Leach, Davis, Game and Skelcher (1991) in their study of post-abolition metropolitan government suggest that in such an indirect election model an accountability component should meet the following five criteria:

- Local authority nominees' receive an expert briefing from one or more of the authority's officers on issues arising from the joint board's agenda.

- There is a forum at which the local authority's stance on these issues is decided.

- Joint board members receive instructions on voting requirements.

- The nominees report back to the local authority.

- Matters relating to the joint board are discussed at committee or full council.

(Leach, Davis et al. 1991:163-164)

Their research revealed that in general these five criteria fail to be fulfilled. The research found that nominees' accountability to their appointing local authorities was limited and only arose at the emergence of a major policy or financial issue. The research showed that

indirectly elected members tended to be left to their own devices and so were more susceptible to be captured by the strong professional forces found in these single-function organisations. Further to this local authority appointees, rather than developing or making policy on the basis of the constituent councils' interest, tended instead to become advocates for the joint board. The problem of accountability was heightened by the lack of direct accountability to the electorate. Members being appointed by councils to boards using internal political processes meant a further widening between any electoral commitments of individual councillors on the matters covered by boards and their capacity to act upon them. The research suggests that whilst the indirect election model does improve the accountability relationship in theory, in practice the political independence of the body is maintained (Skelcher 1998:166).

The West Midlands Regional Assembly, like joint boards and committees in post-abolition metropolitan government, is an organisation based on an indirect model bringing together quasi autonomous governance with features of representative democracy. In this way it faces critical challenges regarding its ability to be accountable. At the regional level, central government has established a form of regional governance in the form of RDAs, Regional Assemblies and GOs which falls short of directly elected and fully integrated regional government. RDAs have been established to coordinate and secure regional economic development and regeneration for each region (DETR 2001). RDAs claim to represent their regions and speak and act on the regions behalf however their members are appointed, not elected and therefore have no mandate to represent their constituents. The institution of 'regional assemblies' alongside RDAs was designed to address this accountability gap

through the introduction of a representative function. Indeed the White Paper 'Your Region Your Choice: Revitalising the English Regions' spoke of 'decentralising power and bringing decision making closer to the people', 'giving the regions more flexibility', 'making government more accountable' and 'providing democratic representation in the regions and a new political voice' (DTLR 2002:11). The final institutions of regional governance are Government Offices whose role it is to represent central government in the region and oversee the delivery of government programmes. The majority of power in regional governance sits with the RDAs and GOs but their accountability is to central government not to the people of the region. In contrast the only bodies with a representative function and downwards accountability are regional assemblies, a hybrid quango with a 'questionable mandate' (Robinson and Shaw 2002). Table 7 outlines this imbalance in further detail.

Table 7 The West Midlands Regional Troika: Organisation, Accountability and Appointment.

Organisation	Accountability Structure	Powers / Role	Resource Provision	Management Structure	Method of appointment
Regional Development Agency (Advantage West Midlands)	Accountable to the Secretary of State; Chief Executive personally accountable to Parliament for effective management of public money **(UPWARDS)**	-Prepares Regional Economic Strategy (RES) -Funding delivery to regional business	Funded by single budget pooled from Departments for Business, Innovation & Skills, DCLG; Energy & Climate Change, Culture, Media & Sport; Environment, Food & Rural Affairs; and UK Trade & Investment	Chief Executive and board which comprises executive chair and 14 non-executive board members.	-Secretary of State appoints members to the Board of AWM including local authority, trade union and private sector representatives. -Chair of RDA is a Prime Ministerial appointment.
Government Offices in the Regions (GOWM)	Accountable to relevant Minister and department **(UPWARDS)**	-Coordination of central government policy at regional and local level -Distributor of European Objective 2 & Objective 3 (European Social Fund) Funds -Monitor WMRA performance	-Relevant regional departmental allocations -European Funds devolved from central government	Strategy Board comprises Regional Director, 5 Deputy Directors and 3 non executive members	All members are civil servants except non executive members who are appointed by the Secretary of State.
Regional Assembly (WMRA)	-Each Member is accountable to their home organisation or to the sector which they represent. **(DOWNWARDS)** -Local Authority members are elected Councillors, and are therefore accountable to their own constituencies as well. **(DOWNWARDS)** -Assembly accountable to its Member organisations and to DCLG for the way it uses its funding. **(UPWARDS)**	-Scrutinise Regional Economic Strategy and work of AWM -Regional planning body -Lobbying organisation for the region -Regional housing executive	Majority of funding from central government Assemblies Funding Agreement from DCLG	Assembly comprises 100 members, 68 representing local authorities (8 of which balancing places based on party political composition of region), 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.	-Councillors nominated directly by their council or through regional political group mechanisms. Business representatives nominated by West Midlands Business Policy group. -Social and economic places allocated to sectors each nominating/electing members.

The use of a system of indirect appointment within the formal construction of the West Midlands Regional Assembly was an attempt to inject more accountability through the introduction of a representative element into its membership composition. The accountability structures for assembly members are downwards to their appointing/home organisation and further to their constituencies and original constituency electorate. This places significant importance on the representative function of members as it is the mechanism through which accountability may or may not be delivered.

Representation in the Appointed State: A research problem

There has been a substantial growth of regional governance in Britain and the creation of a number of bodies formed on the basis of indirect appointment. These regional bodies provide a number of strategic, planning and policy functions yet remain at arm's length from the electorate. Regional Assemblies are a prime example of a multi functioned body formed on the basis of indirect appointment and therefore the West Midlands Regional Assembly forms a window into the general problem of representation in the appointed state. Members are indirectly elected to the Regional Assembly in order to fulfil a representative function. This function was introduced to provide a form of visibility and accountability in order to address democratic concerns. The representative function and how well it is conducted form a crucial element in maintaining the democratic legitimacy of the institution. Therefore the representative function provides the core conceptual basis of the thesis. Whilst a great deal of work has been done looking at the concept of representation (Pitkin 1967; Judge 1999; Mansbridge 2003; Rehfeld 2006) and representative role of politicians (Eulau, Wahlke et al. 1959; Newton 1974; Katz 1997; Rao 1999; Scully and Farrell

2003) there has been less consideration of the concept of 'appointed representation'. Regional assemblies provide a new environment for councillors and empirical studies of assembly members their roles, role choices and influences are significantly limited. Regional assemblies are a new arena for participation and collaboration within which councillors are operating alongside actors representing business, social and environmental interests (Glasson 2002; Humphrey and Shaw 2004) in a dynamic, complex and contested system of regional governance. In opening up the system to representatives from outside conventional political parties many also view the assembly as a location for a 'new style of politics' (Bradbury 2003; Hudson 2006). Assembly members are brought into a new institution and a potential contrast with local elected government which is defined by hierarchy, committees, cabinets, party politics and an institutionalised opposition. Indeed a study of appointed boards posited that due to the lack of wide scale voting and caucusing the predominant norms informing action within appointed bodies are 'politeness, consensus and conformity' (Ferlie, Ashburner et al. 1995). This new environment and the introduction of non-political members to the representative mix provide an interesting range of external factors which can affect the representative role of councillors as assembly members. There is a requirement to represent as this function forms the principal accountability mechanism for the Regional Assembly. However there are no mechanisms to ensure that councillors act on behalf of the council or constituents they represent, in this way the quality of both representation and accountability can vary. There is a need therefore to look at how assembly members go about the fulfilling the representative function, what factors influence their ability to represent (and be accountable) and what their choices are in terms of adopting different roles.

Research Questions

The thesis explores the wider research problem through the following research questions which will be individually operationalised later in the thesis.

Research Question 1:

How do councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected?

The introductory section above observed that the West Midlands Regional Assembly represents a new regional institution and context within which councillors are appointed to fulfil a representative function. A number of authors researching local government and political science have explored the concept of representation with regards to elected politicians drawing attention to the nature of representation (Sharpe 1962; Pitkin 1967; Sartori 1968), the enactment of representative roles (Eulau, Wahlke et al. 1959; Newton 1974) and the notion of representativeness and responsiveness to elections (Scully and Farrell 2003; Childs and Cowley 2011). A number of authors have explored the rise in partnerships and non-directly elected forms of government in the UK (Skelcher and Davies 1995; Payne and Skelcher 1997; Skelcher 1998; Sullivan and Skelcher 2002). However both empirical knowledge and theoretical understanding of both the concept of representation and the enactment of representative roles within non-directly elected forms of government is limited.

As an institution fulfilling a representative function the West Midlands Regional Assembly is an important new location for democracy which warrants empirical attention. This research

question seeks to open up the black box of indirectly elected representation to reveal both the interpretation and substantive action of representation. The question of how councillors fulfil their representative role addresses both theoretical and normative concerns. The representative chain of assembly members is to their appointing institution but the regional remit of the Assembly and the prevalence of political parties in English local government may obscure and confuse their representative role. As members of the Regional Assembly lack a formal representative chain to the electorate, the structures and scope for representative democracy through appointed officials is weakened considerably. Analysis will use a framework developed from the literature review to explore the objects, interests and actions of representation. Analysis will therefore deliver empirical data about which variant of democracy assembly membership engenders for the elected officials operating within it and how this differs from their conception of representation in other organisations.

The actions of assembly members in fulfilling the representative function are particularly important due to the questions raised by the fact that they are appointed as opposed to elected. In order to explore the normative democratic implications of indirectly elected governance the analysis will seek to address questions of both authorisation and accountability to explore how Assembly members view their role and mandate

Research Question 2:

To what extent can Pitkin's framework of representation be applied to indirectly elected bodies?

Hanna Pitkin is the seminal author in modern political science contributing to modern understandings of the concept of representation. Her conception breaks down political representation into four main types of representation. The four types are formalistic representation focusing upon the dimensions of authorisation (pre electoral) and accountability (post electoral), symbolic representation, descriptive representation and substantive representation (built upon delegate and trustee conceptions). Pitkin's appraisal is situated within the realm of representation by election and is contingent on a number of structural mechanisms which inform representative role choices and enactment. These mechanisms are different within the context of politicians being appointed rather than elected. Pitkin's framework will be developed during a literature review of representative roles in order to operationalise it into larger framework. This larger framework will be used to explore and capture the multiple facets of the modern roles of local and regional politicians. The literature review on representation will consider the alternatives to and criticisms of Pitkin's four views of representation and will be supplemented by a personal appraisal of the value of the framework in addressing the question of appointed representation.

Research Question 3:

What are the structural factors and role choices which inform councillors' decision-making when choosing which representative role to enact in indirectly elected bodies?

The West Midlands Regional Assembly represents a new institutional setting with different functional capabilities to local councils. The councillors appointed to the assembly are subject to a number of different influences, limitations and expectations. The purpose of research question three is to surface the contextual, structural and power factors in the form of representative tensions and issues. These tensions and issues form the barriers or facilitators which affect the substantive action of representation and the ability of assembly members to make choices about who, what and how they represent. Secondly the research question will explore the role choices and motivations of assembly members. This will surface the flexibility in the enactment of different roles and the extent to which they adopt a reflexive approach to their role to evade or overcome representative issues and tensions.

Research Question Four:

How can research design and methods be developed to advance empirical investigation and generate new knowledge of the concept of appointed representation?

Research question three addresses the need to dismantle the concept of appointed representation and explore the intrinsic and extrinsic influences on assembly members and how this affects how they subsequently enact different representative roles. This research question seeks to offer a new, more holistic way of looking at the concept of appointed representation. It explores how analysis can consider the interplay between structural

factors and individual agency within set institutional contexts in order to interrogate the substantive action of representation and surface the relative importance of each element in informing, allowing or limiting the enactment of particular representative roles. This research question introduces the concept of organisational sensemaking (Weick 1995) and situates it in a wider research and methodological framework to explore the concept of appointed representation.

The argument and structure of the thesis
The central argument of this thesis is that the conception of types of representation as fixed on notions of delegates or trustees proves too simplistic with regards to defining how politicians choose and enact representative roles within the non-directly elected West Midlands Regional Assembly. The thesis is divided into eight chapters.

Chapter Two is the first literature review chapter and focuses on the political theory literature relating to the concept of representation. It explores the basis of systems of representation and assesses the seminal work of Pitkin (1967) in defining different types of representation. It introduces the crucial dichotomy within conceptions of substantive representation between delegates and trustees. The chapter concludes with a critique of Pitkin's four views of representation in line with subsequent theoretical and conceptual developments in the study of the concept of representation.

Chapter Three comprises a second literature review but focuses on the concept of representative roles. The chapter evaluates the attempts made by theorists to categorise the

behaviour of representatives through analyses of the practical enactment of representative roles and the development of typologies and categories of representative behaviour. The chapter explores the methodological techniques used by theorists to investigate the considerations of politicians in terms choosing which representative role orientation to adopt. The analysis explores the notions of representative focus, style, scope and role and appraises their value as organising principles with which to explore representation in indirectly elected bodies. The chapter concludes with a comparison of the various role typologies offered by local government academics and delivers a conceptual framework adapted from Pitkin (1967) with which to analyse interview data from assembly members in terms their enactment of different types of representation.

Chapter Four is the first empirical chapter which brings together data from eight scoping interviews with regional assembly members and maps them onto the deductive framework developed in Chapter Three. The chapter reports the findings of the analysis and concludes with the suggestion of five new role orientations for indirectly elected representatives.

Chapter Five analyses the research methodology used to address RQ1. It offers a critical appraisal of the strengths and limitations of the representative role system framework developed in Chapter Two. Therefore chapter five addresses RQ2. The chapter also introduces the final two research questions (RQ3, RQ4). The final part of the chapter provides the research plan for the remainder of the thesis and as such explains the rationale for introducing the final two research questions and talks about the methodological toolbox used to address them.

Chapter Six is an empirical chapter investigating the contextual structure and power factors that affect the substantive action of representation and the ability of assembly members to make choices about who and how they represent. The chapter is formed of a secondary analysis of the data from the scoping interviews utilising a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The chapter draws out codes and categories emerging from the data across all the interviews on the themes of representative issues and tensions. The final part of the chapter looks at the reflexivity in the actions of one councillor in the role choices he chooses to adopt. This analysis explores how the representative positions taken and actions made by individuals are informed by a coherence and consistency within their overall beliefs, ideals and normative judgements about how indirectly elected members should conduct their role. The chapter aims to bring together the preceding empirical analyses by assessing the positions adopted by assembly members in terms how their role choices, democratic concerns and choices of objects of representation are informed by an appreciation of structural factors within their institutional context.

Chapter Seven is a case study of the actions of one councillor's representation of three institutions on the issue of the Governments proposals for an Eco-town in his constituency in the period 2007-2010. The chapter translates the findings and implications of earlier analysis into a more grounded and situated analysis of the enactment of representation within a particular time, situation and context. The chapter builds on the concept of organisational sensemaking (Weick 1995) and operationalises it within a wider methodology to explore the situated interpretation and enactment of different representative roles. The format of the chapter introduces each institutional context before an analysis of the councillor's

representative actions within it and how he addressed the Eco-towns consultation. The sensemaking framework brings together the role choices and representative issues and tensions emerging from Chapter Six as part of a wider sensemaking analysis.

This final chapter (Chapter Eight) comprises five parts. The first section summarises the thesis and re-states the main points in each chapter. The second section identifies the contributions of the thesis. This is done through addressing the four research questions in turn and summarises the central arguments of the thesis in light of the research findings. The third section sets out lessons for future research using a similar methodological approach and suggests further avenues for research. The fourth section offers some reflections on the PhD process and the final section outlines the researcher's personal development.

CHAPTER 2: THEORIES OF REPRESENTATION

Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted key aspects in the evolution of regional governance in the UK including the development of regional assemblies as a means of 'decentralising power and bringing decision making closer to the people', 'giving the regions more flexibility', 'making government more accountable' and 'providing democratic representation in the regions and a new political voice' (DTLR 2002:11). The allocation of a representational function is a crucially important mechanism to address the implications posed by quasi governmental institutions for both accountability and democracy.

The meaning of democracy from the Greek word *dēmokratía* is rule by the people. However this ideal is impractical in the modern nation state as effective political participation is theoretically and practically limited. The viability of direct democracy also diminishes with scale and therefore there is a need for alternative systems by which the process of decision making can be democratised. Representative democracy is the dominant alternative to direct democracy and is founded on the principle of elected individuals forming a ruling body to represent the people. The notions of representation and the representative assembly are the central tenets of a system of liberal democracy. These two components Beetham argues are 'the most effective device for reconciling the requirements of popular control and political equality with the exigencies of time and the conditions of the modern territorial state' (1992:41). This chapter will examine the democratic claims made on behalf of representation within representative democracy and question how these tenets can be

reconciled with the growth of the appointed state and, specifically, non-directly elected bodies.

The crucial elements in the creation of regional assemblies for this thesis are the representative function and the role of politicians in fulfilling this function. The representative role will be considered in chapter three but firstly, this chapter will explore the concept of representation itself. The chapter begins with an elucidation of the concept of representation and its advocates and detractors. The analysis will then consider contemporary theories of representation and the critical distinction between representative democracy and representative government. The chapter then moves on to consider the elements that form a representative system before discussing Pitkin's four views of representation (1967) and the mandate independence controversy. The final section addresses the question of representation in non-elected bodies and delivers a critical appraisal of Pitkin's framework and evaluates its value as a suitable framework for addressing the concept of appointed representation.

Representation and Democracy

Despite representation being the cornerstone of democratic politics the roots of representation are aristocratic as opposed to democratic (Manin 1997). Hobbes positions representation as central to the possibility of a group creating or acting with a single mind.

> 'A multitude of men are made one person, when they are by one man, or one person, represented. The people are united by the fact that the representing body or individual representative speaks with one voice, hereby expressing the

one voice of the group 'it is the unity of the represener, not the unity of the represented, that maketh the person one' (Hobbes [1770] 2002:114).

In Leviathan Thomas Hobbes defined two kinds of person, natural and artificial, a natural person being one whose words and actions are considered his or her own, whereas an artificial person is one whose words and actions are considered those of someone else. This distinct divide is useful when considering Hobbes conception of authority and the definition of a representative as an artificial person. The notion of acting on behalf of someone else belies the basis of democracy as 'rule by the people' and replaces it with rule for the people and places a great importance on the role of those acting in place of the people.

The concept of representation is also a central foundation of John Locke's theory of government within The Second Treatise of Government (1690), in which he states that the consent of the majority particularly with regards to taxation must be given 'either by themselves or their representatives chosen by them' (Locke 2003:362). Locke did not see the social contract as requiring a democracy but instead specified that the government is entrusted with the 'right of making laws… for the public good' i.e. in the interest of and for the benefit those represented. If they break this trust then people may rescind their authority and place it in another government thus Locke invokes an accountability mechanism.

Representation of individuals instead of corporations proved the foundation for both a democratic conception of representation and the development of legislatures which are

accountable. The French social commentator Charles Montesquieu in his book the Spirit of the Laws discussed the constitution of England and praised the development of representative legislatures and representation in the country:

> 'As, in a country of liberty, every man, who is supposed a free agent ought to be his own governor; the legislative power should reside in the whole body of the people. But since this is impossible in large states and in small ones is subject to many inconveniences, it is fit the people should transact by their representatives what they cannot transact by themselves' (Montesquieu 1902:165).

The final conception of representation is interpretative representation whereby the representative takes on the role of both a spokesperson and interpreter of the views of the electorate. Interpretative representatives speak for the electorate, they interpret how the electorate wants them to act and position themselves to act accordingly. This was defined as 'personation' (Hobbes 1981) an act in which the representative speaks with authority for another, in particular another individual or group of individuals dissimilar to themselves. This conception fits with situations where representatives have diverse constituencies and need to use their judgement to act in a coherent manner ascribing a set of interpreted attitudes to the represented. Appointed representation can be viewed in the same way, when individuals are appointed they are formal representatives in the sense that they hold official positions. They speak for, act for and look after the interests of their respective groups.

The case for and against Representative Democracy

Representative democracy is defended by theorists and politicians predominantly by diverting definitions of democracy away from the notion of 'rule by the people' and recognising instead democracy as a set of 'political mechanisms' (Hirst 1990:28) or a set of political 'techniques' and 'instruments' whereby popular power is exercised (Sartori 1987:30). In positioning representative democracy as a political process any claims for it to be considered democratic rest upon the process itself. Robert Dahl suggests the criteria for a democratic process (1989:108-114) as being effective participation, voting equality at the decisive stage of collective decisions, enlightened understanding and control of the agenda by the demos. Dahl builds a case for the democratic process by stressing the intrinsic equality of all people and so every individual should be entitled to participate in collective decision-making. Dahl in this way argues that the democratic process is justified as it serves the interests of all individuals in society (Dahl 1989:322). Giovanni Sartori (1987) stipulates that modern democracy hinges on similar yet alternative requirements, limited majority rule, elective procedures and; the representational transmission of power. In this respect theories of representation are central to any normative conception of democratic legitimation in Britain.

Representative democracy also has its detractors who believe that self rule by the people is a fundamental requirement of democracy. Jean-Jacques Rousseau ([1762] 1993) famously claimed that the English people are free only in the moment of their vote, after which they return to slavery. Rousseau took the position that citizens cannot delegate their voting rights to representatives. Paul Hirst (1990) whilst agreeing that representation is necessary in a

modern world sees the process of representation as a practical exclusion of the mass of the people from the decision making process and cites a need for more representative institutional forms to supplement traditional representative institutions (Hirst 1994). Others see representative government as a system designed not to encompass the interests and preferences of the many but instead as a device to reduce wide scale citizen involvement. This idea was highlighted in the work of Bernard Manin who said 'representative government was conceived in explicit opposition to government by the people' (Manin 1997:232). The dominance of representative democracy can be seen as due to its reconciliation of extensive political involvement and a hierarchical system of government. Manin defined a 'principle of distinction' (1997:94) as representative democracy constitutes a clear division of political behaviour between represented and representatives both in terms of political activity and political competence and posited that representative democracy produces elected elites. The idea of Thomas Jefferson in the American declaration of independence that 'governments are instituted among men' with all power residing in the people may stand true but this power is only realised at electoral junctures.

Contemporary Theories of Representation

This section will explore contemporary theories of representation and the movement away from the general public as the focus within representative government to the enhanced and indeed detached role of the representative. This will be done via an appraisal of elite theory, pluralism and the increasing influence of political parties on the interpretation of representation.

Elite theories of representation, representative democracy and representative government

A point of crucial importance is the distinction between representative democracy and representative government. Edmund Burke ([1774] 1999) and to a lesser extent John Stuart Mill (1865) position representatives as superior to the represented, who should be elected on the basis of their enhanced knowledge, education, reasoning and sound judgement. The elected representative should then utilise their unbiased opinions and mature judgement without a need for further public involvement.

Burke sets out the independence of the representative from electors by arguing that they should be allowed to make decisions without the need for any form of consultation. This is a significant step away from listening to their opinions and acting upon them for this would shift their role away from that of a representative and into role as a delegate. Such a delegate role can force the representative to not only act contrary to their own interests but also contrary to the interests of the country as a whole. This distinction forms the crux of the difference between representative democracy and representative government. Hanna Pitkin (1967:211) describes Burke's position as *elitist* by his positioning of the representative as superior to the represented, not on the basis of their superior wisdom but instead excluding the public for fear of such 'ignorant inferior constituents' subordinating their own opinion. Burke saw the representative as having the freedom to adopt either position, although he advocated the representative role. James Mill (1955) viewed representative government as a way of ensuring that interests were protected from too great arbitrary power. John Stuart Mill (1865) like his father James also supported a detached role for the representative. In

arguing that representatives are 'groomed' for the purpose of representing others he concurs with Burke that they should be allowed to use their informed judgement:

> 'if it can be an object to pass representatives in any intellectual respect superior to average electors, it must be counted upon that the representative will sometimes differ in opinion from the majority of his constituents, and that when he does, his opinion will be the oftenest of the two' (Mill 1865:92).

In positing the notion that representatives have superior powers of mind to those who they are representing John Stuart Mill gives the impression that there is inherently a need for well informed and educated representatives and at a time when the working classes had just received the vote John Stuart Mill seemed to be arguing for their exclusion from taking active political roles. John Stuart Mill focused much of his writing upon how the extension of the electoral franchise to the working classes could, if unchecked, bring about the tyranny of the majority. John Stuart Mill and other elite theorists interpret the mass public in the words of Pitkin as 'incapable of governing themselves, [and] were not made to think or act without guidance or direction' (1967:169).

James Madison in 'The Federalist No.10' (1787) praises the benefits of a representative legislature as a system which can 'refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interests of their country' (Madison 2003:44). This trustee conception of representation is supplemented by the need according to Madison to have constituencies of a manageable size 'by enlarging too much the number of electors, you render the representative too little acquainted with all their local circumstances' (Madison 2003:45). Madison hoped that representative institutions would limit the opportunity for corruption and unfair personal

influence of representatives by local individuals. The development of a representative system was also seen by Madison as a way by which representatives could develop and hold superior knowledge, judgment, negotiation and speaking skills to their constituents. Such an idea feeds on the notion of politicians as experts and politics being a career which leads to questions over the calibre of representatives.

The early 20th century saw theorists take on the mantle from the elite theories of Burke and John Stuart Mill with classical elite theorists adopting a 'scientific' approach to 'prove' that government by small elite was inevitable and even desirable. Vilfredo Pareto (1935) emphasised the psychological and intellectual superiority that elites obtained, believing the elites to be formed of those accomplishing the highest achievements in any field and thus defined not only governing elites but also non-governing elites. Gaetano Mosca (1939) defined society as composed of two classes – the ruling class and a class that is ruled. This notion therefore harshly opposes the democratic idea that the electorate have control over decision making as it is the ruling elite which governs. Robert Michels (1949) furthered this idea with an empirical study of political parties during the early 1900s. His study showed that the parties, rather than being run on a democratic and egalitarian basis, were instead organised by a small elite at the top of the party which Michels defined as the 'iron law of oligarchy'. In specifying the inability for the mass of citizens to make complex decisions Michels stressed the need for leaders and specialised staff. Classic elite theorists saw no need for mass involvement or participation in society as it is the role of the elite to govern on their behalf.

The formal basis of representative democracy is rooted in a theory of liberal democracy. This in turn is couched within two distinct propositions, an electoral basis and the idea of competitive elitism. Joseph Schumpeter defined the democratic method as 'the arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote' (Schumpeter 1943:269). This places the specific role of the people as the producers of government. Simply put Schumpeter's definition sees competitive elitism as purely a method for electing governments and in order to gain elite pluralism. Schumpeter supports the development of a political elite and saw the development of parties and machine politicians as a 'response to the fact that the electoral mass is incapable of action other than a stampede'(Schumpeter 1943:283).

The implications of adopting a more economic theory of democracy are wide. For example when the electorate chooses an administration from the options presented to them by political parties the representative basically acts as an intermediary. Hereby the representative loses their own representational character at elections as they appear as a representative not of their constituents but of their party. The system keeps public participation to a minimum i.e. simply choosing between competing parties at elections with the elector becoming a passive as opposed to an active citizen (Stewart 2003). Dunleavy and O'Leary suggest that the combination of elite theories and pluralism in the conceptual form of democratic elitism portray a 'realistic picture of how representative democracies operate, stripped of normative optimism which colours many liberal accounts'(1987:141).

The view of Schumpeter contrasts directly with the view put forward by Rousseau that the health of a polity is dependent on the involvement of the active citizen in all aspects of governance. John Stuart Mill despite often being portrayed as an elitist was a strong promoter of participation, particularly at the local level. Mill argued for the involvement of ordinary people in the decision making process in order to avoid abuses of power and protect the individual from potential harmful actions by the state. Therefore Mill was a strong advocate of the need to combine both representative government and participatory democracy. Contrary to Mill's calls for the increased involvement of ordinary people in the decision making process, this has not occurred in mainstream politics beyond the sporadic interjection opportunities at elections.

Pluralist thinkers including Dahl (1961) and Sartori (1962) agreed with Schumpeter's democratic elitist arguments that direct democracy should be redefined so as to exclude the idea of direct rule and the sovereignty of the people. Dahl and Schumpeter agreed that democracy should move the emphasis away from the electorates function to make decisions on issues and instead focus on the role to produce a government. The focus therefore is for electors to select a representative government as opposed to interact and decide on individual issues.

Pluralists defend their position in arguing that as long as rulers are chosen by the ruled this is sufficient for a system to be considered democratic (Held 1996). Dahl argued that the safeguard of democracy is where different groups and parties must compete in an open contest for the electoral support of the eligible electoral population. Dahl defined such a

system as a polyarchy and reinforced the view that competition among organised groups structures policy outcomes and establishes the democratic nature of a regime. Polyarchy is a form of democracy in which a small group rules with mass participation in politics limited to party or leadership choices at elections carefully managed by competing elites.

The notion that polyarchies are characterised by 'minority rule', as argued by Dahl is based around two methods of political interaction: firstly the electoral system, where electors vote in favour of groups most sympathetic to their wishes and concerns and secondly pressure groups assure 'minority rule' by picking up the slack left by political parties in influencing governments, parties and public opinion. In this way Dahl believes that polyarchical systems can fully represent the electorate as their interests are advanced by both the electoral system and a variety of competing groups who are at least 'somewhat responsive to the preferences of ordinary citizens' (Dahl 1956:131).

Neo pluralists criticised Dahl and other pluralists for neglecting the ability of the elected to set the agenda, the elected not being an umpire for adjudicating the demands of different groups but instead a relatively autonomous actor that has the ability to both forge and look after its own interests.

What forms a system of representation?
The centrality of theories of representation to any normative conception of democratic legitimation in Britain has led to a great volume of academic attention focusing on systems of election, representation and the actions of representatives. Before moving on to discuss

different ways of defining the concept of representation it is useful to briefly appraise the elements that make up the composite system of representation.

There are four essential elements within a representative system. Firstly there are the representatives; secondly there are the represented; thirdly is the relationship that exists between the two groups i.e. representation exercised by the representatives on behalf of the represented and finally the setting within which the activity of representation takes place.

Representatives may be individual agents or groups of individual agents in cases where representatives are elected on a party political platform; they may act for their own ends, according to their own judgements or on the basis of the furthering a party goal or aim. In the case of furthering a party goal or aim this will be agreed as an end by the party and all representatives will be expected to act accordingly more as a cooperative agency than a collection of individual agents. The represented could be a single individual as when a politician takes up a case on behalf of a constituent or the represented could be a larger group either a proportion of the electorate of a constituency or alternatively a group within a constituency e.g. GPs in a constituency.

John Stuart Mill declared representative democracy as the grand discovery of modern times whilst others describe it as a pillar of democratic theory (Manin 1997; Przeworski, Stokes et al. 1999) forming the backbone of democratic politics. Despite this, what it actually is and how it is best done has been extensively debated in historic political theory and is still

extensively addressed by contemporary political scientists in discussion about theories of representation. Representation itself is not only a political procedure but has become a constitutional norm despite being broadly contested. Hanna Pitkin compared the concept of representation to 'a rather complicated, convoluted, three-dimensional structure in the middle of a dark enclosure' where 'political theorists give us, as it were, flash bulb photographs of the structure taken from different angles' (Pitkin 1967:10) The situation remains as characterised by Heinz Eulau in that 'we can finally say with some confidence what representation is not. But in spite of many centuries of theoretical effort we cannot say what representation is' (Eulau 1978:31). The concept of representation is misleadingly simple and extensively debated between both classic and modern theorists over the question of who representatives are and whom, what and how they represent.

Hanna Pitkin provides a straightforward definition saying to represent means 'making present in some sense of something which is not present literally or in fact' (Pitkin 1967:8-9). This definition delivers a paradox as 'the people' are held to be present through their representatives, yet they are not actually present at the juncture of decision making thus they are both included and excluded in the political process. Expanding on Pitkin's definition, political representation occurs when individuals speak, symbolise, advocate and act on behalf of others in the political arena. This simplistic definition is inadequate as representation has multiple competing definitions each containing different and competing conceptions of how political representatives should represent and the standards with which to compare them.

Pitkin's Four Views of Representation

In her seminal work on representation Hanna Pitkin (1967) offered one of the most comprehensive discussions of the concept of political representation breaking it down into four main views of representation each leaning towards a different approach for examining representation. The four main views are formalistic representation focused around the dimensions of authorization and accountability, symbolic representation, descriptive representation and substantive representation (see figure 4). These will be briefly outlined and evaluated below.

Figure 4 Pitkin's Four Views of Representation
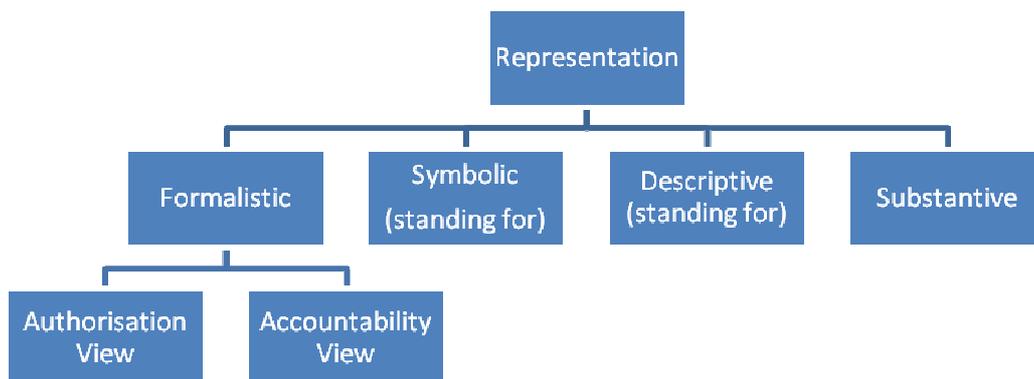
(Pitkin 1967)

Formalistic Views of Representation

The formalistic definition offered by Pitkin is derived from Hobbesian arguments defining representation. Thomas Hobbes' work Leviathan (Hobbes 1981[1651]) deduced a formalistic definition of representation through it being derived out of a theory of authorisation and consent or more basically the giving and having of authority. A transaction occurs before the

act of representation begins. The result straddles the corporatist-individualist divide, the basis for representation comes from individuals who in becoming party to the social contract authorise the sovereign, who then becomes their representative and is given a right to act which they did not have before. The direct implication of Hobbes calling his sovereign a representative is that they have a duty to represent their subjects as opposed to just doing as they please. Hereby when individuals join the social contract they become part of the body politic and the state can be conceived of in a medieval corporatist way whereby all the political rights of individuals are accrued to it. In this respect the individualist elements of Hobbes' theory are the formative basis of the individualisation of the theory of political representation and furthermore the basis of modern democratic representation. Pitkin clearly highlights this as a critical element within Hobbes formalistic definition 'to the extent that he has been authorized, within the limits of his authority, anything that a man does is representing' (1967:39). The point of authorisation is crucial for after this point it is the decision of the representative to choose how they act and signifies the point of detachment of the representative from the represented. Any representative relationship at this point comes from a role choice by the representative to represent what they see fit. The authorisation view pivots around the idea that a representative is someone that has been authorized to act and is therefore given a right, which they did not have before. Furthermore power is placed into the hands of the representative whose rights have increased whilst their responsibilities have decreased.

The second formalistic dimension of representation outlined by Pitkin is accountability. For accountability theorists a representative is someone who is to be held to account by another

for what they do. In some respects the accountability dimension is diametrically opposed to the authorisation dimension for authorisation effectively frees the representative from responsibility for their action whereas accountability accrues new obligations to the representative. In some respects accountability becomes a corrective device for the authorisation view. Pitkin in 'The concept of representation' argues theorists should not endeavour to reconcile the paradoxical nature of representation but instead preserve the paradox by placing equal importance on the autonomy of the representative and the autonomy of those being represented. Pitkin cites the need for representatives to act in ways to maintain the capacity of the represented to authorise and hold their representatives accountable whilst upholding the capacity of the representative to act independently of the wishes of the represented. Pitkin places great importance upon knowing the context in which the concept of representation is placed if one is to succeed in determining its meaning.

In short, formalistic definitions of representation focus on the institutional arrangements that initiate, precede and follow the act of representation. The dimensions of authorisation and accountability will be considered further in the chapter alongside a discussion on elections and the notion of competitive elitism however it is useful to briefly assess them normatively as criteria to ascertain standards for evaluating representativeness. Regarding authorisation i.e. the means by which a representative gains their position, the standard for evaluation is simply whether or not a representative legitimately holds their position. The second dimension of formalistic representation is accountability. Accountability concerns the ability of constituents to either punish the representative for failing to follow their wishes

e.g. unelect them, or alternatively the responsiveness of representatives to their constituents. The only measure of standards here are assessments of whether the representative has been responsive or sanctioned. Both the formalistic elements of representation, authorisation and accountability are criteria measured outside the act of representation itself but both evade the idea of the 'activity of representing'(Pitkin 1967:59). Although authorisation and accountability surround the concept of representation rather than focus on the act of representation itself they are criteria that are intrinsic to making normative assessments of democracy and in this respect there is a need to assess how they affect the representative and the act of representation.

Returning to Pitkin's four views of representation discussion will now concentrate on definitions about the act of representation, namely what representatives do and what constitutes the activity of representing. The basic dichotomy offered by Pitkin was through definitions of 'acting for' and 'standing for'. Turning first to 'standing for' this element splits into two types 'descriptive' and 'symbolic'.

Descriptive and Symbolic Representation
The notion of descriptive representation is 'the making present of something absent by resemblance or reflection' which was coined and explained initially in the theoretical work of Griffiths and Wollheim (1960) alongside symbolic representation, ascriptive representation and the representation of interests. Griffiths and Wollheim define descriptive representatives as already having the same attributes as or being analogous of their group or generation. In which case it is impossible to become such a representative, as it is

necessary or sufficient for the representative to already be similar in some respects to the represented. The basis of descriptive representation is a figurative metaphor i.e. that the representatives are a 'speaking likeness' (Skinner 2005:163) of those that they rule with Parliament being a visual representation of the people. Similarly Sartori speaks of 'sociological representation' whereby a person is considered representative because their personal attributes i.e. religion, social status, education are typical of the group they represent (Sartori 1968). With regards to the relationship between the representative institutions and those they represent, representatives ought to exemplify the significant aspects of the people they represent; key variations between the electorate should also be represented in proportion to their distributions within the electorate. In this way with regards to the development of electoral systems, those which deliver proportional representations of the relative composition of the votes best serve this figurative conception of representation (Mill 1865). The figurative conception of representation could also be the formative basis of the organisation of legislatures around geographically defined constituencies from the notion that the geographical divisions between areas are salient and important.

Descriptive representation has relevance but is only a partial view. Firstly representation as resemblance presupposes that there are meaningful collectivities in society that can be reflected in the composition of an institution, if said institution is to be considered representative in descriptive terms then there is an implication that institutions should supply information about the nation as a whole. Descriptive representation has also been taken as the starting point for theorists to analyse the demographic similarities between

representatives and the represented for example on the basis of gender, class and race. This idea of representation has been discussed as the 'politics of presence' (Phillips 1995) however its value is limited.

Secondly when considering who is the best person to represent a particular cultural or ethnic group, it is clear that an individual does not have to be part of a particular group to be an effective representative. This point was also made by James Madison, the fourth president of the United States of America, a predominant advocate for representation by population rather than representation by area. Madison proposed that elected representatives, as opposed to the people as a whole, would be more disposed to consider the national interest ahead of a particular factional interest. Madison inferred that his ideal of representation would be that the representative and the citizen will not only differ from each other (with regards to the representatives having greater political wisdom) but that they ought to differ as he saw one of the principal aims of political representation to select the wisest and best candidates for the office of representing the electorate in government.

Descriptive representation evades the Burkean conception of elected representatives representing the interests of all as each representative would be selected due to their resemblance to a particular group in society as opposed to being the best person to do the job. Pitkin (1969) argues that to legitimise the replacement of direct democracy with representative government, the representative body should closely resemble the whole nation and act in the same way the whole nation would. Ultimately what 'qualifies a man to represent is his representativeness – not what he does, but who he is' (Pitkin 1969:10). A

crucial point of note is that as political parties seek to increase the amount of women and people from different ethnic and social groups to stand for election they are aiming to increase representation as resemblance, but not strictly democratic representation. Simply put when representation is posited as resemblance then how politicians actually go about the business of representing becomes irrelevant. Linking back to representation as authorisation and accountability, authorisation is derived from subjective resemblance and politicians can only be held to account for only what they have done, not what they are.

In contrast symbolic representation is where 'no resemblance or reflection is required and the connection to what is represented is of a different kind' (Pitkin 1967:3). Politicians symbolically representing can embody traditions or ideals without personally having any particular qualities pertaining to them. In this way a politician makes the choice to focus on attitudes appropriate to something or someone other than their self. Therefore symbolic representation fits with policy advocate conceptions of representation. In this way symbolic representation is where a representative 'stands for' the represented with the measure of this being the degree of acceptance the representative has among the represented. Symbolic representation means politicians giving information about the represented with good representatives being those who give accurate information and furthermore where there is no such information to give, the act of representation cannot take place. Power therefore is situated in the hands of politicians as to which characteristics of resemblance are politically relevant to reproduce. Bringing descriptive and symbolic representation together focuses attention around characteristics of representatives. However it avoids the political agency of them acting for or on behalf of the represented.

Substantive Representation

The notion of representatives 'acting for', 'on the behalf of', 'in the interest of' or 'as the agent of' someone else relates to the activity of representation itself. Whereas formalistic and symbolic definitions do not directly allow theorists to assess the relative conduct of representatives, substantive representation gives scope for a full assessment of the extent to which representatives advance the policy preferences of those they represent. Positioning representation as a substantive activity allows theorists to compare and assess the obligations of representatives as agents for others whether they are individuals, parties or ideas. This idea takes what Tussman calls the 'perspective of the actor' (1960:12) i.e. what the representative believes is required according to their role and thus gives us the standards to judge representative action and decide whether the representative in question has represented well or badly. The idea, also described as 'ascriptive representation', stresses the point that representatives act on behalf of particular individuals or groups without having to share any particular characteristics with them. A clear example of this would be the way in which a lawyer acts on behalf of a client in a court of law. The concepts of emulating representatives and representatives as agents show the scale of difference between representative roles and choices. On one side emulating representatives stand for the electorate by typifying or epitomizing it whereas the alternate conception positions representatives as acting as an agent of the electorate.

The notion of an emulating representative holds with the idea of the representative being representative of the electorate as a whole whilst the agential representative would act in line with what they believed to be the electorate's interests at the centre of their thinking.

This positions the representative firmly in a position of flux continually having to weigh up their perceptions of the current mood of the electorate as opposed to a role as a passive indicator defined in figurative conceptions of representation. An electoral basis is needed to ensure electorate consent to the agential role of representatives and there is also a need for a device to ensure a regular check and control of the definition and implementation of the representative's brief e.g. regular elections and manifesto consultations. Of crucial importance is the agency accorded to representatives to decide what or who to represent. This choice frames contemporary discussion about representation with a choice balancing on broadly contrasting conceptions of the representative role and the relationship between politicians and the electorate. This will be explored in the following section with an assessment of the 'mandate independence controversy'.

A critical juncture: Delegate versus Trustee conceptions of representation

Historically within theoretical literature on political representation the focus and debate has been on whether representatives should act either as delegates or as trustees. Madison (2003) was a large supporter of the delegate conception of representation, that representatives should basically follow the preferences expressed by their constituents. The contrast to this came from Edmund Burke when he made an address to the electors of Bristol, an excerpt is shown below.

> 'Parliament is not a Congress of Ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an Agent and Advocate, against other Agents and Advocates; but Parliament is a deliberative Assembly of one Nation, with one Interest, that of the whole; where, not local Purposes, not local Prejudices ought to guide, but the general Good, resulting from the

general Reason of the whole. You choose a Member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not Member of Bristol, but he is a Member of Parliament' (Burke [1774] 1999:13).

This address blew apart traditional conceptions of representation and is a critical juncture in how representation and the representative role was to be done, considered and studied in the future. The speech set in motion ideas that freed the representative from being bound by the views of the electorate and should instead follow their own understandings of what are the best actions to pursue. Delegate and trustee conceptions of political representation thus place competing and contradicting demands on the representative.

Edmund Burke was a significant supporter of representation as a central pillar of legitimate government; however he brought the situation full circle by reintroducing a corporatist view of where the interests and rights of communities are situated. Burke saw interests and rights as unattached to elements of society and community such as the population, land or tax contributions. Burke believed Parliament should be a 'deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole' (Burke [1774] 1999:13). On this basis Burke considered that representatives did not need to be directly tied to the constituencies they represent. Burke defined three different types of representation: actual, virtual and traditional (Burke [1792] 1999). The idea of virtual representation is that constituents do not elect a representative, but the representative or trustee resembles them in their interests and political sympathies. This idea came from the context of the time with citizens in the colonies only having virtual representation within the

British government. Burke saw virtual representation as better in many cases than actual representation, namely representation via elections, on the grounds that people may err in choice; but common interest and sentiment are rarely mistaken. Weissberg explained the concept of virtual representation in later work:

> 'the city of Birmingham is not automatically unrepresented merely because it has no delegate in Parliament, because Bristol, which has the same commercial interests as Birmingham, does send Members to Parliament, Birmingham is virtually represented' (Weissberg 1978:537).

Burke turned the idea of the representative as delegate on its head by positioning the representative as a trustee with authorisation to judge and act independently of constituency opinions.

Rousseau rejects this instrumental view of politics and reverts to the classical view of politics that direct participation in politics is necessary to ensure the legitimacy of laws. Most democratic theory has tended to follow Rousseau in assuming that representative democracy is, at best, an instrumental substitute for stronger forms of democracy (Pateman 1976). Rousseau saw the notion of delegates as abhorrent and attacked the notion of political representation within his work *The Social Contract* (1762) 'The idea of representation is modern; it come to us from feudal government, from that iniquitous and absurd system which degrades humanity and the name of man' (Rousseau [1762] 1993:266). Rousseau equates the idea of politicians as delegates with the use of mercenary soldiers in wars. Rousseau posits that people cannot be represented, as sovereignty cannot be transferred 'Sovereignty, for the same reason as makes it inalienable, cannot be

represented; it lies essentially in the general will, and will does not admit of representation'(Rousseau [1762] 1993:266). The moral capacity of the individual is at the root of politics for Rousseau and this cannot be delegated to, nor mediated through others but instead requires the direct participation of the individual.

The trustee theory of representation requires neutrality in politics, public servants are supposed to act in the public interest without regard to the competing demands of a pluralistic society (Pitkin 1969). If the trustee model is to work pubic interest needs to be translated into policies formulated and enacted on the basis of technical and apolitical criteria such as efficiency or effectiveness. Such a model seems impossible to accomplish as politicians find it difficult to divorce themselves fully from their own ideologies, political realities and the values of society.

In contrast the delegate theory of representation posits that politicians should expressly act for the people that elect them or alternatively if they are appointed they should act for the people that appoint them. The appointee's role is to make decisions as if they were their appointing institution. The contemporary variant of delegate theory is principal-agent theory whereby an agent of spokesman acts for the principal precisely as the principal would (Birch 1971). This however is clearly down to the appointee interpreting correctly what the interests and policies of the appointing institution are. Furthermore the question arises as to whether the appointee represents the ruling group or the opposition of the appointing institution. Taking the substantive view of representation directs the theorist to assess of the value of representation within democracy. The relevance of the characteristics of

representatives as in the descriptive and symbolic views of representation are only relevant insofar as they affect their representative actions.

Critique of Pitkin's Four Views of Representation

Hanna Pitkin (1967) offers the most comprehensive exploration of the concept of representation. Despite normative and empirical critique her typology continues to inform and shape discussion. In taking the approach that to understand representation, one must consider the ways in which the term is used Pitkin's framework delivers a broad schematic overview of the concept. The framework has value in that it captures the different facets of a complex concept. However in adopting this broad approach Pitkin fails to explain how the different views of representation fit together. In conflating conceptions of formalistic representation with conceptions of symbolic, descriptive and substantive representation Pitkin utilises different and conflicting standards to evaluate representatives and representativeness. Table 8 (over page) illustrates the research questions posed and standards for evaluating representativeness of each of the four views of representation.

The framework broadly encompasses the multiple facets of the concept of representation; however it does so without delivering explanatory power as to how each of the views of representation inter-relate. This represents a substantial omission and reflects the lacunae in the literature about how formalistic representation relates to descriptive and substantive views of the concept.

Table 8 The questions asked by Pitkin's Four Views of Representation

	Description	Research questions posed by each view	Standards for evaluating representativeness
1. Formalistic	The institutional arrangements that precede and initiate representation.	What is the institutional position of the representative?	None
(Authorisation)	How a representative gains their office, position, status or standing	What is the process by which a representative gains power (e.g. elections/appointment) and what are the ways a representative can enforce his or her decisions.	No standards for assessing behaviour of the representative. Can only assess whether a representative holds their position legitimately.
(Accountability)	Constituents ability to punish representatives for failing to act in accordance with their wishes (e.g. voting politician out of office) or the representatives responsiveness to the wishes of their constituents.	What sanctioning mechanisms are available to constituents? Is the representative responsive to the preferences of their constituents?	No standards for assessing how well a representative behaves. Can only determine whether a representative can be sanctioned or has been responsive.
2. Symbolic	The ways that a representative 'stands for' the represented / the meaning that a representative has for those being represented.	What kind of response is invoked by the representative in those being represented?	Representatives are assessed by their degree of acceptance among the represented
3. Descriptive	The extent to which a representative resembles those being represented.	Does the representative look like, share experiences with or have common interests with the represented?	Representatives are assessed by the accuracy of their resemblance to the represented.
4. Substantive	The activity of representatives, the actions taken on behalf of, as an agent of, in the interest and as a substitute for the represented.	Does the representative advance policy preferences which serve the interests of the represented?	Representatives are assessed by the extent to which policy outcomes they advance serve 'the best interests' of their constituents.

Adapted from Dovi (2006)

Pitkin's framework has also drawn criticism due to its static nature as solely a descriptive typology with calls for a more dynamic approach to the concept of representation. This criticism is driven by the potential reflexivity in the role of the politician and the flexibility and fluctuation of potential objects and issues of representation. Pitkin only begins to recognise what later scholars have called the 'entrepreneurial' aspect of representation (Brennan and Hamlin 1999). As explained by Warren and Castiglione 'while individuals hold some interests, identities, and values quite consciously, many others are formed in response

to representative entrepreneurship, which may function to evoke latent interests, raise consciousness, or overcome collective action'. In this way representative entrepreneurship can reveal 'interests' or 'identities' or even 'values' that do not 'pre-exist the representative relationship' but 'become objects of representation through it' (2006:13). Michael Saward also sees the development of typologies as limiting with the categories of delegate and trustee being built upon the simple and ready accessibility of the interests of the represented. In this respect Saward argues that 'the character of the represented is precisely what we ought to be putting to question' (2010:17) turning typologies on their heads, arguing that 'these roles are in fact resources for would-be representatives' (2010:33).

Saward (2010) in his work on the 'representative claim' critiques Pitkin's primary focus on the representative rather than the represented suggesting that a unidirectional approach is 'unnecessarily limiting' and 'encourages us to ignore the subtle and deeper processes of constructing the represented or that which needs to be represented' (Saward 2010:10). Saward appraises that Pitkin is influenced by thirty years of writing on representation in her depiction of the representative as 'having a clear readily accessible, and largely stable set of interests' (2010:10). The criticism from Saward is that this has ultimately led to subsequent attention being deflected from the 'constituted, constitutive and dynamic character of representation' (2010:10). Saward continues to criticise Pitkin's categories and the division between A) formalistic (authorisation and accountability) and B) substantive representation as 'acting for' (a person), and descriptive and symbolic representation as two modes of 'standing for' (a person or object). This divide according to Saward positions type A as things that involve activity 'acting for', and type B as more passive as a person does not have to do

anything in particular to 'stand for' something else. Saward asserts that this type of categorisation 'sidelines categories of active symbolic or aesthetic representation' (2010:14). This positions the politician as primarily someone who 'acts for' others and only secondarily and less interestingly 'stands for' something. This according to Saward presents the represented as transparent, whereas in fact their 'character, views, boundaries, interests, and priorities are almost always contested at some level – in part because there is no one obviously acceptable characterisation' (2010:14).

Iris Young (2000) also contributed to thinking about representation with her emphasis on the 'politics of difference' and in particular the importance of shifting 'perspectives' as well as more standard interests and opinions. The main argument runs contrary to Pitkin's implicit if not explicit notion that there are relatively 'fixed' interests to which representatives ought to respond. Young built upon earlier work by Schwartz who defined a 'transmission belt' model of representation (1988:25), Young stressed that representation was instead a dynamic relational process over time rather than simply interests being fixed, clear, and visible.

The final stream of critique of the framework relates to its narrow focus on traditional elective contexts. Pitkin like so much literature on representation (Phillips 1995; Young 2000; Urbinati 2006) focuses solely on standard models of parliamentary and elective representation and thus the scope of their insights is limited with regard to alternative and non elective contexts. Recent academic attention has therefore called for a greater consideration of representation beyond the ballot (Saward 2006; Warren 2008). Pitkin's authorisation/accountability distinction is excessively formal however non-electoral

representation lacks the clear sequencing of authorisation and accountability that is produced by regular elections. The process starting with an authorisation to represent interests, then deliberation and decision making, followed by being held to account for the results is too simple even in electoral contexts and focused on the retrospective giving of accounts. Other academics have considered the discursive and ongoing nature of account giving looking at the prospective and pre emptive actions of representatives in giving account of their representations, actions and decisions (Young 2000; Mansbridge 2003; Thompson 2004). Mansbridge defines representation as a multiform as opposed to monolithic concept (Rogowski 1981). Mansbridge (2003) offered three additional types of representation beyond promissory representation (similar to Pitkin's formalistic representation). She added anticipatory representation; based on what representatives believe will be rewarded and the next election not on what they promised at the last, gyroscopic representation; where representatives look within to derive from their own experience, conceptions of interest and principles to serve as a basis for action. Finally of particular relevance to this thesis is surrogate representation. Surrogate representation occurs when a legislator represents constituents outside of their district. This category is particularly relevant when considering members of the Regional Assembly. Members of the Regional Assembly have a broad range of representative options including geographic distinctions (local/regional), demographic distinctions (urban/rural) as well as other potential interest groups (farming etc.) both external to and encompassed within their constituencies. Rehfeld (2005) argues that constituencies of interest such as these contribute to an argument against political representation being organised on the basis of territory.

Since its publication in 1967 Pitkin's 'Concept of Representation' has delivered the dominant framework for considering representation and has shaped contemporary discussion of the concept within political science. The strength of the framework lies in its broad capture of the multiple facets of the concept. The dominant critique of the framework is that whilst illuminating it fails to surface how the different facets of representation relate to one another. More recently criticism has suggested the framework is too static to capture the true nature of the concept, ignoring the 'entrepreneurial' aspects of representation whereby interests and values are constituted through the representative process as opposed to being pre-existing. Young (2000) also asserted that representation was a more dynamic relational process. The final area of criticism comes from the context of Pitkin's work and a great deal of subsequent work in that it focuses on traditional elective representation and its mechanisms and processes. This does not take into account the shift to systems of governance, increased pluralism and the notion of non-elected representation. Overall the main call from the literature is for a more dynamic, realistic and constitutive set of theoretical perspectives on representation. Academic attention asks for a greater understanding of the dynamics of representation as opposed to the more normative questions which dominate.

Summary: Representation in non-elected bodies

An analysis of the political theory literature shows that the concept of representation was and remains historically contested. Various types of representation have arisen out of differing historical, contextual and organisational settings revealing the numerous options available to representatives with regards to role choices and enactment. A representative can adopt a liberal perspective akin to that of John Stuart Mill, a more conservative position

similar to that of Burke, Schumpeter's elite position or a position out of the pluralist ideas of Dahl but ultimately will be able to make decisions without the need to involve the electorate. The shift from representative democracy to representative government has also had a profound effect on how representation has subsequently been studied.

Many factors emerge from the literature review which informs how the thesis will approach the research questions. Firstly the importance of context cannot be understated. It is clear that representation is established and moulded by constitutional design and subsequent representative roles are in turn structured by institutional rules and inducements. Secondly the concept of political representation is inherently complex, the activity of representing cannot be understood on the 'one-to-one, person-to person' (1967:221) model of the principal-agent relationship. Pitkin (1967:220) emphasised that any 'legislative decision' will take into account multiple and competing factors: bargains struck with colleagues in the legislative; the agenda and interests of the party; the ideas of the nation as a whole; not to mention the legislators own 'views and opinions'. Any such decision is multidimensional and cannot be confined to as single axis between the politician and their constituency. In this respect the principal-agent model is insufficient because the relationship is not dyadic. Thirdly the constituency definition of representation is fundamental as it establishes the frame – the inclusions and exclusions – within which issues are decided. This builds on Plotke's assertion that 'the opposite of representation is not participation. The opposite of representation is exclusion' (1997:19).

To return to the focus of the thesis in particular the literature review considered Pitkin's Four Views of Representation in order to assess their relevance to representation in non-elected bodies. Whilst one of the primary critiques of Pitkin's work is that it is derived from the study of traditional elective forms of representation and government, the formalistic definitions of authorisation and accountability are crucial elements to explore with regards to non-elected bodies such as the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The Regional Assembly is an example of shift in the locus of collective decision making away from state-centric models and towards governance models. State centric models can simply gather sovereignty from the people through elections in order to act in their name. However non-elected bodies do not provide formal legitimacy and clear representative accountability to those affected by decisions. Regional Assemblies are new political arenas for representative action but their formation on the basis of appointment and lack of an elective mandate does not automatically mean that representation will not occur. Indeed Pitkin asserts that representation frequently occurs when the represented is neither literally organised, nor agitating for an 'express popular wish'. Pitkin argued that there is a need to understand representatives as having the ethical obligation to be responsive to their constituents' interests. Indeed within elective systems representation is a reciprocal arrangement; it is an activity where agency cannot be the property of the either the represented or representative.

When considering representation in non-elected bodies there is a need to return to a Hobbesian conception of representation and explore what constitutes the representative basis. Representation occurs when one person is authorised to act in place of others, for

most theorists of representative democracy the criterion for this becomes elections. However if representation is viewed as the delegation or granting of authority the basis of election or selection is unimportant, the point of importance becomes the accountability function of the representative. In this respect Pitkin's formalistic views of representation provide a two stage framework with which to question the representative relationship and critically appraise the democratic function fulfilled by assembly members. The first stage explores how mandates are viewed and constructed by appointed assembly members. Within this consideration must address the two points of authorisation for assembly members. Initially they are elected and authorised by those who elect them at constituency level and from this point they become members of the local authority. The next point of authorisation is through their appointment to the assembly, the representative basis for this being their membership as councillors on their local authority. The disjuncture created by appointed roles also weakens any potential principal-agent relationship between voters and representatives due to communicative distance and information deficits. The second stage of the framework relates to the accountability view and how assembly members fulfil their representative function through being accountable. Questioning must address two elements, firstly what is the constituency to which they consider themselves accountable and secondly how do they go about ensuring accountability to it. Assessing the formalistic components of representation helps explore the criteria of difference between appointed assembly members and elected politicians in how they view and enact the representative and accountability functions required of their role. However this only addresses part of research question one.

RQ1: How do councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected?

It is clear from the literature explored in chapter one that the appointed nature of the Regional Assembly clouds the landscape of representation posing questions about accountability and democracy. However to address the question of how councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in the West Midlands Regional Assembly analysis will explore the substantive element of representation i.e. how they go about fulfilling their representative role. The complexity of issues considered at the Regional Assembly is compounded by the political complexity derived from multi-level and overlapping constituencies and mandates. These overlapping elements create a strain on the capacity and power of representatives to stand for and act in the interests of those they represent. The next chapter (chapter 3) will operationalise Pitkin's conception of substantive representation through an exploration of the representative role.

As a new institution fulfilling a democratic and representative function the West Midlands Regional Assembly is an important location warranting empirical attention. Modern definitions of representative democracy express dominance of party as the defining feature of the system. However in the case of Regional Assemblies the representative chain is to reflect the wishes of the home institution that had appointed them and had conferred on them the mandate. This would in turn reinstate and thus strengthen the geographic /areal representative link between the assembly member and the 'constituency' or local authority unit. However members of a Regional Assembly lack of a formal representative chain to the

electorate, the structures and scope for representative democracy through appointed officials is considerably weakened. The representative mix of the assembly encompasses both elected officials from multiple levels and tiers of regional and local democracy alongside non-political social, environmental and economic partners. This crucial extension of the representative field could be loosely described as a form of participatory democracy or even market democracy. The Pitkin framework will be used to explore the objects, interests and actions of representation and thus give empirical data about which variant of democracy the assembly membership engenders for the elected officials operating within it and how this differs from their conception of representation in other organisations.

The actions of assembly members in fulfilling the representative function are particularly important due to the questions raised by the fact that they are appointed as opposed to elected. Even though Pitkin's work focused on elected representation it offers a broad schematic overview of the concept and therefore provides the perfect tool with which to capture the critically relevant facets of representation for democracy. Insofar as it captures the formalistic elements of authorisation and accountability and how these elements are acted upon through substantive representation. The inability of the framework to capture the 'entrepreneurial' aspects of representation and address the interplay between how the authorisation element of formalistic representation informs the substantive action of representation is not relevant at this stage as the primary question relates to the 'how' of the appointed representation question. The call from the literature for a more dynamic, realistic and constitutive set of theoretical perspectives on representation will be addressed through an appraisal of Pitkin's framework in this context (RQ2).

RQ2: To what extent can Pitkin's framework of representation be applied to indirectly elected bodies?

The next chapter will operationalise the representative role system framework as the basis for questioning of eight members of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. This questioning will provide data to explore and address the first two research questions.

CHAPTER 3: THE REPRESENTATIVE ROLE

Introduction: The Representative Role and Types of Representative

When considering the concept of representation, research has been concentrated around four distinct questions: how 'the demos' is conceived which can enable categorisation of types of representation, how the representatives are conceived, what representatives 'represent' and finally how the electorate is represented (Judge 1999). The huge tensions in systems of representative democracy as to who the representatives are, who they represent, whom they resemble and how they represent have been explored with regards to politicians at different levels of governance. The area of interest for the thesis is not only how appointed representatives go about the business of representation but also to explore and explain the reasons why they represent in a certain way.

This chapter considers the attempts made by theorists to categorise the behaviour of representatives in order to explore these tensions by elucidating the role orientations of politicians. Many theorists have tried to unlock the concept of representation through analyses of how representatives perform their role in practice, and by doing so have developed typologies and categories of representatives behaviour. An appraisal of the work of other theorists will give a broad basis of understanding about the relative effects on the representative when making role choices in terms of focus, style and scope. The thesis will assess the relative influence of authority membership, party membership and the electorate on the way politicians choose to fulfil their representative role. This chapter will explore how other theorists have researched the roles of politicians at different levels of government and

concluded on these influences. The analysis will then turn to a consideration of the idea of mandate and a discussion of the implications of and questions raised by appointed representation. The final part of the chapter will introduce a analytical framework based on Pitkin's (1967) 'four views of representation' and developed from the literature. The framework will operationalise the concept of representation and deliver an analytical frame with which to question and capture the different facets of representation which will be used to address research question 1:

RQ1: How do councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected?

<u>Normative Theories of Representation</u>

The function of politicians as representatives – when politicians do political representation – has been extensively described in the literature (Pitkin 1967; Birch 1971; Manin 1997). However, more normative discussion as to how representatives should represent is heavily contested. Normative theories of representation have focused on a basic delegate/trustee dichotomy of how representatives act. The majority of empirical work is theoretically rooted and couched in the Burkean vocabulary of the 18th century (Rao 1994). In his exploration of the differences between representatives and delegates Burke focuses on the idea that a representative can represent people without requiring their views whilst a delegate is required to consult the public and respond accordingly. The representative role of Burke has been interpreted and developed extensively to form typologies of types of representative.

The notion of delegate representation became more complex as 'the demos' became a more diverse body to represent due to the movement to larger geographic areas as the units of representation. This problem was confronted by Edmund Burke in his 1774 speech to his electors in Bristol when he avowed that he was not only the member for his Bristol constituency, but also a Member of Parliament, and should be entitled to vote on legislation as he saw fit. This notion of trusteeship remains and alongside a fixed elective system brings together the basic representational forms, consent, authorisation, accountability and responsibility (Sartori 1968).

Literature on the correct form of political representation has been dominated by the contest between Edmund Burke and Thomas Hobbes' philosophy of trustee representation and John Stuart Mills' agential or delegate representation. The extensive normative debate was labelled by Pitkin as the 'mandate-independence controversy' (Pitkin 1967:144). This debate was explored and operationalised by Eulau, Wahlke, Buchanan and Ferguson (1959) in probably the most influential empirical typology of styles of representation.

Representative focus, style and orientation

Different elements of the representative role have been explored by theorists. Eulau, Wahlke, Ferguson and Buchanan (1959) explored the concept of representative 'focus', which concerns the extent to which a representative is guided in their decisions by a concern for the welfare of the political unit as a whole, for that of their immediate constituency, or for that of particular sectional interests in it. In their analysis of state legislatures of North

America, Eulau *et al.* showed that representatives focused their attention on four basic elements, the geographical unit, a party, a pressure group or an administrative organisation.

Theory on constituency representation has concentrated on not only 'representative focus' but also around the idea of 'representative style'. Wahlke, Eulau, Ferguson and Buchanan (1962) developed their representational styles around the Burkean criterion of judgement on how representatives ought to act. They proposed a spectrum with 'independent trustees' at one end and 'mandated delegates' at the other. The trustee role being informed by either a moralistic conception of the representative as a free agent following what they consider right and just; or a rational conception where the representative follows their own judgement based on an assessment of facts and their understanding of the problems involved. The delegate role is rooted in the assumption that representatives should not use their independent judgement or convictions as criteria of decision-making. In the middle of the spectrum they defined a further classification – that of a 'politico' where the representative is more sensitive to the conflicting alternatives in role assumptions, and is more pragmatic and flexible to adopt either of the two styles as they saw fit. They argue that delegates rather than using their judgement in decision-making subordinate to an alternative 'superior' authority whereas those taking the trustee role are either free agents working to their own 'moralistic interpretation' of what they believe to be fair and just or alternatively act on their own assessment of the facts. The trustee role was the most popular role orientation according to Eulau *et al.* due to the increasingly technical and specialist nature of government with representatives as they became more involved in the business of government becoming intrinsically more detached from representing the concerns of the

electorate. In extending this idea to incorporate memberships of political parties and loyalty to party groupings, a logical extension of argument of Eulau *et al.* is that the party forms a strong element of the business of modern government further removing the politician from the business of representing the electorate.

Eulau *et al.* elaborated on the differences between representatives and how they go about representing others in considering their areal focus. They identify three foci which are intertwined with the style of representation: a district orientation, a state orientation and a combination of the two where the representative fails to see a clash of interests between them. Eulau *et al.* discovered that district-orientated representatives were more likely to take a delegate role orientation whereas state-orientated representatives are more likely to take a trustee role. Where the representative focused on both the state and the district the representative was more likely to take on the role of politico. George Jones (1973) did similar work to Eulau *et al.* in the context of British local government. Jones noted that as well as representing a geographical area, councillors may also act as a representative of a broad section of the community, another local authority, a particular organised group or individual citizens. Further work on councillor roles subsequent to Eulau *et al.* has offered alternate role types and styles. Kenneth Newton (1974; 1976) in his study of Birmingham identified six role orientations. The first was the representational orientation which encompassed Eulau *et al.'s* delegates, trustees and politicos. Added to it were areal, party, and pressure group orientations along with orientations on a continuum pertaining to either a specialist or a generalist role orientation and either a broad policy or an individual problem orientation. Newton stressed that previous studies of role orientation had often isolated the

different strands of the representational role and tried to make sense of them individually. This approach failed to take into what Hanna Pitkin called their 'metapolitics' (1967:20), i.e. how individuals interpret the different facets of their job in their evaluations and perceptions of the structures that make up their social and political world. In accepting the need for role choices to be set in the more general context of political cultures and subcultures, Newton combined different elements in his analysis to see how different role choices and orientations grouped with and overlapped each other. From this Newton identified five role types: the parochial, focused on the ward and individuals within it; policy advocates, who pursue broad policy issues and governing; the peoples agent, focused on constituents' problems but within a broader, governing perspective; policy brokers, who act as mediators in the policy process; and policy spokesmen, who speak on general policy issues.

Within the context of politicians in the Regional Assembly the work of Eulau *et al.* is too simplistic with regards to areal roles and also fails to take into account the strength of political party affiliation. Eulau *et al.* extensively consider how a councillor represents but do not address why they represent in this way or the reasons for them to adopt a particular representative role. It is increasingly difficult to measure the extent to which representatives are representing through an analysis of the congruence between the electors policy preferences and the actions of the elected member in their elective institution. Newton utilised the notion of role orientation to expand the idea beyond representative styles (delegates, trustees and politicos) incorporating party, administrative, and policy based orientations and looked at how these elements combined to develop his own role types. The

notions of representative focus, style and orientation depict the who and how of representation that forms the representative role system (figure 5). It is how these interact and overlap within different contexts that define the representative role.

Figure 5 Conceptual Map: The representative role system
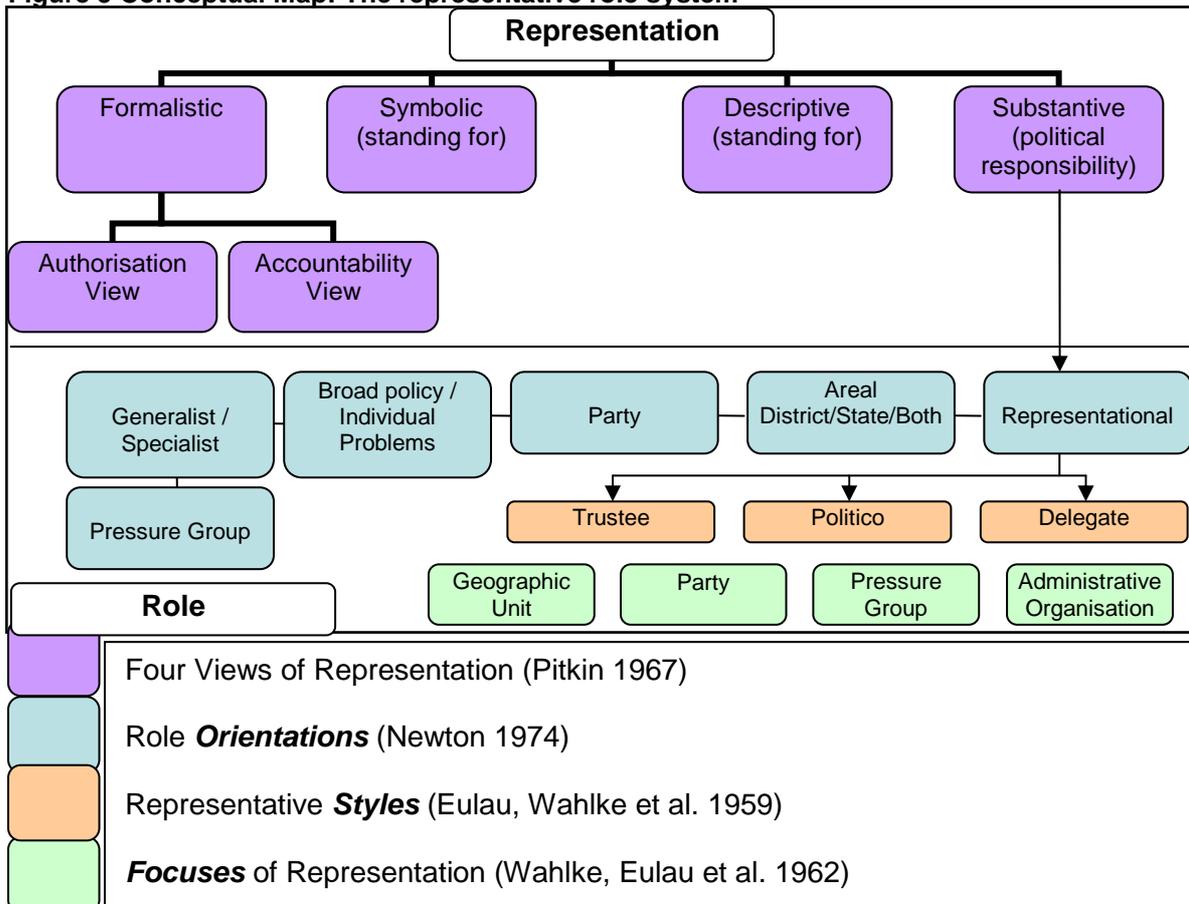
Research on the notion of representational orientation and focus maintained the idea of an 'areal' focus and also incorporated the growth and development of political parties and functional groups. This was conceived of as a 'triadic relationship' between the legislator, the legislator's parliamentary party and his primary constituency (Norton and Wood 1993). Colin Copus (2000) has illustrated the 'crisis of representation' as politicians weigh up the clashing

views of the electorate and the party with both sides expecting loyalty. The rise of political

parties and the implications of this will be explored in the following section.

The Rise of Political Parties and Implications for the Representative Role

The rise of modern political parties brought with it the notion of 'party representation' and

the rise of a 'system in which the elected representative may be forced by his party

managers to vote for a policy which is contrary to the apparent interests of his constituents,

contrary to the prevailing opinion in his constituency, and contrary to his own personal

judgement about what is best for the country' (Birch 1971:97). This conception is supported

by parties on the grounds of electoral mandate and party discipline but clearly highlights the

difference between 'representative government' and 'representative democracy' as

discussed in the previous chapter. This disjuncture between the electorate and the elected

caused by political parties reveals further tensions when considering different levels of

government as to where representative responsibilities and mandates lie as highlighted in

the work of Wolman and Goldsmith:

> 'the idea that voters actually consider party manifestos and provide a 'mandate'
> for the winning party to carry out its policies carte blanche is clearly a fiction at
> all levels of British politics, and particularly so at the local level, since local
> elections are most likely to be a referenda on the national political situation
> than local events' (1992:140).

The strength of party in the representative mix is a crucial factor for consideration for this

thesis. Kjaer (2000) explored the attitudes of Danish local councillors to political

representation by asking them to assign priorities between their own opinion and that of

their party; between their own opinion and that of voters; and between the party's opinion

and that of the voter. His work concluded that 'party political affiliation proved a more precise indicator of the councillor's preferences in comparison with basic demographic traits like gender and age'. (Kjaer 2000:44).

An interesting element to consider is the trustee and delegate dichotomy within party roles and responsibilities. A politician can be a delegate of their own party and toe a strict party line or alternatively adopt a trustee role and use their own judgement to assess the value of the party line against their own or their constituents' wishes. In order to assess the councillor's attachment to their party group Lewis Corina (1974) conducted a case study of councillors in Halifax and classified their behaviour into five groups: party politician, who applies abstract principles to events; ideologist, who applies strong convictions to all issues; partyist, who places party allegiance before all else; associate, who exhibits a loose association with the party; and politico administrator, who is a the centre of all party and council activities. The classification showed that how councillors perform their role is contingent on their loyalty, connection and association to the party. Role conceptions will vary based on individual interpretations of the role and purpose of the party group.

Since the research of Corina the strength and intensity of party discipline and group cohesion has increased immensely with the party as opposed to the councillor holding the cards. The increase in party group strength is considered by Copus to cause a further weakening of the link between those representing and the represented

> 'Councillors are still free to have a very loose attachment to the ward or division from which they were elected, creating in turn a representative vacuum

between councillor and community represented. This vacuum is filled for the councillor by the party group, which employs calls for group loyalty and appeals to party and principle in order to ensure that all issues… will come to the group for consideration or to be solved by it' (Copus 2004:183).

The party realm namely the party group is where councillors of the same political allegiance 'share information and pool ideas and . . . use their numbers to the maximum advantage in the decision-making process' (Gyford, Leach et al. 1987:161). The party arena is a place where representatives raise issues and concerns and the party group will usually resolve these issues before they get to a full council meeting. John Gyford (1984:20) offered a simple distinction between types of party member. He identified two roles with councillors either a 'tribune' of the people, focused on individual casework and ward issues or as a 'statesman' focused on broader policy and maintaining patterns of party political control. He agreed with Newton (1974) that senior members preferred to focus on general policy matters whereas junior members preferred to focus on individual problems. Councillors who were part of the majority group on councils were also identified by Newton as being more likely to focus on issues of city wide concern as opposed to basic localised ward representation.

Studying Functional Representation: How representatives represent

Heclo (1969) unlike those that went before him addressed the influence of party politics on how a councillor chooses to represent. He defined three types of representative, a *constituency representative* similar to focusing on local issues and concerns, a *party activist* who approaches their role as a representative with the interests of their party foremost in their mind and the *committee member* specialising on the business of the council. The

research of Heclo led into further study on the functional role choices of politicians and discussion of the 'scope of representation' which are outlined below.

Representative Scope

The basic dichotomy on the choice of who to represent, the party or the electorate was expanded upon by both George Jones (1969) and Andrew Glassberg (1981) when they wrote on an additional level of tension beyond the choice between loyalty to the party or loyalty to the electorate and identified the *'scope of representation'* as the criteria. This idea focuses on the extent to which councillors see the ward or borough as their focus of attention. Glassberg introduced two classifications, firstly those with a ward scope who he defined as 'classic parochials' who saw the ward as the only fact of importance in conducting council affairs. The second classification was 'localists' who approached ward representation with a broader political context in mind taking into account local issues within a national framework. Glassberg's approach towards representation is particularly useful when considering the tensions between politicians operating at more than one level of government in terms of responsibilities and remits.

The idea of representative scope highlights that politicians have a diversity of roles to adopt and these role choices can fluctuate according to circumstances and opportunities. Whilst there is a long tradition of research of the concept of representative roles there has recently been a questioning of whether the concept of role is likely to be of further use in legislatures. Searing (1991; 1994) argues the concept of role is still a useful if one establishes their content, mediating factors and behavioural consequences. Three elements which address the what, how and why questions of representation. Rather than assuming that the

basic delegate/trustee dichotomy is meaningful in all legislatures empirically grounded explorations of the concept of role in different institutional settings are valuable in surfacing the other factors which mediate the role conceptions of legislators. The following sections will look at how the representative role has been studied within different institutions and at different levels of government. The sections on Members of Parliament, Members of the European Parliament and councillors will explore alternate role types and influences on the representative and contemporary developments for consideration in the study of representative roles.

The role of Members of Parliament

There is an extensive body of literature relating to the role of Members of Parliament (MPs). The predominant model for comparative research on legislative roles at the national level has been the representative triad of trustee/delegate/party (Norton and Wood 1993:27). The literature on the role of MPs is dominated by studies focusing on the influence of party on elected representatives particularly as dissent from the official party position is a rare, but not unprecedented phenomenon (King 1976; Norton 1990). For a modern MP their role choices will have significant implications for their future prospects in terms of Ministerial careers, committee memberships and reselection as the party's candidate. In line with this a number of analyses have focused on the congruence between the opinions of parliamentarians and their supporters in the electorate (Rose 1974; Dalton 1988). Other analyses have looked at how legislators define the constituency for which they act as a representative be it an entire district (Miller and Stokes 1963), their voters in the district (Stone 1979) or a broader national grouping identified as collective representation

(Weissberg 1978; Hurley 1982). Other appraisals of role have concentrated on functional aspects of the day-to-day roles of MPs.

Functional descriptions of the Parliamentary role of MPs are based around the functions of parliament. i.e. to scrutinise government policy, to examine proposals for new law and vote on them and to debate current issues (Silk, Walters et al. 2006). The House of Commons is a representative institution and its members therefore perform the function of representation i.e. 'an MP is expected to defend and further the interests of his constituents, collectively and individually' (Norton 1982:59). Alongside this is the constituency role. From a study of the roles constituents ascribe to their local Member of Parliament seven constituency roles were outlined (Norton 1994). The first three of these were predominantly internal to the constituency namely a role as a safety valve, 'a focal point' to which a view can be expressed, the role of information provider and a role as a local dignitary. The next role ascribed was that of advocate, this is related specifically to the MPs position as constituency representative and will be addressed later. The final three are a role as benefactor, as a powerful friend when constituents seek to redress a grievance and finally as a promoter of constituency interests. The constituency role has rapidly grown and this has been illustrated by the volume of communications they now receive (Norton and Wood 1993). Edmund Burke positioned the MP as the mediator of the views of constituents although this growth of parties coupled with the parliamentary role of MPs has muddied the waters regarding the representative role. The debate between the trustee and delegate 'models of representation' is again prevalent with the notion of trustee being supported on the basis of convention for MPs to act on their own judgement on issues of 'conscience'. Other

Westminster conventions on the role of MPs which have developed since the increase in the constituency caseload of elected representatives. The most notable conventions being that MPs should not purport to represent other constituencies and should represent all their constituents, not just those who voted for them (Gay 2005). The conception of ascriptive representation (Griffiths and Wollheim 1960) fits with cases where a Member of Parliament negotiates with a government department on behalf of their constituent. It is a position whereby the actions of the representative are accredited by the person they are representing and there is no need for the representative to be similar in any way to the constituent. The convention of elected representatives not representing those external to their constituency which has developed in the post-war period offers insight into restrictive factors around the 'areal' basis of representation, and limits the scope for MPs to act as regional advocates at the level of governance in which they work. Conversely the nationalisation of political parties has made MPs more likely to support national mandates than stand on local issues (Finer 1985).

The development of party as an increasingly important factor in the representative concerns of politicians has implications for the role of MPs. The juxtaposition of wishing to please those in their home constituencies in order to increase their prospects for re-election with commitments to toe the party line sits uncomfortably with notions of democracy. Once a party succeeds in getting enough MPs to form an administration the executive party structures are quickly brought into play to force MPs to take the party whip and follow the party line. This weakens the opportunities for individual and constituency level representation and is also not limited to the ruling party as members of the opposition are

also expected to toe the party line. The view of government as a corporate body can however be seen as a strength as Parliament will operate more efficiently and generate more coherent legislation. However it puts the power firmly in the hands of a select few representatives who themselves may not be representative of, nor represent the electorate. Advocates of representative institutions and party and executive systems state that they provide stability meaning individuals are less likely to act due to sudden changes of opinion than those operating in more participatory systems. The electoral system and the dominance of party and party structures in UK politics prioritise the representation of the people at a group level, which is to the detriment of localized constituency representation. The strength of party as an undemocratic force is highlighted by Birch when his work explains how party can be the strongest factor in influencing a politician's action.

> 'An elected representative may be forced by party managers to vote for a policy which is contrary to the apparent interests of his constituents, contrary to prevailing opinion in his constituency and contrary to his own personal judgement' (Birch 1971:97).

Members of Parliament may aside from party interests or even aligned with them take up a 'representation of interests' (Griffiths and Wollheim 1960:190) for a particular field of interest. This may be due to committee positions or briefs, earlier career experience or particular constituency interests. For example a Member of Parliament could be a particular advocate of the trade union movement, renewable energy or medical research without being part of a particular group in relation to these interests.

Donald Searing conducted a study of MPs roles in the 1970s based upon interviews, which delivered a role typology. He categorised MPs as constituency members, policy advocates, ministerial advocates and Parliament men. The constituency member role he subcategorised as either welfare officers or local promoters (Searing 1985). Searing utilised a motivational approach which focused on the content of roles and how they are influenced by the goals, incentives and rationales of MPs. Searing combined tape-recorded discussions with Parliamentarians about their careers, institutions and political values with a written questionnaire and a previously validated rank order instrument measuring their political values. A three-question approach was used firstly asking respondents to characterise their role, this was then combined with an evaluation measure of their relative importance. The final question asked respondents to elaborate on their motivational basis for their role choices. An important conclusion came through an assessment of how representatives change their role over time and how many of the differently defined 'purposive' roles are intertwined. This inductive and respondent driven approach enabled Searing to develop a data derived typology. Searing also critiqued the rational choice method and his data highlighted the idea that elected representatives are motivated by their own culturally informed belief that constituency service is simply 'part of the job' and valued for its intrinsic merits.

Traditional approaches to analysing the representative style (Eulau, Wahlke et al. 1959) have been strongly critiqued given the increased role of party in national politics (Thomassen 1994). Converse and Pierce developed the dimension from trustee to delegate into a triangle by adding loyal partisan as a third role type (Converse and Pierce 1986). In looking to update

the Eulau, Wahlke, Buchanan and Ferguson (1959) typology, Andeweg and Thomassen (2005) report that since 1972 'the Burkean trustee has been gradually losing ground, but primarily to the politico' (2005:509) with representatives being unable to choose between the two main alternatives. Andeweg and Thomassen applied the microeconomic principal-agent framework (Bendor, Glazer et al. 2001) to the typology. Within this framework, political representation is viewed as delegation of power from 'the principal' (constituency group or voters) to 'the agent' (the party or MP). The main question arising from this is how and to what extent the principal can prevent the agent acting in a way contrary to the interests or the demands of the principal. Instruments to prevent the loss of agency can either precede (*ex ante*) or follow (*ex post*) the representative relationship. In this way this approach addresses the formalistic view of representation outlined by Pitkin (1967). Linked to formalistic representation *ex ante* controls such as screening potential candidates or drawing up contracts relate to the authorisation view whereas *ex post* controls such as monitoring and reporting requirements relate to the accountability view. This produces a useful model (figure 6) to consider how control can be exerted from both above and below at different times and in different ways showing the inherent flexibility in both the different roles that can be adopted and the mechanisms framing the choices to adopt these roles.

Figure 6 Modes of representation

		Control Mechanism	
Direction of interactions	From Above	*Ex ante*	*Ex post*
		Authorization	Accountability
	From Below	Delegation	Responsiveness

(Andeweg and Thomassen 2005:512)

Mansbridge (2003) introduced the idea of promissory representation, from representative relations based predominantly on *ex ante* controls namely the promises made at elections, and anticipatory representation for relations which rely on *ex post* controls where representatives will focus on what they think will reward them at the next election rather than the promises they made at the last election.

A consideration of the literature on the representative role of MPs has surfaced a number of issues, a growth in the functional roles of MPs including role typologies within role types in the case of Norton's constituency roles (1994), the pervasive power of political parties in influencing the adoption of different roles and an appreciation that the dichotomy of delegates and trustees is too simplistic. The mediating role of MPs in negotiating local concerns and the concept of ascriptive representation (Griffiths and Wollheim 1960) shows that representation is not a simple A to B transaction but instead negotiated through different contexts, at different times and with and against different groups. The work of Mansbridge (2003) highlights that there are multiple forms of democratic representation, it should not be conceived as a monolithic concept. Democratic representation cannot be understood as a simple principal-agent relationship. There is a need therefore to assess the manifold representative concerns beyond the traditional delegate, trustee and politico conceptions of role.

The role of Members of the European Parliament

The system for electing Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) moved to a proportional basis in 1999 and has been discussed extensively (Farrell and Scully 2006). The MEPs attend the European Parliament and serve on committees alongside a constituency representative role, which involves holding surgeries in their constituency. There is also a strong policy advocacy role with MEPs promoting regional interests and lobbying on a regional basis with regards to obtaining inward investment and supporting local industry. The 'delegate' conception of representation (Miller and Stokes 1963) purports that the actions of individual representatives should be guided by and consistent with the opinions of the citizens which elect them described elsewhere as 'representation from below' (Esaiasson and Holmberg 1996). Due to the weak nature of European party groupings it has been suggested that the 'delegate' conception of representation and the function of the Parliament as a geographic forum (Birch 1971) is a fair description of the European Parliament. However the representative role in this regard is concerned with the correspondence between representatives and their constituents, which due to the physical, demographic and geographical size of their constituencies may be weakened. This coupled with the strength of party discipline means that representatives have less freedom to vote on a regional rather than a party basis (Thomassen 1994). Another essential angle to consider is in relation to the basis upon which MEPs are elected. The rational choice assumption is that those MEPs elected via a Proportional Representation party list system in English multi-member constituencies will be subject to a weaker demand for constituency service than their Scottish and Welsh counterparts in single-member constituencies (Lundberg 2006). Conservative MEPs in the West Midlands due to being elected on a list

basis have carved up the constituency into their own geographic areas and also thematic areas combining the delegate conception and functional conception of representation.

The perceptions of MEPs regarding their representative role were assessed through a survey of candidates in 1994 (Katz 1997) which depicted 'agent' and 'trustee' roles (Wahlke, Eulau et al. 1962). The survey also drew out an additional role defined as a 'confederal' role highlighting at one end of the scale with a strong role in advancing national interests and at the other giving priority to national party over European party groupings. The role of MEPs was similarly addressed with regards to their perception of their representative role alongside questions rating their perceived importance of different aspects of their work (Scully and Farrell 2003). An important aspect when considering the representative role of MEPs is the clear duality between representative interests at different levels of governance, the MEP working in a particular context has to balance local and partial interests against the national interest. The MEP has to make decisions on their respective role with relation to every level of representation.

The literature on the representative role of MEPs is limited in scope. It is dominated by the primary concerns about whether or not the electoral mechanism induces responsive behaviour in elected representatives; whether accountability works prospectively or retrospectively and normative appraisals of the appropriate role for the representative to play. All issues which have been extensively addressed elsewhere (Przeworski, Stokes et al. 1999).

The role of councillors

The majority of academic attention relating to the representative role of councillors has focused on developing role typologies (Heclo 1969; Jones 1973; Rao and Young 1993). Traditional approaches have tended to focus on the simple distinction between policy and administration. As discussed earlier the work of Heclo (1969) made the simple distinction between the roles of committee member, constituency representative and party activist. In a similar vein Jones (1973) divided councillors into three broad categories, the representative, the broad policy maker and the specialised policy maker. These early categorisations, whilst acknowledging the administrative role of councillors are based on a rather limited conception of the functions and organisation of elected members. Subsequent categorisations give a better reflection of the diversity of the roles performed by councillors. Rao (1998) defined three constituency representative functions, constituency servant, constituency mentor and party servant. Corina (1974) introduced party roles into his typology, whilst others have offered typologies incorporating new roles. For example Byrne (1994) who included six overlapping roles and responsibilities namely representatives, ombudsmen, managers, community leaders, policy makers and politicians. Wilson and Game (1998) suggested four roles, representative, policy maker, manager and the oversight role of monitor and progress chaser. As the role of the councillor has developed throughout the post war period the government has commissioned research on local councillors which have addressed the developing role of the councillor in the form of three committees, the Maud Committee (1967), the Robinson Committee (1977) and the Widdicombe Committee (1986).

Young and Rao (1993:8) conducted research with councillors in a similar way to the Searing (1985) study with MPs and found that a majority of councillors gave first priority to dealing with the individual problems of their constituents (40%) with ward commitments coming a close second. An extensive survey of the representative role of councillors in Birmingham was conducted in the 1970s and found 32% saw themselves as delegates, 43% regarded themselves as trustees and 25% identified themselves as politicos (Newton 1976). Newton compared these representational roles alongside data on areal roles and the policy orientations of council members. A notable limitation of the research is that it was done before the 'entrenchment of party government' (Judge 1999:162) in local authorities. From Newton's study it is not clear that those councillors who classified themselves as delegates saw themselves exclusively as party delegates although Newton does note that 64 out of 66 respondents took party organisation on the council as a given (1976:122). Post Newton a great deal of attention has been directed toward 'party representation'. The Widdicombe Report (Widdicombe 1986:59) stated that: 'our research shows that the great majority of councillors and councils are now elected and organised on party lines'. In 1986 within his research for the Widdicombe Committee, Gyford gave clearer evidence of the existence of the 'party delegate' role (Widdicombe 1986:129). This notion of 'delegate democracy' was identified by Gyford as an attempt to fuse together representative and participatory forms of government. The model of delegate democracy post the 'entrenchment of party government' in local government institutions would mean that the local representative would:

> 'Reflect the express wishes of his constituents and must be held accountable by the latter's direct participation in the formulation of his instructions and in the

judgement of his performance. Delegate democracy lays great stress on the acceptance of majority decisions, on the mandating of representatives and in their reporting back to those who confer the mandate upon them. It may be regarded as a form of Labour movement politics transposed onto local government… If the voters return a Labour council to power on the basis of a specific manifesto then the local Labour party becomes the guardian of the voters' mandate and on behalf of the voters the party must ensure that councillors keep faith with their election pledges.'

(Widdicombe 1986:129)

The trend towards councillors adopting party representative roles has gone hand in hand with the strengthening of the system of party control of local government since the 1980s (John 1997:271). Wilson and Game note that: 'the majority groups manifesto becomes the council's agenda to be translated into practical policy proposals', whilst Game and Leach report the growth in 'pervasive group discipline' and a 'Westminster style' approach to party discipline in local government (Game and Leach 1996:128-31). The pattern of party influence at national level has been replicated at the local level with significant implications for the idea of local representation. Academic discussion on political parties has tended to concentrate its focus upon central as opposed to local government. However Copus describes the situation in Britain in no uncertain terms when he says 'one thing will be abundantly clear: local government in Britain is party-based government' (Copus 2004:1). In positing the idea of a 'partyocracy', Copus defines two contrasting views of the party in local politics, either as a 'bastion of democracy and mechanism to transform electorates policy preferences into a workable governing agenda' or alternatively 'an anti democratic partisan presence in local affairs'. With local parties often seemingly meta-representations of

national parties at a local level the representative role can often be to re-present policy from the national level at a local level. This effect is highlighted with regards to national and local elections where the contests are described as 'two skirmishes…part of one battle fought by the same armies' (Jones 1969:324). The traditional literature on the representative role of councillors offers a number of dimensions which can often be in competition. They include the co-ordination and oversight of public service provision (administrative/management role), and holding officers to account. Other dimensions include representing the broad interests of council wards or divisions or sectional interests, representation of the broader council organisation (institutional), a party political role in governing or opposition and representing or pursuing the interests of the party and the development, implementation and review of policy (generalist). The summary table 9 highlights how the different typologies exploring councillor roles fit into this framework with different authors breaking down the role into functions, orientations, role types and styles.

Table 9 Review of literature on the Representative Role of the Councillor

	FOCUS (Eulau, Wahlke et al. 1959)	STYLE (Wahlke, Eulau et al. 1962)	FOCUS (Heclo 1969)	FUNCTIONS (Jones 1973)	ROLES (Jones 1973)	PARTY ROLES (Corina 1974)	ROLE ORIENTATIONS (Newton 1974)	ROLE TYPES (Newton 1976)	ROLES (Gyford 1976)
Representative		• Delegate • Trustee • Politico					• Delegate • Trustee • Politico	• Parochial • Peoples agent • Policy advocate • Policy broker • Policy spokesperson	
			Ward representation	Individual citizens (ombudsmen function)	Representative (spokesman and watchdog)		• Individual problems/ Casework • Broad policy		Tribune of the people (casework/ward issues)
Geographic	Geographic Area (district/state/ both)			Geographic Area (parish/ward/village /town)			Areal (city/ward/both)		
Policy (Specialist)					Specialised policy maker (1-2 services)		Specialist		
Policy (Generalist)					Broad policy maker (concerned with overall policy of local authority)		Generalist		Statesman (focused on broader policy)
Party	Political Party		Political Party	Particular organised groups (political, economic, social)		• Party politician • Ideologist • Partyist • Associate • Politico administrator	• Party rebels • Faithfuls • Abstainers		
Sectional Interest	Pressure Group			Broad section of community (factory workers, council tenants)			Pressure group		
Administrative	Administrative Orientation		Council committees	Another local authority (tier)					

The developing role of the councillor

The increase in the functions of councillors has stimulated further academic attention on councillor roles particularly in the light of the local government reforms under the Labour Government (DETR 1998). A straight comparison can be made between earlier studies and attention post the Local Government Act 2000. For example in a study commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation based on interviews with councillors there was a simple division between representative and administrative roles with councillors positioning their representative role as more important than their involvement in council business (Rao 1993). However more recently the 2006 National Census of Councillors (LGA / IDeA 2007) defines a wider breadth of roles and positions local community representative (74.5%) as the best descriptor of councillors approach to their role. Other descriptors were community engager (49.6%), community leader (18.6%), community advocate (39.1%), scrutineer (25.8%) and party representative or activist (15%). Beyond this further roles external to the council chamber also offer alternative representative roles which have lacked academic attention. For example a minority of councillors also operate within Europe as regional representatives particularly within the Committee of the Regions (COR) but also on other European representative bodies like the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

The distinction between representative democracy and representative government (discussed in chapter 2) has also been used to define a distinction between representational and leadership roles. This distinction informed the reforms outlined within the Local Government Act 2000 which brought about the shift away from the committee system in

local government and the movement towards alternative arrangements such as cabinets and elected mayors. The logics for this movement within the Modernising Local Government consultation were that there 'was a strong argument for separating the executive and representational functions of councillors' (DETR 1998:30). The committee system was seen as inefficient and ineffective in that it blurred responsibility, allowing councillors to disclaim responsibility for corporate decisions and thus prevented open scrutiny of executive decisions. The Local Government Act 2000 also provided for the establishment of overview and scrutiny committees, thus providing a clear separation of executive and representative roles. One possible consequence of such a move in the view of the DETR would be an enhancement of the individual councillor's representative role, enabling them to 'become, in a much clearer way, the advocate of local people, channelling their grievances and demands' (DETR 1998:31). There is an acknowledgement in the reforms of the distinction between representational roles and leadership roles and ultimately the fundamental distinction between representative government and representative democracy. Within the proposals the government sought the simultaneous enhancement of both roles (Judge 1999:197). Adding to the representative role debate, some academics have developed categorisations which incorporate the impact of the post 1997 modernisation agenda and consider the roles of councillors within the new political management arrangements. Sweeting offers four overlapping categories of policy maker, partner, community leader and scrutineer, with the scrutineer role offering potential for developing democratic representation (Sweeting 1999:14). Wilson and Game built upon their earlier work and looked to advance a new job description for councillors incorporating the role of representative, policy maker, scrutineer and community leader to varying degrees (Wilson and Game 2002:244-252). With regards to

which roles different councillors choose within the new arrangements, Rao (1993:29-30) points out that those elected with a greater period of service are less satisfied with the 'casework/parochial' role and prefer the opportunity of representing the community at large. Whereas Goldsmith noted that most councillors will 'expect to take up constituents' problems; many will have special interests which they will seek to represent, be it local ward or community, but in practice very few tend to exercise leadership or policy roles (2000:18). Local Government reform has created new functions for the councillor and academic attention on the developing role of the councillor has delivered a range of new roles and typologies which are summarised in table 10.

Table 10 Contemporary Councillor Roles and post Local Government Act 2000 roles

	ROLES (Stewart 1990)	ROLES (Byrne 1994)	MODERN ROLES (Wilson and Game 1998)	CONSTITUENCY ROLES (Rao 1998)	NEW COUNCILLOR ROLES (Sweeting 1999)	ROLES IN NEW EXECUTIVE STRUCTURES (Snape 2004)	COUNCILLOR ROLES (LGA / IDeA 2007)
REPRESENTATIVE	Parochial (constituents grievances)	• Representative • Ombudsmen	Representative			Representative	Community representative
GEOGRAPHIC	Standard bearer (area needs)			• Constituency servant • Constituency mentor			• Community engager • Community advocate
POLICY (Specialist)	Specialist	Policy Maker	Policy Maker		Policy Maker	Policy Maker	
POLICY (Generalist)	Generalist						
PARTY		Politician		Party Servant		Party Group member	• Party representative • Party Activist
SECTIONAL INTEREST							
ADMINISTRATIVE							
LEADERSHIP		• Managers • Community Leaders	Manager		Community Leader	Community Leader	Community Leader
SCRUTINY	Overseer (services and performance)		• Oversight • Progress checker		Scrutineer	Performance monitoring	Scrutineer

The new executive arrangements have defined different functions for the councillor. The emergence of overview and scrutiny roles can be seen as an extension of the representative function. The rise of policy development forums is clearly a new policy role whereas the negotiation of area agreements is an extension of the planning function which relates to both geographic and administrative orientations. Finally the quasi judicial function also relates to an administrative orientation. The introduction of scrutiny committees have also brought about the strengthening of party group roles.

Overall many individual and group roles have emerged from the reforms leaving the councillor with greater choice and scope in how they appraise and assess their role (orientation) what they choose to represent (focus) and how they choose to do it (style). The movement to different executive systems has offered councillors further choices in which roles to adopt and enact. This has gone hand in hand with an increase in the scope of representation in recent years with the proliferation of partnership bodies at both the local and regional level. These new representative roles outside the traditional council chamber pose different challenges for the modern councillor and evoke both traditional and non traditional functions from networking and contact building, to reporting, advocacy and ambassadorial roles.

The Representative Role in the Appointed State

The growth of the appointed state (as discussed in chapter 1) has delivered additional realms for the modern councillor beyond the traditional council chamber. The movement from local government to local governance (Rhodes 1997:133-4) has delivered 'nearly 5000 bodies, not directly elected... involved nowadays in the governance of our local communities, spending

well over half the total money spent by elected local government' (Wilson and Game 1998:316). This movement offers not only a challenge to the traditional model of representative local government, but also a challenge to councillors negotiating role choices within the new quasi-governmental institutions. Whilst attention on the representative role has concentrated on elected politicians there has been less consideration of the concept of 'appointed representation' and the representative role of politicians operating within institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected. Hansen (2001) posits that there is scope for a new kind of governance role for the modern councillor to meet the challenges posed by de- and multi-centred local governance structures. The opportunity for councillors to represent their constituents and their local authority on alternative bodies and within different tiers of government affords them a unique role to act as guardians of constituency, common or public concerns and forward these interests when operating in other institutions.

Relating to their role as a councillor, the relationship between demos and representative is relatively simple, i.e. through elections a given democratic group (the demos) confers administrative and, in some cases legislative authority (mandate), to specific individuals (councillors), all of whom are subject to removal by the membership. The majority of councillor roles are derived either through election on basis of a mandate (from constituents or on a party platform), or drawn from functional aspects of their role (policy making, scrutiny, etc.). However with regards to councillor roles on alternative bodies they are appointed as opposed to elected and there are additional or alternate functions to their appointed roles. It is therefore useful to consider both the mechanism for their appointment

and the variance in the functions of the institutions to which they are appointed. The next section will explore research on councillors in appointed bodies before discussing the functions and possible roles of councillors appointed to the West Midlands Regional Assembly Members in particular.

<u>Appointed representatives</u>

Research on councillors appointed to organisations has focused on their role choices and functions in terms of representation and accountability. Appointments can be seen as weakening the representative link and producing representatives that are increasingly distant from their original representative basis.

The main research conducted regarding the appointment of politicians as opposed to their election to tiers of government was done by Leach, Davis *et al.* (1991). The abolition of metropolitan county councils and the Greater London Council in England in 1986 heralded a change from a two tier system with a directly elected upper tier to a two tier system with an indirectly elected upper tier. One of the arguments of the government for this move was to make metropolitan government more accountable; however the movement towards delegate democracy was seen as an erosion of representative democracy. Steve Leach and his colleagues at INLOGOV (Leach, Davis et al. 1991) built upon earlier work (Gyford, Leach et al. 1987) when considering variants of democracy alongside variants of accountability. The most prevalent conception of democracy is 'representative democracy' itself. It remains the dominant frame of reference with regards to the relationship between political actors and their constituents.

Positioning direct democracy as an unrealistic ideal leaves representative democracy as the best option that is practically possible. It allows people to participate via elections but at the cost of delegating their power to others due to the size of the population and the relative complications this would generate for any kind of legislative function. The benefit of government by representatives therefore is that it can encompass the majority interests and preferences of greater numbers of people more reliably than if they were participating directly. It does however place the representatives in a crucial position with regards to how they conceive representation. There can be critical differences between how representatives interpret representation and the interpretations of those they are elected to represent. A politician's conception of representation is likely to be informed by and reflecting different concepts of local democracy. The nature of the modern political system positions elected members as accountable to multiple groups, their constituents, their party, and often to the Government/Local Authority. However the mechanisms for accountability when members are appointed as opposed to elected are less structured than the ultimate sanction of constituents voting out a representative. This lack of electoral sanction means appointed representatives operate within a different system of local democracy.

In their research on joint boards Leach, Davies *et al.* (1991) saw few examples of appointees briefing, mandating or reporting back to districts. Therefore showing a weak system of delegate democracy failing to offer any clear form of accountability to local districts with many district leaders becoming detached and the system lacking any strong from of accountability. This research offers an appropriate approach to explore representation by

appointment through its discussion of the communication and reporting procedures which contribute to clarity about accountability.

Day and Klein (1987) conducted research and assessed accountability with regards to the roles of appointed members in public services. In the National Health Service they looked at district health authorities whose members were all appointed and accountable through statute to the Secretary of State however their role focused upon deciding priorities for their respective districts. Day and Klein assessed the perceptions of accountability of members with the majority specifying a horizontal accountability towards the district and only a minimal theoretical accountability upwards. The majority of those interviewed did not see themselves as accountable to central government, but instead saw the local district management team as the main constraint on their role.

Day and Klein (1987) concluded that it the predominant differences between those authorities made of directly elected members and those of nominated members did not stem from perceptions of their own role, but rather reflected differences in the way they responded to the tensions inherent in their role. They revealed a paradox whereby the rhetoric of election, being seen as synonymous with accountability may actually divert attention from the conditions that have to be met if accountability is to be achieved. Conversely those members who lack the legitimacy of election seemed to be more conscious of their need for control. In this way those appointed took the mandate which 'imposed a duty on them: the real sanction was not revocability of the mandate, but their own civic

alter ego. They saw themselves as trustees or tribunes rather than delegates' (Day and Klein 1987:229).

Dahl addresses the notion of guardians as an alternative to democracy based upon the notion that 'ordinary people can be counted on to understand and defend their own interest' (1989:52) is false and 'those of superior knowledge and virtue are specifically qualified to govern' (1989:52). The idea is based upon the arguments first laid down by Plato in the Republic (Plato 1991). In his discussion of guardians Dahl supports the idea of experts as policymakers but contrasts this with a dependence on what guardians believe the general good to be. Appointees could be described as 'quasi-guardians' (Dahl 1989:337) as they have a weakened link to the demos, yet due to the knowledge provided by being part of a policy elite at the their home organisation can better judge what is best for the needs of the constituency as part of the region. In this way Dahl concedes that non-majoritarian systems do not strictly violate the requirements for democracy.

The role of Regional Assembly members

Members of the Regional Assembly may be elected to their 'home' institutions however the basis of their presence on the Regional Assembly is through appointment by their local authority so they act on the basis of a local council or institutional mandate as opposed to an elected one. This point of difference is crucial to research question one (RQ1).

RQ1: How do councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected?

Two elements frame Regional Assembly members within a non-traditional version of representative democracy. Firstly whereas elected members are subject to processes of authorisation through election, the selection and appointment of members of the Regional Assembly is done by local councils on the basis of a reflection of the geography and political composition of the region. Secondly without the ultimate chance of electoral sanction appointed members of the Regional Assembly will be subject to alternate accountability mechanisms. These two elements represent the conceptual context of difference from traditional elected representative democracy. It is important therefore for RQ1 to address the formalistic views of representation relating to authorisation and accountability (see figure 7). The authorisation view can be explored through asking appointed Regional Assembly members about where they drew their mandate from. The accountability view can be explored through questioning of whom they saw themselves as being accountable to and how they go about ensuring that accountability. This will allow an appreciation of the context within which assembly members interpret their role choices.

Figure 7 Conceptualisation of Representation
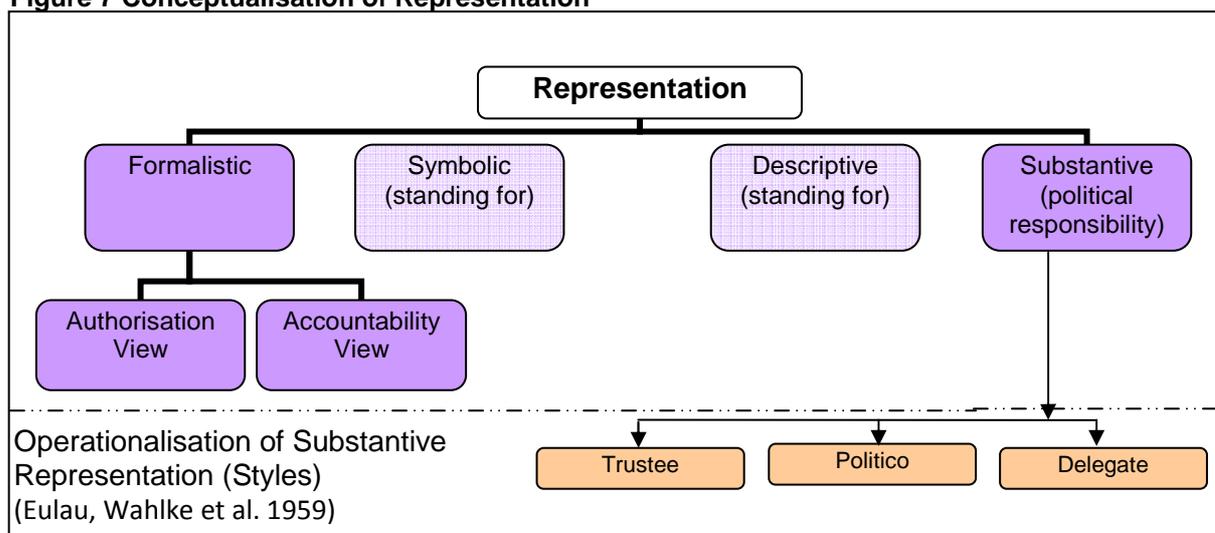
(Pitkin 1967)

The second part of the Pitkin framework which will help address RQ1 relates to how assembly members fulfil their representative role in terms of substantive representation, whether they act as delegates or trustees in relation to the object they represent. Therefore to address RQ1 questioning will need to explore both who is being represented (focus) and how they are being represented (style). Eulau *et al.* (1959) provide a conceptual framework with which to operationalise the dimensions of substantive representation through an assessment of the relationship between the assembly member and the constituency they represent. This constituency may be their local authority as a whole, their political party or their electorate. In this way the analysis can begin to explore the reasons for any dislocation between the views of the representative and the represented. The framework offers three representative styles. Firstly delegates acting as a simple mouthpiece for, and bound by the instructions of those that appoint them. Secondly trustees who utilise their own discretion, competence, judgment and leadership to make decisions and act on behalf of those that appoint them; and finally politicos a form of pseudo-trustee where the representative can employ both approaches at appropriate times.

Specific questions arise with the idea of representation and consent as the consent of the principal is not a necessary condition of their being represented. The mandate is from their appointing authority, but the function of Regional Assemblies according to the government White Paper 'Your Region Your Choice' is to 'bring decision making closer to the people,…make government more accountable… and provide democratic representation in the regions and a new political voice' (DTLR 2002:11) so there is a representative and

accountability link to their constituents. To address the disjuncture there is a need to consider alternative forms of representation which may inform representative role choices.

The notion of ascriptive representation is based around the idea of representation without consent, for often more than half the electorate wouldn't have voted for the elected representative and at no time has any individual had the choice to not be represented. However, in the case of the appointed assembly members they are also ascripted representatives. Jackson and King in their study of the House of Representatives introduced another type of representation and one that is particularly relevant to this research, the notion of institutional representation (Jackson and King 1989). In their research they substituted the collective representation of Weissberg (1978) with the idea of institutional representation whereby representatives act in accordance with the voting preferences of fellow party members in alternate institutions or members from the same geographic area. This notion is of particular relevance when considering the representative role of assembly members and the strength of party; and its organisation at multiple levels of government coupled with the importance of local geography as an influencing factor upon the representative concerns of appointed assembly members. The notion of institutional representation is also relevant with regards to assembly members and loyalty or representative allegiance to their appointing institution.

Summary: Appointed Roles

The literature on representative roles shows that the majority of councillor roles are drawn from perceptions of responsibility based on the mandates they derive from constituents via elections or are drawn from functional aspects of their role (policy making, scrutiny, etc.). However with regards to councillor roles on alternative bodies they are appointed as opposed to elected and there are additional or alternate functions to their appointed roles. Therefore when considering RQ1, how councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in appointed bodies questioning will need to consider both the mechanism for their appointment and the functions of the institutions to which they are appointed.

The main functions of the West Midlands Regional Assembly are to scrutinise the work of the Regional Development Agency (Advantage West Midlands) to make them more accountable to the region, to act as a regional advocate and lobbying body and provide coordination, oversight and endorsement of the regional strategies (spatial, economic, housing and cultural). It is from these functions that other possible role orientations may emerge, which will be explored within the next chapter.

Pitkin's four views of representation (Pitkin 1967) will be used as a simple framework on which to base questioning of assembly members in order to capture different facets of the representative role. There will be a particular focus on formalistic elements (authorisation and accountability) and substantive representation operationalised as representative styles (Eulau, Wahlke et al. 1959). Assembly members will be questioned regarding not only their object (focus) of representation and how this object is represented (style) but also the scope

of their representation in order to appraise the flexibility in their role choices rather than seeing role orientations as static. Assessing the scope of representation will not only assist in exploring further the extent to which they represent a particular object of representation helping explore assembly members views of their mandate and remit but also will help address role orientations which can be considered on a scale (generalist to specialist, etc.). In this way the approach will address the wider role system (figure 8) and show how assembly members construct and fulfil their roles when operating in the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

Figure 8 The representative role system

Four Views of Representation (Pitkin 1967)

Role Orientations (Newton 1974)

Representative Styles (Eulau, Wahlke et al. 1959)

Focuses of Representation (Wahlke, Eulau et al. 1962)
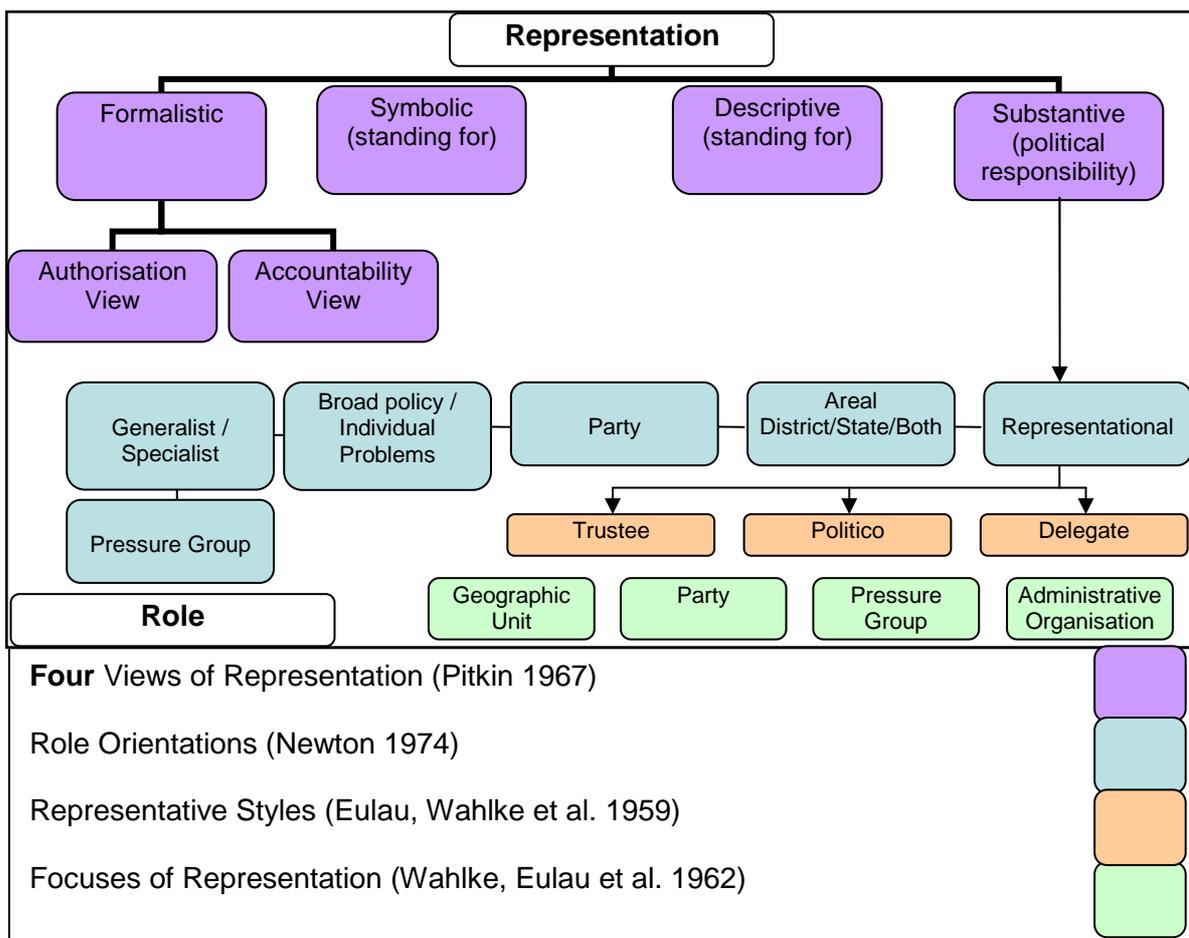
The next chapter will discuss the operationalisation of the representative role system framework and methodology for the first stage of the research. It investigates the data from eight scoping interviews with Regional Assembly members about how they interpret their mandate, conduct their accountability function and how they consider and enact their substantive role as representatives in the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

CHAPTER 4: THE REPRESENTATIVE ROLE IN APPOINTED ARENAS:

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS FROM SCOPING INTERVIEWS

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the growth of non-elected forms of government in the UK and examined the democratic implications of quasi governance in terms of both representation and accountability. The West Midlands Regional Assembly, the empirical location of the research, is a representative institution formed through a system of indirect appointment. The representative function of its members is crucially important as it is the mechanism through which the institution can be held accountable. This chapter brings together the results of 8 scoping interviews with members of the West Midlands Regional Assembly exploring how they fulfil the representative function, where they see their mandate being derived from, who they are accountable to and how they go about the substantive action of representation. The analysis is based upon the representative role system derived from Pitkin's (1967) four views of representation and developed in the literature review chapters on representation (chapter two) and the representative role (chapter 3).

The chapter will first introduce the framework developed during the literature review. Then the research methodology for the first stage of the research will show how the framework will be operationalised to address the first research question.

RQ1: How do councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected?

The chapter will then turn to the analysis of the interview data. The analysis is in three sections. First, analysis will looks across the interviews at how assembly members consider formalistic elements of representation exploring how they view their mandate, responsibilities and the accountability function of their representative role. The second stream of analysis explores substantive representation and whether assembly members saw themselves as delegates or trustees. The concluding part of the analysis will return to the research question and posit a range of role types and orientations drawn from the interview data.

The Research Framework

The implications of non-elected institutions for both democracy and accountability increase the importance of the representative function of appointed members of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. How appointed representatives go about the business of representation in terms of the constituency they represent, how they choose to represent that constituency and how they are accountable is crucially important, as it is the mechanism by which the institution is held accountable. Therefore, the representative function provides the conceptual basis of the thesis and the West Midlands Regional Assembly and its members the location and objects of enquiry.

The previous chapter explored the literature on the representative role of politicians and the ways in which this has been studied at different levels of government. Many factors

emerged from the literatures which are important in terms of how the thesis approaches the research questions. First, representation is established and moulded by constitutional design so there is a need to understand how assembly members appraise the way in which they are appointed to the Regional Assembly. Second, as the representative function is the means by which the Regional Assembly provides accountability there is a need to explore how and to whom assembly members consider themselves accountable. Third, representation cannot be simply understood through the 'one-to-one, person to person' (Pitkin 1967:221) model of the principal agent relationship and therefore the questioning of assembly members needs to explore the complex array of competing representative concerns and how assembly members enact their representative role.

The literature review in chapter three appraised the ways in which academics have questioned and studied the representative role and delivered a broad framework based upon Pitkin's (1967) four views of representation. The framework breaks down to provide a conceptual map to explore the representative role in the West Midlands Regional Assembly (Figure 9).

Figure 9 The representative role system diagram is used to address RQ1
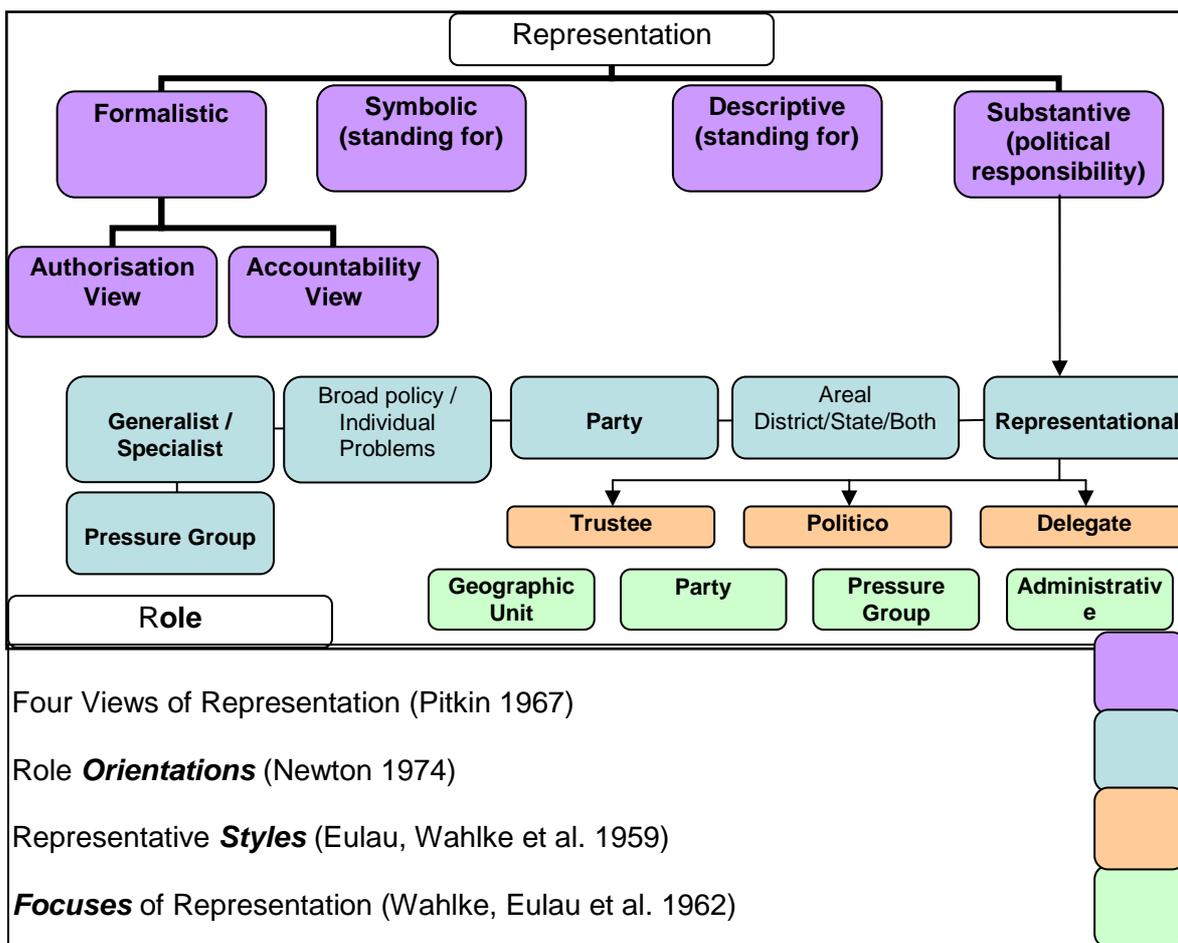
RQ1: How do councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected?

Firstly the framework explores the point of difference from traditional elected roles through an appraisal of the formalistic elements of representation which define the formal arrangement at the outset of the act of representation namely authorisation and accountability (see figure 9). Non-elected bodies do not provide formal legitimacy and clear representative accountability to those affected by decisions. Therefore questions on how assembly members consider their representative basis i.e. who granted them the mandate to act form the first step of questioning of the accountability function of their role. This

explores the two potential points of authorisation for assembly members: their elective mandate to their local authority and their appointment by the local authority to the Regional Assembly. Questions in the interviews explore what assembly members believe their representative basis to be as this is seen in the literature as the point at which the politicians are freed from responsibility for their action. It must be considered in tandem with the accountability view, which post authorisation accrues new obligations to the representative. The second step therefore questions how assembly members fulfil these obligations to the represented through an appraisal of the accountability view of representation i.e. to whom and how are appointed representatives accountable.

The way in which politicians assure their accountability, if at all, is through the practice of representation. This is not considered by the formalistic views of representation. There is a need to explore how they fulfil their representative role through an assessment of substantive representation i.e. how appointed representatives go about fulfilling their representative role. Therefore the eight assembly members were asked about how they go about representing through questions on briefing, reporting procedures and who they associate their actions with when operating in the Regional Assembly as opposed to their local authority. This part of the framework is operationalised through the concepts of representative focus; questions about who or what the objects of representation are, representative style; how representatives operate either as trustees or delegates (or a combination of the two) and role orientation; a broader category exploring their beliefs and motivations about both the nature and function of their role. Each of these are explored

with an appreciation of the notion of representative scope in order to appraise the flexibility and range of role choices assembly members can choose and enact.

The predominant focus of the substantive view of the representative role system focuses on how representatives 'act for', 'on the behalf of', 'in the interest of' or 'as an agent of' the represented. The prevalent dichotomy here is politicians acting as either a trustee or a delegate (Burke [1774] 1999). Pitkin explores this as acting 'on the behalf of' (delegate conception) and 'acting for' (trustee conception). The idea of acting 'on the behalf of' someone, whether it be an individual or groups, requires representatives to behave in a certain way relating to obligations. In this sense, they cannot act on impulse and need to act as if they would be held to account even if a formalised accountability mechanism is not in place. The assumption here is that there is 'relative equivalence between the representative and the represented, so that the latter could conceivably have acted for himself instead' (Pitkin 1967:140). Conversely 'acting for' others requires responsiveness to the interests of others without being subordinate to them. In this way an assembly member who is 'acting for' can act independently of the views of what or whom they represent in a role as a trustee. This difference between acting as a trustee (free agent) or delegate (mere agent) is a crucial factor that the interviews explored with questions of difference between operating in the different political arenas being the main focus. Whereas assembly members adopting a trustee role are more independent and have a freer mandate, those taking a delegate role are more obligated to be responsive to those the represent.

The representative role system framework was used to explore the objects, interest and actions of representation. This delivered empirical data about which variant of democracy is engendered for appointed politicians operating within the Regional Assembly. Data also explored whether role choices are drawn from the mandates derived from their authorisation or from functional aspects of their role and remit.

The interview questions brought together analysis of how assembly members conceive how they are authorised and are held accountable with an appraisal of how they substantively enact different representative roles. This enabled comparisons of both how and the extents to which politicians aim to advance the policy preferences of those they choose to represent. The subtle differences between how councillors choose to conduct their representative role and the various methods through which they perform the accountability function addresses not only the question of 'how representatives fulfil their representative role when operating in the West Midlands Regional Assembly' but will also contribute to a better understanding of the democratic implications posed by quasi governance in the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

Methodology for Scoping Interviews

In order to address RQ1, eight members of the Regional Assembly were interviewed about how they consider their representative role based upon the categories, elements and themes within the framework developed from the literature review (figure 9). Interviews and qualitative data provide an appropriate method to explore complex social actions and phenomena such as representation in appointed arenas. When exploring the roles and

actions of individuals in different contexts qualitative enquiry allows the analysis to give a depth of information about the processes, patterns and relationships of the representative process. The value of qualitative analysis comes through a full and systematic analysis of the text and structured data in the case of this stage of the research the analysis of eight interviews with Regional Assembly members. The purpose of qualitative data analysis is to determine the categories, relationships and assumptions informing the research participants view of the world in general and the topic in particular (McCracken 1988). The interviews take a broad approach to the concept of representation and narrow down the analysis through mapping the statements onto the representative role framework. To utilise the analogy of spirit production, many processes need to occur to produce the final product from initial reduction to condensation, distillation, grouping and finally classification. This approach started with the interview asking broad questions on the assembly member's conception of representation before focusing down on the different views of representation, relating to formalistic elements (authorisation and accountability) and substantive representation (the objects and the how of representation). The full interview schedules for the scoping interviews can be found in appendix 1. The statements from the individual interviews are then mapped and grouped together onto the themes, orientations and styles drawn from the literature review. This process helped build up a clear picture of the data and how it relates to the concept of appointed representation and answers the different elements of the research question.

The organisation and analysis of the interview data is a challenging process as it is not simply a mechanical or technical exercise, but instead a dynamic, intuitive and creative process of

requiring reasoning, thinking, reappraisal and theorizing (Denzin and Lincoln 2008). Throughout the process of data collection during interviews, the statements and views were mapped onto the framework allowing continual re-evaluation and refinement of interpretations and definitions in order to derive a deeper understanding of the data. This process was heightened by the interaction with assembly members, their contextual setting and insights that were being drawn upon throughout the research process.

Whilst the interview transcripts may offer an interesting initial read such a shallow analysis fails to surface the social world under scrutiny and the ways in which it is viewed by the research participants. The representative role system framework provides a conceptual tool which will illuminate the dominant conceptions and patterns of behaviour. The approach to the data analysis is a framework analysis (Richie and Spencer 1994). In terms of organising and coding the data I adopted the approach advocated by Strauss and Corbin (1990) in that there is a list of provisional codes informed by and developed from the conceptual framework and the research questions. The methodology is not an exercise in identifying the theoretical apparatus emerging from the data, instead it assumes *a priori* a normative theoretical frame against which the findings from the data are assessed (Weston, Gandell et al. 2001:384-85). The interview transcripts were coded manually and mapped onto the coding frame. The coding frame was developed from the representative role framework with themes grouped around comments relating the formalistic elements and definitions of representation (authorisation and accountability) and substantive representation (delegate and trustee conceptions). Table 11 shows an example of the coding frame.

Table 11 Sample coding frame for interview data

Formalistic Representation					
Accountability View	**Text, quote, phrase, statement**	***Notes***	Participant	Ref	See Also
	'Partnership working being not that transparent' 'he is the best guy for us on European issues that's what he should be answerable for'	Cllr goes on to stress formalised reporting	C2	p2	
Authorisation View	**Text, quote, phrase, statement**	***Notes***	Participant	Ref	See Also
	'you have to…actually have the confidence that you can say you know this is something I have agreed to and if I have to go back, I will justify it'		C1		@
Substantive Representation					
Delegate Conception	**Text, quote, phrase, statement**	***Notes***	Participant	Ref	See Also
	'The district man at the region' *'therefore I have no right to exceed the mandate I feel I have been given'*		C4 C4	p2 p1	**
Trustee Conception	**Text, quote, phrase, statement**	***Notes***	Participant	Ref	See Also

The substantive view of representation was explored through a consideration of representative style (Eulau, Wahlke et al. 1959) through asking those interviewed to locate their representative style at the assembly on a scale from 'independent trustee' at one end through 'politico' to 'mandated delegate' at the other (see figure 10). This was then explored further through both open and closed questions during the interview process.

Figure 10 Representative Styles Scale

Mandated delegate	Politico	Independent trustee

<u>Definitions:</u>

Mandated delegate: 'I see my role as solely pursuing the policy preferences expressed by my council when operating on the West Midlands Regional Assembly'

Politico: 'My council gives me direction to follow but I will appraise this against other interests (the region/my political party/my constituents) before deciding how to act at the West Midlands Regional Assembly'

Independent trustee: 'I pursue what I think are the best interests of my council when I operate at the West Midlands Regional Assembly'

Interviewees were asked what they consider to be their representative focus, covering what they concentrate their attention upon within political processes. Interviewees were asked to consider both their elected local authority role as a councillor and their appointed role as an assembly member. The four potential focuses were drawn from the literature: geographic unit, political party, pressure group or an administrative organisation (Wahlke, Eulau et al. 1962). Finally, interviews addressed the role orientations of members drawn from Newton's (1974) categories. Questions on these elements helped to explore and explain how regional

assembly members go about the business of representing. The interviewing process brought together the 'who' of representation (focus) with the 'how' of representation (style and orientation) to give a picture of the representative function of assembly members. The notion of representative scope (Glassberg 1981) was also considered within the questioning in order to explore the link between the remit and range of representation.

Interview Process and Sampling

The interviews sought both confirmatory data around the initial conceptual ideas developed in the research framework but were also highly exploratory, actively seeking difference beyond the initial framework. Thus a mix of open and closed questions were used based upon the framework. Interviews were conducted in person and fully transcribed. Content analysis used codes derived from the data itself and from the prior theoretical framework developed from the literature review (Drew 2003:196).

As few inferences about relationships between types of members can be drawn with the sample of only eight assembly members there was no need for a stratified sample. Nevertheless, the sample was intended to be broadly representative of the makeup of the Regional Assembly. A snowball sampling approach was used. Following conversations with Esther Knight (WMRA main contact), I was put in contact with the first three interviewees (C1, C2 and C3). From these interviews I sourced a diversity of contacts and a wider profile of possible interviewees. From these potential contacts I chose interviewees to represent the demographic and

party political makeup of the Regional Assembly. Political party memberships of the interviewees were two Conservatives, two Labour, three Independents (one aligned with the Green Party and one ex Conservative) and one Liberal Democrat. There was a mix of councillors from different levels of appointing authority: four district councillors, two county councillors and two city councillors. The sample also encompasses five senior councillors, classified as such due to holding leadership or cabinet posts. In terms of demographics six of the sample were male and two female with all of those interviewed being over the age of 40. A brief table outlining pen portraits for each of those interviewed is shown in table 12.

Table 12 Pen portraits of interviewed WMRA Members

Councillor 1 (C1)	A senior male Conservative councillor for a rural seat in the north of the region. Councillor C1's assembly nomination comes from his county council seat (held for over 20 years). At the time of the interview he was leader of the opposition. He is also a district and parish councillor. Councillor C1 has particular interests in farming and European working.
Councillor 2 (C2)	A senior male Labour councillor for a metropolitan urban seat in the centre of the region. Councillor C2's assembly nomination comes from his city council seat (held for over 25 years). At the time of the interview he was leader of the council. He has held various chairs on other regional partnership bodies and has particular interests in urban regeneration and planning.
Councillor 3 (C3)	A senior male Independent (aligned green) councillor for a rural seat in the west of the region. Councillor C3's assembly nomination comes from his district council seat (held for over 25 years). He is also a town councillor. He is a former Conservative, but is now in a leading independent in the region and represents the region in Europe. He has particular interests in farming and the business sector.
Councillor 4 (C4)	A male Independent (non-aligned) councillor for a rural village seat in the centre of the region. Councillor C4's assembly nomination comes from his district council seat (held for over 15 years). He is also a parish councillor and has particular interests in health and wellbeing
Councillor 5 (C5)	A male Conservative councillor for a rural seat on the outskirts of a market town in the south east of the region. Councillor C5's nomination comes from his district council seat (held for over 10 years). He is also a portfolio holding county councillor and has particular interests in tourism, planning and scrutiny.
Councillor 6 (C6)	A senior female Liberal Democrat councillor from a village seat in the west of the region. Councillor C6's nomination came from her district council seat (held for over 10 years). She has led the council and has particular interests in housing and regeneration.
Councillor 7 (C7)	A senior Labour councillor for an urban seat in the centre of the region. Councillor C7's nomination comes from their city council seat (held for over 25 years). He has led the council and is heavily involved in European working with particular interests in regional matters and the business sector.
Councillor 8 (C8)	A female Independent Councillor from a town seat in the north west of the region. Councillor C8's nomination comes from their county council seat (held for over 25 years). She is also a town councillor. She is active at the European level and has particular interests in planning and youth issues.

Findings from interviews: Authorisation View

The West Midlands Regional Assembly is an example of governance as it is formed of politicians and administrators from different decisional layers alongside non-political actors i.e. interest representatives and stakeholders. The policy which formed the WMRA (HM Government 1998) stipulated who was to be involved in the organisation. The policy allocated local authority units as the base unit of representation. Assembly members are given the representative authority to act within the assembly '*a priori*' by virtue of their selection by their local council. Therefore they are given an institutional mandate to represent their appointing authority. An example of how this process works is found within the constitution of Birmingham City Council which states that: 'Appointments [to the WMRA] are reserved for the Full City Council to determine, as it thinks fit… Proportionality of votes to apply' (Birmingham City Council 2006:3).

The nominations were made to the West Midlands Local Government Association which proposes them to the board of the Regional Assembly. The board then ratified the appointments through a simple voting process outlined within the institutions Articles of Association (WMRA 2006:6). The only possible limitation on appointments was that the constituent groups cannot exceed 68 local authority, 16 business council and 16 other stakeholder group members. At this point it is worth noting that there were no strictly defined rules or advice on how appointed WMRA members should act in their role as representatives. This leaves the decision on how to enact and understand their rights and obligations as representatives entirely down to those appointed.

Authorisation: Constituency or institutional mandate?

The authorisation view was explored extensively within the interviews with regards to the question of where councillors saw their mandates being granted. As explained in the research framework this only shows half the picture. The authorisation view defines representation as the giving and having of authority to act, but takes no account of accountability to the represented. The questions asked to councillors focused around where they saw their mandate as situated and who granted it. All eight of the assembly members interviewed were appointed through selection by their local authority (none were appointed via the party political balancing places). As the starting point of the representative relationship all subsequent actions and role choices are informed by or interpretations of this appointment juncture. When questioned about the source of their mandate, three councillors referred to a constituency mandate (areal) and five to a local authority (institutional) mandate at the assembly. As the constituency mandate was a deviation from the institutional mandate derived during the process of authorisation it was explored further with the three interviewees to see if they felt a responsibility to the collective territory or people of the area. Councillor seven (C7) stressed that his mandate was for 'the whole region' adding that 'even though the council technically puts me there, what is good for the West Midlands is good for Birmingham'. Councillor six suggested that ultimately she 'got this assembly post on the basis of the whole county and its people and my responsibility is to them' (C6). Councillor three said his constituency mandate meant his 'responsibility is not to the party controlling the council but to the local people and rural interests' (C3). Councillor three distanced himself from actions of the ruling group of his local authority. Conversely, these other two

councillors asserted some degree of equivalence between the interests of the local authority and its geographic constituency. The majority of those interviewed used constituency representation as a synonym for authority representation; however the constituency in question was defined in scale and geography as different to their local ward through which their membership of the authority is institutionalised through periodic election. The implication is that there is a weakened link to their local electorate.

Independence from mandate: non representative orientations
Councillors reported a great deal of flexibility in their representative role as assembly members and hinted at a degree of independence, if not from party then at least from constituency or council mandates. Councillor one went so far as to explain that 'It's not so much a representative role as a matter of being able to talk about the issues and come to a consensus' (C1). This was the first of many instances where councillors directly talked of detachment or independence from their mandate and a more functional or technical role orientation. Another interviewee when discussing the first meeting of the Regional Forum of Leaders spoke of the need for councillors to have power and independence 'You have to… actually have the confidence that you can say you know this is something I have agreed to and if I have to go back, I will justify it.' (C2). Councillor two asserts a leadership orientation as a trustee which is driven and informed by the circumstances and procedures of the Regional Assembly. He supplemented this idea when I enquired about the nature of business at the assembly. As full assembly only meets four times per year there is a lot of business to get through in a short time, so decisions are sometimes made at a fast pace. Councillor two stressed that there would be a problem if councillors constantly

had to refer back to other groups before making decisions, 'since the first meeting, people are like, I've got to go back to my group to discuss this', so if you can't make a decision then there is not a lot of point being there' (C2).

Councillor eight referred to her roles on other bodies meaning that she was 'at the table as a specialist' (C8) and her appointment by the district council was 'just a matter of procedure' (C8). These views reveal the clear expression of a Burkean conception of representation (Burke [1774] 1999:13) with politicians once authorised being free from the mandate. Although the Burkean conception usually refers to politicians breaking from their mandate post election (until the point of re-election) it also fits the model of appointment to the Regional Assembly. Therefore the way in which assembly members 'do' accountability is even more important if the democratic implications of non elected governance are to be addressed and the members themselves seen as legitimate democratic representatives.

Local authority mandated representatives
Other councillors were clear in thinking that their mandate was granted by their appointing authority. This understanding came from their perception of the formation and function of the Regional Assembly. Councillor five described the Regional Assembly as 'a consortium of councils, because every council gets representation' and stressed that his mandate was derived on this basis so he was 'answerable to and for his council' (C5). Another councillor also referred directly to his appointing authority when he said he was 'the district man at the region' (C4). When asked if this meant his constituents or the council, he clarified that when working in larger organisations it was more practical for his focus to be on the larger

constituency unit: 'I don't represent my constituents at the region, I represent my council as it goes about its business as part of the region'(C4). One councillor stuck to a conception of authorisation based upon appointment by their local authority but specified that they had other interests at other levels 'There is a technicality here, yes you are representing your authority, but I am also a councillor on the district council and technically I am their nominee not the county councils nominee' (C5). I asked this councillor if this made things difficult in terms of representation, the response was 'actually you don't represent, it's a strange sort of situation, to a degree yes in decision making you have to reflect the interests of your area' (C5). The Councillor quickly followed up that there was a need to represent more holistically: 'what I do is represent the interests of the local authority which should embrace the various wards and divisions in it and sometimes we have to share that burden with a neighbouring authority' (C5).

Conclusions on the authorisation view

The authorisation view of representation is not particularly useful as an aspect on its own but was explored as a precursor to an understanding of the relationship between the appointed member and the granter of their appointment. Whilst literature suggests that politicians operating on other bodies are not always clear whether they are representing 'themselves as individuals, their organisations, a cluster of organisations or a particular sector' (Audit Commission 2005:34), the interviews suggest that assembly members have a clear conception of their representative mandate. All those interviewed asserted that their mandate was drawn from their appointment on a constituency or institutional basis matching their

legislative basis for participation in the assembly. Discussing their representative basis in the assembly provoked some members to discuss more functional orientations for their role (specialism, leadership, holistic representation) as opposed to a particular areal representative role. The councillors in question suggested that appointment was simply a procedural aspect and thus exhibited a trustee conception of their role. The crucial question is how appointed members make sure they are accountable to those that appoint them, this will be addressed in the following section.

Findings from interviews: Accountability View

The balancing part of Pitkin's authorisation view is the accountability view which acts as a mechanism by which politicians acquire obligations post authorisation. Having ascertained that all those interviewed derived either a constituency or institutional mandate from their appointment the interviews considered how assembly members assured accountability to and representation of their local authority through questioning on pre meeting briefings, reporting procedures and information sharing. The public administration literature acknowledges that partnerships and networks challenge traditional notions of accountability (O'Toole 1997; Agranoff and McGuire 2001), positing two general approaches to understanding accountability: accountability as answerability; and accountability as managing expectations. Accountability as answerability stresses accountability can only be ensured by maintaining strong external control mechanisms (incentives and sanctions) whereas accountability as managing expectations asserts administrators are capable of self control based on expectations and norms. Traditional accountability mechanisms can

be defined simply as 'a relationship between an actor and a forum, in which the actor has an obligation to explain and to justify his or her conduct, the forum can pose questions and pose judgement, and the actor may face consequences' (Bovens 2007:447). The notion of how members do accountability on a non-elective mandate is increasingly contested.

Contemporary principal-agent theory is based upon a delegate conception of accountability whereby an agent of someone acts for the principal precisely as the principal would. However, as Pitkin stresses, the concept of modern political representation is inherently complex and cannot be understood on the 'one-to-one, person-to person' (1967:221) model of the principal-agent relationship but instead politicians need to take into account multiple and competing factors. Despite this, accountability as answerability and principal agent perspective still provide the foundation for the design and implementation of external control methods to both establish and maintain accountability. However an analysis of the council constitutions (including member role descriptions), codes of conduct for members and guides to partnership and external working (Stratford-on-Avon DC 2005; Staffordshire County Council 2008; Birmingham City Council 2010) provided only frameworks for reporting as opposed to strict requirements. The main requirements emerging from the documentation were the need to follow an annual protocol defining any prospective involvement on external bodies and partnerships through the creation of a 'memorandum of understanding' (Birmingham City Council 2010:50-51), or simply an expectation to carry out strategic and corporate management functions, effectively represent the interest of electoral divisions and

be available to represent the council on other bodies' (Stratford-on-Avon DC 2005:7; Staffordshire County Council 2008:9). Even though there is this 'institutional hardware' (Mathur and Skelcher 2007) it is weak in terms of defining actual procedures for assembly members to follow. Therefore the interviews explored the 'institutional software' through which assembly members 'do accountability' built upon an 'accountability as managing expectations' conception.

Mechanisms for accountability

The first area interviewees were questioned about related to the mechanisms they utilised to make sure that they were accountable to their appointing institution. The eight assembly members named a range of mechanisms as outlined in table 13.

Table 13 Reporting and Accountability mechanisms mentioned in interviews

Accountability Mechanism	Number of Councillors
Questions about WMRA at Cabinet, Executive or Full Council meetings	**6** (C1, C2, C4, C5, C6, C8)
Written report to appointing authority (annual)	**3** (C3, C6, C7)
Written report to appointing authority (quarterly)	**1** (C4)
Issue addressed by overview and scrutiny committee	**1** (C1)
Information briefing to party colleagues	**1** (C1)
Regular leaders briefing to the press	**2** (C1, C2)
Leaders Blog	**1** (C1)

In the majority of instances the onus to report back to the appointed institution rested with the assembly member. This places an increased importance on the perception of assembly members on what is of interest to their appointing authority.

There is also no measure of how much time is allocated to questioning the actions of assembly members back at their local authority. Councillor four commented that he was only questioned 'sporadically' (C4) about his work at the assembly. Other councillors suggested these actions were 'not really a requirement' (C6) and 'just a nod really to the work I'm doing' (C5). The interviews failed to surface any clearly defined accountability obligations acquired by appointed assembly members 'post authorisation'. Therefore there was a challenge to seek out the ways in which assembly members 'do' accountability at the regional level in terms of the softer expectations upon their role. The best method through which to assess the way in which politicians assure their accountability, if at all, is through the practice of representation, which is not considered by either of the formalistic views of representation but instead is addressed in a separate section on substantive representation.

Accountability through representation

Few assembly members when asked about accountability as an appointed member referred to the fact that they were the voice of their council at the region. One in particular stressed that they made sure if things were of particular relevance to their authority their council was fully consulted saying 'to a degree that's a form of accountability' (C5). A critical factor however in order to be accountable through representation is to clearly know the position of your appointing authority. The interviews asked the eight assembly members if they had briefings before they went to assembly meetings and who they came from. Table 14 lists the range, regularity and source of briefings for each assembly member.

Table 14 Briefings mentioned in interviews

Councillor 1 (C1)	Briefings from Conservative party group (morning of assembly meeting)
Councillor 2 (C2)	Subject based briefings available (on request) via appointing authority Monthly briefings from local Labour party
Councillor 3 (C3)	None
Councillor 4 (C4)	Quarterly briefings from WMLGA Independents group
Councillor 5 (C5)	WMRA Briefings
Councillor 6 (C6)	Quarterly briefings from appointing authority, Local authority briefings relating to Regional Spatial Strategy
Councillor 7 (C7)	Subject based briefings available (on request) via appointing authority
Councillor 8 (C8)	Quarterly briefings received from West Midlands in Europe on European Issues

Only one of the councillors interviewed received a briefing from their local authority in advance of full assembly meetings. The other members were reliant on the briefings provided by the West Midlands Regional Assembly itself or on subject based briefings which needed to be requested well in advance of any assembly business. The lack of formal and regular briefings weakens any opportunity of representatives acting as delegates.

Several councillors fulfilled an accountability function to other groups instead of their appointing authority. Councillor one stressed that the main opportunity for accountability was to his party group whom he regularly reported to and got briefings from as there was no opportunity to brief to full council: 'I do it to the group as there is nothing at the county' (C1). The councillor stressed that within his home institution they 'have tried to get it into our scrutiny system as a subject' (C1) but that there was no formal opportunity to report to the council. Councillor two stressed that accountability came naturally through the procedures at his council. He

highlighted the democratic deficit posed by other stakeholder members of the Assembly who didn't have 'a real organisational structure to do accountability' (C2), whereas the 'natural mechanisms for accountability were there within the day to day work of a councillor' (C2). These natural mechanisms took the form of 'regular briefings about what happens in each of the other partnerships' (C2), and were in place to combat the dangers of 'partnership working being not that transparent and not particularly accountable' (C2). In the case of councillor four he stressed that as an Independent he 'didn't have a particularly formal party group to report back to' (C4) and saw accountability as a function of the council. Whereas councillor four speaks strictly of the need to be accountable to the appointing body, other members divert their attentions elsewhere. Indeed if members are contemplating the party mandate there is scope to explore party groupings as a proxy target for the accountability obligations of members.

Some interviewees spoke of the specialist remits of members within the assembly as a possible proxy for the need for accountability: 'people are put in place to give some political balance to our structures and secondly they are competent people who I think we can all trust to represent us in those areas' (C5). Councillor two supported this idea that many members of the Regional Assembly were there due to their skills or specialism, giving an example of a senior member of the Assembly: 'it doesn't matter if he is operating outside his remit as a Birmingham councillor, he is the best guy for us on European issues, that's what he should be answerable for' (C2). Councillor seven stressed that the assembly contained many 'regional players' (C7) who were 'there because of what they bring to the table, not because of where

they are from' (C7). This contradicts the system of geographical authority units as the basis for the appointment of representatives and instead posits a desire for meritocratic appointments in line with Dahl's conception of guardians (1989).

Accountability through visibility

Questions about reporting procedures and the politician's associative identity when operating in each institution (home authority and the Regional Assembly) also led councillors to speak of accountability through alternative means. Some interviewees talked of the Assembly being accountable as a collective entity and visible to everyone. The majority classified the Regional Assembly as different and subject to 'different standards of transparency, visibility and accountability' (C7). Councillor two stressed that the lack of visibility of what goes on was an important factor restricting accountability but allowing assembly members to act differently in a less partisan way. Talking broadly about partnership working, he added that on the whole the Regional Assembly was: 'not being scrutinised by the press' and 'not under a media spotlight, or indeed generally speaking a public spotlight' (C2). This visibility was also noticed by councillor one who did not think many of his fellow councillors at parish and district level had 'ever even spotted that I'm a member' (C1). He went on to supplement the point made by councillor two that this changed the dynamic at the Regional Assembly: 'when you are not being scrutinised by the press then it is slightly more responsible, more adult' (C1). However this lack of scrutiny prompted councillor one to endeavour to make himself 'more visible' (C1) to his colleagues, the press and his constituents.

Conclusions on the accountability view

The interviews show that the organisation of accountability mechanisms of partnership members to their appointing organisation is haphazard, unstructured and unclear. Similar findings are seen within larger samples in the work of Smith, Mathur and Skelcher (2006) on public sector partnerships and work on local authority appointments to joint boards (Leach, Davis et al. 1991). The lack of formalised and consistent accountability mechanisms means many of those interviewed stressed that the accountability function came through non traditional and non-institutionalised means namely external visibility or other proxies (through party or indirectly through their councillor role). Some councillors also considered that there was no need for particular geographic accountability as assembly members were often 'regional players' or specialists.

The relative strength of the 'institutional software' emerging to deliver accountability to their appointing institution was weak in most cases. The institutional software was limited to a series of expectations: assembly members comply with the remit of their mandate, follow any top down directives relating to their actions at the assembly and defer where appropriate to the individual expertise or judgement of others.

Returning to the literature the members interviewed failed to fully meet the accountability component suggested for indirectly elected bodies by Leach, Davis, Game and Skelcher (1991) derived their study of post-abolition metropolitan government:

- Local authority nominees' receive an expert briefing from one or more of the authority's officers on issues arising from the joint board's agenda.

- There is a forum at which the local authority's stance on these issues is decided.

- Joint board members receive instructions on voting requirements.

- The nominees report back to the local authority.

- Matters relating to the joint board are discussed at committee or full council.

(Leach, Davis et al. 1991:163-164)

It is clear that without formal accountability mechanisms and requirements, the indirectly elected assembly members are left to their own devices. Overall members were poorly briefed by their appointing authority and were therefore reliant upon WMRA itself for briefings (see table 14). No interviewees suggested that they were given voting instructions or direction. Reporting procedures were also piecemeal and unstructured (see table 13). The fact that the West Midlands Regional Assembly stepped into the void left by the lack of local authority briefings suggests that there is scope for indirectly elected members to be captured by the interests of region.

The dichotomy of giving account or holding to account (Stewart 1992; Skelcher and Davies 1995) is useful when considering the functional aspects of appointed representation. The notion of giving account concerns how decision-making, policies and performance are reported. As an appointed member the representational role becomes less of one about advancing particular policies or concerns but instead becomes a method through which opportunities and developments can be

communicated back to the local authority. In terms of being held to account individually the lack of effective accountability mechanisms means that there is no scope for ex post control by the mandate giver. There is no Damoclean sword, no physical deterrent or mechanism for discipline to force the appointed member to represent. The participation of councillors in the Regional Assembly without defined accountability mechanisms decouples appointed members from the simplest opportunity to be responsive to others. It would be too simplistic to say that this was because of their appointed nature as opposed to being elected as in both instances councillors can choose independence from the mandate. A councillor put it succinctly when they said referring to the juncture at which they can act independently along a more trustee conception of representation 'whether you are elected or appointed makes no odds, once you have found that out what do you do with it' (C1).

Conclusions on formalistic views of representation

Normative judgement posits that if the democratic implications of non-directly elected bodies are to be addressed, then the representative role needs to be acted more explicitly and responsibly in order to answer accountability concerns. Findings on the authorisation view of representation show that assembly members have a clear conception of their representative mandate with all responses suggesting a constituency or institutional mandate (in line with their legislative basis of participation). From this basis questions were asked exploring the accountability view about how assembly members assured accountability to their local authority. The interviews showed that the functions of representation are poorly fulfilled in

terms of both 'giving account' through being adequately briefed and being 'held to account' through reporting back to their local authorities. The view from some interviewees that the appointment mechanism was simply a procedural aspect and didn't place any particular expectations upon their role suggests that the representative aspect of the Regional Assembly fails to address the democratic concerns about non-elected bodies.

The lack of organisational structures and rules for accountability or answerability puts pressure on the conception of accountability as managing expectations as the means to address concerns about appointed representation and democracy. Therefore there is a need to consider both non traditional methods to assure accountability and the norms relating to the expectations upon representatives.

With some interviewees raising the idea of being accountable to their party at the regional level there is an increased need for research to explore the other objects of representation chosen by appointed assembly members. Without clear intentions for accountability or a strong responsibility to those which grant them the mandate, the assembly members are in many cases acting as if on a party mandate or solely on the basis of their expertise. This puts into doubt whether they can be legitimately referred to as 'representatives'. External visibility as an accountability mechanism as referred to by some of the councillors posits that members need to act in an acceptable way supporting the concept of accountability as managing expectations. However as stressed by Papadopoulos (2007:474) external publicity is a 'necessary condition for democratic accountability' but is insufficient mechanism to ensure

representatives act in a particular possibly responsive way. Such a mechanism can only be considered of value if negative reports in the media convince electors to sanction unresponsive representatives at the next electoral opportunity thus removing them from the pool from which assembly members are appointed.

The responses on authorisation and accountability views of representation show that on balance assembly members assert an independence from their appointed mandate and thus act as trustees. As assembly members fail to adopt a delegate conception of their role and there is a lack of hierarchy and formalised accountability mechanisms, the task of being representative and responsive is left to those who choose to enact it. There need therefore is to see how representatives enact their role through a consideration of substantive representation, representative styles and orientations seeking alternative forms of responsiveness and representation in spite of the circumstances.

The formalistic views of representation fail to give insight into the substantive activity of representation. It is too simple to infer that representing others or acting on their behalf obligates the representative to behave in a certain way. Without the object of representation being revealed by the representative it is difficult to assess the relative equivalence of their actions with the wishes of the body which gave them the mandate. In this way there is a need to ascertain how councillors conceive of both their role and the object of their representation.

Substantive Representation

To examine the substantive element of representation the research analysed how interviewees view and refer to their responsibility and accountability. This revealed not only the objects of representation but also how councillors interpret the role of regional assembly member. Exploring the substantive view of representation is a two-step process. Firstly the objects of representation need to be identified before the individual stances of assembly members towards their appointer and any mechanisms for their accountability can be appraised. In this way assembly members can be compared along a continuum from delegate to trustee conceptions. In the strictest sense there do not seem to be tangible mechanisms or methods for holding councillors to account in their role as assembly members, they may act 'as if' they could be held to account rather than due to any form of institutionalised accountability (Pitkin 1967:119).

The lack of a strictly defined accountability mechanism, which could be evaluated, means that any claims of responsiveness by assembly members are in the first instance measured by the equivalence between the positions of the representative and the represented. However, councillors create the conditions of their responsiveness due to their relative autonomy in choosing whom or what they represent. Therefore, when seeking to assess representation as accountability firstly the object of representation needs to be identified before any assessment of responsiveness can be made. Councillors mapped onto both delegate and trustee conceptions of the framework and across the interviews that there was a great deal of difference in the way politicians saw their role.

Delegate: Acting on behalf of

We might expect all of those interviewed to adopt a trustee conception of representation owing to the lack of formal mechanisms to ensure accountability and few local authority specific briefings. However one interviewee, Councillor four mapped onto a more delegate conception and was keen to stress that he was appointed by his district council and therefore was 'the district man at the region' (C4). When asked whether he felt politically limited by taking the mandate literally he stressed 'I wouldn't be at the table as an Independent without the appointment by the district council, therefore I have no right to exceed the clear mandate I feel I have been given'(C4). The same councillor mirrored this when speaking about representing the region to Ministers; 'the Minister asked who are you representing and we said local government, so he asked again, well if you are asking I'm Independent and he's Labour. I'm sure if it had been a Lib Dem and a Conservative it would be the same.' (C4).

Some councillors did state that they were acting in the interests of their electorate but none referenced a direct delegate role in relation to those who elected them to their appointing authority. This is probably due to the long chain of delegation between the politician operating in the assembly and the demos that elected them. If they are to be considered delegates then their direct principal is not the electorate. They are authorised to act but in a sense are not clearly delegated to any principal. Partisan representation is in the first instance regulated by electoral competition but post the point of selection their representative responsibilities are blurred. This replicates the findings of work done on joint boards (Leach, Davis et al.

1991) with the lack of statutory requirements for reporting and briefing leading to a weak system of delegate democracy.

There is little evidence of other interviewees adopting a delegate conception with the majority failing to request briefings in order to re-present the views of their authority to the Regional Assembly. Interviewees instead seemed more inclined to focus on taking information away from assembly meetings. There are few examples of councillors directly drawing on opinion, experience or expertise gained at the local level and replicating it or re-presenting it at the regional level as either a straight reinforcement of knowledge or a reapplication to the regional context. The direction of communication in this way is predominantly away from the assembly with reporting back seen as an opportunity to inform fellow councillors and the organisation as a whole of the opportunities, policies and potential areas for funding and lobbying. When asked what they took to the assembly and took away one councillor said in the most part they used their role to take information back to their local authority, 'you gain experience, transferable experience and you translate that into a wider outlook for the community' (C1).

Trustee: Acting for

The majority of those interviewed alluded to a more trustee conception of their role which matched the work of Day and Klein on appointed members acting 'more as trustees or tribunes rather than delegates' (Day and Klein 1987:229). When asked to place themselves on a scale from Mandated delegate through Politico to Independent trustee, the majority adopted a more trustee conception of their role

with only the Independent councillor feeling an inability to escape from a delegate conception of his role (Figure 11).

Figure 11 Interviewees conception of their representative style

Mandated delegate	Politico	Independent trustee
C4	C3 C2	C6 C8 C5 C7 C1
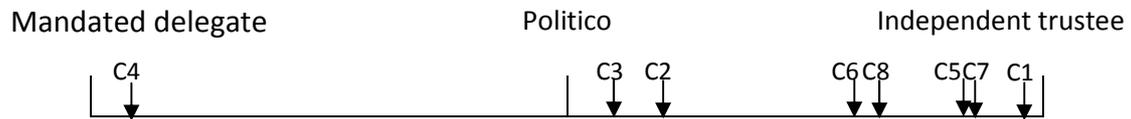
It should be made clear that trustee conceptions should not simply be assigned to those conceptions that are not delegate conceptions. The majority of those interviewed gave more interpretive assessments about their role as a representative on the basis that they fell under the auspices of a loosely situated mandate as opposed to something strict and defined. This builds on the idea of the nature of appointment freeing the appointee from structured representation allowing them the space to represent a wider range of objects, actors or issues. This is illustrated in the case of issue representation where a councillor when talking about their attendance at a Regional Assembly meeting said 'the fact that it is an appointed position, coupled with the stakeholder communities means that I can dip in and out of consensus groups as I like' (C3). This idea suggests a fairly open and independent view of representation on the part of the councillor. The answers given about where mandates were situated were varied. This highlighted the ability of individuals to interpret their appointed mandate in diverse ways. Furthermore the flexibility involved in individual agency and choice when representing manifested itself in broad and often changing responses from councillors between questions.

Taking a trustee role, when another councillor was asked whether he was the 'council man at the region' he categorically disagreed, 'No, not at all you have to think regionally, what is good for the region. Essentially, you were thinking what is good for the Black Country, which was often good for the region.'(C2). Instead he concentrated on his party mandate at the region, 'Effectively that replaces your mandate and it becomes a regional Labour mandate rather than a local Labour mandate so that strengthens that view that I have that people do think regionally about regional issues a lot, there is a parochialism in certain parts but it isn't overwhelming and when it does emerge, its not necessarily very productive, its not a helpful way forward and people don't generally respond to that.' (C2). Another councillor also took forward this collectivist idea of taking both a regional party mandate and representing larger geographical area than his appointing institution in this case a larger county unit as opposed to his home (district) unit 'They are also selecting, and I make no bones about this, a person to look after wider interests, it's just the system that says everyone had to be tied to a geographic area' (C5). This builds upon an earlier comment whereby he stated a similar idea about his elected role 'We act corporately and collectively and that's established in law as well as taken as accepted practice' (C5).

Some councillors alluded to an advocacy role emerging from their perception of the best interests of their constituency or the region. This sits within the scope of a trustee conception of representative style. A Conservative councillor asserted passionately that 'he had fought the government through the Regional Assembly' (C5), and the whole of the assembly had 'let our voice be heard about eco-towns'

(C5). Only by asking further on the use of the relative pronoun 'we' did it become clear that on this issue the councillor in question was talking about a direct reflection of the view of his local authority (this case is explored in more detail in chapter seven). This exhibits a strategic decision by the councillor to use his position at the assembly to give account for and forward the interests of his appointing authority. In many cases councillors spoke about a joint voice and problems shared with other councils in promoting an issue or campaigning against different elements of the regional strategies 'If you look at your neighbours there you probably both share the same issues, scarcity of population, whatever it may be, ethnic minorities and you need to be able to have some sort of joint voice' (C1). Speaking about one of the proposed replacement bodies for the assembly (Regional Forum of Leaders) a senior Conservative councillor stressed the importance of fighting the cause of a particular geographic location 'the leaders who go into the RFL they are going to be talking about allocations of funding and stuff like that, he's got to fight, he is fighting his area to them' (C1). The senior councillors interviewed stressed the importance of the policy advocacy role and the benefits and opportunities that arose from involvement with the region: 'I was very keen to stress to the leader of the council and the planning portfolio holder (borough) that they involve themselves with the region' (C1). A senior Labour councillor stressed the assembly was an 'arena for influence' and outlined the important role officers can play in advocating local or council positions at the region 'You can get influence through unconventional means' (C2). He explained further that

> 'an awful lot of the work that needs to be done at the assembly can't be done by the assembly officers. Because they do not have the capacity

but you then have, effectively you then have officers from different parts, constituent organisations who effectively work on a voluntary basis on top of their day job doing certain things. And they have, those people actually have immense power, if you have got somebody who say the your transport officer is working on the transport strategy then your scheme is never going to be a million miles from the top and that is probably more influential than having a member pushing it. You have then got somebody in there' (C2).

Those closer to trustee positions are less responsive to their constituencies acting along the lines that their mandate grants them a level of independence. Their regional remit gives them independence or specialism and the room to choose whichever group, issue or object they want to represent leading to the need to assess their possible foci of representation. One councillor directly referenced the challenge of multiple representative foci, but stressed that the authority representative focus won out clearly depicting a trustee role. Referring to the electorate they said 'one has to represent their interests above all others, but there is a legal requirement upon all elected members at all levels to act corporately within the organisation they are in' (C5). When I referred them to their elected mandate he spoke of the electorate electing 'I make no bones about this, a person to look after the wider interests' (C5).

The majority of councillors interviewed adopted a position that is best described as some form of trustee, although this classification is broad and thus weak in terms of its explanatory power. The category of trustee needs to be delineated as the action of being independent from the mandate cannot strictly be assumed to be a

definitional basis for trustee conceptions. Within the interviewing councillors were asked to compare their role as an elected councillor and their appointed role as an assembly member, the following section reveals some of their responses and endeavours to compare elective notions of trustee representation with appointed notions of trustee representation.

Representing as a trustee

The next point of questioning for interviewees aimed to explore if there was any variation between how members considered their appointed mandate to represent at the Regional Assembly and how they consider their elected mandate as a councillor in their home institution.

All eight of those interviewed were clear that there was a difference between how they operate in the West Midlands Regional Assembly and in their home institution. One councillor suggested that in their home institution 'the political milieu is far sharper, so you will be involved in debate.' (C2). The Labour councillor in question was on the ruling group in their council but not in the majority at the assembly (predominantly Conservative). On asking precisely what he meant by 'a sharper political milieu' he described how party politics has a much stronger influence on how members act in their home institutions whereas he defined the partnership setting as different and a place which was 'slightly more, more responsible, more adult' where 'you do engage with opposition members in a different way' (C2). Another member described it simply as a 'different kettle of fish' (C3) he explained that at the regional level there was 'a concerted attempt by the main parties to work

strategically as a unit on regional issues' (C3). He stressed that on regional issues it was important to get what was best for the region when competing with other regions and government targets citing the examples of centrally imposed housing figures, the collapse of manufacturing at Longbridge and cross regional competition for funding at RAF Cosford.

Discussions within the interviews about the differences between engagement at the regional and the local level drew a range of responses. Councillor four saw the regional setting as a breath of fresh air: 'Its refreshing to get away from some of the parochialism at the district level, in most assembly meetings if someone walked in it would be near impossible to work out which party members where from' (C4). This was reflected in another interview although the interviewee talks more of strategic cooperation: 'it works a bit differently in terms of a comparison with the way it works within a local authority. I think you are more strategic in what you oppose and support, rather than just opposing everything as might be the case on council, just for the sheer fun of it.'(C2). The Labour councillor was keen to stress that there were 'different real interests' (C2) at the assembly and the need to keep in mind a long-term strategic plan:

> 'if you see everything as a one off, then it doesn't work. If you see each battle as something that you have to win, but if you see a battle as something, if I lose that one then I can expect to win that one, you have to see it that sort of way as part of the bargain, then prioritise what you're doing'(C2).

Logically the next step was to ask the politicians why they thought there was this difference. The majority spoke of the Regional Assembly being different as it was you are 'not being scrutinised by the press' and 'not under a media spotlight in a partnership, or indeed generally speaking a public spotlight' (C2). A further councillor noted that he didn't think many of his fellow councillors at parish and district level 'ever even spotted that I'm a member' (C1) the interviewee went on to add 'when you are no being scrutinised by the press then it is slightly more responsible, more adult' (C1). I spoke at length with one councillor with regards to what kind of institution the Regional Assembly was and how this related to their role as a councillor and furthermore what this meant with regards to their representative role. He classified the Regional Assembly as another partnership and thus different to the local council: 'I think that what you need to see the assembly as, not as the assembly and the council separated like that, but the assembly as part of a big range of partnerships at an RDA level.' (C2). Another councillor stressed that the assembly allowed him to have a strong representative role on different levels, which fitted in with his delegate-based conception of representation 'It's about representing the views of the council as you go about representing the region' (C4).

Some of those interviewed took the scrutiny role of the Regional Assembly as an essential aspect of their representative role and used it as a proxy for assuring that the interests of their appointing institution were represented and recognised. The majority of councillors interviewed discussed the success of the assembly within its scrutiny work. Councillor five said that the range of scrutiny topics and posts available allowed him to make sure that 'his part of the region did not miss out on

opportunities whilst others wasted them' (C5). Speaking about the benefits for his city of his involvement in the scrutiny of the regional transport strategy Councillor two stressed that 'on transportation we have done particularly well' (C2). The number of leaders and senior councillors involved as assembly members also meant that 'no stone was unturned and everyone was answerable within the scrutiny process' (C2). Councillor two expressed his surprise at how well scrutiny was done at the assembly despite the calibre of participants:

> 'if you are going to do scrutiny at a regional level, the last people you ask are council leaders. First of all they don't do scrutiny; they don't have many scrutiny skills. Secondly, a lot of people who have done a lot of scrutiny and are a lot better at it' (C2).

Councillor one offered an alternative standpoint on the scrutiny function of the assembly and suggested that scrutiny was the raison d'être of the assembly and its sole significant function adding that 'All you can do is scrutinise' (C1). This statement undersells scrutiny somewhat and positions representation as something than can only be done through decision-making.

The fact that members were appointed as opposed to elected had other consequences on how members conducted their role. One councillor suggested that the appointed mandate meant that some assembly members failed to conduct their representative role: 'There is a certain amount of people who just switch off and you may not like it but you have got to engage' (C1). Another councillor criticised those who failed to take the role seriously due to the lack of consequences 'they just don't care, they don't have any questions to answer when they get back' (C7). Councillor

one was clear that others 'don't turn up or think it's a chore' (C1). A senior Labour councillor suggested that due to the specialist functions of the Regional Assembly it attracted a particular type of individuals whom he classified as 'regional thinkers' (C2):

> 'I go to a lot of the meetings, and I do not see many leaders at many of their meetings. So often, it has been delegated to people who have got more time or somebody who isn't the leader like [councillor] who is quite a logical choice to chair planning as he does a lot of regional work' (C2).

Questions therefore arise as to whether when operating regionally assembly members were taking a calculated choice in the interests of their local authority or alternatively were identifying with or had been socialised into being a regional representative.

Conclusions

Considering the formalistic and substantive elements of Pitkin's four views of representation (Pitkin 1967) throughout the interview process allowed an appraisal of the difference between appointed and elected mandates as well as addressed questions about the democratic implications posed by institutions formed on the basis of appointment. This section will therefore address research question one and address the wider implications of the findings.

RQ1: How do councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected?

All respondents confirmed that they acted differently when operating in the Regional Assembly in comparison with their local authority councillor roles. Interviewees suggested that this was due to being independent of their appointed mandate and thus being part of a larger regional unit, out of public media scrutiny and away from party political pressures. The representational ambiguity created due to their appointment, coupled with a lack of formal mechanisms for briefing and reporting means that the majority of those interviewed adopted a trustee conception of their representative role. This institutional void allows some of them to adopt and enact different roles performing representation through scrutiny or adopting a wider perspective and thus a strategic regional orientation above both locality and party.

West Midlands Regional Assembly members are defined as representatives and could be assumed to take on some kind of either collective or specific interest, however the nature of this has interest has yet to be defined. When adopting the trustee role as highlighted in the previous section councillors were given the opportunity to represent beyond their appointed authority mandate. The scope therefore is for them to adopt alternative orientations and represent different constituencies.

Emerging Representative Role Types

Many potential role types adopted by regional assembly members emerge and are informed by the skills and knowledge required to work in partnership style bodies. Below are some potential role orientations emerging from the data.

Institutional delegate: Councillor 4 (Independent councillor) is the only one of eight interviewed to adopt a delegate conception of his role and remained tightly committed to his institutional mandate. His insistence that he 'was the district man at the region' and he represented his council 'as it goes about its business as part of the region' went together with a commitment to deliver quarterly written reports on his actions at the Regional Assembly

All the other orientations which emerge from the analysis are based upon a dislocation from the original institutional mandate and a trustee conception of role.

Regional player: This term coined by one of the Labour councillors (C7) brings together both areal (regional) and specialist orientations. Their mandate to represent was irrelevant as they were involved with the Regional Assembly 'because of what they bring to the table, not because of where they are from' (C7). These individuals tend to be senior councillors who have been involved within regional institutions for a considerable time. One councillor alluded to a councillor operating as a specialist as opposed to being a representative for his constituency (Birmingham) stating 'it doesn't matter if he is operating outside his remit as a Birmingham councillor, he is the best guy for us on European issues and that's what

he should be answerable for' (C2). This conception although rooted in an areal orientation towards the region includes those who believe in the trickle down benefits for their institution from success at the region.

Scrutineer representative: The interviewee who stressed that 'all you can do is scrutinise' (C1) used the scrutiny process at the Regional Assembly to ensure his constituency 'got a fair deal' (C1) out of what was on offer at the assembly (funding/best practice). This was done through hyper-involvement and immersing himself in the regional context. This was mirrored in councillor one also being the most active in terms of reporting his actions at the Regional Assembly through press briefings, party briefings, an online blog and securing regional working as a subject for scrutiny at his appointing authority.

Entrepreneurial representative: The flexibility assured by a detachment from a strict appointed mandate allowed many of those interviewed to adopt a floating position in which they 'can dip in and out of consensus groups' (C3) and use their experience at the assembly and 'translate that into a wider outlook for the community'(C1). A solid example of this is councillor five who increased his involvement at the Regional Assembly when he needed to protect a local interest and 'fought the government through the Regional Assembly' (C5).

Strategist representative: This orientation is based around long-term objectives and was adopted in particular by councillor two; a Labour councillor amongst a Conservative dominated Regional Assembly. His involvement with the assembly and

other partnership bodies is rooted in a long-term strategic approach to advancing the goals of his city council. His appraisal was modelled firmly on a trustee conception of the independent representative. His mantra of representing without being briefed and dealing with accountability afterwards is entrenched in an attitude of 'if you can't make a decision then there is not a lot of point being there' and 'if I have to go back, I will justify it' (C2). The strategist representative has a belief in the institution as 'an arena for influence' and stresses the importance of presence and 'being there' (C2). The orientation is based an overall approach towards communication and building consensus and engaging 'with opposition members in a different way' (C2). The strategist representative will operate on broad horizons and make long-term assessments which fit with the way of working of the Regional Assembly (15-20 year plans). This long-term outlook allows the representative to offset losses now for the long term benefit of his appointing institution. As shown with the comments from councillor two that: 'if you see everything as a one off, then it don't work' and 'If I lose that one then I can expect to win that one' (C2).

The eight scoping interviews conducted on the basis of the representative role framework enabled the analysis to address RQ1 and suggest role orientations emerging from the data. Chapter five will begin with an appraisal of the framework and will address further questions arising from the data before continuing to outline the research plan for the rest of the thesis.

CHAPTER 5: BEYOND THE FRAMEWORK, DISMANTLING AND RECONSTRUCTING THE CONCEPT OF REPRESENTATION.

Introduction

The previous chapter used the representative role framework to explore how assembly members fulfil their representative role when operating in the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The analysis mapped the opinions and statements of interviewees onto the formalistic definitions of representation, namely authorisation and accountability, before considering how representatives act in terms of whether the act as delegates or trustees. The interviews showed that the majority of assembly members viewed their mandate as derived from their appointing institution but failed to fulfil the accountability component of their representative role. As such seven out of the eight assembly members interviewed adopted a trustee conception of their role. This chapter considers the findings from chapter four and stresses the need to take an alternative approach to the analysis of the concept of appointed representation. The chapter posits the need to take into account the intrinsic and extrinsic factors which influence the role choices of assembly members. This will allow an exploration of the motivations and reasons for the enactment of different role choices by appointed representatives.

The first part of this chapter addresses the second research question through a critical appraisal of explanatory value of the representative role framework. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the deductive approach used to operationalise it. In addressing the weaknesses of the framework, the next section stresses the importance of an appreciation of both the structural context and the

agency of the individual in appraising the role choices of councillors operating in arenas to which they are appointed. This section ends with a discussion of the future direction of the thesis and introduces the final two research questions. The final part of the chapter discusses the research plan for the rest of the thesis. It explains the rationale and method for the dismantling and reconstruction of the concept of representation via sensemaking.

Evaluating the representative role framework

The representative role system framework (see figure 12) was used to address research question one.

Figure 12 The representative role system framework

Four Views of Representation (Pitkin 1967)

Role *Orientations* (Newton 1974)

Representative *Styles* (Eulau, Wahlke et al. 1959)

Focuses of Representation (Wahlke, Eulau et al. 1962)
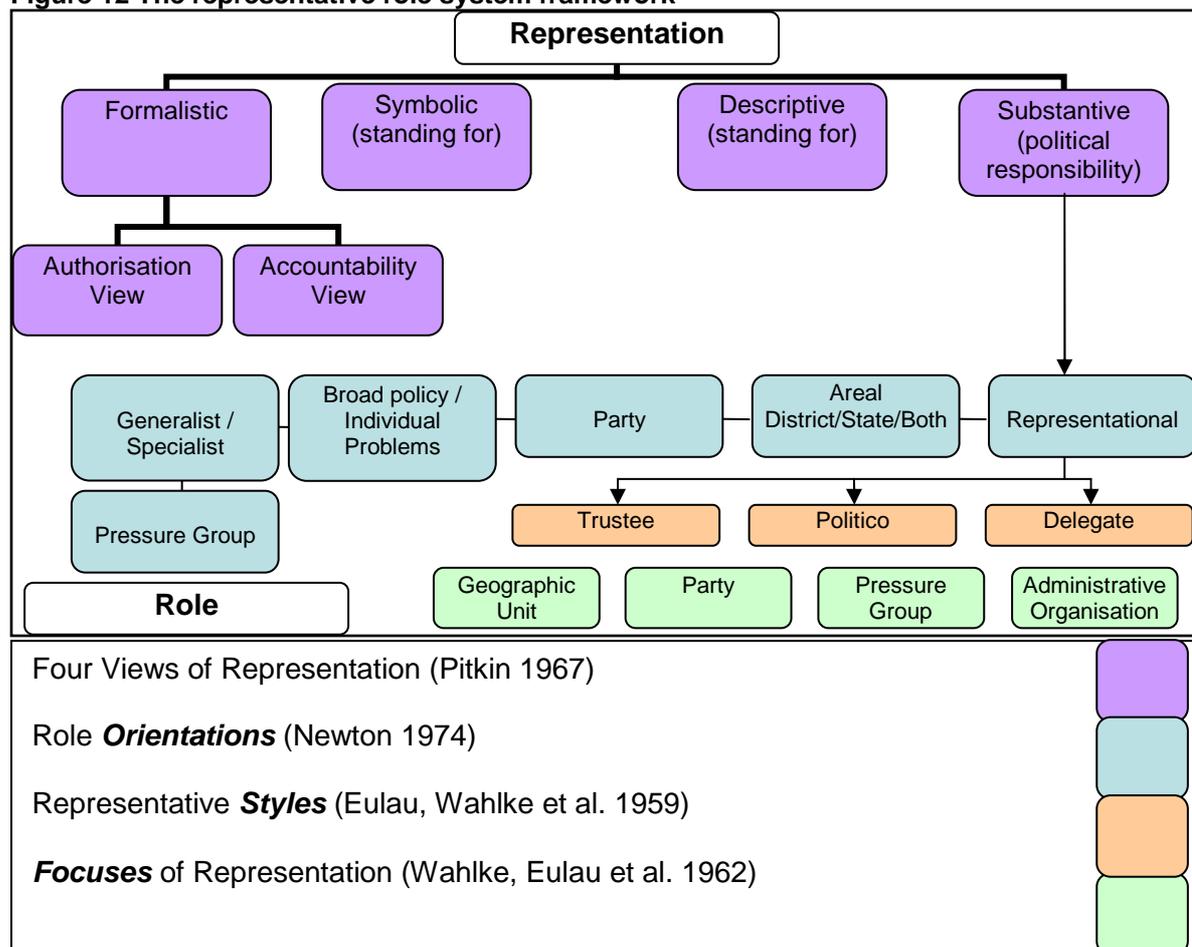
The framework succeeded in exploring the formalistic elements of representation and illustrating the different role orientations taken by assembly members. However, the deductive approach limited the analysis solely to how appointed representatives fulfil their representative role without addressing the question of why they choose to adopt and enact different role orientations. This section will first appraise the explanatory power and value of the framework in capturing the different facets of appointed representation. It will then address the elements which the framework failed to capture. Second, the analysis will evaluate the deductive methodology used to address the first research question. These elements together will address the research question:

RQ2: To what extent can Pitkin's framework of representation be applied to indirectly elected bodies?

The explanatory power of the framework

The representative role system framework developed from Pitkin (1967) proved useful in teasing out how councillors acted within the Regional Assembly but didn't make particular inroads into why they acted in this way. Whilst assembly members could predominantly be placed in the trustee category of representatives, this seemed to be due to the lack of strict accountability mechanisms giving them agency to adopt and adapt who or what the represented and how they went about representing them. It is clear that without accountability mechanisms those who take a delegate role will have a stronger responsiveness to their constituency or appointing authority than those who take on a trustee role. However, defining all

assembly members as within the trustee category purely because they exhibit independence from mandate shows that the category of trustee needs further delineation. Whilst the framework surfaced how interviewees conceived their mandate and their views on the accountability function, it did not address the extent to which this informed their adoption of a trustee conception of their representative role. In order to explore the concept of appointed representation there is a need to delineate whether assembly members adopt a trustee orientation due to circumstance and structural factors or whether they make a strategic tactical choice to do so.

When considering the trustee role adopted by the majority of interviewees many suggest a regional orientation or focus, however it is not clear to whose interests they are alluding when representing regionally. It is difficult to determine whether this is instrumental calculation to further the goals of their appointing institution or if there are other processes at play. In elective situations the enactment of representation is strongly influenced by the dynamics of competition and political struggle rather than collaboration. However the interviews suggest that this is only a small factor influencing the role choices of assembly members as few examples of overt party politics or competition emerge. The framework proves limiting in that it fails to question any of the possible structural factors informing role choices and the possible tensions and issues arising from assembly members adopting one role conception or object of representation over another.

The interviews suggest that most assembly members represent the region, which by its nature is a broader concept as opposed to a distinct targetable group of individuals. Exploration of the formalistic elements of the representative role system framework reveals that assembly members have a weakened constituency mandate and fail to adequately fulfil the accountability function of their role. However the argument that assembly members have a weakened constituency mandate and therefore adopt a trustee conception of their role is too simplistic as it fails to address the wider structural and motivational influences on assembly members. The largest of these is the institutional context of the Regional Assembly itself which informs how members both consider and enact their representative role.

The Regional Assembly is a new arena for participation and collaboration within which councillors are operating alongside actors representing business, social and environmental interests (Glasson 2002; Humphrey and Shaw 2004) and is therefore a dynamic, complex and contested system of regional governance. This is a direct contrast with local elected government which is defined by hierarchy, committees, cabinets, party politics and an institutionalised opposition. Within their assembly role councillors are potentially influenced by more foci than a simple local authority self interest, as notions of the common good, the institutional goals of the assembly and the interests of the region as a whole can pervade their decision making. This contrasts strongly with depictions of representatives being solely interested in the interests of their appointing organisation. Therefore there are wider reasons as to why assembly members may adopt alternative role orientations.

Possible explanations for the adoption of regional orientations are that assembly members are being socialised into acting in certain way or are being consciously or unconsciously influenced by norms i.e. 'collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity' (Katzenstein 1996). It is hard to separate whether this is strategic calculation (e.g. assembly members calculate and seek to maximise their given interests by adapting their behaviour to the norms and rules within the assembly) or whether their period of time within the assembly has caused a form of cognitive / institutional lock in and this regional representative behaviour has become internalised.

Organisational theory offers a similar appraisal which would consider assembly members as boundedly rational actors who due to the multiple representative concerns have to calculate the cost benefits of each. Checkel (2005:804), in his development of a framework developed to study international institutions, describes two types of socialisation which could be applied to those operating in appointed arenas. Type one, where conscious instrumental calculation has been replaced by conscious role playing. Type two goes beyond role-playing and implies that agents adopt the interests or even possibly the identity of the community of which they are a part. In this way conscious instrumental calculation has been replaced by 'taken for grantedness'. The assembly as an organisation and the groups within it (policy specialist groups to party groups) provide shortcuts and cues which can lead to the enactment of role conceptions and role playing amongst its members (March and Simon 1981). This leaves room for the idea that socialisation (Dawson and Prewitt 1969) is occurring as logics of appropriateness seem to be replacing logics of

consequentiality (March and Olsen 2008). There is a need therefore for the next stage of analysis to explore the cues and prompts for the enactment of particular role orientations through a greater appreciation of both context and time.

Another possible reason why councillors adopted a trustee orientation was due to structural circumstances restricting their ability to enact a more delegate conception of their role. A clear example of this emerged from the interview data which suggested that the volume of pace of business at the assembly meant assembly members neither had the time or resources to act as delegates. For example councillor one suggested 'it's a lot of paperwork…it can be tiring and there is not time to think between meetings' (C1). Another councillor worked out that he was on 'about 40 partnership bodies' (C2). The longevity of involvement in the assembly for long-term members alongside the intensity of involvement i.e. large amount of business conducted per assembly session; creates strong conditions for the internalisation of particular roles and hints at a greater internal responsiveness to the partnership. This could have an affect on their external responsiveness to their constituencies. By not being bound by the ideas or interests of their appointing organisation assembly members can alter their stance to overcome the differences that might otherwise constrain the development of consensus within the assembly.

The situation however is not as simple as the assembly members taking on a role of being regional trustees. Their involvement at the local authority is their primary role and with it there is a clear democratic rationale to be both active within the Assembly and responsive to the needs of their constituency in order to progress the

strategic positions of their appointing institution. Derkzen and Bock (2009), in their study of representation in rural partnerships, found that different types of partnership member interpreted their roles and responsibilities differently despite having the same formal basis of appointment. Voluntary sector members perceived their role as a delegate and expressed the strongest responsiveness towards their constituency. This was due to the organisational structures for accountability in place within their organisations coupled with a need to act as if they can be held accountable. Conversely local authority members fell into the mould of trustees and were less responsive to their constituencies acting as if their 'mandate provided them with a certain level of independence' (2009:83). Where local authority members were acting as trustees on the basis of their own expertise Derkzen and Bock suggest 'it is questionable whether they can legitimately be referred to as representatives' (2009:84). Using the dichotomy of representatives and participants, their study suggests that members saw the role of participant as being active and involved, in order to make a positive contribution to the work of the partnership. In contrast, interviewees saw the representative role as passive and were not there to contribute to the partnership but instead focused on taking information from the partnership. Derkzen and Bock's findings show the majority of respondents attributed negative features to being a representative and positive features to being a participant. Their study stressed that when members went to meetings they went as representatives of their appointing organisation but did not go to meetings just to sit around the table, they went to participate.

It is clear that being active members of the Regional Assembly and thinking regionally does not prevent assembly members from acting as representatives. As asserted by Plotke 'the opposite of representation is not participation. The opposite of representation is exclusion. And the opposite of participation is abstention' (1997:19). Assembly members cannot escape their membership of a particular party and are still likely to promote the interests of their appointing organisation. If acting regionally interferes with the goals and aims of the appointing institution then the assembly member can act strategically. Within the assembly some councillors actively evade conceptions and ideas of being parochial in order to maintain opportunities to hold influence on regional matters. In this way the institutional rules and expectations of the Regional Assembly as a collaborative body limit the ability of appointed assembly members to adopt a simple representative role. By increasing their participation and developing their profile within the assembly councillors stand a greater chance of furthering the aims of their appointing organisation, whereas taking highly localised standpoints could hinder further opportunities for influence. In identifying strongly with the assembly and the interests of the region councillors seek to legitimise acting autonomously from their organisational interests. This links directly with the findings of Derkzen and Bock that 'Members seemed to find the notion of participation implied independence from a specific community and responsiveness to the partnership as a whole' (2009:85).

Limitations of the deductive approach

The representative role system framework was operationalised through the mapping of statements onto predefined role categories which had significant implications for the analysis. Whilst the interview process involved both open and closed questions, the framework onto which the statements were mapped proved limiting. The framework analysis approach was deductive in that it sought to reduce the data to concentrate on the role conceptions identified from the literature review. As such the approach was concerned with addressing similarity and fit as opposed to exploring difference within the data. The framework analysis thus neglected some important factors affecting the choice and enactment of different role orientations. The approach failed to surface and draw the links between the influence of context, norms, structural factors and individual role motivations and the role choices made by assembly members when enacting their representative role.

Mapping the statements onto the different representative views and styles the approach also failed to capture the potential for appointed representatives to adopt and enact different roles at different times. The fluidity of interpretation of opportunities and responsibilities by assembly members highlights the potential for individuals to be flexible in the role choices they make. As highlighted in the section on the criticisms of Pitkin's four views of representation, the framework fails to address the 'entrepreneurial' aspects of representation (Brennan and Hamlin 1999). The formulaic and static nature of the framework fails to take into account the potential reflexivity in the role of the politician and the flexibility and fluctuation of potential objects and issues of representation. The framework presumes that

appointed representatives have a clear readily accessible and stable set of interests. However appraisals of the formalistic elements of representation within the interviews reveal that assembly members seemingly have a low appreciation of the importance of their mandates and exhibit a weak level of responsiveness to them. Saward criticises the unidirectional approach of the Pitkin framework as 'unnecessarily limiting' and the results of chapter four suggest the need to explore the deeper processes of constructing 'that which needs to be represented' (Saward 2010:10).

Conclusions on the representative role framework

Overall the framework proved useful in answering the question of how councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected. The holistic nature of the framework allowed a broad capture of the multiple facets of the concept of appointed representation and helps explore the democratic implications of non elected bodies. However the framework failed to address how the different facets of representation relate to one another or make inroads into why appointed assembly members adopt different role orientations. The static character of the framework coupled with the deductive methodology limit the scope of analysis to those expressions fitting the framework and thus ignores the structural influences upon and individual agency of individuals. Therefore the analytical approach cannot address whether assembly members adopt an orientation as a regional trustee due to structural factors or make a strategic choice to do so. There is a need therefore for the next stage of analysis to explore the cues and prompts for the enactment of particular role orientations through a greater appreciation of both context and time.

Moving forward from the representative role system framework

In her seminal work on representation Pitkin appraises the concept of representation and the approaches of political theorists towards it:

> 'We may think of the concept as a rather complicated, convoluted, three-dimensional structure in the middle of a dark enclosure. Political theorists give us, as it were, flash-bulb photographs of the structure taken from different angles. But each proceeds to treat his partial view as the complete structure' (Pitkin 1967).

The representative role system framework delivers snapshots of the concept of representation in appointed arenas. However there is a need to address the elements that the framework fails to capture before the analysis can broach the questions of why assembly members adopt different role orientations at different times. The main call from the literature is for a more dynamic, realistic and constitutive set of theoretical perspectives on representation (Saward 2010:10). Academic attention asks for a greater understanding of the dynamics of representation, as opposed to the more normative questions which dominate. One of the dynamics of representation emerging from the interview data was the broad flexibility of individuals in terms how they interpret their capabilities, their role and ultimately choose which different representative roles to enact. It is clear that there are plenty of opportunities for members to act autonomously of their authority mandate particularly when they are given specialist roles in the assembly i.e. chairing a particular strategy. Other studies have shown that that specialism and increased participation in the assembly can be seen as having a strong effect on the depoliticisation often seen in other forms of partnership working (Leal 2007). There is a need for the approach for the thesis to seek out the points of deviation from the

representative's original representative focus. This will allow an understanding and delineation of which issues or dynamics change how appointed members act and explicate whether the role choices being made are strategic or otherwise. Therefore, in order to address the question of why assembly members choose to enact different role orientations, the analysis needs to explore whether this is due to circumstance or strategic choice. The approach will therefore need to incorporate a full consideration of four elements (see figure 13).

Figure 13 Breaking down the concept of appointed representation
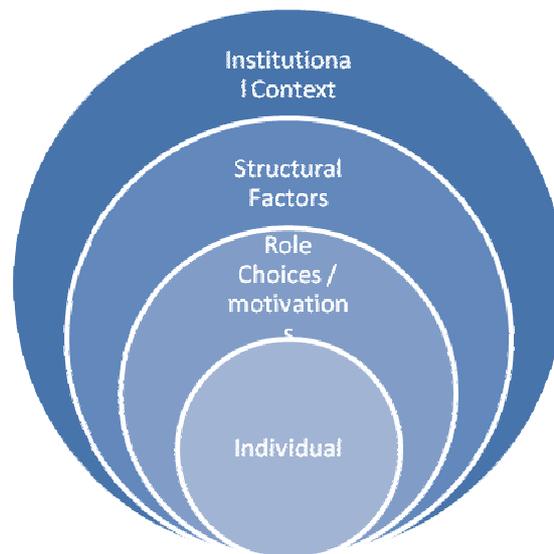
Firstly the individual is central to any understanding of appointed representation. Secondly the individual will adopt and enact representative role choices based upon their own beliefs, opinions and reasoning. Thirdly there are tangible and intangible structural factors which act as barriers or facilitators to different role choices. Finally the choice and enactment of different roles is done within a contextual space which has an impact on choices made. In order to appreciate these four elements the remainder of the thesis will concentrate on two new research questions.

RQ3: What are the structural factors and role choices which inform councillors' decision-making when choosing which representative role to enact in indirectly elected bodies?

And

RQ4: How can research design and methods be developed to advance empirical investigation and generate new knowledge of the concept of appointed representation?

Research question three addresses the need to dismantle the concept of appointed representation and therefore understand the external influences on individuals. It aims to appreciate how the internal motivations, agendas and aims of individuals affect the subsequent enactment of different representative roles. In order to rebuild the concept of appointed representation research question four explores how analysis can consider the interplay between structural factors and individual agency within set institutional contexts. Therefore research question four aims to explore the substantive action of representation and surface the relative importance of each element in informing, allowing or limiting the enactment of particular representative roles. The next section will introduce the research design for the rest of the thesis.

Research Design

The overall thesis is a case study of the West Midlands Regional Assembly; the analysis so far has focused on eight assembly members and a deductive framework analysis of their interviews addressing how assembly members consider formalistic and substantive elements of representation (Chapter four). Subsequent analysis utilises a case study approach therefore the next section will outline the rationale for the use of a case study approach.

Introducing Case Studies

William Wiersma defined a case study as 'a study characterised by an investigation of a single, individual, group, event or culture' (Wiersma 1991:422). Another definition comes from Sturman (1994:640) who highlighted that 'while the techniques used in the investigation may be varied, and may include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The distinguishing feature of a case is the belief that human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity and are not simply a loose collection of traits'. In this way it becomes possible to see the interdependencies of parts and the emergent patterns. This is needed to understand the case and enable a full explanation of why things happen.

Case studies are widely used by researchers as a method to explore and understand social phenomena within their context. Indeed Yin cites using a case study method 'because you deliberately wanted to cover contextual conditions – believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study' (Yin 2003:13). The method embraces environmental complexity and as an approach endeavours to fully appreciate and encapsulate its richness. This essential benefit of a case study

approach was highlighted by Stake (1995) who emphasised its focus 'on a bounded system, whether a single actor, classroom, institution or enterprise-usually under natural conditions-so as to understand it in its own habitat' (Stake 1995:256). Case studies allow the context to be explored deeply lending itself to 'thick description' (Geertz 1973).

Encapsulating an individual in context or environment allows the researcher to seek out connections between observable behaviours and actions. Glaser and Strauss (1967) highlight that the case study method leant itself to 'grounding theory' in data as opposed to more deductive methods. There is a distinct need however to ensure that the case study is situated within a 'conceptual framework' (Miles and Huberman 1994), structure or 'theory building' (Yin 1989).

Limitations of Case Study Research

The case study approach permits an examination of the complexity of the whole as opposed to component parts however any account it provides will still be 'partial and incomplete' (Easton 1992:3). In the same way that within quantitative work, limits are set by extraneous, hidden or immeasurable variables within case study work no matter how deep and situated the researcher gets into the context there are limitations. As simply observed by Miles and Huberman 'You cannot study everyone everywhere doing everything' (1994:27).

Despite this a case study approach does permit a deep examination of assembly members within an operational context conducting their role at different institutional and organisational locations. It is generally assumed that the findings of

case studies are only valid in one instance (De Vaus 2001). However this assumption is contested by Flyvbjerg (2006):

> 'One can often generalize on the basis of a single case, and the case may be central to scientific development via generalisation as supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalisation is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas 'the force of example' is underestimated.' (Flyvbjerg 2006:288).

The ability to make full scale generalisations is not the reason that the case study approach is adopted. The analysis takes a more constructivist approach directed to understanding:

> 'Inquiry is less about predicting or generalising behaviour, and more about interpreting intention and meaning in context.' (Dodge, Ospina et al. 2005:289).

Case studies of Local Government and representation

Case study approaches are extensively used within the study of councillors in terms of both studies of local representation (Meadowcroft 2001; Raco and Flint 2001) and the numerous locality studies which dominate empirical study of English local politics (Birch 1959; Jones 1969; Hampton 1970; Glassberg 1981). However, with the object of analysis being the councillor and their representative action, the case study forms a device to explore the concept of representation in action. In accepting that councillors now live in an era of complex local governance actors operate in multiple local networks rather than purely through old-style national/local government structures (John 2001:3, 108, 168) the analysis of a particular policy or policy stream allows an appreciation of the dynamism of individuals. The case study allows the dynamism of councillors to be explored as they access the policy process both

formally and informally and at different institutional levels and different stages of

the in order to maximise their opportunities to forward particular policy concerns or

invoke changes.

Dismantling the concept of representation

The critical appraisal of the representative role system framework and the deductive

approach to analysis earlier in the chapter showed the need for subsequent analysis

to take a different approach. In order to scrutinise the way in which individuals act

i.e. why, when, where and how they act in different situations; the ensuing approach

to the data will be more interpretative and inductive. The eight scoping interviews

contain far more insight into the reasoning behind the actions of representatives

operating in the West Midlands Regional Assembly than shown through the

framework analysis of the data conducted in chapter four. The implications of a

more inductive and interpretative approach will be discussed below

Introducing Grounded Theory

Grounded theory evolved from the work of sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967)

and offers a rigorous approach for generating theory from qualitative data and is

particularly suited for exploratory studies where little is known about a particular

concept. The approach is inductive and a method through which theory is

systematically generated from the data. It has been widely adopted as a procedure

for conceptualising and analysing data in studies of local government and

representation (Turner and Whiteman 2005; Chaney 2008). Whereas the framework

approach adopted in chapter four stopped at the level of description or simple

interpretation, grounded theory aims to explore the richness of the data and explain

the plausible relationships between sets of categories that emerge from the data analysed. Theory is used to mean the relationships that exist among concepts that come from the data and help us understand our social world more clearly (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Grounded theory offers a constructivist, objectivist (Charmaz 2006-131), situational and cartographic approach to the study of social structure, social action and infrastructure (Clarke 2005:xxii). As such it allows analysis to surface the interconnecting social worlds, matrices of structure, trajectories of action and situated and local readings of individuals and their lives (Charmaz 2005:524-528).

Approach to the data

To address research question one the analysis of the interview transcripts was deductive and involved the manual mapping of opinions and statements onto a conceptual framework developed from the literature. The same eight interview transcripts will be used to address research question three along with additional transcribed data drawn from follow up telephone interviews with the eight assembly members. In order to address research question three the analysis will be inductive searching for themes, codes and categories emerging from the interview data.

RQ3: What are the structural factors and role choices which inform councillors' decision-making when choosing which representative role to enact in indirectly elected bodies?

The inductive approach to address research question three will use the notion of representative issues and tensions as the frames with which to investigate the data.

In doing so the analysis will have scope to surface the broad range of feelings, actions and influences affecting all assembly members and will thus enable an exploration of the substantive action of representation. The approach can also capture the multi faceted nature of the representative role picking up on where councillors fluctuate and choose between different role conceptions as they see fit. This will allow for a deeper consideration of the day to day individual experience and choices that councillors face when operating as appointed assembly members. To explore the flexibility and adaptation in terms of role choices chosen and enacted by individuals the second part of research question three will concentrate solely on the flexibility in the role choices of councillor one. The analysis will explore the coherence and consistency within the beliefs, ideals and normative judgements of councillor one about how he should fulfil his representative role at the Regional Assembly.

Coding the data

Grounded theory utilises a two stage process with the data firstly being condensed into smaller and manageable units and secondly distilled into categories through the investigation of interpretations and different schemes of organisation. Coding represents a significant aspect of grounded theory as it is the main process by which data is subdivided and thematic codes or categories assigned to it. Categories and codes being the labels used for allocating units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information gathered during the interview process. Codes can be attached to chunks of data of varying sizes from words to phrases to whole paragraphs. Basic coding involves the use of categorical labels or metaphors (Miles and Huberman 1994) to mark out examples of relevant phenomena. From which

those phenomena can be analysed to find differences, commonalities, structures and patterns. This process of establishing categories is a significant challenge as the choice of categories plays an important part of the outcome. As Ely, Anzul *et al.* contend:

> 'the process of establishing categories is a very close, intense conversation between the researcher and the data that has implications for the ongoing method, descriptive reporting and theory building' (1991:87).

The categorisation of data aids the construction of conceptual schemes. These schemes enable the researcher to ask new questions, apply hierarchy and compare aspects across the range of the data. They also allow the reframing of ideas through merging, subsuming or creating new categories.

The analysis of the eight interviews to address research question three will be driven by the codes and themes emerging from the data adopting the grounded approach advocated within the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). The process involves a clear process of familiarisation with the data, transcription, organisation, coding, and analysis and reporting. The coding will utilise the 'open coding' approach suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998) whereby a sweep is done through the data marking the text. The dynamic, creative and intuitive process of coding will utilise a constant comparison technique whereby the categories, codes and concepts that emerge from one stage of analysis will be compared with the categories, codes and concepts from the previous stage. This process will continue until there is 'theoretical

saturation' i.e. 'when additional analysis no longer contributes to discovering anything new about a category' (Strauss 1987:21).

Using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)

The framework analysis used to answer RQ1 adopted a manual approach to coding which brought with it many difficulties beyond the length of time involved. The arduous task of manual coding involved extensive use of highlighter pens, post it notes and the cutting up of multiple transcripts into categories and sub-categories. The ability to track and record thought processes, patterns and comparisons within the data was significantly limited. Therefore to address research question three the analysis utilises the CAQDAS software package NVivo to code and analyse the transcripts. The use of NVivo enables the researcher to replicate the same logic processes and technique of coding but without the need for excessive manual data handling, searching and filing. Whilst the programme does not do the analysis, the ability to simply segment and code data, conduct simple computerised searches for single words and phrases coupled with the ability to track thought processes though diary entries, annotations and notes helps record and understand the processes of interpretation. The programme takes over the business of sorting, cutting, marking up, organising and collating and gives the ability to store, search and access pages of interview data simply and efficiently.

Rationale for Research Question Three

The purpose of research question three and chapter six is twofold. Firstly it endeavours to surface the contextual, structural and power factors in the form of representative tensions and issues. These tensions and issues form the barriers or facilitators which affect the substantive action of representation and the ability of

assembly members to make choices about who, what and how they represent.

Secondly the research question will explore the role choices and motivations of

assembly members to surface the flexibility in the enactment of different roles and

the extent to which they adopt a reflexive approach to their role to evade or

overcome representative issues and tensions.

Reconstructing the concept of representation.

It is widely appreciated that actors within the policy process have specific agendas

and frames of reference and these factors along with local contexts have a

substantial role in shaping what is enacted (Majone and Wildavsky 1978). Existing

literature shows that individual knowledge structures affect interpretation (Sims and

Gioia 1986) and those interpretations differ because they are subjective constructs

(Wildavsky 1979). Prior knowledge, past experience and *a priori* beliefs and theories

influence perceptions about issues in that existing schemata provide the frameworks

for which issues to address, and how to interpret those issues. These schemata and

understandings are used by individuals to impose order and make sense of their

environment, thus reducing ambiguity and infusing situations with meaning (Thomas

and McDaniel 1990). There is a need therefore to explore the concept of appointed

representation within the institutional context to understand the processes of

reasoning and motivations of the individual. This will allow an assessment of the

relative effect of norms, expectations and rules in providing barriers or facilitators to

the enactment of different role orientations. Only through a full acknowledgement

of the importance of the individual; their role choices and motivations; alongside

their external context and structural tensions can we begin to understand the

process of interpretation of the representative role. It is this interpretation which ultimately informs the enactment of representation itself. Through an understanding of these factors analysis can begin to delineate whether Regional Assembly members enact a trustee role as regional representative because of strategic choice or institutional circumstance.

To address research question four the final chapter will bring together an appreciation of the findings of the previous empirical chapters through a case study analysis of a single councillor on a single policy issue within three different institutions. In order to do this the analysis will draw upon and develop Karl Weick's 'Theory of Sensemaking' (1995) from the disciplines of Organisational Studies and Social Psychology.

Introducing Sensemaking

Karl Weick uses the term sensemaking to denote the idea that certain phenomena (such as organisations) are created by being talked about. Of crucial importance for Weick is how individuals make sense of novel, new or non routine situations. His main contributions to the literature are explorations of the collapse of sensemaking during disasters (Weick 1990; Weick 1993) from which he defines the notion of a 'cosmology episode' (Weick 1985:51-52) – a challenge to assumptions that causes participants to question their own capacity to act. As a novel context different to that of their appointing institution the West Midlands Regional Assembly represents an institutional setting with a different composition, different norms, expectations and rules to their appointed institution within which individual councillors have to 'make sense' of their representative role. The concept of sensemaking means 'the

making of sense' (Weick 1995:5) where individual actors construct sensible and perceivable events. Within the concept of sensemaking the essential questions are 'how they construct, what they construct, why and with what effects' (Weick 1995:4). Sensemaking is defined by Starbuck and Milliken (1988:51) as 'placing stimuli into some kind of framework' and is a process which enables individual actors to 'comprehend, understand, explain, attribute and predict' their situation. This depicts sensemaking as the black box which needs to be opened up and understood. In the case of appointed representation the stimuli are those internal and external factors which structure and influence the decision making processes of the individual. The internal factors are the beliefs, values and orientations of the individual, whereas external factors include the availability or lack of briefings or time which can act as facilitators or barriers. These are the factors which inform firstly the perception and secondly the enactment of different representative roles. This interpretative conception highlights the immensely subjective, individualised, dynamic and embedded nature of representation.

The concept of sensemaking has been widely used as an interpretative framework within political and social science research literatures with examples with regards to both individuals as boundary spanners (Noble and Jones 2006) and more overt explorations of policy implementation (Pope, Robert et al. 2006; Coleman, Checkland et al. 2010). Drawn from organisational and management theory, this is where the majority of literature and instances of its application and exploration can be found. Indeed within much management literature many issues of strategy are couched in terms of opportunities and threats. This distinction between opportunities and

threats is considered by Weick (1995) to be significant on the grounds that it may 'influence sensemaking at an even earlier stage that we first thought because it is conceivable that they dominate the definition of the project and therefore influence what is extracted from elapsed experience' (Weick 1995:25). Many scholars consider individual action as a linear process whereby rationality and logics define ultimate outputs. However when considering the interpretation and enactment of representative roles it is clear that individuals being embedded in dynamic settings results in rationality being emergent; shaped and understood by the actions of others. In this way individual choices are made in the vein of the adage 'life is what happens to you while you're busy making plans' (Lennon 1980).

Sensemaking and Institutions

The dominant criticisms of sensemaking claim that the theory overlooks the role of larger social, historical and institutional contexts in explaining sensemaking choices. Taylor and Van Every argue that 'making sense – and interpretation – is not an accomplishment in a vacuum its not just context free' (2000:251). An paper by Weber and Glynn (2006) argues that institutions not only proved a cognitive constraint on sensemaking but also act more directly to influence the process of sensemaking. This builds on this idea of the inherent contextualised and contingent nature of the enactment of representation within the assembly. Weber and Glynn (2006) argue that institutions do this by firstly 'priming' sensemaking by providing frames and role expectations for individuals but also 'edit' sensemaking by providing the social context within which groups of individuals negotiate shared sensemaking about meaning in an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation. Weber

and Glynn (2006) suggest a model for the consideration of sensemaking in institutions (see figure 14).

Figure 14 Mechanisms relating Institutional Context to Sensemaking
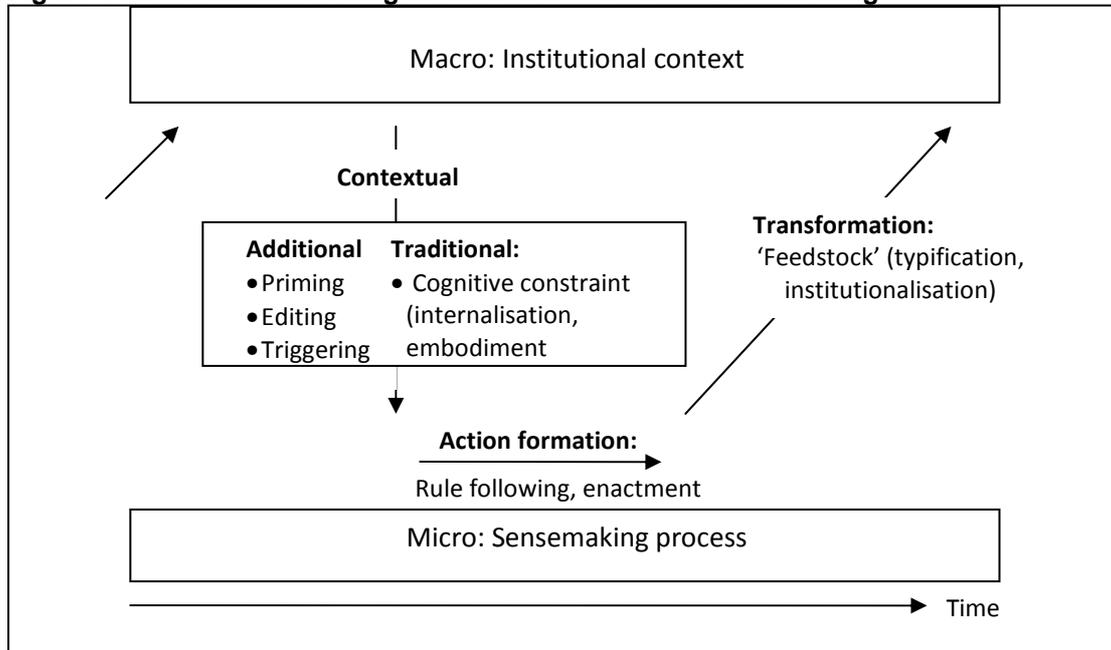
(Weber and Glynn 2006:1641)

Weber and Glynn's model (figure 14) suggests sensemaking pivots on mechanisms of action formation at the micro level of inter-subjective processes, while institutions reside at the macro level of extra-subjective structures (Wiley 1988). In this way institutions are antecedent to (as contextual mechanisms) and emergent from sensemaking (via transformational mechanisms). The institutional context can therefore be seen as an important mechanism narrowing how and what sense can be made (Barley and Tolbert 1997). Furthermore Weber and Glynn suggest two levels of constraint on the sensemaking processes of individuals. The first level (traditional) constraints include those which preclude other potential ways of thinking. These encompass the 'taken for granted' ways of thinking rendering alternatives unimaginable or implausible. The second level constraints are addressed

by Weber and Glynn's 'additional mechanisms' (figure 14) of priming, editing and triggering. These second level constraints do not preclude deviance but instead focus on the social policing of actions through 'institutionalised expectations' (2006:1641). The critique of Weick shows the need for sensemaking analyses to take into account the bottom up aggregation mechanisms named by Weick as the 'feedstock for institutionalisation' (1995:35) alongside the top down contextual influence of institutions which impose constraints, templates for action and norms which inform institutional roles and scripts of Assembly members (see figure 15).

Figure 15 Roles and Scripts (Identities, Expectations and Frames)

ROLES Typified
Actor-in-situation

SCRIPTS Typified
Action-in-situations

INSTITUTIONALISED
IDENTITIES
(Typified Actors)
e.g. councillor, party /
partnership member

INSTITUTIONALISED
EXPECTATIONS
(Typified Actions)
e.g. Representation,
advocacy,

INSTITUTIONALISED
FRAMES
(Typified Situations)
e.g. Reporting and
briefing, giving account
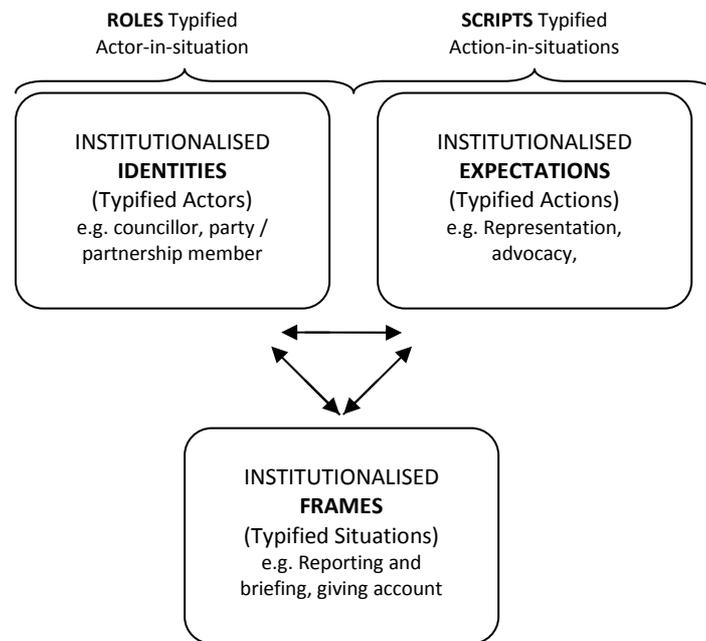
Adapted from Weber and Glynn (2006:1645)

The West Midlands Regional Assembly, as a new institution with new organisational structures and practices, requires councillors to make sense of their surroundings as they try and reconcile other identities (councillor/party member) and assumptions with new realities. The aspect of institutional environment and context therefore cannot be underplayed. Therefore, in deciding to locate the analysis within the

theoretical framework of organisational sensemaking, the research can start to bring together and understand the how external factors and internal preferences, logics and ideals interplay within a particular context to define the enactment of representation. The concept of sensemaking (Weick 2001) is an appropriate tool to address the reflexivity of actors with regards to understanding and adapting to different policy contexts. It permits an appraisal of the difference between and within individuals' interpretations of representation by exploring the micro-level enactment of reality of situated actors (assembly members) 'making sense' of representation and their conception of it within a particular context.

Characteristics of Sensemaking

Sensemaking proves a particularly useful interpretative framework when individuals are diverted from their traditional and routine activities and confront different environments, differences and stimuli. It brings together a consideration of how structural factors, institutional contexts and individuals affect how the individual perceives and enacts their representative role. In order to explore the sensemaking processes of individuals Weick (1995:18) identified seven interrelated characteristics of sensemaking (see figure 16 overleaf).

Figure 16 The Seven Characteristics of Sensemaking

From Weick (1995:18)
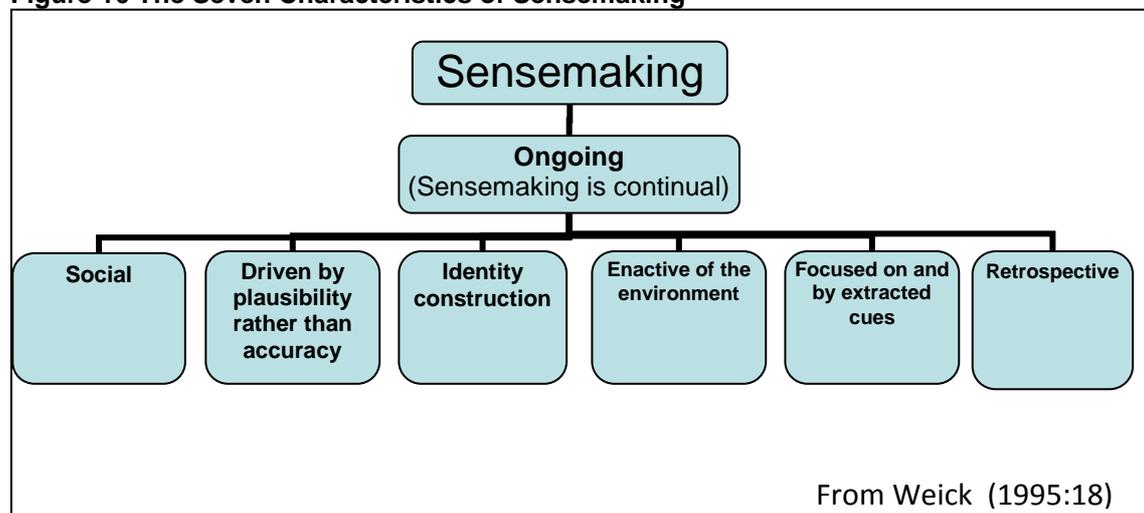
It is these seven characteristics of sensemaking which will be used as the framework, context and drivers of the final stage of the research. The value of each characteristic and a conceptual explication of it and how it can be used to understand the actions of individuals is described in detail in table 15 overleaf.

Table 15 Details of the characteristics of sensemaking

Characteristic	Description
Ongoing	The process of sensemaking is continual, sensemaking flows are constant. Assembly members will be in a constant process of making sense of what is happening around them. However they will isolate particular moments and cues from this continuous sensemaking process to make sense of the current situation. Questions will need to surface the pertinent cues at different stages of the policy process.
Social	Sensemaking exists in a social realm and is contingent on interactions with others directly or indirectly. The social aspect refers to both individuals and organisations. Assembly members will interact within different organisational contents each featuring systems of rules, routines and expectations each having impacts upon how they makes sense of each situation. These scripts and routines will be embedded by varying degrees in each institution. The requirement is to surface what assembly members believes these rules, routines and expectations to be and how they interpret them, their strength and validity. When these 'scripts' and routines are weak or do not exist, assembly members are left to revert to their own ways of making sense.
Driven by plausibility rather than accuracy	Due to the retrospective nature of sensemaking and the nature of post hoc rationalisations (when individuals look for cues to make sense of something) they operate on what is plausible as opposed to accurate. By doing this individuals have the potential to rely on 'faulty' decision making in determining what is right and wrong. Assembly members interpreting new situations may revert to historic understandings. This is contributory to the inconsistency of sensemaking between different members of an organisation. This is an exemplar of focus upon individual subjectivity within the sensemaking approach: explanations of behaviour will often differ between different groups and individuals at different hierarchical levels. In this way it is important to note that the primary interest is in the subjectivity of assembly members as individuals. Any contextual data drawn from the literature or interviews with others involved in the same process will provide context and contribute to understanding as opposed to validate the individual interpretations of assembly members. It is acknowledged therefore that diverse meanings can emerge as plausible between different individuals in relation to one particular policy or event.

Table 15 continued.

Characteristic	Description
Identity construction	Sensemaking is grounded in the notion of identity construction. Our view of the world is influenced by who we are and factors that shaped our lives. Our individual identity is in constant flux being continually redefined as a result of our experiences and contacts with others. Within the case study of appointed assembly members numerous identities can be drawn upon or ascribed to. The basis of these can be drawn from various role conceptions (trustee/delegate/advocate), memberships of different bodies (and responsibilities to each), perceived geographic scope/reach of roles or perceived capability of each role. The analysis needs to identify the strength of each of these elements in how assembly members construct their identity at different times and in each organisation that they participate in. and at different times. Therefore further interviews seek to explore what assembly members believe to be their role in each institution and how they draws from these when reasoning about which representative position to take.
Enactive of the environment	Sensemaking does not take place in a vacuum. An important contributing element of sensemaking is understanding experiences within a particular environment. An individual's sensemaking can be created or constrained by their environment. The inter-subjectivity of the individual and their environment means that the environment created by the individual reinforces their own sense of credibility. There is an important need to understand the historic context of organisations and policy areas. An understanding of institutional history and policy context within which assembly members operate provides a solid basis upon which to question their individualised understandings of and actions within that environment.
Focused on and by extracted cues.	The sensemaking process is selective; it involves focusing upon certain aspects while completely ignoring others in order to support an interpretation of a particular event. The retrospective nature of sensemaking means that individuals with selectively draw upon past experiences, including rules and regulation in order to make sense of situations. In this way questioning and analysis need to focus not only on what assembly member did and why but also what they chose not to do and so invoke notions of what was right and wrong and what was plausible and possible.
Retrospective	Individuals are reliant on past experiences to interpret current events: sensemaking is inherently comparative. Meaning is ascribed to the 'present' by comparison to similar or familiar past events. The interviews and analysis seek to draw comparative examples of similar events which evoked either similar or different actions and which past experiences inform how individuals understand their present context. This contributes to an understanding of the reflexivity of assembly members and help surface any potential dominant role choices or personal characteristics. Individuals also construct their understandings of past events by omitting or shaping information in order to mediate troublesome recollections to aid coping in order to build self esteem and feelings of control. In this way post hoc rationalisations are an intrinsic part of the retrospective understanding and subsequent construction of meaning.

Rationale for Research Question Four

In order to address research question four the research will operationalise Weick's characteristics of sensemaking (1995:18) within a methodology to explore how an individual makes sense of and enacts different representative roles within the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

As stressed earlier in the chapter, there is a need to reconstruct the elements broken down in earlier stages of the analysis to form a more holistic appraisal of the relative influences upon the individual when interpreting and enacting their role. The criticisms of the representative role system framework were that it was too static and failed to take into account the subjectivity and potential flexibility in the choices made by individual. It therefore failed to capture whether decisions were being made due to strategic choice or circumstance. Appraising the representative issues and tensions on members and their role motivations allows a better appraisal of the relative influence of each upon informing action. This will contribute to a stronger appreciation of the direct influence of institutions upon the process of sensemaking and address the dominant critiques of sensemaking (Taylor and Van Every 2000; Weber and Glynn 2006). An appreciation of the internal and external factors which structure and influence the decision making processes of the individual will help open the black box of appointed representation. Therefore assessments can be made about the relative strength of the internal factors (beliefs, values and orientations of the individual) and external factors (availability or lack of briefings or time) as facilitator or barriers which inform the perception and enactment of different representative roles. The use of an interpretative method allows the

analysis to explore the subjective, embedded and dynamic nature of representation.

In this respect sensemaking is appropriate to studying appointed representation at

the Regional Assembly as members are confronting a new, novel environment which

they need to 'make sense' of in terms of its function, norms and rules and how to

enact their representative role within it. Having a Regional Assembly role represents

a diversion from their routine representational role as a councillor in that they are

confronting a new complex organisational environment and experience.

Operationalising Sensemaking

In order to operationalise the sensemaking process the actions of interpretations of

one councillor (Councillor Five) within a particular policy context (The Government's

proposals for eco-towns) in three institutional arenas will form a case study and the

object of exploration and analysis. The process will be two staged. Firstly the initial

stage of the case study consists of archival and documentary analysis of the history

and trajectory of the government's plans for eco-towns until their eventual demise

following the change of government in 2010.

Documentary/Archival Research

The research draws upon a number of primary and secondary documentary sources

ranging from government policy papers, to policy briefings, minutes of council

meetings and local and national newspaper coverage of the issue. Policy documents

from organisations at different stages and at different institutional levels within the

process are analysed. This enables the construction of a historic narrative of the

policy process so as to understand the situational context in which councillor five is

operating. The documentary analysis involves the creation of a timeline of the main

policy decisions and practices along with important documents and events. This process also ensures that all the essential actors in the policy process are identified.

The benefits of extensive documentary analysis are two-fold, primarily documents can be utilised to draw upon examples for use within interviews but secondly they can supplement some of the information gained from the interview process. Archival records are also important to the case study in order to explain the historic and political context of three institutional arenas in which councillor five operates (Stratford District Council, Warwickshire County Council and the West Midlands Regional Assembly) and the location of the eco-town site at Long Marston. This uncovers the institutional setting and other important features such as the membership composition of councils, the key actors within them and other geographic/constituency concerns. The data helps establish the individual contexts in which councillor five operates and how these have developed over the trajectory of the eco-town proposals.

Interviews
The second stage of the operationalisation is interviews with the councillor in each institution within which he performs a representative role. The desire for the research to explore the interactions between the motivations, attitudes and beliefs of individuals with their experiences of events situates interviewing as the primary method for data generation. Each interview aims to get the individual to recall, explore and reconstruct their experiences within their own frame of reference. Because the interviews ask the individual to reconstruct their experience there is a probability that the individual will make *post hoc* rationalisations of past events in

order to portray themselves in a certain way. This can be considered in two ways, some may consider that this is a limitation on getting an honest account of events. However it can also be seen as further expression of the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of the individual which if explored can provide further examples of the interaction between factors and the relative strength of each.

As the interviews endeavour to surface and explore the narratives of individuals, the role of the research is to allow the interviewee to speak freely on the issue. Therefore prompting or interference with the accounts of the individual is limited. The main aim is to follow the trajectory of the policy over time to find the critical incidences where the individual interacted with or had strong feelings about aspects of the policy making process. Any interjections into the interviews are to invite the individual to more deeply explore their understandings or explain their actions. Whilst seeking to surface the critical incidents from the accounts of the individual, there is also a role for the researcher to encourage or prompt the individual to explore the rationalisations or reasoning informing their interpretations and action. Therefore any questioning will invite the interviewee to explore, confirm or dismiss other factors and elements of the accounts of others or understandings drawn from the documentary analysis.

Officer staff at the three locations at which councillor five is a representative are interviewed to not only add their contextual understandings to events but also to reveal their observations of councillor five within the policy process. Interviewing officers also assists in the uncovering and collection of secondary documentation

including minutes of committee meetings and which are often neither universally accessible nor readily available. Interviews were arranged through earlier contact with both elected members at the assembly and via councillor five who could offer those members who were adequately involved to provide both documentation and give their understandings of the policy context.

A series of three interviews are conducted with councillor five; each interview was conducted at the location where the member held a particular position. Therefore at the District Council councillor five is asked to speak about his district council role and councillor five is asked about his regional assembly role after an assembly meeting and so on. On each occasion councillor five is invited to talk about his interactions with the eco-town policy process at each of these institutional locations and consider how he enacted his representational role.

With location being an important dimension of interpretation the second significant factor is time and the junctures at which councillor five interacted with the policy context. Both events and changing perceptions are crucial in understanding the interpretations and reinterpretations of councillor five. The time dimension cannot be understated, the policy trajectory from Yvette Cooper's instigation of the policy in 2007 via the Eco-Towns Prospectus (DCLG 2007) to Eric Pickles letter (2010) announcing an end to regional spatial strategies (RSS) encapsulates a period of substantial activity. Of interest are the critical incidences which drew councillor five into the policy process. This time dimension also allows an appraisal of how interpretations and legacies evolve and allows those issues or events that are most

significant to councillor five to be surfaced. This time dimension is appreciated and will be incorporated into the interviews with the policy trajectory and events being traced chronologically with councillor five.

In considering the limitations of the interview process there is a particular issue surrounding the reliability of human memory, particularly over a four year time period. However it can be argued that the factual accuracy of the interviewee's story is secondary to how they illustrate how they interpret and make sense of their settings. This issue can also be mitigated firstly by comparing and contrasting the interview data of councillor five with the interviews with officers and secondly by running through the transcripts of councillor five with the councillor at a later date.

Interviews were recorded with notes taken throughout, because the nature of the interviews comments were often personal or political or both. The names of the interview respondents are masked or made anonymous. All interviews were personally transcribed in full which although a time consuming process is worthwhile to fully explore and understand the data and enhance the analysis.

Selection of Case
This eco-town was selected as an appropriate case for analysis for a number of reasons. Firstly it was a cross cutting issue. In terms of geography although the eco-town was located in a particular part of the region it became clear that each geographic or representative unit would take a different position on it. The range of positions of institutions at different levels of government also permitted a great chance to see individual councillors operating within institutions which had different

if not completely contradictory aims. The eco-town policy was certainly an emotive issue for many individuals with some of the positions of institutions seeming incongruous with others creating a confused environment.

The eco-town policy was one which was driven from a national level, had some support at the Regional Assembly, and represented a coherent possible solution to a distinct policy need (sustainable housing) yet would ultimately face significant local opposition if seen as either central government imposition or an inappropriate solution to a local need.

The most important selection of case however was the selection of councillor five. He was selected from previous interviews as he was a significant actor at numerous levels with regards to both housing policy and economic development. An active player at the Regional Assembly, and a believer in regional working councillor five also held three other local government posts, as a County Councillor at Warwickshire a District Councillor at Stratford On Avon and a parish councillor. He was fully immersed in the eco-town proposals and policy process from their instigation to their final demise and held portfolios in economic development and a membership of the eco-towns working group during the whole period.

The eco-town at Long Marston was an issue pushed as potentially part of the regional spatial strategy, it was strongly opposed at District Council level and the County Council were against but were assured of the distinct need for housing. Councillor five held representative roles on each of these institutions and thus faced

the challenge of balancing competing demands and desires. Officer staff and other councillors were selected from those who had worked on the eco-town policy and interviews took place with officers from all three institutions on which councillor five held a representative role.

Analytical Approach and Research Plan

The analysis interrogates the research interview data and look for examples of the characteristics of sensemaking within the accounts of councillor five in each of the three representative arenas. These are discussed at length in order to address the question of why and when councillor five adopts different role orientations and how these are informed by structural factors and perceptions of opportunity. This permits an appraisal of whether role choices are informed by circumstance of strategic choice and the relative affect of each as barriers or facilitators to the enactment of different role orientations. In this way the overall approach addresses the call for a greater focus on the intersubjective dimensions of argumentation regarding representation, away from conceptions of structures and individual agency as separate. Table 16 shows the overall trajectory of the analysis. This chapter has addressed research question two and offered the research plan for the rest of the thesis. The next chapter will concentrate on a reanalysis of the interview data. It will explore structural factors and individual role choices and their relative affect on the appraisal and enactment of different representative role orientations.

Table 16 Dismantling and Reconstructing the Concept of Representation Research Plan

	Case Study of Representation in the West Midlands Regional Assembly			
Chapter	Chapter Four	Chapter Five	Chapter Six	Chapter Seven
Research question addressed	**RQ1: How do councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected?**	**RQ2: To what extent can Pitkin's framework of representation be applied to indirectly elected bodies?**	**RQ3: What are the structural factors and role choices which inform councillors' decision-making when choosing which representative role to enact in indirectly elected bodies?**	**RQ4: How can research design and methods be developed to advance empirical investigation and generate new knowledge of the concept of appointed representation?**
Object of analysis	Eight Assembly members **(C1,C2,C3,C4,C5,C6,C7 & C8)**	The representative role system framework and deductive approach to data	a) Representative tensions and issues: Eight Assembly members **(C1,C2,C3,C4,C5,C6,C7 & C8)**	a) Eco-towns policy context
			b) Role Choices and individual agency of Councillor one **(C1)**	b) The role choices of councillor five **(C5)** in three institutions (Stratford DC, Warwickshire CC & WMRA)
Method	Framework analysis of Interview data (Manual)	Critical appraisal of representative role system framework and deductive approach	Grounded theory analysis of Interview Data (using NVivo)	a) Documentary/Archival Research, Interviews with officers.
				b) Interviews with councillor five in three institutions. Sensemaking analysis of data.
Data analysed	Eight scoping interviews	Results of RQ1	a) Reanalysis of eight scoping interviews and additional telephone interviews	Policy documents/briefings, interviews with officers.
			b) Reanalysis of interview with Councillor One	Three interviews with councillor five
Approach to data	Deductive	Critical appraisal	Inductive	Interpretative Sensemaking Analysis

CHAPTER 6: REPRESENTATION: ISSUES, TENSIONS AND ROLES

Introduction

The previous chapter explored both the strengths and weaknesses of the representative role system framework. As shown in chapter five the framework analysis approach failed to capture in sufficient depth the substantive actions of representation and the significance of the institutional context on how Assembly members interpret and enact their representative role. Chapter five outlined a research design to capture the cues and prompts for the enactment of different role orientations through a better appreciation of individual strategy, motivation, institutional context and time. The approach to RQ1 was a deductive framework analysis but chapter five argues an inductive approach would assist in the dismantling of the concept of appointed representation. This chapter therefore focuses upon a reanalysis of the initial scoping interviews, utilising a grounded theory approach to developing codes and themes around which structural factors have an influence on the individual. The scoping interviews were highly exploratory and therefore utilising an inductive grounded theory approach to analyse them captures elements which the framework did not. Therefore the substantive content of this chapter is an empirical exploration of the themes emerging from the interview data. The analysis is broken down into two main sections. The first section relates to representative issues and tensions in the day to day work of Assembly members, which structure and inform how they conduct their representative role. The second section addresses the individual agency of councillors in dealing with representative tensions and the structural issues, which provide facilitate or block

the adoption of different role orientations. The chapter therefore addresses Research question 3:

RQ3: What are the structural factors and role choices which inform councillors' decision-making when choosing which representative role to enact in indirectly elected bodies?

This chapter commences with a brief explanation of the research methodology and coding process adopted to address RQ3. The remainder of the chapter then focuses on an empirical data emerging from the grounded theory analysis. This first explores structure i.e. the representational issues and possible role tensions relating to the theme of resources. Second, the theme of procedures addresses issues relating to appointment and reporting. Third, the dynamic nature of representation and the affect and implications of structural factors on the capacity of appointed assembly member to fulfil the representative function at the West Midlands Regional Assembly is discussed.

Approach

The second part of this chapter is a grounded theory analysis of the interview transcripts of councillor one looking to explore the role choices and motivations behind his actions as a member of the Regional Assembly. Data were coded around the broad theme of role. The coding surfaced issues relating to role choice, individual agency, objects of representation and interactions with others. This builds on chapter four which considered representative styles and orientations and the

structural and procedural factors identified earlier in this chapter. The analysis explores the relevance of time and circumstance upon the adoption of different roles. Councillor one was chosen for analysis due to his experience as a councillor and assembly member a brief portrait of councillor one is shown in table 17.

Table 17 Pen portrait of Councillor One

Councillor 1 (C1)	A senior male Conservative councillor for a rural seat in the north of the region. Councillor (C1)'s assembly nomination comes from his county council seat (held for over 20 years). At the time of the interview he was leader of the opposition. He is also a district and parish councillor and chairs numerous committees at the local and regional level. He is a passionate advocate of his county at both regional and European levels. Councillor (C1) has particular interests in farming and European working and has been a member of the Regional Assembly since 2004.

The chapter will conclude with a brief appraisal of the methods and a discussion of the relative influence of both structural factors and the strength of individual agency and strategy in role choice upon the ability of assembly members to fulfil their representative function.

Analytical Approach

As described in the research plan in Chapter five, a grounded theory approach will be used to generate codes and themes emerging from the data. The process has four stages (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Firstly codes are identifying formed from textual anchors around which themes can emerge. Second, collections of codes of similar content are grouped into concepts. Third, concepts are grouped into broader categories. Fourth, inferences and explanations are drawn about the relative affect of representational issues and tensions on individual role choices of Assembly members.

Coding process

The transcribed interviews were coded utilising QSR NVivo a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software package. Transcripts were saved and imported into NVivo. Each interview was set as an individual case within the software and in this way any subsequent interviews could be grouped together. Grouping interviews into cases assisted the process of looking for consistency and patterns within what councillors' identified as their influences, choices and opinions. The application of cases for each councillor meant that additional supplementary descriptive data could also be applied to them. Each councillor was labelled under basic descriptive variables according to their gender, political party, type of local authority, length of time as a councillor and their length of time as a member of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. Although comparisons between data based on these descriptive variables are limited, this approach allowed an exploration of possible links between issues and opinions raised by assembly members and their structural location.

The main aim of data analysis was to explore the potential tensions in the role of councillors between conflicting role orientations, styles or focuses and representational issues (factors which impact upon the capacity of assembly members to fulfil their representative function). This allowed scope to explore the experiences, feelings, actions and influences affecting councillors and allowed the analysis to capture the aspects neglected by the framework analysis. Working on themes of representative tensions and issues all the transcripts were read and annotated electronically with early thoughts. These annotations provided additional

context and notes from the experience of the interview process and note patterns and possible areas for future questioning.

Open coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998) involved the analysis of the transcripts line by line with codes being drawn from the data (NVivo "nodes"). Individual words and sentences were selected and coded on the basis of being examples of potential representative issues or tensions. Each relevant quote from the interview was labelled with a code – a short descriptive label relating to the texts theme or relevance. For example, a comment where a councillor hinted towards and expressed a desire to represent a local issue in the face of more regional concerns was labelled as 'geographic parochialism'. Each transcript was read in turn with new nodes added as and when different themes and ideas emerged from the data. If a selected quote fitted with a code that had already been identified it was coded accordingly at the pre-existing node. The process was entirely reflexive and iterative and as new codes arose or groups of ideas became unwieldy in terms of conceptual size or scope then I returned to the earlier issues to recode them into more distinct categories. After coding each interview I returned to the earlier interviews to see if any of the newly emerging codes were relevant. This process continued until all eight of the interviews had been fully coded. At this point I returned to interview some of the eight assembly members by telephone to pick up on any points I had missed during the initial scoping interviews. The process of coding continued until all the documents had been fully coded. Whilst there was an aim for the codes to be derived solely from the data the inability to escape prior knowledge meant there was an element of premeditation about what categories might emerge. However the

whole process was an extremely reflexive and reflective activity of constant re-evaluation, deconstruction and exploration of possible themes. Table 18 shows the full list of codes emerging from the data.

Table 18 First level codes emerging from the interview data

Free Nodes		
Name	Sources	References
Engagement	6	44
Democracy	5	44
Regional Interest	6	32
Strategic	5	31
Geographical Parochialism	5	31
Reporting	5	29
Resources	6	28
Specialists Debate	4	26
Party	4	26
Consenus working	5	26
Relevance	7	23
Association	6	22
Time	6	21
Joined up working	4	19
Non Party Alliances	3	19
Personalities	3	16
Junior or Senior Leaders Debate	4	16
Autonomy	5	15
Translatability of role	4	14
Appointment Procedure	4	14
Multi Agency Working	5	14
Multi Level competition	3	13
Scrutiny	4	12
Rural vs Urban	4	10
Dual Hats	4	10
Cross Border Working	3	10
Councillor vs Officer	4	9
Statutory Remit	2	9
Shared History or Institutionalisation	4	8
Working Corporately	2	8
Versus Central Government	2	6
Scale Jumping	2	5

The next stage involved grouping codes into similar concepts to make them more workable. Concepts were grouped into broader categories and higher level themes. The main themes emerging from the interviews were coded as 'Resource tensions' and 'Procedural Tensions', which are discussed in turn below.

Resource and Procedural Tensions

The numerous roles fulfilled by modern politicians have developed significantly over the years. An undisputed theme was the increasing workloads pushed upon them. This has been highlighted consistently with regards to both Members of Parliament (Barker and Rush 1970:221) and local councillors where academic assessment of the subject which has come from Local Government Reviews (Widdicombe 1986), Councillor Census (LGA / IDeA 2007) or more direct work which focuses on either role orientations of councillors (Newton 1974) or explorations of constituency caseloads (Gyford 1988).

In recent times local government has been modernised structurally and operationally, e.g. movement to new executive models and the development of the overview and scrutiny function. This has led to an increase number of roles for councillors (Snape and Dobbs 2003). These changes have meant that there has not only been the need for adaptation of the roles and remits of councillors but also an increased workload pressure upon them.

Whilst there may be differences between the functional and service responsibilities of councils at different levels of government, the operational changes in local government have gone hand in hand with an increase in the number of outward facing roles (Hansen 2001). Partnership bodies such as the West Midlands Regional Assembly fill a significant part of these roles. The movement away from the committee system has seen the roles of councillors shift onto like for like

replacement groups for the policy and planning functions of their role (Gardiner 2006; Sandford 2006).

It was unsurprising therefore that a number of different tensions and other representational issues emerged regarding resources in terms of both finances and time. This issue broadly subdivided into two themes those relating to time and those relating to other resources. The first of which, time is graphically depicted and will be discussed below

Time
Figure 17 Representational Issues and Tensions relating to Time
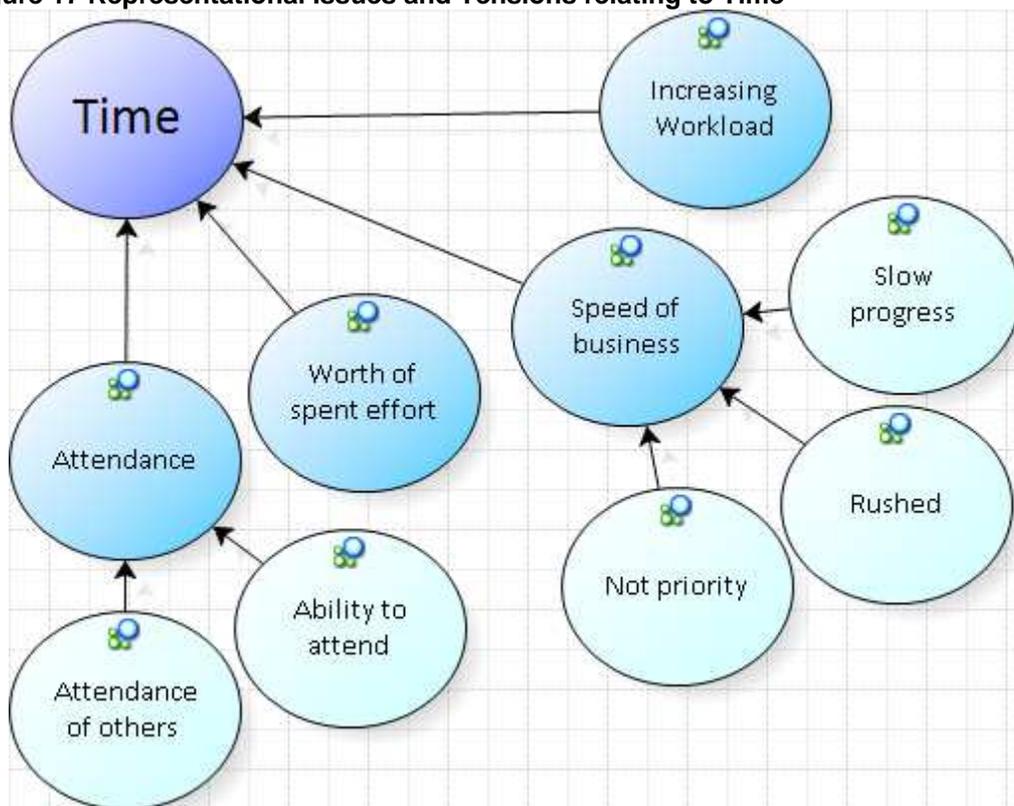
Attendance
The issue of attendance came out of the interviews as a prominent theme. This theme related to a tension between time spent on regional issues and at councils. It

included the poor attendance of others and the implications of this for the success of representation at the regional level. Addressing his capability to attend, an Independent councillor stressed the lack of funds available for attendance at Regional Assembly meetings. He made a strong point about the lack of support mechanisms for assembly members who weren't members of the main parties. This issue was heightened being by the increasing need to attend a number of different partnerships. He stressed 'not only does it end up costing me money, but it really eats into my ward time' (C3). This affected his ability and motivation to attend. Regarding his attendance of one particular regional committee he added 'I have to finance myself going to those, and I haven't got any (finance), if I go I have to go on my own steam. I go when I can' (C3). Another councillor mirrored this idea about motivation to attend referring to the full geographic representation of the region at the assembly whereby other members could 'pick up the slack' (C1). Another councillor added that the Regional Assembly 'just eats into my time', stating 'you either do it properly or not at all and for lots of people I think that's why they don't attend' (C7). Another possible tension emerged between the institutional representative function of members and the practice of members being substituted for one another which often occurs despite members being from different parties or diversely different constituencies. For example, councillor four describes the decision about which members were going to speak as regional delegates: 'we decide who goes from the six of us by random really, just a case of who is available' (C4).

The attendance of other members was also a point of contention for councillors. The perceptions of individual councillors about the importance or relevance of meetings allowed many members to ignore or opt out of meetings. This enraged one councillor 'I'm a busy man, a council leader, but I make sure I'm there, how can we call ourselves representative of the region if only half of us turn up?' (C7). Another councillor asserted a similar view point speaking out against his peers: 'we don't all of us always attend, but I'm always there, my council wants me there and I'm there for my constituents' (C3). A senior councillor also noted the variability in motivation: 'I've seen people who don't turn up or think it's a chore. Then there are the rest of us doing a job for our councils' (C1). He stressed however that at times his work for his appointing authority had to take precedence and suggested 'that has to take priority, my voters put me there, what I can get for them from the West Midlands, great but they aren't going to be happy if I don't get the day job done' (C1).

These themes revealed an inconsistency across those interviewed as to their opinion of the relative importance of the work of the assembly in relation to work in their home authority. A significant tension emerged regarding the opportunity cost of attending one institution over another particularly given the rise in the number of partnership bodies to which councillors are appointed. The dominant standpoint emerging from the data was the dominance of the elected constituency role over other roles.

Increasing workload

Another extremely important theme was the increased workload for councillors, not just as regional assembly members but more generally. One senior councillor

highlighted the stark increase in workload since he started in terms of time spent within and external to his constituency:

> 'It used to be when I first started it was a day a week; maybe a day a week and you'd sit and read the paper and make decisions about local schools and you would go to another area in the county then could be seeing people there, it was no more than a day a week. Whereas now it's more like 5 days a week for me now and we are speaking about multi million pound regional transport budgets' (C1).

This straight comparison showed the increase in workload across both roles. The councillor attributed poor assembly attendance to 'a lot of paperwork' (C1). Whilst for those who did still want to attend the ever-increasing number of commitments made managing their workload difficult:

> 'even when I was leader of the council, between working on networks in my ward and stuff on a city wide basis, LSPs, sub-partnerships, and some regional stuff like the Black Country and regional stuff, I think I worked out I was on about 40 different partnership bodies well I'm only twenty now but then I was on nearer forty. I did the sums they all met two hours every quarter, which is pretty modest, but because all of them will have away days and appointments and God knows whatever else. There might be sort of five weeks of your working life gone in a year, so there is an awful lot of, you know activity' (C2).

This quote highlights the scale of involvement of councillors in different areas both geographically and thematically. This suggests a possible tension between specialist and generalist roles as in the case of councillor two the variance in scope of his roles limits his capability to act as a specialist.

Speed of business

The final elements emerging from the data with regards to the theme of time relate to the speed at which business is done within the assembly, whether it is rushed, frustratingly slow or indeed in some instances whether the work is worthy of the time.

The relative importance of assembly working is a question faced by assembly members as they return to their appointing institutions. The often specialist nature of regional working, due to statutory remits of the Assembly and the committee memberships of its members, mean that quite often there is not a direct relation back to their work as a local councillor. This poses a potential tension between the ideas of a representative institutional mandate and the value of non-constituency related work at the region. A number of councillors expressed this as a tension in their relationships with council colleagues and their view of the value of regional working. This has implications for information sharing and accountability as members are disinclined to report back to their local councils. One councillor stated that he reported back but only 'when there is a space at the meeting' (C3). Here, he was referring to his council's regular meetings to discuss their work on partnerships. The lack of space at meetings is an indictment of the sheer volume of work done within partnerships and the increasing workload of councillors. Even so the councillor suggested that both he and his peers should report back more than they actually do for accountability. He highlighted questions of relevance as a restricting factor on greater reporting.

'I suppose the answer is we could report back more than we do, but I'm not sure (it's a bit difficult) you don't want to overdo it or else people get bored to death' (C3).

The prioritisation of work was discussed by councillor five as a reason for a proper division of labour in roles for councillors and the need for involvement of junior and senior members in the body's work. This point is relevant for the Regional Forum of Leaders which will replace the Regional Assembly. The variable geometry of regional policy work coupled with the significant cross cutting roles of council leaders were highlighted as key reasons for time and resource tensions in terms of the ability of exclusively council leaders replicating the job done by the Regional Assembly:

'the Leaders will be able to represent their councils but not do the groundwork so there is going to be another tier of people drafted in, elected members who actually champion certain causes some on a semi-permanent basis, some on a task and finish basis' (C5).

The speed at which business is done at the Assembly was addressed by all interviewees as a point of tension between making the best decisions for the region and making decisions democratically. One councillor compared the nature of working at the assembly as similar to parliament as things were 'taken as read before it gets to the meeting' (C1). Another cited the party group as an area where things could actually be discussed thoroughly and democratically, offering cases where a lack of interaction and discussion led to undemocratic decision making:

'I have been in cases whereby if you are not careful suddenly somebody comes up with maverick ideas and if you are not careful you will make a regrettable decision, which is ill-informed at the chamber' (C5).

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The link between ill-informed decision making and the speed of proceedings surfaces another tension between the normative ideal of representation requiring debate and the volume of decisions being made within proper scrutiny.

When decisions are rushed, the process of policy making is turned on its head. Councillor one described the need for later exploratory work to be done post decision making: 'you think whoa, we'll think about this later' (C1). It was not just the volume of work but also the scheduling that gave rise to tensions in terms of a full democratic consideration of issues and implications. This was addressed by the same councillor (quote below). He expresses an issue, shared by others, that there is not room or time for councillors to look back to their appointing authority or adopt a delegate role. The processes and procedures force a need for assembly members to adopt the role of trustee for their appointing authority.

> 'The very fact that we have a day of meetings, there is group, there is LGA, full assembly, RIEP panel and whatever, it can be tiring and there may not the time to think between meetings… something might be raised at one meeting, decided at another in half an hour and ratified half an hour after that' (C5).

The variable geometry between the working speeds and calendars of different organisations augmented tensions around speed of decision-making. Some councillors reported that reliance on other bodies for recommendations and decisions meant decisions were often out of sync with assembly business. This amounted to an elongation of the time it takes for policy decisions to progress and actions to begin to occur.

Worth of Spent Effort

The external perception of councillors by their constituents and their councils about their role in the assembly was also source of tension for a couple of councillors. The need to be seen as acting in a particular way meant that one councillor was particularly wary of the extent to which he promoted his regional role:

> 'I do give reports to the local paper occasionally but I have to be very careful about what I put or else Ill get letters, 'what on earth are you doing wasting your time' (C3).

The external perception of the worth of effort spent by councillors is an important factor contributing to their actions. The most important decisions however about the worth of time spent on regional activities are in the hands of assembly members themselves. There is therefore a need to further explore how those councillors make decisions about how they act and what are the other mediating factors. One councillor put it simply as a basic rational choice between the available elements:

> 'I think if you get into that activity and you prioritise the things which are going to be effective when you turn up at those and you do less on the things that are going to be less effective' (C2).

The black box therefore is the decision about the worth of spent effort. The idea of effectiveness suggests the councillor makes efforts only where there is a chance of success. However various other factors including the external perception of others as raised by another councillor all have an influence. This raises an interesting question about the role of the individual in decision making on behalf of others.

Conclusions of tensions relating to time

As expected the increased workload upon councillors due to their involvement within partnerships was a large tension in terms of the ability for councillors to fulfil their roles. All interviewed councillors shared issues around the ability to conduct a fully informed representative role and scrutiny function. This was being significantly hampered by both the speed of business at the assembly and varying schedules across partnerships. Perhaps more significantly however was the predominant tension regarding time related not just to workloads but also the motivations of members to engage and commit to regional working based upon the value they saw in it. The importance of the choices of individuals on how to enact their roles (covered in further sections on interactions and agency and role choice) are critical to how assembly members choose to manage their workloads. However tensions relating to time either through a lack of it or perceptions of its value significantly influence the strength of ability or desire of assembly members to fulfil the role to the best of their ability

Resources

Figure 18 Representational Issues and Tensions relating to Resources
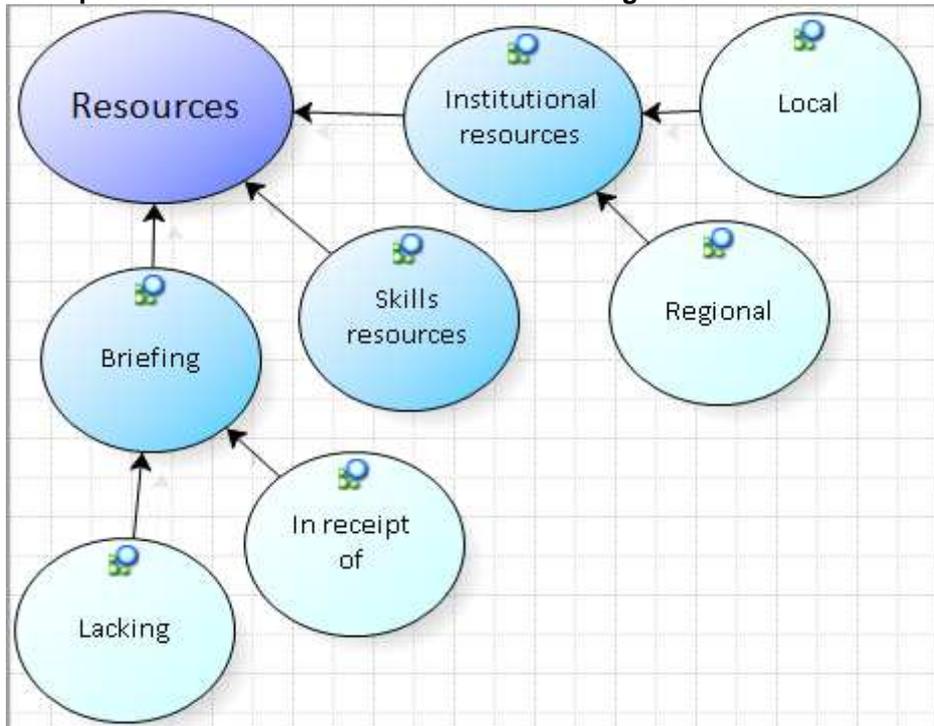
Whilst time may affect the ability of assembly members to fulfil their role the relative resources are also important to the success of councillors' role (figure 18). These tensions include the limits of funds of each institution and provision of officer, researcher and administrative support. Whilst later sections focus on role choice, the following section on resources explores the factors, which limit role choice or the ability to conduct roles. This section addresses the structural and procedural resources that play a significant part in defining the capabilities of councillors. The main tension emerging related to the division of resources between local and regional concerns and whether resources should be shared or kept separate.

Institutional resources

Discussions with councillors about their roles as assembly members often led to comparisons with their elected role as local councillors. A clear theme emerging

from the data were limitations of the capabilities of each organisation in terms of both democratic remits and financial capabilities. One councillor described the need to take 'a more cohesive approach to that sort of challenge because finances are finite' (C5). The limits of local resources were also highlighted by another councillor who stressed that there was a real responsibility for councillors to actively seek opportunities outside of their home institution. In this way they could fill resource gaps and not lose out to possible competitors for the finite resources available. They saw the role of assembly member as one to assess both the opportunities on offer and those possible competitors or partner institutions that were already utilising them. From this they could then make a case to the council executive, 'you have to come to them and say to the council this area is losing out and the district and borough ought to be getting into that' (C1). This councillor is taking a clear boundary spanning role (Aldrich and Herker 1977) and it is through this kind of behaviour that their home organisation can work around local financial constraints and explore different contexts to secure their policy aims and service needs. This idea of looking to other areas for support was highlighted in terms of an argument about economies of scale and the limited capabilities of smaller organisational units.

> 'It is a matter of who can put in the extra work. Well you find the parish can't they just don't have the budget, the district and borough its outside their level, the county council may not be able to do it, so then you have to have another body that can direct funds around the region and that is going to be the key for the RFL and the RDA. They have to work out how do you redirect capacity building money around the region to help us all' (C1).

It was not only at the local level that councillors felt budgets were limiting, indeed this is the nature of the Regional Assembly as a non-preceptive organisation. As the capabilities of the Regional Assembly have developed and increased over time there has been a need for the assembly to seek additional funding from the government. For example, councillor six expressed the need for funds in order for the assembly to fulfil its democratic and statutory remit 'in the end I think we got some funding from government, because on regional planning issues that again is a statutory function of the Regional Assembly' (C6). Councillor five stressed the limitations imposed by the nature of the assembly compared to other institutions when he said: 'counties and districts and metropolitan boroughs and everything else can in fact precept for that income' (C5).

Financial resources at regional level also have a knock-on effect on the provision of officer support for councillors. Together with the problems related to the speed of business as discussed above, this is a significant constraint on the effectiveness and volume of business that can be completed. This surfaced within the majority of interviews, particularly with regards to the provision of briefings and post assembly reporting, one councillor addressed the situation stressing the extensive workload of officer staff of the assembly:

> 'An awful lot of the work that needs to be done at the assembly can't be done by the assembly officers. Because they do not have the capacity…, effectively you then have officers from different parts, constituent organisations who effectively work on a voluntary basis on top of their day job doing certain things' (C2).

The recession and economic climate have significantly affected the extent of operation of regional funding programmes. This has in turn affected the scope of opportunity for local councillors to use their assembly roles to assist in bridging any resource shortfalls that they encounter at the local level. The decreasing institutional resources at both levels represent a significant constraint on the councillors' capabilities in their local roles. They are also a constraint when councillors seek to operate in different arenas and across boundaries to secure additional resources. Crucially and unsurprisingly financial resources within institutions are dominant; however the knock on effects of this in terms of provision of administrative and officer support and their workload create a significant constraint upon councillors' ability to perform their representative role at the assembly.

Skill Resources

The skill resources of members themselves were also a factor which concerned members. The ability for councillors to fulfil their role as a modern councillor in relation to their everyday spheres of activity and the technologies associated with them was a factor for one councillor who stressed a gap in their knowledge and a need for provision of resources.

> 'The West Midlands, they should be getting us a website for anybody that's on the European International Panel, we should be given a website so that we've got all these contacts? That's all I can suggest, I mean; I don't know how to set up my own website, but somebody does' (C8).

Another interviewee hinted that some of their peers were lacking in the skills-sets needed to 'make a decent go' (C1), of representing at the region stressing that the

appointment system sometimes gave an ill-balance in terms of the skills-sets of members. 'You will probably find its lack of competence, capability and capacity or something else down at that level (C1).

Briefing (In receipt of)

The ability for assembly members to make full and considered judgements on policy decisions often depends on the volume and quality of their information. The day-to-day life of the modern councillor is filled with council, constituency and partnership business and is supported by a number of local government officers. However the sources of, and degree to which members are supported can vary dramatically. The content, volume and regularity of pre-meeting briefings by officer staff represents a clear manifestation of the both resource constraints and a democratic tension for councillors. To make full and proper judgements, extensive, clear and balanced information from a number of sources is needed. Whilst only one councillor praised the local government association as 'very good, we get an excellent briefing from them' (C3), many others desired more extensive briefings.

Lack of Briefing

When discussing pre-partnership briefings many interviewees stressed that the quality and quantity of briefings across different support teams and policy subject areas varied significantly. Whilst assembly members endeavoured to not single out particular bodies for criticism they were keen to stress that at times they felt constrained by a lack of knowledge. This constraint was heightened at crucial junctures during policy decisions. This represents a capability tension suggesting that

the lack of adequate information can prove a constraint on members' capacity to adequately represent the views of the region.

Some members felt that when they attended additional bodies, particularly where they were acting as regional representative, they were in need of specific regional briefings if they were to be good regional advocates. Talking of a recent role given as a rapporteur at the Committee of the Regions, one councillor felt that in order to make the most of their opportunity they need more specific regional briefings talking of the specific content of the working group. The councillor suggested 'it would have been helpful to have a regional briefing on that' (C8). This theme continued from the member who also operated as a regional representative on another European Union committee. They confirmed that briefings from the local government association were good for assembly meetings but suggested that more specific briefings from the West Midlands in Europe officer secretariat were needed: 'there could be better liaison with the people in Brussels and we could get a briefing from them' (C3). One member spoke of their European peers having 'a surfeit of information' (C8) when comparing them with the irregular regional briefings. This is a critical issue of joint responsibility on the part of the Regional Assembly and the members themselves. One member suggested that there were some failings on their part to keep the assembly informed of their actions and request briefings a sufficient time in advance: 'Perhaps we can raise issues at this meeting and what we have got coming up to provide info for the West Midlands to provide briefings in the future' (C3).

Conclusions of tensions relating to resources

Tensions relating to resources focused predominantly on comparisons by members of the resources available within their various roles. In the first instance, institutional capability is limited by finance, statutory remit and officer support. The economic capabilities of the institution particularly at a time of recession emerged as a theme from the data. There was a strong suggestion that this had a knock on effect on the ability of members to utilise their unique position as boundary-spanners. The involvement of local councillors on partnership bodies is a useful mechanism to progress local policy aims and this theme arises with some members taking an entrepreneurial approach to scoping out funding and development opportunities. The individual skill-sets of interviewees and their peers emerged as a theme from the data as a limitation on the capability of the individuals to fulfil roles whilst operating alongside others lacking in skills. This was a significant constraint upon successful joint working.

The largest area of resource tensions came from members who desired more significant briefings to support them in their roles. Most members accepted there was a joint responsibility for them to make sure that the region knew about the timings and responsibilities of their operations as representatives in supra-regional bodies. However they stressed that workloads often meant they did not get time to forewarn the regional secretariat. All the members interviewed stressed that when they took on a regional advocacy role on European bodies they required regional specific briefings. These briefings meant they could then fulfil their potential as important supporters and champions of the region. It is clear that tensions relating

to resources limit the effectiveness of members; however the other important point

of note is that where resources are lacking members will seek opportunities to gain

them elsewhere.

Procedures

Figure 19 Representational Issues and Tensions relating to Procedures
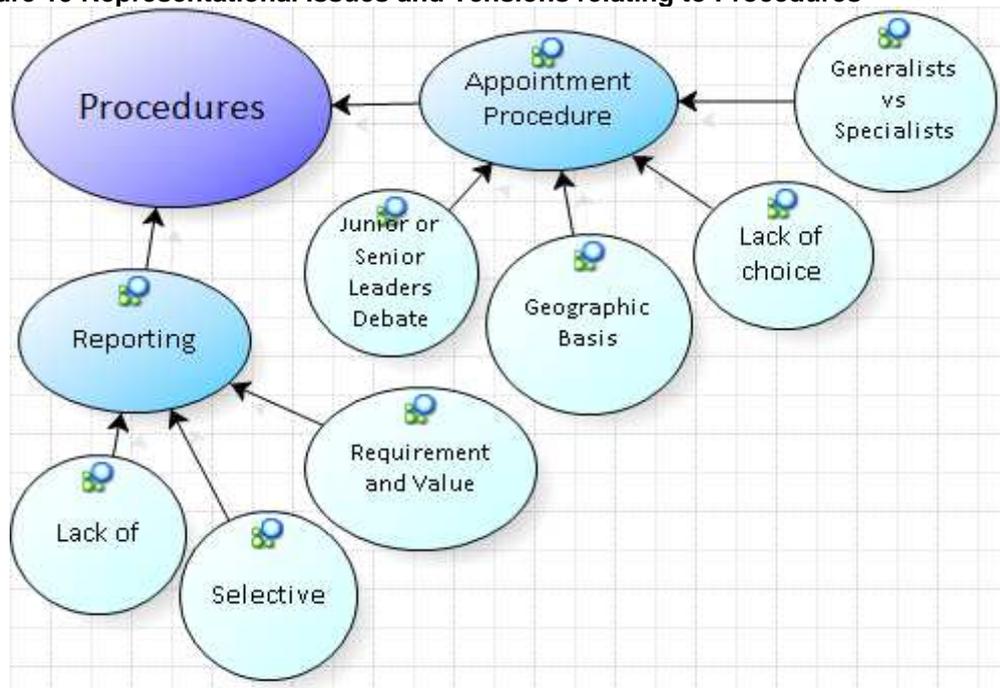
Procedures play a significant part in day-to-day operations at both local council level

and the Assembly (figure 19). They represent structural interpretations of both the

codified and unwritten rules of operation in the Assembly. They also reveal how

members manage and interpret the ambiguity of their roles and manage the

dilemmas around choices for action. Procedures offer a clear representation of the

system and thus give a great chance to understand the way the system functions:

they are a structural manifestation of how 'roles are lived out and interpreted by

individuals fulfilling the roles' (Poulsen 2009). Many rules are informal and subject to

significant individual interpretation traditions. This plays a significant part in forming

expectations and behaviours around ways in which things should be done. The

interpretation and operationalisation of rules and procedures at the regional level predictably threw up many traditional discussions of the best way to do things including arguments about meritocracy, specialists versus generalists and debates about seniority and calibre. The thematic node broke down specifically into issues around reporting and issues around the system for appointment of members. The first section to be addressed below is reporting, and is distinct from the earlier section about members briefing in the fact that responsibility for reporting shifts to the individual and thus moves away from questions about resources onto issues of role choice.

Reporting

The subject of when assembly members chose to report back to their appointing authority offered a wealth of different responses with issues of timing, relevance and requirement contributing to the different ways in which members interpreted their responsibilities. The comments broke down into members expressing that they could and indeed should report back more in order to fulfil their democratic role, the issues where members were selective about what they reported and finally the importance, benefits of, and requirements to report.

Lack of reporting

Availability of time within council business and the need to report to appropriate people at opportune times limit the ability to report. One theme focused on members taking information back to their appointing authorities. On the whole members thought that they could and should report back more but time restrictions and the interest of themselves and/or their peers in regional working had a significant effect on reporting levels. Most members accepted that better reporting

would improve democratic accountability yet the process did not occur that often, 'I suppose, if we reported back better than we do it might be better. I'm not very good at reporting back' (C3). This councillor added he was concerned about the transparency of the work of the assembly to his peers and electors. Whilst accepting the need for reporting, one senior leader talked about the number of partnership committees that he sat on. He stressed that his varied workload meant reporting on everything was difficult, particularly at the right place and at the right time meaning things occasionally slipped his mind: 'You don't remember to tell them all the time' (C2).

Selective Reporting

The acceptability to peers of their work at the Regional Assembly mediates how frequently they report assembly business to their fellow councillors, their constituents and the local media. There was a difference between local authorities in relation to how they prioritised assembly business and their relative willingness and capacity to address regional issues within committee and cabinet meetings. For the majority, members gave verbal reports of partnership working. Decisions about the relevance and appropriateness of content therefore rest solely in the hands of the councillor. As above, available space within the meeting was an important factor. The significance of the content was also important. Reporting was not a matter of course but instead had to be forced or pressured into business by the member in question. Asked why he did not want to push the relevant work he was doing at the assembly he added, 'I'm not sure, it's a bit difficult, you don't want to overdo it or else people get bored to death (C3). The reverse of this was a senior councillor who had instituted a partnership reporting session at every cabinet meeting in order to

improve transparency and make sure that those working in partnerships remained accountable to their appointing authority.

> 'We have something set up, we had a so-called executive team, which was all the chief officers and executive cabinet members from the City council, and we had sort of a partnership watchdog session, at least ten minutes at the end. We would say what happened at each of the partnership meetings then, it is a way of just keeping it on track' (C2).

Another senior council leader conducted a similar procedure but felt the need to mediate the process and content to his fellow Conservative members who were sceptical of regional working

> '…well I bring reports back to county cabinet here, which cover both the councils interest and the regions role in that so we act as if we are organisations which are working together, rather than report, if you just said what the region are doing you could quickly put peoples backs up' (C5).

This scepticism about regional working also arose as a factor for another member, when speaking about operating on a Conservative dominated council. He said that Conservative scepticism about both arenas for policy working (Regional Assembly and EU) was 'bound to effect people, if you know you are going to get hammered, you are not going to rise above the parapet are you' (C3). He added that media scepticism meant that whilst trying to improve accountability informally through the local media, he was wary about external perception of their work 'I do give reports to the local paper occasionally but I have to be very careful about what I put or else I'll get letters, 'what on earth are you doing wasting your time' (C3).

Requirement and value of reporting

Whilst reporting is a selected option for some, for others structures are often implemented in order to ensure democratic accountability. However basic reporting does not always mean engagement by other members. The frustrations of one interviewee with their colleagues were apparent in their interview:

> 'I actually said at the last meeting I don't really see the point in me coming because nobody appears to want to know what I'm doing and I think this is such a waste, a huge waste' (C8).

The location of reporting was also mediated by the acceptance of regional working and the motivation of members in particular to put it on the agenda. Reporting often occurred within party meetings as opposed to full council meetings. One member stressed the need for regional work to be visible and accountable and looked to other mechanisms to make sure it was: 'Well I do it into the group, and there is nothing at the county, I have tried to get it into scrutiny system as a subject' (C1). The discrepancy between councils was noticed when a councillor visited another council to brief members there due to the absence of a colleague stating 'I was quite amazed at the response that I got from people…they want to know but I just don't get the response from our people' (C8).

The value of reporting was also highlighted by members. One councillor stressed the need for members to be accountable for their time and efforts, to maximise efficiency: 'If I have a talk from somebody from the citizen's advice bureau and say that's really interesting, then what do you do with it, where does that go' (C1). The member also went on to say that this reporting was 'vital' to democratic working. He

suggested this was something that was exceptional to the work of councillors and it was a great way to share knowledge and funds.

> 'You gain experience … transferable experience, in my borough ward we are doing a vital villages consultation, which will drag money in, and so you can wave it at people. Then you can translate that into a wider outlook for the county' (C1).

The second example the councillor gave was how he used reporting to spread knowledge about resource availability and best practice in order to benefit others in the region.

> 'Someone may not know how to do something, so you say why don't you do this consultation programme, and then it starts getting where people think well that's hard work, well it is hard work, but it will make your life easier in the long run. And then you translate that up to the Regional Assembly and they pull you out and that sort of works and it might just come back down again' (C1).

The final issue around the value of briefing related to a member who found that excessive briefing by more junior members slowed down business at the assembly. The councillor argued that the value of reporting was weakened if it had an effect on the ability of members to make the needed quick decisions at the assembly: 'the big issue still, as it was since the first meeting, people are like, 'I've got to go back to my group to discuss this' (C2).

Appointment Procedures

The nature and system of appointment of members to the Regional Assembly arose as a point of significant interest and discussion within all interviews. This focus on

the part of members was heightened by the context in which the interviews took place (Discussions were taking place concurrently about the nature and membership of the successor body to the Regional Assembly, the Regional Forum of Leaders). Significant support came out of the interviews for meritocratic appointments and the importance of specialists in the development of the assembly. This supplemented opinion about the irrelevance of the geographic basis for appointment. With the Regional Forum of Leaders being formed from the leaders of each council it was also unsurprisingly that interviewees were keen to discuss the limitations and benefits of such a plan to exclude junior members from the regional representative arena. The broad range of views from interviewees around the nature of appointments and their normative judgments about the value of different member appointment strategies alludes to underlying tensions concerning legitimacy and the perceived role and status of members.

Geographic Basis

Members' mandate at the Regional Assembly comes from appointment by their local authority. However with lines of responsibility being blurred by the regional remit of the Regional Assembly some members saw the nature of their mandate as irrelevant. The idea of an authority mandate was viewed as a misnomer with one councillor seeing it as a feature of the system as opposed to an element of definitive importance:

> 'it's just the system says that everyone had to be tied to a geographic area and as such the whole of your administrative area is covered by the membership of the assembly the council or whatever it might be' (C5).

This mentality was based upon functional roles as opposed to consideration of an allocated mandate and any particular responsibility pertaining to it. Another councillor suggested that 'Whether you are elected or not makes no odds, once you find that out what do you do with it (information)? You have to come to them and say to the council this area is losing out (on a particular issue) and the district and borough ought to be getting into that' (C1). The blurring of constituency mandates into a regional mandate was heightened by councillors holding multiple council mandates at different levels. A significant number of those interviewed were councillors at other levels of government holding posts on parish, district and county councils.

Generalists versus Specialists

The discussion of meritocratic promotion, the calibre of councillors (Rao, Young et al. 1994) and arguments for and against generalists (Newton 1974) have been the subject of academic attention within research. Indeed in his study of Birmingham in the late 1960s, Kenneth Newton noted that specialisation within the membership of councils grew with the size of local authority. The question therefore is with regards to the selection and appointment of members to the Regional Assembly, how do decision makers decide who to represent the council at the assembly? A number of those interviewed had a significant role in choosing appointees and therefore within the interviews issues and opinions arose with regards to the need for specialists. Many interviewees gave examples of where they had appointed others on the basis of their specialism and experience. With regards to the calibre of councillors and the availability pool of councillors at different points in time members also gave a range of views about the careless selection of poor candidates due to a lack of ability to

choose. They stressed that tensions arising because of the appointment of half-hearted and apathetic members. These issues and themes are explored in the sections below.

With regards to the selection of appointees there was a clear tension between different approaches to choosing which members to appoint to the Assembly. This resulted in imbalances and disparities in the skills of members. The matter of finding an appropriate appointee emerged as a significant concern for some members with one councillor stressing his importance of 'making sure person in the right seat is given the right job' (C1). Other councillors were keen to ensure that whilst they thought 'people should be promoted on merit, including into political jobs' (C5), they could 'cite examples of where buddies stick together and not necessarily in the best interests of the council' (C5).

The need to appoint specialists was seen in interviews, this aligns with arguments about technocratic versus democratic roles. For example the regions' interaction with European institutions was described as 'a bit of a specialist subject, starter for ten' (C1), with the member suggesting that 'if you put an ordinary backbencher on they would be out of their depth within seconds' (C1). For this reason he was keen to stress that on his council they 'try and find people who have got interests and understand the subject and put them on it' (C1). The member went on to say that the need for specialists went beyond basic party politics. Speaking about voting and membership arrangements for a successor body to the assembly he insisted that some of the proposed voting systems would exclude the Liberal Democrats. The

member saw this as not utilising the range of resources the region had to offer and insisted that 'some of their members will be good and key members to get involved elsewhere' (C1). Other councillors cited examples of where members were appointed as specialists on a non party basis. Referring to Labour councillors appointed despite the dominance of the Conservative party in the region one councillor added:

> 'The reason those people are in place is we have tried to give some political balance to our structures and secondly those two guys are competent people who I think we can all trust to represent us all in those circumstances' (C5).

Argument about generalists and specialists also extends to issues regarding briefings and role promotion. I asked assembly members how the Regional Assembly should communicate with its members. Some suggested that there was a difficult balance to strike due to levels of interest and experience. One member bemoaned the quality of briefings which 'tend to be almost too general, but have to be produced because there is an audience out there perhaps that isn't as informed as others might be' (C7). Thus briefings were 'too broad in their spectrum of issues to engage either the generalist or the individual who has a much more focused agenda' (C7). The following section addresses the democratic tension created by the desire and the ability of members to appoint 'the best candidate for the job'.

Lack of choice

Selecting the best people for regional assembly roles is dependent on those appointing depicting the role as in need of a specialist / specialist interest. Instances

where others had taken the choice lightly or where those responsible for appointing had an untalented or uninterested pool from which to appoint were also represented in responses. One Independent councillor spoke of the huge disparity in experience and ability between members. Discussing the small pool of Independent councillors he added 'There was one chap, a local farmer; he didn't really operate in the broader context, unfortunately the previous occupant lost his seat at the election so I had to appoint him' (C4). Councillor one stressed that sometimes those making the appointments chose the wrong people as they 'didn't realise what the Regional Assembly was about' (C1). The idea of a choice between appointing someone senior, someone experienced and someone junior was explicitly expressed by a senior councillor

> 'OK so send like someone who is the logical choice to chair planning as he does a lot of regional work, or send somebody along who, well just to fill their day or to get them out the bloody civic centre where they are being paid to smile' (C2).

Councillor one stressed that regional roles were a place where councils gain both influence and information and accordingly places were allocated to senior members by his council's Executive. In two cases those interviewed suggested that there was a need for a small group of regional specialists:

> 'it's necessary for some councillors (not all) to also have a knowledge of and perhaps even a wider remit that's goes beyond their own authority, I've taken that view for quite a substantial time' (C7).

Councillor one added that there needs to be a 'small elite, you don't want the whole council doing it, but just a few' (C1). Those appointed to be representatives of local

authorities at the Regional Assembly had a wide range of views on which kinds of people were appropriate to fulfil their roles with a great deal of discussion around junior/seniority.

Junior versus Senior Leaders

Opinions of who is best to represent local authorities on partnerships ranged from those who believed only leaders would have the autonomy, to those who thought they should be those at the grass roots in the local authority. Argument regarding the appropriateness of members was not limited to choices over junior versus senior members but also opinions about the motivation to attend and the capability of members to work with others.

The divide and indeed competition between junior and senior members has become particularly pertinent since the movement to replace the Regional Assembly with a Regional Forum of Leaders (RFL). The representative composition of the new assembly raises questions about of calibre (Jones 1969) and capability of member. It mirrors some of the arguments about the movement to cabinet government and the creation of 'first and second class' councillors (Copus 2004:221). This divide between figureheads and grassroots is clearly depicted in a slightly barbed comment from one interviewee speaking about the potential composition of RFL: 'I'm just wondering who are going to be the people, are there going to be people who are actually working in the field or are they going to be people that think they are?' (C8). Another member described a divide between those who engaged with the process and those that did not: 'there are some strong participants and I am one of those, there are

some what I would call soft participants that don't turn up very often so I suppose that would be the two categories' (C5).

Councillor one highlighted the need for experienced candidates and stressed more junior members would be met with a steep learning curve:

> 'all of sudden they get elected and told oh you're on this … suddenly they have got to learn about what the whole jobs about so you might be on the RIEP or you might be on the European strategy board' (C1).

However this did not mean that the only solution was a RFL but instead made clear that a broad specialist, not a seniority basis for appointment was needed to ensure full and proper representation:

> 'The government has imposed the RFL on us, and you end up with this dictatorship up at the top. We are very wary of that and the other bit was all the stuff I just told you about the European, health all that scrutiny role, how do you… we are in danger of losing that we need to retain it' (C1).

This idea of leaders not necessarily having the appropriate skills-set for the Regional Assembly's functional remit was supplemented by the opinion of another senior councillor who suggested that the scrutiny function should be done by those with experience of the process:

> 'If you are going to do scrutiny at a regional level, the last people you ask are council leaders. First of all they don't do scrutiny; they don't have many scrutiny skills. Secondly, a lot of people who have done a lot of scrutiny are a lot better at it' (C2).

The councillor added that often leaders were 'not necessarily always particularly strong, there are one or two who are very difficult to work with, and there are one or two who are, well you wonder how they got there' (C2). Many of the arguments for a movement to a Regional Forum of Leaders centre on the idea of autonomy and the courage of leaders to make decisions. This view was expressed by councillor six who believed only senior members had the legitimacy to make strategic decisions on behalf of councils: 'I think that it is right that a collective of leaders perhaps is needed to decide and dimension where regional interests are' (C6).

Conclusions on resource and procedural tensions

Investigation into the resource and procedural tensions on assembly members surfaced many of the anticipated dimensions of pressure on councillors. The interviews showed increasing workloads place a significant tension on the ability of members to fulfil their democratic representative function. There was a significant depth of opinion about the relative importance of the Assembly. This affected the motivation of some members to engage and resulted in an animosity between those who engaged and those that did not.

An unexpected tension emerged between a councillor's ability to conduct a democratic representative role and the speed at which business was done. In many cases the speed of business limited individuals' capability to know and represent the best interests of their local authority. This tension contributes to the councillors' inability to adopt a delegate position in these circumstances. This tension instead

requires a councillor to act as an autonomous trustee and make quick decisions, dealing with consequences at a later date.

The institution's financial, statutory and officer support capacity limited the ability of members of participate at the Regional Assembly. The variable resources and capabilities available at different institutions also gave some members an opportunity to adopt boundary spanning roles in order to circumvent some resource tensions. Many of those interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with resource provision and exhibited animosity towards the casual or disengaged actions of their peers.

Procedural aspects within the day-to-day work of the Regional Assembly emerged as limitations to its members' work. The ability, motivation and regularity of members reporting to their appointing authorities varied significantly across those interviewed, creating a tension with regard to their democratic representative remit. Normative judgements about the procedures and functional roles at the assembly revealed contrasting dynamics between arguments for and against specialists and debates of calibre and seniority. These issues were also germane due the impending move from the Assembly to a Regional Forum of Leaders. Therefore these issues and opinions were at the forefront of the minds of interviewees.

The resource theme surfaced the tangible (access to finance and other resources) and intangible (time, role expectations) aspects which define and impose restrictions on the capacity of assembly members to adopt different roles. Issues around

procedures and 'how best' to do things also contribute to dilemmas for councillors these ranged from decisions on who to appoint to whether to work with colleagues who were disengaged from regional working.

Introduction to "Role Choices"

The first part of this chapter explored the resource and procedural tensions upon assembly members, which influence their decision making by limiting or creating opportunities for particular actions. The analysis explored themes across the interviewees to highlight the range and significance of factors influencing the day-to-day work of assembly members. Whilst these factors influence role choices by limiting options or rewarding actions, they are not definitive. Instead they are mediating factors that play off against the individual views, opinions or political leanings of individuals or the groups within which they act. The plethora of decision-making junctures laid out in front of assembly members contribute to a portrayal of a confused and chaotic set of circumstances rather than systematic decision-making. This section investigates this complexity through an appreciation of the motivations for action and a case study exploration of the role choices of one assembly member (Councillor One). The analysis aimed to surface the beliefs, opinions and reasoning that informed his role choices to reveal the flexibility in his interpretations of his role. This exposes how the range of positions taken and actions made by members are informed by a coherence and consistency within their overall beliefs, ideals and normative judgements about how they should do their job.

Themes emerging from the interview with Councillor One

Objects of Representation

The first category emerging from the transcript was the broad spectrum of objects available for councillor one to represent. Considering the objects of representation permitted an understanding of primary representative concerns of councillor one. These concerns form the basis of any 'representative claims' that he may be making. The notion of representative claim making has emerged as an alternative approach to consider notions of accountability, legitimacy and the relationship between representative and those they represent. The notion of representative claim making emerged from the work of Saward (2006). This rejects the over emphasis on the effects of representation, instead concentrating on representation as a complex, contingent and lived relationship conditioned by a claim to represent. The various objects of representation chosen and offered by councillors within their interviews can offer both primacy and propinquity effects but none of which are particularly verifiable. All this simple analysis can reveal is what the councillors' chose and no reasons as to why, or the relative strength of each object they represent or relationships between them. Only where members refer to or explain how or why they represent in terms of their role or mandate can their choices and decisions be scrutinised with regards to any form of representative claim making.

The first code emerging from the theme of objects of representation was geography i.e. what was the geographic basis of representation in terms of representing the local authority area, the region as a whole or a more reflexive dual hatted approach. Councillor one expressed the futility in representing purely the local authority and

despite stressing 'some lines you can't cross' (C1) believed there was a need to make 'hard decisions in the regional interest for the long term interest of the local authority' (C1). This suggests the primacy of his institutional mandate and the adoption of a long term strategy of representation, forgoing short term benefit for long term gain. This allows the councillor to subvert the tension between his democratic mandate and the need to be seen to participate at the Regional Assembly. The idea of an important authority advocacy role was matched with a commitment to softer politics and manoeuvring, 'If there is a protest or you are pushing for something, there is a lobbying role, either for or against something that is happening on your patch'. When pressed on the 'lines you can't cross' councillor one identified 'things which you know are black and white, planning applications and funding allocations' (C1). He hinted towards a form of regional institutionalisation whereby those members embedded in the Regional Assembly for a long period were less concerned with the local area as the primary object of representative concern. He stressed 'you get used to joint working, what works and what doesn't' (C1). However it was clear that this pattern would break if the composition of the Assembly changed:

> 'It would only take one local election, you gain new councillors and lose old councillors and before you know it any good work that there was is gone and people end up in their own turf patches again' (C1).

Councillor one was strong in his conviction that a Regional Forum of Leaders would be an entirely different proposition whereby the rules would change and members would revert to strict parochial representation of their appointed mandate:

'Whoever is there has got to remember where they came from, and that is going to be the interesting thing. Its the leaders who go into the RFL and they are talking about regional allocations of funding and stuff like that, he has got to fight... he is fighting his area piece to them' (C1).

The approach to represent the regional interest in order to further the interests of their appointing authority seemed like a predictable position for councillors. Councillor one however was quick to criticise those who were not prepared to make sacrifices or look at the bigger picture stressing the need to 'take a hit' (C1) and 'be realistic' (C1). He cited the example of the furore over the consultation on a second runway at Birmingham Airport (Docherty 2003) and stressed that 'wherever you put an airport somebody is not going to want it there, if everyone goes tribal it makes it impossible to make a decision so the government makes it for you' (C1). Giving the example of the East Midlands Regional Assembly he criticised its members for their inability to escape their constituency mandates and think regionally which he asserted 'killed the institution in terms of getting positive regional outcomes' (C1).

The inability of others to 'see the bigger picture' (C1) meant that Assembly business was slowed down. Councillor one was clear that there was a need to be flexible about when to represent this local authority and when to represent the region. He criticised those that did not exhibit this flexibility and warned that members could lose sight of long-term benefits for local authorities if they did not fully consider regional interests. He stressed that an over focus on local priorities meant 'lazy insular cultures and you lose it all' (C1). He cited Stoke as an example:

'Stoke have never engaged at the regional level, I kept telling them, if you don't go to Birmingham you are not going to get any money, and they will say oh we are nearer Manchester, well they are not in that region' (C1).

This comment outlines the harsh reality and reasoning of political engagement with the region, the councillor makes it clear that regional engagement is goal directed and amounts to councillors playing the game to achieve outcomes.

The tension between participation and democratic representation emerged in the guise of a dual hatted approach to objects of representation. His adoption of the region as an object of representation meant he was 'treated more positively by colleagues' (C1). This approach was also reflected when he talked about how more junior members can benefit from 'smart' (C1) usage of the Regional Assembly to advance local concerns:

'the only way you can push it [planning issue] forward is that regional role, probably from their eyesight, even more so than the county role, because they went to the county and it got ignored so if they go to the region it can enhance their voice and their arguing, I think that's pretty key for the borough council role' (C1).

This dual focus is marked with the acceptance that at times 'you might be pulling in one direction, where they (the region) are pulling in another' (C1). The reflexive position to choose objects of representation as and when appropriate blurred into a rationality argument for the councillor: 'It's not so much a representative role as a

matter of being able to talk about the issues, understand them and come to a consensus' (C1).

Non-geographic objects of representation were also present in the palette of options councillor one drew from. Citing that there was a definitive divide in terms of representation between the different areas of the constituency areas of the region he stated 'there's this rural versus urban thing' (C1). He highlighted informal alliances around demographic or thematic interests across the region.

Party emerged as an important object of representation for councillor one. One revealing comment came at the end of a question asked to him about what kinds of people make up the assembly:

> 'You'll find a lot of the districts never attend or they put somebody on who … in fact I know one where they put the opposite party on and it was at the stage where we were then taking control and one of our people nominated a Labour party member and so it was quite bizarre that they didn't realise what the Regional Assembly was about' (C1).

The comment about not realising 'what the assembly was about' is extremely telling. The fact that a Conservative district council nominated a Labour party member was in the opinion of councillor one 'a significant mistake' (C1). Whilst he agreed that his mandate was a local authority one, he admitted that across all members 'Once you get into it, it is as political as anything' (C1). The idea of party being a significant object of representation was further heightened when he discussed the importance

of party group meetings in advance of any assembly work to make 'sure of the party lines' (C1).

Four potential objects of representation emerged the interviews with councillor one: Local Authority representation; regional representation; thematic or subject representation; and party representation. It is clear however that each of these is significant but none exerts full dominance over the others; particularly not the actual mandate granted by the local authority when they appointed him to the Regional Assembly. This is rooted in the idea of trickle down: councillor one is a regionalist believing that what is best for the region will be best for his constituency. This belief sustains his continued participation at the regional level in the hope that his efforts will be rewarded in the longer term. This way of working is something that is particular to the Regional Assembly whereby members opt in to these rules of behaviour in order to achieve the best outcome for their constituency. This contrasts with the potential threat of an adversarial 'turf war' in the new Regional Forum of Leaders.

Agency and Role Choice

The second theme emerging from the data considers whether the councillor chooses to associate with or act autonomously from different objects of representation. These decisions are rooted in prejudgements about relevance, opportunity and strategy. The analysis reveals the ways in which councillor one makes strategic choices to evade or cope with the representative tensions and issues of his Regional Assembly role. The first codes emerging from the data concerned the idea of

association to different mandates and concerns. The idea of association with regards to individuals, mandates or groups is embedded in the use of relative pronouns. Therefore interrogating who or what councillor one associated with helped inform the approach to this section. Councillor one had a strong association with the work of the Regional Assembly and its institutional history: 'I'm part of a big project, something different' (C1). He demonstrated a strong commitment to maintain what he described as 'the long history of cooperation in the region' (C1). His association with the Regional Assembly was also drawn from his status as a party member fighting as part of a Conservative dominated region against a central Labour government.

When speaking of his local council elective mandate, he argued that there was no direct link to the concerns of his constituents in terms of the orientation he opted to take at the Regional Assembly. As such, he had a great deal of flexibility in what he could do at the region:

> 'There is no direct 'vote for me and Ill get rid of the houses' sort of thing, its just one of those roles that as a senior member that you can undertake' (C1).

Councillor one highlighted the need for autonomy at the Regional Assembly. He saw the ability to make decisions without extensive cross reference and consultation as a positive aspect. This was evident in his strong criticism of those assembly members who related 'everything back to their own little patch' (C1). The only element that he did not allude to having any autonomy from was his political party. The codes about

political party membership referred to the need to 'make sure of party lines' and 'read from the same hymn sheet' (C1).

Ideas of relevance go a great way to reveal how members prejudge how they make decisions and what roles they choose to adopt or avoid. Furthermore these prejudgements are mediated from their own perceptions of their role and beliefs about how others perceive their role. The first mention of the perceptions of others related to the visibility (or lack of it) of his Regional Assembly role was when he made clear that in most cases his work went on above the radar of most of his constituents: 'I bet they never even spotted that I'm a member' and that his role was 'so far distant it would not be understandable' (C1). The councillor therefore asserts that his constituents did not associate him with the Regional Assembly therefore his work there had a low relevance to them. With regards to accountability this finding reasserts the strength of a collective local authority mandate and posits his constituents as the sole potential scrutineer of his work at the region.

The notion of relevance was also a critical factor in the role choices of councillor one in terms of how fellow councillors and officer staff viewed the work of the assembly and his role within it. The relative affect of any limit on the credence of his assembly role was shown to affect both his motivation and his actions. He spoke of the difficulties of 'doing work against the flow of opinion' (C1) within both his home authority and local party.

The final issue under the theme of relevance related to how councillor one utilised information i.e. where and when he chooses to report. The volume of data from different institutional sources represented a challenge due to the 'lack of interaction' between different strategies including differing outcomes, definitions and terminology. The challenge of understanding and managing the different aims, objectives and outcomes of different bodies was not a simple task for councillor one. He gave an example of this complexity:

> 'one says regeneration corridors, another one says houses are going here, here and here and another one says not here, not here' (C1).

This hints at the crucial role as a mediator and interpreter of information and a privileged position for assembly members. The power is held by the assembly member as to how they use information. Councillor one saw his position at the Regional Assembly as being 'part of the game' to potentially gain the rewards in terms of the potential information and resources which come from involvement. This strategic view hints at a strong competitive self-interest as an important motivation for his involvement at the assembly:

> 'Whether you are elected or not makes no odds. It is once you have found that out what do you do with it, and you have to come to them and say to the council this area is losing out and the district and borough ought to be getting into that.'

The councillor also stressed the benefit 'of being able to have some sort of joint voice to make a strong, coherent case to the Government' (C1). This gave district councillors the opportunity to punch above their weight on issues of local

importance: 'if they go to the region it can enhance their voice and their arguing, I think that's pretty key' (C1). Strategic action according to councillor one also took the form of thinking long term about individual and party interests. He spoke of his position as a gatekeeper and power broker at his council when choosing who represents the authority when making appointments to different bodies, selecting members in terms of 'knowledge, experience and temperament for partnership roles' (C1).

Councillor one was strong in his assertion that knowledge is power and that his regional role allowed him to go about the business of being a local councillor in a new way to the benefit of the local authority as a whole. He explained this with reference to the local issue of potholes.

> 'If you do regional scrutiny on roads let say, potholes or whatever and you compared with you neighbour because you've got more potholes than them, it might be an idea to go and have a look and see why they have less potholes. It might be that they put more money in, they have better machinery, the staff are more motivated, and they ban cars off the road. You know, you don't know until you go and have a look and you need a mechanism of either visiting or scrutinising' (C1).

The role and remit of assembly members is loosely defined (though a weak appointed mandate) and thus broadly interpreted. This interpretation is informed by the visibility, translatability and internal and external perceptions of the roles value. One element that pervades the judgements of councillor one with regards to how he interprets his role is his overall opinion of the legitimacy of the Regional Assembly as an institution:

'I'm far more of the mind myself that those powers of the Regional Assembly should be passed down to a sub-regional level such as Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, where people can relate with it more, so personally I think the structures wrong, it ought to be at a local level where the people are a bit more in touch and rely on the elected member to do the lobbying with ministers or government office or whoever it may be' (C1).

Despite this view councillor one accepted the need to 'make the most of the current system' (C1). He saw his role as an assembly member as an opportunity to gain 'transferable experience', to 'drag money in, so you can wave it at people' and use his position to use the funds and experience to 'translate that into a wider outlook for the county' (C1). This rational account of accepting the rules of the system and maximising all opportunities for a beneficial pecuniary or resource outcome for the home authority positions councillor one as a reflexive and shrewd operator. His overall approach to his role at the assembly shows that his primary interest is his local authority but he participates in order to make sure his council makes the most of what is on offer at the region. He asserted taking this position was 'hard work, but it will make your life easier in the long run' (C1).

Interaction

The third theme emerging from the interviews considered the broad category of interaction with others. This theme encompassed elements of consensus working between members in terms of shared geographic, resource or ideological platforms. The choices individuals make about who to work with can give clues towards both role choices and underlying motivations and associations. The coding category of

interaction proved particularly fruitful in encapsulating a great number of themes relating to the ways in which councillor one chose to operate in the Regional Assembly.

The issue of consensus working was broadly addressed by councillor one. He posited the Regional Assembly offered a forum, which 'got the right people together' (C1) particularly on issues of grave economic importance to the region as a whole e.g. the collapse of MG Rover in Longbridge. There were no barriers to joint working and councillor one stressed that the system 'seems to work well' (C1) and the choice to operate within it was a 'no brainer as you often get out more than you put in' (C1). His rhetoric was couched in terms of the potential of joint working to benefit his constituency and this was his predominant motivation to engage. It is clear that councillor one saw his regional role as important and worth of the time and effort invested. However his own engagement at the assembly contradicted his ideological views on the best form of infrastructure for delivering long term strategic planning i.e. that it would be better delivered at the sub-regional level. Councillor one stressed a clear divide between those with a regional mentality and those who held ideological objections to the concept: ' I think it's the culture of the word region, there is a certain amount of people who just switch off and you may not like it but you have got to engage' (C1). He stressed that some of his peers could not comprehend doing business on a macro level:

> 'you explain how the desire to have three million extra houses comes
> down through regional development strategies and local development
> plans and frameworks down to an individual site allocation and you find
> that certain members can understand it but a lot don't' (C1).

Another issue relating to interaction with others related to the councillors relationship with officers at the local and regional level. Councillor one's comparison with parliament in that most material is 'taken as read before it gets to the meeting' (C1) meant he was very reliant on the positive and supportive engagement of officer staff.

The ability to interact and engage across borders, between different agencies and form non-party alliances was also a significant part of his role. Building upon earlier comments about the rationale for engagement at the region he admitted he spent a great deal of time making the case for the regional working:

> 'As a borough councillor I was very keen to stress to the leader of that council and the planning portfolio holder that they involve themselves with East Staffordshire Borough Council which punches above its weight historically at the region, we can learn from them' (C1).

He asserted that he was always making the point that there was a need to engage beyond simply the region 'the region isn't an island so there are those kinds of dynamics as well' (C1). The Regional Assembly also gave rise to another significant element of the councillor's role. He described an 'almost statesmanlike' (C1) role in scrutinising different organisations and agencies. These regular interactions with key regional players were significantly different to the day-to-day machinations of regular council work. Councillor one saw these as 'an actual development' in terms of his role and responsibilities as he had the chance to 'finally join up different elements of his shared interests' (C1). Councillor one also stressed that he could use his positions to scale jump in order to fight policy battles on different fronts: 'well if

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you don't get the message through, go to another organisation and drop down on them, find a man who will tell them different' (C1). This element of the representative role is quite novel in this context but shows the breadth of benefit that can be gained from full engagement.

The potential tension between roles was downplayed by councillor one who described his role as a 'balancer' rather than a 'council man or regional man' (C1) with this reflexivity being an essential element to his work. The issue of non-party alliances also developed as a significant code within data analysis with councillor one affirming that members in his area of the region had 'got a lot in common', he expressed his surprise at some of the 'curious alliances that get made up' at 'all different levels, political, urban, rural, regeneration' (C1). He also asserted that whilst new groups had developed because of the Regional Assembly, which had 'significantly affected' (C1) the way in which people went about their role there was a risk that this could change once the Regional Forum of Leaders was instituted as a replacement:

> 'Ultimately the West Midlands LGA, we are in danger of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, the government has imposed the RFL on us, and you'll end up with this dictatorship up at the top. We are very wary of that' (C1).

A number of codes emerged from the transcript which referred to joint working, conciliation and engagement with others. Some comments began to pick apart how these elements fitted with a rational local authority interest, which he expressed elsewhere in the interview illuminating what happened in instances where assembly

members disagreed. The interviews showed a number of potential dividing lines between the 'City and Shire regions', 'the main parties' and 'competing personalities' (C1). On the issue of power relations councillor one expressed the defining principal at the assembly as 'competitive, that's the way things work when all is said and done' (C1). This was telling given the amount of statements coded about the benefits of regional working. This power exchange was exhibited in the debates about the future of the Regional Forum of Leaders and contrasted directly with the pragmatic examples of *realpolitik* mentioned elsewhere. The section of the interview relating to the future arrangements for the Regional Forum of Leaders was littered with examples of the competition between members. Councillor one compared the exchanges with the strength of debate about the movement to Unitary councils:

> 'You know if you start trying to say you are going to be Unitary in a two tier, bloods on the carpet, it's the same now, this is the hard end' (C1).

Councillor one stressed the challenge of working with 'different personalities' (C1) and believed that more adversarial politics would re-emerge with the movement to a Regional Forum of Leaders. He stressed the risk that when things change members will need to make a case for gets what at the new institution 'before you know it any good work that there was is gone and people end up in their own turf patches again' (C1). He cited an example where Birmingham 'kicked off' about the Midland Way (a project to bring together the East and West Midlands) as they 'felt it would detract from them' (C1). The new arrangements would mean that 'it will all go out the window, we will have to 'fight, fight our areas piece of the pie' (C1).

Conclusion: The role choices and motivations of councillor one

The broad picture of interactions on the part of councillor one was that he was very much a strategic player. He used a long term approach of information sharing to gain benefit for his primary concern, his local authority. In the pursuit of this, he admitted that concessions had to be made and that for some of his colleagues this was seen as too much. He is very much engaged at the regional level and this is due to a distinct need in tandem with a rational choice for long-term benefit. His criticisms of others who did not engage is particularly telling either saying that they lacked of 'experience, motivation or insight' (C1). Councillor one shaped his role in order to cultivate a position for himself as a boundary spanner able to pursue and gain the information, funding and experience that others neglect. In this way he represents an outlier amongst many of his Conservative peers. His liberal and reflexive approach to engagement at the region emerged from the interviews and with it the numerous advantages he gained from taking this position. It is clear that councillor one is not engaged for the sake of it but has made a clear and reasoned choice as in the light of the opportunities he feels it offers.

Councillor one described the motivations of politicians as 'a triangle of prestige, politics and community' asserting this applied to all members. He discussed a way of understanding the relationship: 'you do a stress/strain diagram as to how far they are on each one. Some people are there because they are political; some are there because the like the name councillor and the chains of office and all the rest of it, and others are there for the community' (C1). For councillor one the answer to the triangle was a solution that was 'not exclusive to all of them' (C1). His statement

below goes a long way in explaining why he sees a reflexive; rational approach as the way forward and why he acts in the way he does at the region:

> 'You need a little bit of prestige otherwise the position wouldn't work. If you put people in who say I'm just here for my community, I don't bother about myself or party politics. Well they might not be able to get things done if they are not political. Then there are those who are just political and ignore their constituents, well they are not going to get appointed or elected. And then there are people who just like the chains of office, well they are not going to get anything!' (C1).

This view is also summed up by the quote used earlier when he addressed his representative role directly, as one informed by making the right choices in terms of building consensus, thinking longer term and forgoing front-end battles keeping the local authority as the primary interest at the forefront of his mind.

> 'It's not so much a representative role as a matter of being able to talk about the issues, understand them and come to a consensus' (C1).

<u>Summary</u>

This chapter utilised a grounded theory analysis of the scoping interviews with eight assembly members. Looking across the interviews a number resource and procedural issues emerged. The theme of resources surfaced the tangible (access to finance and other resources) and intangible (time, role expectations) aspects which define and impose restrictions on the capacity of assembly members to adopt different roles. Issues around procedures and 'how best' to do things also contributed to dilemmas for councillors. These issues ranged from decisions on who to appoint to whether to work with colleagues who were disengaged from regional working. An analysis of the transcript of councillor one highlighted the variance in his

adoption of different roles at appropriate times. Overall the analysis showed councillor one adopted a long term approach to his representative role in order to gain benefit for his primary representative concern (his local authority). Councillor one cultivated a role as a regional player which enabled access to a number of different resources. This was a conscious choice and shows that representation is not simply an A to B transfer relationship but embedded in context and strategy. The next chapter forms the final case study of the thesis exploring the actions and motivations of councillor five within three institutions in the context of the government's proposals for an eco-town in Warwickshire.

CHAPTER 7: SITUATING REPRESENTATION, THE LOCATIONS OF AND ENACTMENT OF REPRESENTATION.

<u>Introduction</u>

This chapter seeks to translate many of the findings and implications of previous chapters into a more grounded and situated exploration of the enactment of representation within a particular time, situation and context. This chapter will introduce a single issue case study of a particular policy area as a means to explore and investigate representation in its everyday context. This draws upon multiple sources of evidence namely policy documents, policy histories and accounts from officers and councillors relating to a particular issue. In this way it is possible to assess both the locations where representation is enacted and also help to affirm or translate the conclusions and implications of previous chapters to generate new data.

The research plan and methodology for this chapter are discussed extensively at the end of chapter five. This chapter is a case study of the actions of one councillor (Councillor Five) in three institutional arenas (Warwickshire County Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the West Midlands Regional Assembly). The overall approach is to operationalise the sensemaking process through an interpretative analysis of the role interpretations of the councillor within a particular policy context (the Government's proposal for an Eco-town at Long Marston in Warwickshire). In this way the overall case study approach consists of an assessment and exploration of Councillor Five's substantive actions and interactions with the

eco-town policy as he interprets and understands a developing policy context. The case study aims to surface the beliefs, motivations and tensions informing his actions.

The case study comprised two stages. Firstly an extensive documentary and archival analysis of the eco-town policy context within each of the three institutions at which councillor five is a member. The first stage assesses the policy trajectory of the government's proposals on eco-towns. The principal foci for this first half of the case study are how Warwickshire County Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the West Midlands Regional Assembly interacted with the Governments proposals for an Eco-town at Long Marston. The first stage of the case study explores specifically how each of the contributing institutions to the consultation planned and crafted their responses to the consultations. Analysis consists of an exploration of why, how and where the key policy actors interacted with the eco-towns policy process in the first instance, and second how, where and why councillor five directed, changed and fed into those interactions.

The second half of the approach is the substantive analytical competent of the case study. The analysis explores how councillor five firstly 'made sense' of each policy context and juncture, and secondly defined and enacts his role to input into the policy process. Therefore each section analyses the comments of councillor five on his understanding of context i.e. his opportunities for action, the limitations in scope with regards to action and influence of the policy process. The analysis has two foci. First, addressing how he made sense of his environment and second an exploration

of the actions taken by councillor five based on his sensemaking of the situation. This approach will firstly consider how councillor five understands his situation and secondly how this understanding informs, restricts or enables the enactment of particular roles. This will help bridge the analysis of how the ideas, beliefs and understandings of councillor five based upon his experience and knowledge inform, instruct and enable the enactment of roles. This will permit an assessment of how councillor five acts strategically within each different environment. A report of the actions of each authority forms the starting point of each analysis. This appreciation of the actions of institutions and the policy trajectory through them enables the analysis to trace the actions of and influences upon councillor five. The understandings of councillor five will then be represented in the analysis via the operationalisation of Weick's concept of sensemaking as outlined in the previous chapter. Weick (1995:18) identified seven interrelated characteristics of sensemaking. Therefore when addressing each consultation juncture how councillor five made sense of his environment will be explored with full consideration to the elements outlined in the following figure (Figure 20 overleaf).

Figure 20 The Seven Characteristics of Sensemaking

From Weick (1995:18)
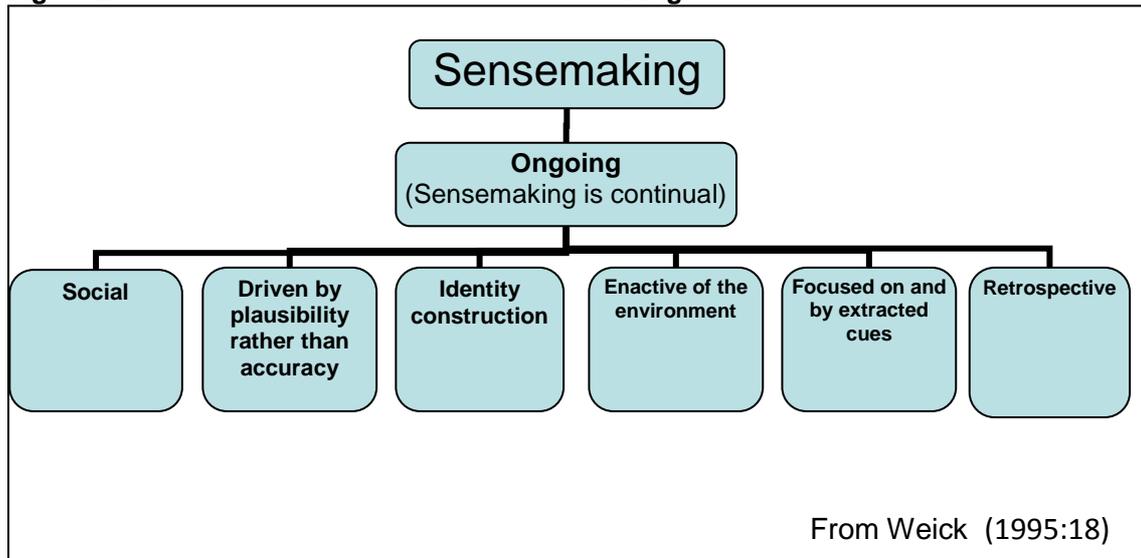
The chapter concludes with an overall discussion of the roles adopted by councillor five in each institution, discusses the value of sensemaking and posits a model for understanding the interpretation and enactment of different role choices. Before moving onto the substantive content of the chapter the next section will briefly introduce the policy area for analysis namely the government's proposals for eco-towns. It will describe the policy trajectory and process from the initial response to the government's proposals to the ultimate withdrawal of the eco-town plans. This will introduce the policy area, key policy documentation, the various actors within the process and the opportunities and arenas at which councillor five was able to participate and inform the policy process. This section will end with a full timeline of events.

The Trajectory of the Government's Eco-Town Proposals from 2007-2010

The Eco-Towns Prospectus

The notion of sustainability has become a mainstream policy term and formed a significant element in New Labour's policy aims and objectives with regards to both regeneration and housing. In March 2007 then Housing Minister Yvette Cooper announced the development of five new eco-towns in England each approximately 10,000 homes in size (Cracknell 2007; DCLG 2007). This was swiftly followed by the Eco-Towns Prospectus in July which increased the housing figure to between 5-20,000 homes per settlement, whilst in September of the same year Gordon Brown announced that the number of proposed eco-towns doubled to ten (DCLG 2007; Milne 2007).

The eco-town proposals of the New Labour government brought together the three essential aspects of planning policy, namely economic, environmental and social concerns. These elements are defined together as the 'three legged stool' of sustainability and were assessed in The Eco-Towns: Scoping Report (2007) where TCPA Chairman David Lock asserted that if proposals missed out on 'any one of these three aspects, the project will very likely fall over' (Town and County Planning Association and Lock 2007:1).

July 2007 also saw the government publish 'Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable' (DCLG 2007) the Housing Green paper, the consultation from

which drew almost 200 responses in relation to eco-towns. A summary report of these findings was released in February 2008 (DCLG 2008). The green paper stressed that regional assemblies and local authorities had to revise their housing figures upwards in line with the government's national aim to deliver 240,000 homes per year by 2016. The Government expected eco-towns to contribute significantly to meet these revised targets.

Beyond the Eco-towns Prospectus

The invite to tender contained within the eco-towns prospectus invited local authorities, house builders, developers and registered social landlords to come together to build small new towns drew 57 applications. One of those was the site at Long Marston and the proposed 'Middle Quinton' eco-town where two developers St Modwen and The Bird Group submitted a bid.

Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation

On the 3rd April 2008 then Minister for housing and planning Caroline Flint MP sent out the 'Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation paper'(DCLG 2008). The consultation document highlighted eco-towns as the solution to modern demographic challenges and the need for new affordable and sustainable housing provision. The paper outlined a shortlist of the fifteen proposals that had made it through to the next stage of assessment. It included those proposals which put 'emphasis not only on affordable housing in the new community, but also benefits to nearby residents' and which were 'designed around the needs of public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists' (DCLG 2008:3).

The consultation paper set out the planning process for eco-towns and the requirements and procedures for the further development of proposals. The main purpose of the consultation paper was to seek the views of councils and other stakeholders on the preliminary sites and potential benefits of eco-towns; a deadline of the 30th June 2008 was set for responses. This initial consultation would then be followed up by a more detailed consultation concentrating on individual locations as part of the Sustainability Appraisal and Policy Statement which was due to be issued in July. The Eco-towns: Living in a greener future consultation paper asserted that 'eco-towns will be subject to a planning application which we would generally expect to be decided by the local planning authority' (DCLG 2008:21). The consultation paper stressed that each planning application was to be determined in the context of a wider planning policy framework taking into account the governments planning policy statements (PPSs), the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks.

Revised Planning Policy Statement, SA and HRA Addendum and Eco-towns: Locations decision statement

A new Planning Policy Statement (DCLG 2009) was prepared and published on 16th July 2009 which described the standards eco-towns would have to meet following the consultation period from 4 November 2008 and 30 April 2009. It was delivered with two further documents the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment Addendum (DCLG 2009) and the Eco-towns: Locations decision statement (DCLG 2009).

Eco-towns: Locations decision statement

The Eco-towns: Locations decision statement (DCLG 2009) was meant to signal either a progression or an end to the eco-town proposals for Middle Quinton. However as the eco-town proposal formed an integral part of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (which was at that time going through the Examination in Public stage of consultation) the decision on the location was deferred until the final report on this had been received.

The General Election and subsequent policy developments

The general election of the 6th May 2010 resulted in the demise of the New Labour Government, as no political party achieved the 326 seats needed for an overall majority. The Conservative Party won the largest number of votes and seats but still fell 20 seats short of a majority resulting in a hung parliament. Ultimately the Liberal Democrats formed a coalition government with the Conservatives. The coalition government quickly set about making their mark and Prime Minister David Cameron appointed Eric Pickles as the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on the 12th May 2010.

With the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy having not been signed off by the outgoing New Labour Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government John Denham the situation about its status and that of the eco-town remained up in the air. This was rectified when Eric Pickles announced in a written statement to the House of Commons that Regional Spatial Strategies were being revoked (Pickles 2010). This also sounded the death knell for the Middle Quinton eco-town in its proposed form. The timetable for these events is summarised in figure 21.

Figure 21 Timetable of Department of Communities and Local Government statements, reports and consultations
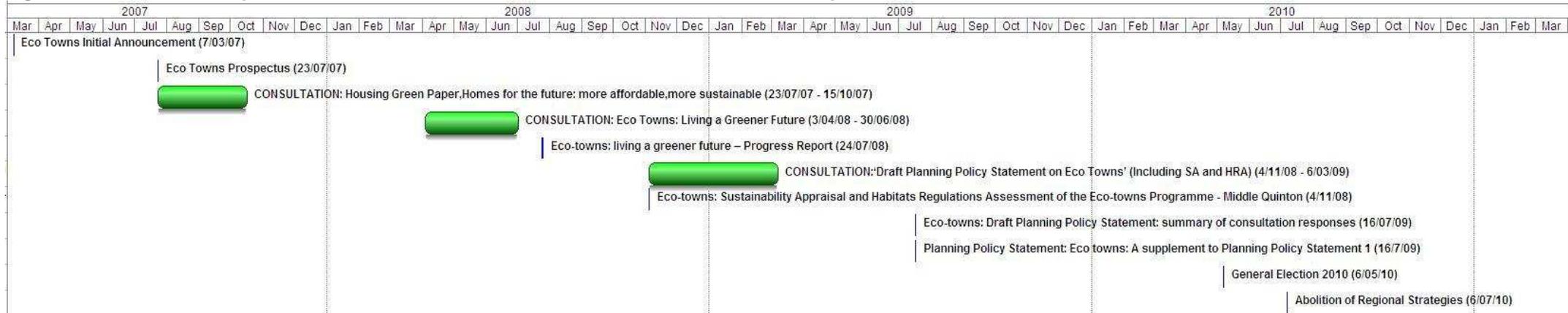
Stratford-on-Avon District Council Context

The emergence of the eco-town proposal

The first real mention of the Middle Quinton eco-town proposal at Long Marston came at a meeting of the Executive on the 11th February 2008. The Executive gave consideration to a paper (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2008) suggesting that the Council agree proposals to establish joint working arrangements.

The first real questioning of the Eco-town proposal at Middle Quinton emerged within the opportunity for public questions at the beginning of a full council meeting on the 25th February 2008. Under this section the Chairman received a petition signed by 1,000 people opposed to the siting of an Eco-town at Long Marston (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2008:3-4). The Eco-town proposal was not rejected at this meeting but instead deferred to a special meeting on the 12th may 2008.

Initial response to the Eco-town proposal

The first critical juncture for Stratford-On-Avon district council came as the council sought to make their response to the 'Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation' (DCLG 2008). Full council met at 2pm on the afternoon of 12th of May 2008 for a meeting which lasted over an hour and a half. Within the meeting they considered the District Councils response to the consultation on the basis of a report prepared by the officer staff. Attendance was high (44/47 councillors). Of those attending four councillors declared a personal interest with regards to their membership of the Better Accessible Responsible Development (BARD) group. The

BARD group was 'a pressure group formed in opposition to the proposals for an eco-town at Middle Quinton' (BARD Group 2008). Councillors were presented with a paper for consideration which contained an analysis of the eco-town proposals against the existing policy context. The paper introduced issues which required further assessment and recommendations for further action (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2008). The paper itself went on to form the majority of the joint response to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation.

The predominant business of the meeting was to consider a motion as proposed and seconded by two senior cabinet members at the previous council meeting on the 21st April 2008 (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2008:4-6). However the original motion was not adopted as councillors instead decided to make a 'stronger assertion' of their objections of the plans. A newspaper recollection of the meeting stressed the exceptionally high interest in the debate and described the 'metaphorical electricity' in the room which resulted in this turn around:

> "The smart money was on councillors backing an option to reject the proposed 6,000 eco-town at Long Marston, but allowing amendments that would leave the door open for a change of mind once more information was available. A middle way for Middle Quinton, if you like."
> (Stratford Herald 2008)

However there atmosphere changed the direction of the meeting:

> "The pressure had become so intense that anything that smacked of a fudge would have been branded as an unforgivable cop-out. In the end every single member of the council present at the meeting intoned the word "For" when asked for his or her opinion on a motion committing

the council to outright opposition to the project." (Stratford Herald 2008)

The rejection of the original motion was extensively discussed by councillors alongside the report (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2008) delivered by the Chief Executive and officer team. The report explained the policy context and a more strongly worded motion was proposed (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2008:6). In accordance with the councils Constitution a recorded vote was requested following which it was unanimously (including councillor five) resolved in favour of the agreement and adoption of the motion.

Responding to 'Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation'

The Eco-town Proposal at Long Marston (Item 1093) (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2008) report prepared by the officer team at Stratford-On-Avon District Council formed the basis of the response to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation. Following an extensive discussion of the Eco-Towns working group on 16th May 2008 at which Councillor five was a member representing Warwickshire County Council the Managing Director of Wychavon advised that he was organising the submission of an open letter (dated 30th June 2008) to the government. This letter was signed by the Leaders of the six member councils (Stowe, Dare et al. 2008) and contained a summary of all the major issues and concerns about the Middle Quinton proposal. It was advised that councils should at this stage submit individual, but aligned responses to the consultation document as this would have the greatest potential impact.

Stratford-On-Avon submitted response to Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation

The consultation response was developed by the officer team at Stratford and informed by both their research of the consultation documents, their appraisals of the current local and regional plans and the opinions drawn from a strong pool of councillors (including councillor five). The responses from this consultation formed the dominant developing themes, logic and reasoning behind all further responses against the proposed eco-town. The main messages from Stratford-On-Avon's response to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation were:

• The consultation response drew attention to the fact that the eco-town proposal fell outside the scope of and is contrary to the provisions of CTY.18 of the local plan review (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2006:113).

• The overall conclusions delivered for the Eco-towns: Living a greener future were that the "development of a 6,000 dwelling 'eco-town' at 'Middle Quinton' in the southernmost part of Warwickshire could not be regarded as compatible with the existing or emerging development plans at regional or local level"(Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2008:8).

• The eco-town proposals would conflict with the regeneration targets and priorities within the Regional Spatial Strategy.

• An issue raised strongly within Stratford-On-Avon's response to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future was that of the inappropriateness of the site with regards to its current and potential transport infrastructure as a minimum provision. (Stratford-on-Avon District Council 2008:10).

• Stratford DC asserted the need for addressing affordable housing needs as and where they arise rather than concentrating provision on one particular location.

•The response stressed the need for job development and creation in Stratford itself
rather than the proposed eco-town.

The understandings and actions of councillor five at Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

The interview with councillor five regarding his role and actions as a member of
Stratford-On-Avon District Council took place at Elizabeth House in Stratford upon
Avon. Elizabeth House is the main district council offices and the principal location of
councillor five's actions and interactions with the policy process. The conversation
commenced with a discussion of councillor five's role, his perception of his
capabilities in the role and how he believed others considered his role.

Associations, roles and understandings

The first question asked councillor five whether his role at Stratford on Avon DC was
similar or different to his other roles. This allowed him to express his understanding
of both his context and his role.

> "Stratford's different, I've been here since 1998 so I suppose I'm pretty
> much engrained here, or perhaps it's engrained on me, I think you learn
> early on that Stratford has a particular mentality. Stratford itself can be
> very parochial, 'Go away rest of the world, and leave us alone', yes we
> do want the visitors because there was this literary bloke who was born
> there but we can look after it and manage it ourselves, you know go
> away."

In defining the council environment councillor five was strong in his expression that
Stratford was 'different', had a 'particular mentality' and 'can be very parochial'
showing his understanding of the council to be an organisation that was insular and

protective of its interests. This protective council interest was something that he adopted, shared and was built into his understanding of his role. This was apparent within our discussions through both overt explanation and his use of the pronoun 'we' when discussing the actions and motivations of the council.

> "Sure, we have something we want to protect; Stratford itself is very different even within Warwickshire, we are a large council for a district with many councillors and we are fairly united about what is important for the district as a whole."

Councillor five next arrived at his perception of the difference between him and his colleagues via his position on the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

> "Most of us get on well; sometimes the insularity can get in the way, for example my membership of the West Midlands Regional Assembly was scorned upon. This was the same in terms of constituents, some of the people you would expect to vote for you as well as those councillors who you would expect to vote with you. Sometimes by attending meetings my knowledge can put me in a good if perhaps difficult position where I can take the long term view, I think I have the respect of my colleagues to say 'come on lets think about this properly'. I don't think they defer to me, I just have the knowledge so they'd be stupid not to listen."

This identification of difference was derived both from his own perception and what he believed to be the perception of his colleagues of the additional knowledge he gained from his role at the assembly. Therefore there was potential for both insight and oversight on matters at the district. Councillor five perceived the potential benefit he could bring to the council through this additional knowledge and

understanding which allowed him to 'take the long term view'. The position of councillor five as a Regional Assembly member and his perception of the potential benefit of this to the district council made him choose to position himself in an oversight role whereby he could provide knowledge to which his colleagues would be 'stupid not to listen'.

The introduction to the interview of the subject of the eco-town allowed councillor five to delve into how his understandings of the capabilities of his different roles enabled him to further the strategic goals of the organisation, and in some respects made him position himself as different to his colleagues. When asked to appraise in whose interest he was acting when he considered the eco-town he portrayed a position of difficulty, not on the grounds that he disagreed with his colleagues but that perhaps he could see positive aspects of the proposals which in his understanding allowed him to appraise them differently.

> "It wasn't a black and white thing; within the council I could very much agree with my fellow councillors that this proposal was a bad thing. I could very much agree with my constituents who were saying that the plans were a bad thing, but in terms of the region it wasn't as simple as saying it's potentially positive and shouldn't be dismissed out of hand. I had this in depth knowledge of the regional needs and context and I had a very strong opinion about my desire not to have this eco-town imposed on my patch. I needed to negotiate a way through that".

Councillor five's understandings of the strong views of others and self identification as a councillor with a wider interest placed him in a position which he needed 'to negotiate a way through'. Councillor five's conception of the issue as not 'a black and

white thing' hints at a contradiction in his conceptions of his role and mandate. His understanding of what he should do in terms of his constituents who were saying the plans were a bad thing; and his association with his vociferously anti-proposal district council colleagues contradicted the knowledge he gained at, and the role he identified with at the Regional Assembly. The role councillor five identified at the Regional Assembly was as a more long term and perhaps holistic actor which was at odds with his district council colleagues.

> "There was a lot of noise particularly from those with wards close to the site, some councillors were also part of the BARD group and this meant the proposals were immediately rejected virtually across the board. I shared their view that it was inappropriate but perhaps with a better appreciation and knowledge of the full proposal, I needed to counterbalance their kneejerk reaction."

This contradiction in role identification was not matched by any particularly strong contradiction in the goals of each organisation. Therefore councillor five utilised this juxtaposition to act strategically in order to achieve better outcomes for the district council i.e. a more coherent, informed and directed response to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation.

'Out on a limb' at the Special Council Meeting

From the newspaper accounts (Stratford Herald 2008) and the accounts of officer staff it was clear that the special council meeting on the 12th May 2008 was "emotive and tense" (Stratford DC Officer 2010). An interview conducted with one of the senior officer staff at the Stratford District Council revealed that there were "big characters and personalities across the council and unsurprisingly those councillors

were pretty vociferous at the meeting". The officer described councillor five as "a kind of balancer" (Stratford DC Officer 2010) and stressed his influence due to being a portfolio holder at neighbouring Warwickshire County Council and his role at the Regional Assembly. The discussions with the officer at Stratford revealed the special meeting as a particular instance where councillor five exhibited tied loyalties and perhaps took on the role of devils advocate whereby "he would raise concerns even if he didn't fully agree with the position" (Stratford DC Officer 2010). Describing his actions at the special meeting the officer surfaced a potential tension in the role of councillor five, a tension which can be compared with councillor five's own appraisals of his role and understandings of his environment.

> "Its not as if he was saying 'yes I understand your concerns but look we have got to do this', he was saying 'I understand your concerns but if we are not going to do this then we have to be aware of this, and perhaps saying that this is why we are doing it, this is why it is being suggested" (Stratford DC Officer 2010).

The accounts of the officer at Stratford suggested the potential tensions in both councillor five's role and his relations with colleagues. These tensions came to the fore at the special meeting. This meeting was therefore chosen as a suitable event for further exploration with councillor five exploring how he understood his role and how he acted at the meeting. When councillor five was asked about his views on the proposal he specified a personal position that it was 'inappropriate for the particular site' and a joint position that there 'was no love of the eco-town proposal'.

> "My initial reaction was that the proposals were inappropriate for the particular site. For the council as a whole, well there was no love of the eco-town proposal. Well it was nice idea, wrong site really; the big issue

was it was on our patch so we had to make the case that it shouldn't be, by raising issues about its inappropriateness"

The meeting was described by councillor five as 'noisy' and he noted the strong presence of the BARD group at the meeting. This hostile one sided environment made him enact a role to counter the 'knee jerk reaction' of his colleagues based upon his 'better appreciation and knowledge of the full proposal'. Although describing himself as 'anti' the proposals the hostile environment at the meeting in combination with his association with a broader oversight role drawn from his other positions pushed him to enact a role in slight contradiction to his colleagues.

> "Well at those early meetings there wasn't much room to say much beyond, 'we need to make sure this proposal is rejected', I think perhaps at the public meeting and full council (reference to meeting 12th May 2008) I was a bit out on a limb, the time for ranting and raving had passed and we needed to formulate a solid response"

His description of the 'ranting and raving' of colleagues contradicted the need to 'formulate a solid response' and put him in a position of difference to his colleagues. This clearly contributed to his self description as 'a bit out on a limb'. Councillor five highlighted within his interview that the atmosphere of the meeting had shifted and cited the replacement notice of motion as an example of the direction of feeling at the meeting.

> "I had some knowledge and I supported the valid conclusions delivered by the officer staff, I didn't feel we could leave any stone unturned so I wanted to make sure we covered all the angles, which meant asking hard questions and not rushing it, but after a long meeting, they were rolling their eyes."

Councillor five understanding of the situation made him adopt a role whereby he asked the 'hard questions' and 'covered all the angles' however he chose to do this at the end of the meeting to his personal detriment as colleagues rolled their eyes. Councillor five's choice to enact this regional oversight role was something that was supported by the Chief Executive and officer staff at Stratford District Council. They gave this support due to their positive perception of the additional knowledge and inside track that councillor five could bring. His ability to enact this oversight role was legitimised by councillor five through his perception of a shared goal with his colleagues, the experience he had gained at the Regional Assembly and the extensive work he had already done with the officer team on the written response.

Drawing upon and reminding: Legitimising an oversight role

The sensemaking approach proved useful again in surfacing how the councillors understanding was enactive of the environment causing him to act in certain way in order to achieve his aims. Councillor five's view that his colleagues were acting on 'impulse rather than full reason' at the meeting coupled with the propinquity of the deadline to respond assured the councillor of his need to act.

> "In earlier meetings passion was also high but the response... but those responding tended to be acting on impulse rather than full reason. The nearness of the response submission meant I could act, whilst many thought that it was cut and dried, late in the meeting the chair deferred to me for a regional insight and I managed to make some points about the proposals implications. It was near the end of the meeting, things had calmed so I had the chance. Some would say it's pedantic, that I'm being a pain in the arse but I'd say we ended up with a better response."

The knowledge of the chair of his roles at Warwickshire and the Regional Assembly allowed councillor five to bide his time until near the end of the meeting and position his arguments within a discourse of oversight and contributory support of what had gone before. This allowed him to simply build a case as opposed to assert a position.

The basis upon which councillor five drew a mandate and posited his reasoning for both his argument and actions was rooted firmly in the many events and understandings which had developed before the meeting. Thus within the response itself and within councillor five's actions at the meeting there are clear themes which drew upon earlier interactions and understandings of both the policy process (what counts and what doesn't) and rationales for arguments against the proposal. These extracted cues formed the rationale for action. The clearest cue of all is his positive experience and success when participating in consultation activities on previous occasions. Councillor five's clear rationale to build a case and adopt a cover all approach and see what the government came back with was drawn from his past experience with the housing figures consultation.

> "The important thing I think you learn with these things is to build a case, you put building blocks in place, and you take a bit of a splatter gun… no scrub that, a cover all approach. They give you the questions and you give the answers, you respond and you see what comes back, then you rebuild on that."

Furthermore councillors fives knowledge that many of the larger infrastructure concerns within the proposals would be dealt with by either Warwickshire or the

Regional Assembly allowed him to focus reasons against the proposals upon the logic of it being locally inappropriate.

> "The responses across the councils were similar but I think as Middle Quinton is our patch we made sure our response focused down on local needs making sure that it was down on paper that the proposal didn't fit the local plan and the local development framework. The response had a big nod to the RSS and I added in some of my knowledge of the Warwickshire structure plan, but overall we made sure it was a response that was all about the inappropriateness of the plans for the site".

The holding of mandates at Warwickshire and the Regional Assembly gave councillor five a broad understanding and the ability to adopt an approach to his role which leant strongly on non Stratford based experience and understanding. This allowed him to add insight from the Regional Spatial Strategy and Warwickshire structure plan. This additional knowledge and insight which he could draw upon gave him legitimacy with the Chair to conduct an additional role. This role was not related to his district council mandate yet he could utilise his position and information to assist in forwarding the aims and objectives of Stratford-on-Avon District Council. Councillor five described his positions on other bodies as giving him clout with the Chair. This clout gave councillor five a platform to speak on to invoke plausible arguments for his colleagues. The success of these arguments was based upon his recollection to colleagues of how and where the council had gained concessions on national and regional policy directives.

> "I think I made a mark, I made sure the arguments were better, the fact that I was on the Regional Assembly gave me an inroad to speak and perhaps a little bit of clout, with the Chief Exec and officer staff at least.

As I remember from the special meeting I managed to turn the arguments round a bit by reminding my colleagues of how we had gained concessions before, the tone was the same but the argument was better."

Picking up on councillor five's comments about 'reminding colleagues' and 'gaining concessions before' gave a good opportunity to explore how councillor five remembered or invoked previous events in order to shape the direction of both the meeting and the argument. This retrospective element relates to the construction of councillor five's understanding and furthermore how he constructed the environment, argument and plausibility of arguments for his colleagues. This proved essential in delivering changes to the proposed response enabling it to cover a number of additional issues and take a different tack on a number of others. Another example is shown where councillor five reminded colleagues of a time they 'did it right' and assured them of the 'need to follow the same formula'.

"The situation was similar to our response to the housing numbers, what was being proposed was wrong for Stratford, feelings were strong, and we as a council were fighting the then Labour government for its daft proposals. Because we were successful in fighting the figures and it was in the recent past it gave me a focus to slow the meeting down a bit and say 'we did it right this time' let's make sure we follow the same formula. It seemed to work"

Making sense of procedures

The social element of sensemaking represents a softer approach to seeing how individuals make sense of the systems of rules, routines, expectations and language within their environment. Utilising this aspect allowed the questioning to explore

the more procedural aspects of councillor five's work at the District Council. Councillor five explained the usual trajectory of council meetings. He highlighted that usually at the end of the meetings there was scope for wider concerns to be considered. Councillor five's understanding of this soft procedural institution allowed him to interject in the proceedings at a time where he could have room to express a response. This was critical as if he had introduced the issues earlier in the meeting he perceived that he would have 'hit more resistance than the few raised eyebrows' he received at the end of the meeting.

> "It was introduced by the Chief Exec as the team had done a lot of work on the response and had the best grip on it. Then there were many councillors with a strong local interest, most of the meeting was taken up by local representations, I waited my turn and the chair called on me for a wider view on the response. I sat back and waited until called upon by the chair, I think if I had gone in earlier during the meeting I would have hit more resistance than the few raised eyebrows I got at the end".

The respect delivered by deference from the chair coupled with the legitimacy built over time with his colleagues of his potential to add additional input gave councillor five an opportunity and ability to fulfil an oversight role. This however could not be done without invoking some of the ire of his colleagues who either had no respect for his regional working or just wanted to get out of the meeting.

Reflexivity: Sensemaking then enactment

The ability of councillor five to understand the atmosphere in the room and tailor his approach accordingly reveals brilliant reflexivity in his enactment of roles. The ability to draw upon a particular mandate when appropriate in order to achieve results

positions the need to understand how councillors understand their situations as paramount to understanding why they choose and enact certain roles ahead of others. This was clearly in affect when looking at that how councillor five approached the special public meeting. His conception of what was a plausible form of action was drawn from his assessment of the situation. Whilst his colleagues made their 'particular mark' vociferously at the meeting his understanding was that it would not be valuable for him to interject at that time.

> "Sure many of them felt they needed to make their particular mark, even if it meant repeating what others had said, which is fair enough, at times you need to show strength in your representations and perform to some of those there, if that's not a bit strong. I saw that this was going on so I sat back and waited, I knew I could legitimately interject but on balance it was best to wait and use that oversight role to make sure we got back on track and covered all the relevant concerns in the paper presented by the Chief Exec".

In watching the procession of the meeting councillor five built an understanding of the feeling in the room and already had legitimacy with the Chair regarding the potential for an interjection on the grounds of regional oversight. This understanding allowed councillor five a position whereby he could legitimately and coherently express his opinions on the response. It allowed him to introduce the balance and direction he believed the consultation response required. This strategic action allowed councillor five to focus the response around the concerns he believed pertinent and he achieved this by invoking the instances in the past where such approaches had succeeded.

Warwickshire County Council Context

Initial response to the Eco-town proposal

Warwickshire County Council were slightly slower off the mark that Stratford-On-Avon DC. The issue was raised first by a councillor whose ward, like councillor five, was in the Middle Quinton area. The councillor raised notice at the local Stratford-On-Avon Area Committee and requested an information report on the former Long Marston MOD depot site (Warwickshire County Council 2008). The information report delivered on the 19th March 2008 noted that the eco-town proposal did not fit in with existing or emerging strategic planning policy. It also acknowledged that the government could impose a new policy which supports the principle of an eco-town at the Long Marston location. The report was strong on the need for a contingency plan should this occur (Warwickshire County Council 2008:5). The report also alluded to a proposed joint member group to consider the eco-town proposals to ensure all relevant authorities were briefed, consulted and shared information.

The next important meeting and documentation came on the 19th May 2008 when Councillor five called a meeting of Warwickshire officer staff and the relevant councillors from other involved stakeholders (Warwickshire County Council 2008). Warwickshire County Council hosted the meeting with Councillor five leading as he was the portfolio holder for the Environment and Economy Directorate. Councillor five stressed the need to be sufficiently concise, detailed and informed rather than excessive when responding to government consultations. The meeting led on transport issues as councillor five stressed that the Transport Assessment provided by the developer was weak. Warwickshire County Council had already submitted a

bid for £50k funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) which if successful would allow the council to engage ARUP consultants to do a full appraisal of the Transport Assessment work done by the developers. Such work would then enable officers to take the informed view needed when responding to DCLG. A prominent issue raised was the issue of river crossings, with a heated debate on the need for a new river crossing in Stratford. Local members stressed that most external trips would need to access through Stratford to access destinations to the north via the A46 and that any new road option to the west of Stratford would involve a new bridge. Other issues that were raised at the meeting included an appraisal of some of the accessibility benefits to nearby rural communities in terms of employment and schools. However concerns were expressed that any new schools in the eco-town would lead to school closures in surrounding villages.

Responding to 'Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation'

Councillor five as Cabinet Portfolio holder for Economy presented the report to the County Cabinet on the 19th June 2008. The report set out their proposed response to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation. In an emotive speech he drew the majority of his attention to the implications in terms of infrastructure (particularly transport), sustainability and affordability (Warwickshire County Council 2008). Councillor five expressed concern that the eco-town proposal would run counter to the sub region's approach to the Regional Spatial Strategy and Planning Policy Guidance 3 on development in rural areas (DCLG 2006). The cabinet voted to carry the prepared report and posited that the first response to the 'Eco-towns:

Living a greener future consultation' should be forthright. The response from the minutes is quoted below:

> "The Government should re-think its approach to reconciling housing growth and affordability with climate change objectives as set out in the consultation document" (Warwickshire County Council 2008:4).

The three main messages delivered by cabinet were as follows.

- Objectives can be better reconciled with sustainable development through expansion of existing locations.

- The construction of an 'eco-town' would undermine agreed policy to bring about a 'step-change' in development of the Region and Sub-region and bring about a fundamental and inappropriate change in the character of this rural area.

- Therefore the proposal for an 'eco-town' at Long Marston Depot should not be taken forward to the final list of proposed 'eco-towns'.

(Warwickshire County Council 2008:4)

Warwickshire County Council submitted response to Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation

Warwickshire County Council submitted a strongly critical and concise appraisal of the proposed eco-town at the Long Marston site. The submission delivered strong criticisms about the inappropriateness of the site within the county and questioned the capability of the site to deliver on its proposed sustainable objectives.

On the Governments Eco-town proposals

Warwickshire submitted a strong response against the Eco-town proposals on the following grounds:

•The plan cannot be regarded as being compatible with the existing or emerging Regional and Sub-regional spatial planning strategies to which the Council has given its fullest support over the past 2/3 years.

•The eco-town would be at best a distraction from the RSS step change plan at worst it will undermine all strategies.

•Eco-town is in the wrong place in terms of both sustainability and affordability.

•The eco-town poses a risk of fundamental change in the character of the southern part of the county and a concentration of housing in this location would exacerbate the existing dislocation between homes and jobs in the district (Warwickshire County Council 2007:17).

The understandings and actions of councillor five at Warwickshire County Council.

The second interview of the three took place with councillor five two weeks after the first. The interview with councillor five regarding his role and actions as a member of Warwickshire County Council took place in Warwick within the antechamber at Shire Hall at the principal headquarters of Warwickshire County Council. The antechamber was next door to the shared office he held when he was the portfolio holder for the environment and economic development. Like the first, the interview began with a discussion of the councillor's role, his perception of his capabilities within it and how he felt others viewed his role and remit. The format of the interview was similar to the first but was informed and given context by an interview conducted a few days

before with two members of the officer staff at Warwickshire who had worked extensively on Warwickshire's response to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation.

Associations, roles and understandings

Councillor five specified a difference between his understandings of his role at Stratford District Council and his role as a councillor at Warwickshire County Council. His understanding of his role was informed by the geographic and demographic aspects of each of the wards he represented in comparison with the size of the whole council. This understanding was matched and supplemented by the increased capacity and capability of his role at county level. Seeing his county council ward as a small unit in a more diverse area he stressed his role was about joining things up.

> "Well it's a similar position to my other roles; although in comparison to Stratford I think it's more directed. In some respects I have a broader remit, we deal with a great deal more at County, and things need to join up. On the other side I have a very direct remit, within my scrutiny role now and when I held the economic development portfolio it has a very specific focus."

This broad conception of a 'joining up' role contrasted with a specific issue based focus when he held different positions within the council. The question of whom councillor five chose to represent at different junctures was dependent on his understanding of the source and type of issue.

> "I think that probably we tend to be a bit broader here at Warwickshire and not just the accent! Seriously though the role tends to encompass more things, we need to be at the forefront of everything that comes

down from government, whether it is road planning, housing figures or school reviews."

To illustrate councillor five spoke of Warwickshire needing to be at 'the forefront of everything that comes from government' and that he had a responsibility to 'the council as a whole' but conversely spoke of his 'primary responsibility' to his ward and the need to get the 'best out of whatever may be on offer from Warwickshire'.

> "Well the people that voted me in, I have a primary responsibility to my ward, but on top of that I've been given specific roles which I need to fulfil and I have a broad responsibility to the council and to promote the council as a whole. My role is to speak up for my area and make sure we get the best out of whatever may be on offer from Warwickshire particularly within planning decisions, it's a trickle down effect."

Councillor five had an awareness of his own and his wards position as a piece of 'the puzzle' and aimed for the potential 'trickle down' benefits at ward level by getting the best outcomes for the county. This awareness informed his actions when representing Warwickshire. This reflexivity was best outlined when he described 'thinking for the county', but 'pushing hard' for his ward.

> "Well it's virtually the same people, I think at Warwickshire I speak up for rural areas and for Stratford, whereas at Stratford nearly everyone's doing that. So perhaps I push harder for the area, over time though I think you become more focused on Warwickshire as a whole, you cover lots of issues, learn about the different areas. It depends on what it is, sometimes you think for the county, sometimes you push hard for your ward."

Councillor five's understanding and perception of himself as someone that is 'well connected' helps him derive both an ability and confidence to contribute to matters of strategic importance to Warwickshire. This, coupled with the legitimacy accrued to him by colleagues on the basis of his other roles allowed him to influence the agenda at Warwickshire concerning the response to the eco-town consultation.

> "Only through experience really, having liaised with different partners and different organisations, I suppose I'm well connected, but again that's experience. I suppose with my old development role and now with my scrutiny role I cover, or have covered the majority of things we do and perhaps that gives me a strong basis to contribute."

An issue based focus, infrastructure and transport

Councillor five as a member of the joint working group on eco-towns along with members of other affected local authorities helped shape the council's response to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation. His knowledge of both the context at Stratford and the basis of their response allowed him to lead the response at Warwickshire in a particular direction. This direction took a dual approach to show 'the infrastructure wasn't there' and that the surfeit of finance needed to fulfil the resource needs would have to be fulfilled by the government.

> "Well it was clear that the proposals didn't fit in with our structure plan here at Warwickshire, I convened the officer group and other stakeholders, the task group and joint member group and I based the response upon what we led at Stratford. I made sure at the early meetings that we focused on infrastructure issues to show how the proposal didn't fit within the Warwickshire context."

This strategy was based on holistic understanding drawn from his experience and knowledge of Stratford and from his involvement with the joint officer/working group. In steering an early meeting onto transport issues he managed to evoke a strong response focused upon how the proposal did not fit within the context of Warwickshire as a county. Councillor five's understanding of the government's eco-town proposals and their focus on sustainability in all their aspects (building, transport etc) allowed him to focus the response down on the inability of the Long Marston site to provide sustainable transport links.

> "The big areas were transport and education oh yes… the crossing points… the problems that we had were not you know houses and dwellings per se but where they were located and how people would access their local services. Now the nearest town is Stratford so for anyone to get there they have to cross the river, now we didn't think we had the funding to create new river crossing, which would have been necessary, there were then conversations about railways as you know."

He utilised this aspect to both exhibit the need to identify the financial shortfalls within the proposals and also engender his colleagues support to focus on infrastructure concerns within their response.

Leading and shaping

Councillor five's roles at the Regional Assembly and the District Council put him in an advantageous position in the mind of his colleagues. One of the officers interviewed at Warwickshire described the "collateral" (Warwickshire County Council Officer 1 2010) held by the "chief executive and also obviously the economic development portfolio holder (referring to councillor five) who access a lot of regional funding and

are on the cusp of everything happening at the region" (Warwickshire County Council Officer 1 2010). This 'collateral' gave councillor five legitimacy amongst his peers and he was aware of this aspect when he instigated the initial meetings of the joint officer and joint working group.

Councillor five utilised his knowledge of the Warwickshire structure plan and elements of the Regional Spatial Strategy to source concrete examples of where the 'proposals didn't fit' within the already developed plans. A member of the officer staff stressed a great deal of ill feeling from the Conservative controlled Warwickshire County Council towards the Labour government due to what councillors believed were "top down diktats from Whitehall"(Warwickshire County Council Officer 2 2010) and "increasingly hands on interventions in local planning policy" (Warwickshire County Council Officer 2 2010). By revealing the poorly conducted transport assessment commissioned by the government councillor five depicted the government as 'way off the mark' with regards both local sentiment and even the basic geographic of the county. By doing this councillor five managed to shape the cumulative argument driven by cabinet.

> "A lot of stuff is about what has gone before, so we tend to have massive briefing documents, but on this occasion I thought it easier to lead my colleagues through them and get them to recall the decisions they had made on the structure plan and the housing green paper and why they had made them. That way we could easily get them to understand the outlined response from the joint officer team".

The tactic of verbally briefing colleagues on the current Warwickshire plan to highlight the clear differences in objectives and context allowed councillor five to look back and familiarise his colleagues with the historic planning context of Warwickshire. In recalling the events councillor five adopted a priming role for what was to come in terms of setting out Warwickshire's response. His senior position as the relevant cabinet member, numerous contacts and experience of regional planning policy put him in good stead to lead the consultation response.

> "Well I held the development portfolio; my ward is in the Stratford District and I already had many of the contacts with officers and councillors in the other affected authorities so I think it was obvious."

He managed to build upon the general animosity towards central government to make sure the response concentrated on issues of infrastructure and required expenditure.

Reflexivity: Sensemaking then enactment

Whereas at Stratford councillor five took a back seat before interjecting into their response at Warwickshire councillor five awareness of the suitability of his expertise allowed him to lead and shape the response of Warwickshire from the start. Councillor five's understanding of the situation and consideration that he was best placed in the view of colleagues to lead the response put him in a position of power where he could both inform and direct the response. This leadership role was joined by his idea that it was the role of a county councillor to make sure things joined up. This amounted to him leading a response which focused upon issues of infrastructure and thus brilliantly complimented the geographically focused

approach taken at Stratford-on-Avon District Council. In some respects he was in his own words 'thinking for the county' but 'pushing hard' for his ward but on different platforms.

Councillor five saw his role as a county councillor as the perfect platform from which to construct the second part of the battle against the eco-town proposals. His role as cabinet member for economy and the environment gave him additional knowledge, insight and understanding. From this he could direct colleagues back retrospectively to recall planning decisions and events to highlight the ill fit of the government proposals and garner support for a strongly worded response.

The leadership role taken by Councillor five was afforded to him by his colleagues on not only the grounds of his remit as portfolio holder, but also due to the credibility and kudos he gained when battling the government housing targets through his role at the Regional Assembly. His actions in assuming leadership and directing the response towards issues of infrastructure were derived from his own conception of his role at county level and understanding of his capabilities within other roles.

Councillor five's construction of his role as leader was derived from his interpretation of his remit as both 'specific' in terms of his planning focus and 'to join up' drawn from his conception of the diversity of the county. Taking these cues and the respect afforded to him by colleagues because of previous success in fighting top down proposals councillor five took the lead to approach the officer team and interrogate the transport assessment for the eco-town site. From this councillor five identified

flaws in the assessment and built upon a narrative around the government pushing things onto the county whilst not appreciating its nature or geography.

> "Well, I had a bit of a heads up from the work we had done at Stratford, I felt it was Stratford's particular battle, but as one of the members for Stratford we could really lead a coherent response from county level. I think where our focus at Stratford was all about how the proposal was wrong for Stratford we could really use our response here at Warwickshire to show that the infrastructure wasn't there and if the government wanted it they would have to meet the bill."

By doing this he managed to secure the support of colleagues for both the substance and direction of Warwickshire's response. He further evoked the strong feelings of colleagues by verbally leading his colleagues through the planning context at Warwickshire, rather than being reliant on read briefings. He did this in the expectation that it would have a greater impact on his colleagues. This approach would ultimately have a significant influence on the sensemaking of his colleagues by offering them retrospective cues.

West Midlands Regional Assembly Context

Initial response to the Eco-town proposal

Discussion of the eco-town proposals was concentrated in the first instance within meetings of the Regional Planning Partnership (Regional Planning Body for the West Midlands). At a meeting of the Regional Planning Partnership on the 25th January 2008 the minutes delivered two criticisms of the proposals, that the housing numbers went beyond those already worked out, and that eco-homes themselves would be built at a premium and therefore their affordability was questioned (WMRA 2008:3).

Before this meeting the eco-town proposals had been discussed on the 16th January 2008 at a full meeting of the West Midlands Regional Assembly itself. This was a meeting at which Councillor five played a part in raising the concerns of the affected area as both a district and county councillor. Within the official minutes and the meeting record the main item of concern was the failure of the government to put the eco-town proposal to the region in the correct way.

> "Concern was raised that through the RSS process it was the region's aim to maintain communities which were sustainable, the decision as to where to place an eco-town in the region would be with Government. The development of an eco-town proposal had not been shared with the Assembly (as the planning body), which was a matter of concern."(WMRA 2008:2).

Responding to 'Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation'

It was decided on 23rd April 2008 at a full assembly meeting that the secretariat of the assembly should convene a working group comprising officers from the County

and District Council areas affected, RSS Policy leaders, and representatives from business and other sectors to consider the full response to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation. The selected group would then draft a regional response for consideration by the Regional Planning Executive on the 4th June and the Regional Planning Partnership on the 25th June. The final consultation response was approved by members of the Regional Planning Partnership on behalf of the Regional Assembly which was subsequently noted by the Regional Assembly on the 29th October 2008.

West Midlands Regional Assembly submitted response to Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation.
Whilst supporting the general principle of putting affordable housing, lower carbon emissions and environmental sustainability at the core of the eco-towns concept the Regional Assembly's written response expressed "strong concerns" (WMRA 2008:1) under six headings :

•Lack of strategic context and bypassing of proper planning processes.

•Sustainability of eco-town locations and lack for consideration for smaller eco-developments in and adjacent to existing urban areas.

•Contributions of eco-towns to regional and local housing targets.

•Viability and deliverability of eco-town infrastructure.

•Sustainability appraisals and other technical assessments.

•Suitability of the Middle Quinton site in respect of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Overall the response delivered a critical appraisal of the eco-town proposals. WMRA expressed a desire to learn from past mistakes of developing new isolated

settlements. The response asserted the importance therefore for eco-towns to have a clear national, regional and local context and be consistent with, or identified through Regional Spatial Strategies. The Assembly expressed an urgent need for the government to clarify whether the housing associated with the eco-town proposals would contribute, or be in addition to the RSS and local authority housing targets. The response was clear that there were significant concerns about the economic viability and deliverability of the infrastructure required at the eco-town site and WMRA called for assurances that any required funding would be delivered from national resources. In terms of both the sites (Middle Quinton and Curborough) and their suitability as eco-towns within the planning context the final paragraph of the response was clear:

> "The Regional Assembly considers that the Curborough and Middle Quinton proposals would not be in alignment with the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy or the submitted Phase Two Revisions Draft Preferred Option (WMRA 2008:8).

The understandings and actions of Councillor five at the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

Representing Stratford at the region and constituents through Stratford

The questions around role identification showed clearly that councillor five was very much Stratford's man at the region 'making the most of any opportunities that' came the way of Warwickshire and Stratford.

> "Well its representation again really and making the most of any opportunities that may come the way of Warwickshire or Stratford. On

the basis of whom I was there for, I'm the district not the county nominee but on the whole there were ten votes from Warwickshire so there is that voice too. It's mainly about reflecting the interests of your area."

Councillor five identified strongly with his appointing institution and stressed the need to 'reflect' their interests at the Assembly. Another aspect he constructed his representative identity around was Warwickshire and other rural areas. This was driven by the idea that what would benefit these areas would also benefit Stratford. Councillor five highlighted that the Regional Assembly role gave him a 'platform to represent your local interest'. In terms of his construction of his role his local interest was drawn on the basis of geography and the need to endorse the 'collective view at times'.

> "In a body like that you are there for two reasons. The fact that your structure means that all areas are equally represented means that you do have a platform to represent your local interest, but clearly you represent a coherent area within the map of the country and therefore you have endorse that collective view at times. So there is a dual role there."

With the assembly role being appointed as opposed to elected it was important to explore where his local constituents fitted in to how he conceived his assembly role. Councillor five took a trustee view of his regional assembly role in relation to his constituents. He specified that it was the council that he was representing but stressed that it would all feed through for the benefit of his constituents. This

mediation of representative responsibility for his constituents through his council role was again derived from the need to 'take the collective' view.

> "Really it's the council I'm representing, they fight for the area and between us we act in the best interests of our constituents. It all feeds through, Ill have constituency issues that I'll take to full council but when taking things further you have to take the collective view."

A well briefed delegate or a trustee

The question of what it meant to 'reflect' offered the opportunity to understand whether councillor five was adopting a delegate or trustee role at the assembly and also the methods by which he could achieve his aims. From his interview it was clear that information proved crucial in how councillor five chose to enact his representative role at the Assembly. This was clear when he described the need to 'make sure' that the LGA secretariat were sufficiently briefed on the policy position of his appointing institution. This need to deliver information fitted strongly within a delegate conception of his role, however whenever the information wasn't there or indeed the decision had not yet been made councillor five reverted to a trustee conception of his role via being 'trusted to act in the best interests of the council'. This adoption of either a delegate or trustee was based upon his capacity to deliver the defined position of Stratford-on-Avon District Council. His capability to enact these roles was based simply upon whether a clear decision and position had been defined or adopted or a policy briefing conducted.

> "A bit of both, you need to deliver information so sometimes there will have been a decision at the council which you can present. But when voting or when answering a question at the assembly there isn't exactly

time to make a few calls to find a position. I'm trusted to be there to act
in the best interests of the council."

Otherwise councillor five would enact a trustee role retrospectively drawing upon his best knowledge of either how things had occurred in the past or using his own conviction in putting forward his case in the best interests of Stratford.

Role expectations and visibility

With regards to the eco-town there was a distinct change in how councillor five enacted his representative role when the policy arose. The increased visibility of his assembly role amongst his colleagues at Stratford meant his role came under greater scrutiny. Councillor five's choices over how he chose to enact his role were significantly influenced by the increased interactions with and expectations of his colleagues. The increased visibility of his role at the assembly resulting from the eco-town proposal delivered an environment within which councillor five was more constrained. His trustee role was under a greater scrutiny forcing him to adopt a more straight information role as a delegate to deliver the views of his colleagues.

> "Oh no, couldn't afford the latter, no, I was their man there. And as I say
> so with the eco-town business, they knew very well, well they didn't
> have first hand knowledge but they believed me that I was speaking in
> the terms that they would expect us to speak."

The need to visibly represent his colleagues in a kind of gesture politics was not needed as councillor five adopted the tactic of dealing with the officer staff to insert Stratford's concerns about the eco-town into the regional consultation response. The eco-towns consultation shone a light upon councillor five's role at the Regional

Assembly and the conceptions of his colleagues over how he should conduct his role, changed councillor five's own conception of how to enact his role.

> "On the eco-town my role became a lot clearer to my colleagues at Stratford, I don't think they really appreciated it until then, they saw the opportunity to spoon feed information to the region and I think made sure I was doing that. Before that I had a bit more flexibility to act as I saw fit. The increased visibility made in more a case of singing from a hymn sheet and to be honest that hymn sheet approach was what was needed."

The movement from one of trusteeship and flexibility was supplanted by the need to be 'singing from a hymn sheet' and spoon feeding of information to the assembly as a delegate. This change seen as 'what was needed' by councillor five reveals a strong indictment of the inherent flexibility of how individuals make sense of their roles and how this informs the subsequent choice and enactment of different roles.

The Regional Assembly: A well briefed institution

Councillor five was sure of the importance of his role in informing the Regional Assembly by giving them 'first hand knowledge of local issues that could easily have been overlooked'. During Councillor five's time within the assembly he 'learned what worked' which allowed him to advance the aims of his appointing institution. The first example of this is derived from his appreciation of the secretariat of the assembly as of key importance. His ability to manage relationships and stay in contact with the officer team allowed him to keep on top of what was going on, so as to be able to ask the right questions of colleagues at Stratford. Councillor five also managed to use this avenue to input extensively into the early stages of the eco-

towns consultation response at the region on the basis of the expertise he had gained from both his council roles. By doing this councillor five managed to sidestep the particular need to use the full assembly meeting as a soundboard for the district council. The second aspect where councillor five adopted a particular approach to advance the interests of his appointing institution was through being consistent in his representation of Stratford-on-Avon District Council. He did this through maintaining his position and having a good level of attendance of the assembly. In this regard councillor five managed to build from a platform of the 'politics of presence'. This enabled him to be in a position where he would be informed of the actions of the officer staff and consistently consulted and briefed throughout the development of the regions response to the governments Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation.

Conclusion

This chapter revealed the clear flexibility within the enactment of councillor five's representative role. In studying how councillor five understood his context and its limits on his capacity and capability to enact particular roles the data showed that councillor five's adoption of roles was contingent on his appraisal and understanding of his political context.

The use of Weick's concept of sensemaking (1995) directed the interview questions towards opening up how councillor five appraised and understood his situation. This approach clearly depicted a two stage process as councillors. Councillor five 'made sense' of his context through an appraisal of his identity in each particular role and

assessed the constraints or enabling elements within his environment (structural and capacity limitations) against past experience. Taking this information to inform his assessment of the capabilities of his role and the perceived optimum outcome for his chosen object of representation councillor five would then adopt and enact a particular representative role. This role would be chosen in order to give the greatest opportunity to achieve the perceived aims of the council or issue he chose to represent.

Understanding and Enacting Roles

The whole process is diagrammatically depicted below (figure: 22).

Figure 22 Model for understanding the appraisal and enactment of roles
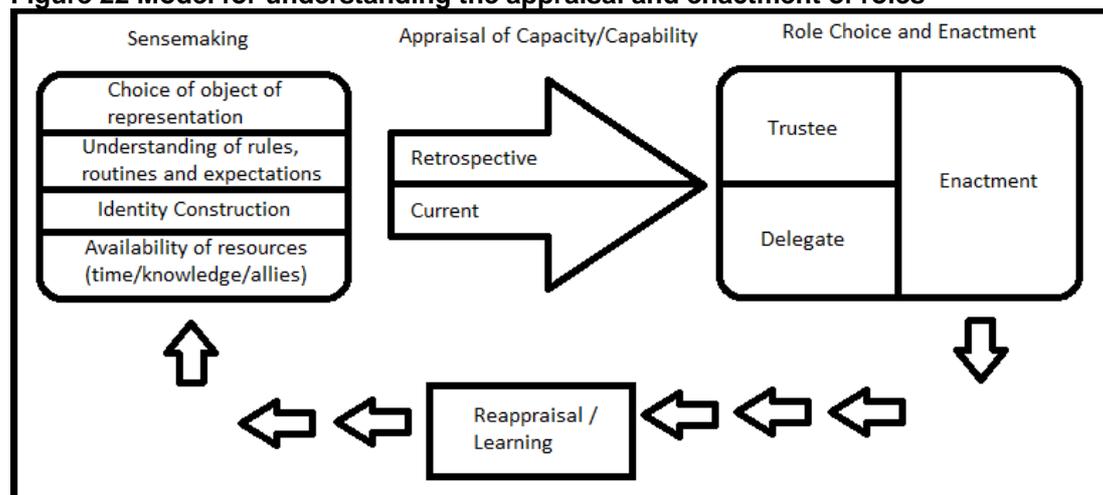
The adoption of a sensemaking process reveals that there is a great deal more to appreciate beyond the simple labelling of councillors as delegates, trustees or politicos. Councillor five's different positions and strategies at each of the different levels responding to the Eco-towns: Living a greener future consultation is brilliantly illustrative of the dynamism of both the individual and the methods he employs to achieve particular goals.

Changing course and focus at Stratford

In relation to Stratford-on-Avon's response to the consultation, councillor five described his understanding of Stratford as 'parochial' and 'protective of its interests'. This construction of a collective council identity formed the basis of his understanding of the position at the council and informed his strong choice of the council interest as his object of representation. However his appreciation of the resources available to him in terms of knowledge and oversight, drawn retrospectively from his assembly role allowed him to achieve a particular aim (to deliver a coherent, informed and directed response to the eco-town consultation) and subvert some of the knee jerk responses of colleagues. Councillor five's understanding of the nature and direction of the special council meeting and knowledge of the routine of meetings (i.e. the chair would call for oversight) allowed him to wait for his chance and ultimately change the structure and nature of elements of the council's response to the consultation. Although positioning himself as 'a bit out on a limb', councillor five managed to mediate the concerns of colleagues and lead the response in a direction focusing on elements regarding the inappropriateness of the proposals within the local context. The platform afforded to him by the Chair of the meeting allowed him to legitimately shape the response and prompt recollections of past successes amongst his colleagues to engender support for the changes. This retrospective aspect in both how councillor five made sense of the situation and framed of the sensemaking of his colleagues via calling to mind past successes highlights the extent to which decisions are informed by past experiences.

The overall ability of Councillor five to understand the atmosphere at the District Council and within meetings and tailor his approach accordingly reveals the reflexivity of individuals in the enactment of different representative roles. Ultimately using the knowledge and oversight gained from his other roles, councillor five managed to subvert a strongly parochial audience and enact a trustee role based upon his additional knowledge of the policy context and judgment regarding the best opportunity to amend the direction of the response at the special meeting.

Leading at Warwickshire

Whereas Councillor Five had sat back at Stratford before interjecting to change the nature and tone of their response, at Warwickshire councillor five managed to lead the response from the start. This commenced with how he constructed his identity as a Warwickshire County Councillor. His conception of his role was derived from his consideration that the role of the council was as a large organisation with a particular role to 'join up' and service the needs of each ward. Identifying his ward as his 'primary responsibility', councillor five expressed a strong rooting in representing the interests of his constituents. However he also appreciated his responsibility to 'the council as a whole'. This was an element he described as 'thinking for the county' but 'pushing hard' for his ward.

Councillor five's appreciation of the perception of his colleagues of his capability to lead the response meant he could shape the response to focus on issues of infrastructure and transport. This approach was drawn from councillor five's

understanding of the eco-town proposals and the government's particular focus on sustainability, as well as a deep understanding of the localised focus of Stratford-on-Avon District Councils response. The appreciation from peers of the value councillor five could add to the response afforded him the opportunity to lead. This opportunity he took up, as he instigated meetings with the joint officer and joint working group. Councillor five's knowledge of both the Warwickshire structure plan and elements of the Regional Spatial Strategy meant he could draw upon cues which showed that the proposals did not fit within the current planning frameworks. Councillor five's decision to appraise the transport assessment conducted on the eco-town site at Long Marston allowed him to depict the government as out of touch. In this way he played into the anti government sentiment he already knew existed amongst his county council colleagues. The tactic of priming colleagues by verbally briefing them on the historic planning context also helped him gain further support to lead the response.

Overall at Warwickshire councillor five managed to use his knowledge, position and colleagues perceptions of his capability to lead the response. His belief in his role being to address issues of 'joining up' meant that the whole approach adopted at Warwickshire focused on issues of infrastructure complementing the geographic focus of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Affirming and informing at the Regional Assembly

Whilst at the Regional Assembly councillor five constructed his identity around the need to 'reflect' the interests of his appointing institution and more broadly the

collective view of Warwickshire. Councillor five mediated the concerns of his constituents through his council role.

Councillor five's ability to enact either delegate or trustee roles at the Assembly was informed by his ability to source the relevant position of Stratford-on-Avon District Council or its members. On such an emotive issue councillor five felt he needed to 'make sure' that the LGA secretariat were sufficiently briefed on the policy position of his appointing institution thus enacting a delegate role strongly fitting with his identity as someone to 'reflect' the district council interest. However where he did not have an appropriate response to feed into the regional consultation he had to draw upon his judgement about how the goals of the district could best be achieved and enacted a trustee role.

However the adoption of a delegate role was contingent on the sudden increased visibility of his role amongst his colleagues arising from their emotive feelings and associated with Stratford-on-Avon District Council's objection to the eco-town proposals. This visibility meant his role was under greater scrutiny and he received an increased number of colleagues wishing to make their representative mark on the regional response through him. This increased interaction with his colleagues at Stratford gave him additional information and cues on which to draw when interacting with the policy consultation process at the regional level. This notional movement, from one of trusteeship and role flexibility to a delegated information delivery role, shows the immense influence that context can have on limiting how

individuals can legitimately enact different representative roles and the need for flexibility.

Councillor five's knowledge of the Regional Assembly as an institution and how it works derived from his experience over time allowed him to learn 'what worked' and thus be able to use the best methods to advance the interests of Stratford-on-Avon District Council (his appointing authority). By knowing the relevant officer staff councillor five managed to inform the development of the consultation response, without having to act in an excessively parochial manner at the general assembly meeting. His visibility at the assembly and relationships with the senior officer team which he had cultivated over time allowed him the opportunity to be at the forefront of the development of the Regional Assembly consultation response and ultimately have a significant impact on its content. This involvement allowed the Regional Assembly response to be informed by and supplemented by the responses already developed by both Stratford-on-Avon District and Warwickshire County councils.

Sensemaking and enactment

The case study of each individual institution served to reveal the adaptive nature of councillor five when confronted with different challenges. The ways in which councillor five 'made sense' of each environment, role and potential capability informed how he chose to enact either a delegate or trustee role in order to advance the strategic interests of the object or organisation he chose to represent. Figure 23 illustrates the actions of councillor five at each institution and posits the logics of his action.

Figure 23 Mapping the logics of representative action

Role	Object of representation	Location	Role choice enabled by
Trustee	Constituents	Warwickshire CC Stratford-on-Avon DC	Election, literature and party platform.
Trustee	Council Interest	Stratford / Warwickshire	Knowledge of broader context (via other roles)
Delegate	Stratfords written response and councillor opinions on Eco town issue	Regional Assembly	Consultation with colleagues and council decisions

The analysis of each consultation response allowed an appreciation of the context of councillor five's sensemaking and informed the interview questions and process which enabled the analysis to reveal the reflexivity in his role choices based on context.

Summary

In seeing the reflexivity within the adoption and enactment of roles by councillor five it became clear that delegate and trustee roles were not predefined but emergent. Within the case of the Regional Assembly, this was particularly clear. The original lack of visibility of councillor five's regional assembly role was based upon his colleagues' lack of appreciation of his regional role as opposed to a lack of formal reporting structures. This meant the adoption of a trustee role was simple. Previous analysis has hinted that due to a lack of elective procedures and visibility the regional assembly role is usually enacted on the basis of a council trustee. However the sudden visibility of the role shows one cannot rule out delegate conceptions in this instance. Roles emerge and are performed by councillors appreciating and adapting to context. Whilst it is difficult to assert what the end goals of councillor five were beyond wanting to stop the eco-town, the interview process managed to surface some of the objectives and motivations for action of councillor five when

operating in different institutional settings. These objectives and motivations appraised alongside how he made sense of his situation show that there is a clear juncture where councillors make sense of their role and then enact it. The adoption of a sensemaking approach shows simply that there is intrinsically more to representation than simply labelling an individual as a trustee or a delegate. Only through understanding the numerous aspects in the construction of identity, the perception of limitations and capabilities and the strategic assessment of opportunity costs and long term actions, do individuals move on to enact particular roles in order to achieve aims.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This final chapter is divided into three parts. The first provides a summary of the thesis re-stating the key points made in each chapter. The second identifies the contributions of the thesis. The section is organised around the four research questions identified at the end of chapter one and summarises the central arguments of the thesis in light of the research findings. The third section considers future research avenues in response to the thesis. The section examines a number of aspects of the research that could be improved upon and the areas that could be developed in further research projects. An additional section offering some reflections on the PhD process and outlining the researcher's personal development can be found as appendix 2.

Thesis Summary

The introduction established the context for the research. The start of the chapter concentrated upon the re-emergence of regional institutions in the UK as an example of the shift towards governance and a wider pattern of growth in quasi autonomous non governmental institutions (Quangos). This re-emergence led to the definition of regional governance in Britain as a 'contested policy space'. The chapter continued to appraise the growth of non governmental regional bodies within the 'congested state' (Skelcher 2000) and in particular their growth under the New Labour Government. The substantive component of the chapter addressed the concerns about the character and democratic implications of 'quasi-governance' and drew particular attention to the questions about accountability and representation

which lie at the heart of academic criticism of Quangos. The introduction highlighted the critical issue emerging from the literature, the juxtaposition between the prevalence and significance of quangos and their position largely outside political activity. This was contrasted with the systems of representative democracy in Britain which offer a clear chain of accountability for elected governments. The chapter reviewed literature on quangos and appointed governance to demonstrate how the growth of quangos has had significant implications for democracy with regards to the nature, mechanisms and transparency of the process of appointment of members.

The next section of the chapter introduced and explained the logic for the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) as the location for the research. The WMRA was chosen as it is an organisation which is based on an indirect model bringing together quasi autonomous governance, with features of representative democracy. In this way it was germane to compare the WMRA with joint boards and committees in post abolition metropolitan government another example of a governance body built upon an indirect model of quasi governance and representative democracy. In discussing the choice of the WMRA as the location for the research the analysis explored the rationale for the creation of Regional Assemblies. The rationale emphasised their function in addressing the accountability gap posed by Regional Development Agencies but introducing a representative element to the institutions of regional governance. The use of a system of indirect appointment within the formal construction of WMRA was outlined as an attempt to inject more accountability through the introduction of a representative element into its

membership composition. The implication of this was that the representative function of members becomes significantly important, as it is the mechanism through which accountability may or may not be delivered. It is this representative function therefore that provided the core conceptual basis of the thesis.

The final part of the introduction defined the research problem of representation in the appointed state. This highlighted that whilst a great deal of research has been done looking at the concept of representation (Pitkin 1967; Judge 1999; Mansbridge 2003; Rehfeld 2005) there has been less consideration of the concept of appointed representation highlighting a relevant gap in the literature. The introduction concludes with a brief explanation of the four research questions breaking down the thesis into succinct components for interrogation. The first research question explored an empirical concern investigating the question of whether councillors fulfil their representative role differently depending on the method of selection, appointment or election to the body in question. The second question explored a more conceptual element asking whether traditional conceptions of the concept of representation drawn from the work of Pitkin (1967) are applicable to the conceptions of representation of those operating in indirectly elected bodies. The third research question explores the ideas of structure and agency through an empirical appraisal of the structural factors, motivations and role choices which inform the decision-making of members of indirectly elected bodies when choosing which representative role to enact. The final research question relates to methodology and is built upon the first three in seeking to find an appropriate

method and research design with which to explore the concept of appointed representation.

The central argument of the thesis has been that in the context of existing literature on representation there is a need to reposition analysis to consider representation as a more dynamic and embedded concept. The thesis explored the normative concerns about the democratic implications of quasi governance and revealed a clear lack of structured reporting and briefing procedures at the Regional Assembly. The argument stresses that it is too simple to define representatives as simply delegates and trustees and highlights the inherent capacity and capability of individuals to be aware of and adaptive to their information, motivation and circumstances. The data revealing the flexibility of assembly members in the roles they chose to enact delivers a strong illustration of the critical weaknesses in both Pitkin's framework and the range of typologies dominating the literature on representative role. The analysis underscores the failure of such approaches to capture the entrepreneurial aspects of representation and address the question of why representatives choose to adopt particular role orientations. The final part of the thesis applied theories of 'organisational sensemaking' (Weick 1995) as a conceptual tool to deconstruct the concept of representation to explore the relative effect of structural factors and individual motivations and strategy on the choice and enactment of different representative roles. The next section will introduce each chapter in turn and briefly discuss them in terms of their content, findings and implications for both the thesis and further research.

Chapter Two comprised a focused review of the political theory literature on the concept of representation. It commenced by exploring the basis of systems of representation and assessed the seminal work of Pitkin (1967) in defining different types of representation and the crucial dichotomy within conceptions of substantive representation between delegates and trustees. The analysis highlighted the benefits of Pitkin's framework in terms of gaining a broad capture of the different elements relating to appointed representation in order to address RQ1. The chapter ended with a critique of Pitkin's Four Views of Representation in terms of its static nature which neglects representative agency and entrepreneurship along with its inability to address the relationships between different elements of the framework. The literature review highlighted a number of elements which informed later chapters; firstly the importance of context cannot be understated. Secondly representation is moulded by constitutional design and role choices are structured by institutional rules and inducements. In this way the analysis would require a joint appraisal and assessment of each of these aspects in order to open up the black box of appointed representation. Another significant element emerging from the literature was the dominance of linear scales of elements of representation e.g. delegates to trustees, localists to regionalists and generalists to specialists. It is clear however that such linear scales fail to capture the complexity and non static nature of the choice and enactment of representative roles.

Chapter Three focused on the attempts made by theorists to categories the behaviour of representatives through analyses of the practical enactment of representative roles and the development of typologies and categories of

representative behaviour. By appraising the work of theorists who sought to break down the enactment of representation the analysis surfaced the notions of representative role, scope and style the literature review surfaced the dominant empirical questions forming the building blocks for interrogating the concept of representation. The literature review offered two summary tables (Tables 9 and 10) which systematically bring together the numerous typologies developed from study of the representative role in Local Government both pre and in the advent of the Local Government Act 2000. The concluding part of the chapter returned the analysis to consideration of the Regional Assembly and the question of the representative role in the appointed state. The analysis showed a research gap in the literature relating to the concept of appointed representation. The last research on the concept that of Leach, Davis, Game and Skelcher (1991) focused on the abolition of metropolitan county councils and the introduction of indirectly elected upper tiers of local government. The research crucially recommended a standard through which the democratic accountability of the model of indirect election could be measured (1991:163-164). The five criteria identified stressed the need for pre-meeting briefings, a forum to ensure appointed members were aware of the chosen stance of their local authority, instruction on voting requirements and the requirement for a structured method to ensure reporting back to and discussion at committee or full council. It is this standard which helped form the basis of questioning within the scoping interview related to the formalistic accountability element of the representative role framework.

Finally the chapter delivered the conceptual framework adapted from Pitkin (1967) which formed the basis to analyse interview data from assembly members in terms their enactment of different types of representation. The framework itself utilised formalistic definitions of representation (authorisation and accountability) to address the normative democratic questions posed about the difference between elected and appointed representative roles. The other essential element of the framework relates to substantive representation which would be appraised through an assessment of the relationship between the assembly member and the constituency they represent. It is on this element that questions of representative role, scope and style could unlock the action of representation. The literature review delivered potential sources of representative role orientations with two elements dominating. These were orientations derived either from a perception of mandate and those drawn from functional aspects of the role.

Chapter Four was the first empirical analysis chapter. It utilised the representative role system framework developed in Chapter Three to explore how assembly members fulfil their representative role when operating in the West Midlands Regional Assembly and therefore addressed RQ1. The deductive framework analysis approach mapped the statements of eight interviewees onto the formalistic definitions of representation namely authorisation and accountability. Then, how representatives act in terms of whether the act as delegates or trustees was considered. The interviews showed that the majority of assembly members viewed their mandate as derived from their appointing institution but failed to fulfil the accountability component of their representative role. As such seven out of the eight

assembly members interviewed adopted a trustee conception of their role. This flexibility in the interpretation of their representative roles allowed assembly members to draw upon different mandates based upon different geographies, their functional specialism or their party group memberships. The analysis stressed the need to explore the factors which informed the decisions they made about how they substantively conducted their role. The chapter concluded with the suggestion of five new role orientations and a typology of indirectly elected representatives. The new role orientations incorporated entrepreneurial representatives, scrutineer representatives, strategist representatives, regional players and institutional delegates.

Chapter Five analysed the findings and research methodology used to address RQ1. The analysis assessed the extent to which Pitkin's (1967) framework of representation could be applied to indirectly elected bodies and therefore addressed RQ2. The chapter assessed the strengths and limitations of the framework in terms of its explanatory power. The analysis stressed two main points: firstly the need to adopt a more inductive and subjective approach to analyse the interview data; and secondly the need to explore the intrinsic and extrinsic factors which influence the role choices of members of the West Midlands Regional Assembly. This therefore surfaced the motivations and reasons for the enactment of different role choices (RQ3).

The final element of the chapter suggested alternative approaches to data analysis which could deliver a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing the role

choices and enactment of representation by Regional Assembly members. The dismantling and reconstruction of the concept of appointed representation was introduced as the means to access the multi faceted nature of substantive representation. This also explored the relative effects of circumstance and strategy upon the representative actions of Regional Assembly members. The chapter concluded with a research design (Table 16) with which to advance empirical investigation. This design would also generate new knowledge of the concept of appointed representation (RQ4) through an appraisal of Weick's (1995) concept of sensemaking and an appreciation of institutional context in explaining sensemaking choices.

Chapter Six investigated the contextual, structural and power factors that affect the substantive action of representation and the ability of assembly members to make choices about who and how they represent. In order to do this, the chapter returned to and added supplemental interviews to the initial eight and conducted a new analysis of the interview data utilising a grounded theory approach. The approach drew out themes which have an influence on the role choices of the individuals. Several themes emerged from the data, which revealed further tensions and representative issues within the roles of assembly members. The selection of themes grouped into two distinct categories, those relating to resources and those relating to more procedural aspects. These elements both affected the ability of members to act in terms of restricting their options or hindering their ability to perform the representative and non representative functions of their role on a day to day basis. Fundamental tensions relating to the ability of appointed assembly members

mapped on to many of the common tensions for elected councillors for example the calibre of peers, the speed of business and the ever increasing workload. All these elements had an effect on the ability of assembly members to fulfil their democratic function. Other sources of tension were specific to the Regional Assembly role with members critiquing the institutional resources available to them and the mismatch in the volume, quality and presence of briefings. This particular finding is pertinent when questioning the prospects for assembly members to fulfil their democratic representative function.

The second half of the analysis within the chapter then moved on from thematic cross member explorations of resource and procedural tensions by instead looking to the individual. Whilst the factors identified in the first half of the chapter clearly influenced role choices, they were not definitive but were additional factors which were in turn mediated and negotiated with the views, bias, opinions and political leanings of the individual. The analysis of an individual councillor (C1) revealed the range of positions he took and how these were informed by a coherence or consistency, with their overarching beliefs ideals and normative judgements about how he should do his job. This advanced the analysis of Chapter Four and illuminated the reasons why councillors adopted trustee roles via considerations of agency and role choice. It revealed clear instances where assembly members would deviate from their authority or party mandate for long term strategic gain. The chapter showed that in terms of role choices and influences, the assembly members saw their mandates as loosely defined and thus they were broadly interpreted. Exploring the grounding of assembly members actions in their beliefs and intentions exposed how

despite seemingly being in constant flux, the representative actions of assembly members were rooted in numerous beliefs, norms and values about the their role and its responsibilities.

Chapter 7 is the keystone which brings together all the previous chapters. Before addressing the findings from this chapter directly the next section will explain the reasoning behind the unusual structure of this thesis. The structure of the thesis is due to the need to explore the component parts of appointed representation in turn before rebuilding the concept. This structure also facilitates the capacity of the analysis to address a number of different empirical, theoretical and methodological questions. The separation of the two main theoretical parts allows the thesis to speak to two literatures. Firstly the first chapters and scoping interviews address the local government literature and are a normative empirical study of the concept of appointed representation. The analysis here explores questions over the legitimacy of the Regional Assembly being considered a democratic institution on the basis of its representative function. The analysis then delivers a new typology of role orientations within appointed bodies which supplement those identified in chapter 3.

The interview schedules used to interrogate the representation of assembly members were deliberately open and designed to maximise qualitative data. As identified in earlier chapters appointed representation is a novel context for exploration therefore there was a need to surface the potential influences, motivations and choices of appointed members. The deductive approach used to address research question one by mapping the statements of assembly members

onto the representative role framework was successful. However it failed to address the question of why assembly members chose to act in particular ways. Therefore the analysis for chapter 6 conducted an inductive interrogation of the data looking beyond the framework for tensions and issues on assembly members. In this way the two distinct chapters capture two of the facets of appointed representation. Chapter 4, the exploratory study of the representative role framework showed the majority of assembly members act as trustees, see their mandate as derived from their institution and that structures for both reporting and briefing are poor. Chapter 6 firstly showed the influence of structures (issues, tensions and roles) on the adoption of different representative roles and secondly illustrated the effect of role choices, motivations and individual agency. The change in direction for the thesis is outlined in chapter 5 which ends with a full research plan explaining the overall approach of the thesis (Table 16). Most pertinently it shows how and where each research question is addressed. The final chapter aimed to bring together the findings about the individual (chapter 4) and the findings about structural factors and role motivations and choices (chapter 6). The final component of the concept of appointed representation is the institutional context. It is within chapter 7 that the case study seeks to insert an individual into a number of institutional contexts to explore the relative influence of the previously identified factors.

Chapter 7 is a case study of the actions of one councillors (C5) representation of three institutions on a particular policy issue. The chapter translated the findings and implications of the earlier analysis into a more grounded and situated account of the enactment of representation within a particular time, situation and context. The

chapter built on the preceding chapters and fully introduces the concept of sensemaking (Weick 2001:2). This showed that sensemaking is appropriate to address the reflexivity of actors with regards to understanding and adapting to different policy contexts. The chapter provided an appraisal of the policy trajectory of the Government's proposals for an eco-town at Long Marston from 2007-2010. In its second half, the chapter provided documentary and archival analysis of how each of the three policy actors (Warwickshire County Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and the West Midlands Regional Assembly) fed into the government consultation on eco-towns. It then explored how where and why councillor Five directed, changed and fed into those interactions. The analysis used a sensemaking approach to explore the substantive actions and interactions of Councillor Five as he inputted into the eco-towns consultation. The approach analysed how he interpreted and understood the developing policy context and altered how he chose and enacted his representative role. Thus the analysis brought together the beliefs, motivations and tensions informing his actions.

The Contributions of the Thesis

Chapter One identified four research questions which will be addressed in turn.

RQ1. **How do councillors fulfil their representative role when operating in institutions to which they are appointed as opposed to elected?**

Normative judgement posits that if the democratic implications of non-directly elected bodies are to be addressed, then the representative role needs to be acted more actively, explicitly and responsibly in order to answer accountability concerns.

The approach to RQ1 considered two elements, those relating to the formalistic view of representation and those relating to substantive representation. Formalistic elements were considered first. A two step process of interviewing showed that those assembly members interviewed had a clear conception of their representative mandate suggesting a constituency or institutional mandate (in line with their legislative basis for participation). This formed the basis of questioning about the accountability view. The interviews showed that the representative functions were being poorly fulfilled in terms of both 'giving account' (being briefed) and being 'held to account' (reporting back to constituency). The system of appointment was a weak method of control and purely a matter of procedure as opposed to a significant aspect which could possibly place expectations upon the representative. Within this model of representation, responsiveness was left to those who felt like it, as participation was decoupled from responsiveness. This shows the devalued role of the representative. The need is exposed for representative roles to be lived more explicitly in organisations such as WMRA if they are to become more accountable and democratic. The lack of organisational structures and rules for accountability and answerability posited the need to consider non traditional methods of assuring accountability. Without clear intentions for accountability or a strong responsibility to those which grant them the mandate, the assembly members were in many cases acting as if on a party mandate or solely on the basis of their expertise. This puts into doubt whether they can be legitimately referred to as 'representatives'.

The responses on the authorisation and accountability views of representation show that on balance assembly members assert an independence from their appointed

mandate and thus act as trustees. The formalistic views of representation failed to give further insight into the substantive activity of representation. All respondents confirmed they acted differently when operating at the Regional Assembly in comparison with their local authority roles. Reasons cited for this were being out of media scrutiny, away from party political pressures and being part of a larger unit. This institutional void allows some of them to adopt and enact different roles performing representation through scrutiny or adopting a wider perspective and thus a strategic regional orientation above both locality and party. Five potential role types emerged from the interview data, entrepreneurial representatives, scrutineer representatives, strategist representatives, regional players and institutional delegates.

The contribution of RQ1 is to normative debates about appointed representation and the implications of it for democracy. It was clear from the analysis that the appointed mandate created a representational ambiguity whereby members could exhibit a strong level of freedom from their mandate. The system of appointment also introduces a certain level of uncertainty regarding mandates and accountability causing some members to adopt new roles as trustees. There is a strong normative implication with regards to the need for greater structures for accountability and briefing.

RQ2: **To what extent can Pitkin's framework of representation be applied to indirectly elected bodies?**

The representative role system framework and a deductive method were utilised as the means to analyse the data from the scoping interviews. The framework proved useful in answering questions of how councillors fulfil their role but was unable to elucidate why they chose to adopt different roles. The holistic nature of the framework allowed the analysis to capture the multiple facets of the concept of appointed representation and thus explore the implications of systems of appointment for democracy. The limit of the framework came through its inability to capture why appointed members chose to adopt different role orientations. The static character of the framework and the deductive approach to analysis ignored the potential entrepreneurial aspects of representation (Brennan and Hamlin 1999) and the structural factors which inform role choices.

Therefore the analytical approach could not address whether assembly members adopt an orientation as a regional trustee due to structural factors or make a strategic choice to do so. This gave rise to the need for the next stage of analysis to explore the cues and prompts for the enactment of particular role orientations through a greater appreciation of both context and time. This prompted research questions three and four.

RQ3: **What are the structural factors and role choices which inform councillors' decision-making when choosing which representative role to enact in indirectly elected bodies?**

The failure of the representative role system framework to address the potential flexibility in the role choices of members called for a more inductive approach to

data analysis. Therefore a grounded theory analysis of the eight scoping interviews revealed a number of structural influences which inform councillors' decision making at the West Midlands Regional Assembly. The chapter presented a rich empirical analysis of the resource and procedural tensions which put pressure on the capability of assembly members to adopt different representative roles. The interviews highlighted how the increasing workloads of councillors in the era of governance cause a tension between the need to act as democratic representatives and the capability in terms of time to fulfil that function. This tension contributes to councillor's inability to adopt a delegate position in these circumstances and instead requires a councillor to act as an autonomous trustee and make quick decisions, dealing with consequences at a later date.

The institution's financial, statutory and officer support capacity also limited the ability of members of participate at the Regional Assembly. The variable resources and capabilities available also gave some members an opportunity to adopt boundary spanning roles to in order to circumvent some resource tensions. Many of those interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with resource provision and exhibited animosity towards the casual or disengaged actions of their peers.

Procedural aspects within the day-to-day work of the Regional Assembly emerged as limitations to its members' work. The ability, motivation and regularity of members reporting to their appointing authorities varied significantly across those interviewed. This created a tension with regard to their democratic representative remit. Normative judgements about the procedures of and functional roles at the

assembly revealed contrasting dynamics between arguments for and against specialists and debates of calibre and seniority. These issues were also germane due the impending move from the assembly to a Regional Forum of Leaders and so these issues and opinions were at the forefront of the minds of interviewees. The resource theme surfaced the tangible (access to finance and other resources) and intangible (time, role expectations) aspects which define and impose restrictions on the capacity of assembly members to adopt different roles.

The analysis of role choices and agency focused on one interview transcript with a senior Conservative member. The broad picture of interactions on the part of the councillor was that he was very much a strategic player, using a long term approach of information sharing to gain benefit for his primary concern his local authority. In the pursuit of this, he admitted that concessions had to be made and for some of his colleagues this was seen as too much. He is very much engaged at the regional level and this is due to a distinct need coupled with a rational choice for long-term benefit. Councillor one cultivated a role as a regional player which enabled access to a number of different resources. This was a conscious choice and shows that it is crucial to consider context and strategy and representation is embedded in these concepts and is not simply an A to B transfer relationship. The final research question of the thesis was addressed through the case study exploring the actions and motivations of councillor five within three institutions in the context of the government's proposals for an Eco-town.

RQ4: How can research design and methods be developed to advance empirical investigation and generate new knowledge of the concept of appointed representation?

The inability of Pitkin's framework of representation to capture the dynamic and embedded nature of representation highlighted the need for an alternate approach to explore the concept of representation. Hanna Pitkin compared the concept of representation to 'a rather complicated, convoluted, three-dimensional structure in the middle of a dark enclosure' where 'political theorists give us, as it were, flash bulb photographs of the structure taken from different angles' (Pitkin 1967:10)

This statement formed the inspiration for the approach taken to dismantle and reconstruct the concept of representation. In switching the epistemology to a more interpretative method the analysis managed to capture the structural factors and role motivations and choices acting as barriers and facilitators to different role choices. In order to access the relative strength of these factors they were brought into the sensemaking analysis alongside a heightened appreciation of institutional context and the importance of the individual. Weick's (1995) concept of sensemaking drawn from the discipline of organisational studies was used as a framework with which to explore how assembly members made sense of and enacted different roles depending on their perceptions of their context, capabilities, past experiences and view of potential success. The knowledge of context, derived from extensive documentary and archival research allowed the analysis to explore how the macro institutional context affect the micro sensemaking processes of councillor five. An appreciation of the seven characteristics of sensemaking formed

a strong basis with which to interrogate the data. The analytical process surfaced how contextual factors such as norms and expectations of behaviour framed the adoption of different roles.

The Regional Assembly as a relatively new institution offered a brilliant canvas on which to explore the reflexivity in the role choices of assembly members with regards to understanding and adapting to different policy contexts. The overall analysis permitted an appraisal of the difference between and within individuals' interpretations of representation. This was achieved by exploring the micro-level enactment of reality of situated actors (assembly members) making sense of representation and their conception of it within a particular context. The dismantling and reconstruction of the concept of representation through the operationalisation of the concept of sensemaking (Weick 1995) thus addresses Saward's call to explore the 'constituted, constitutive and dynamic character of representation' (2010:10).

The sensemaking analysis demonstrated the adaptive nature of councillors when confronted with different challenges. The way in which the interviewee 'made sense' of each environment, role and potential capability informed how he to enact his representative role either a delegate or a trustee role in order to advance the strategic interests of the object of representation he chose to represent. This analysis allowed his logics to be mapped onto his actions (see figure 24, a reproduction of figure 23 from the previous chapter).

**Figure 24 Mapping the logics of representative action (reproduction figure 23)**

Role	Object of representation	Location	Role choice enabled by
Trustee	Constituents	Warwickshire CC Stratford-on-Avon DC	Election, literature and party platform.
Trustee	Council Interest	Stratford / Warwickshire	Knowledge of broader context (via other roles)
Delegate	Stratfords written response and councillor opinions on Eco town issue	Regional Assembly	Consultation with colleagues and council decisions

The sensemaking approach was successful in surfacing the reflexivity within the adoption and enactment of roles. It showed that that delegate and trustee roles were not predefined but emergent. To cite an example, within the case of the Regional Assembly, this was particularly clear. The original lack of visibility of councillor five's regional assembly role was based upon his colleagues' lack of appreciation of his regional role as opposed to a lack of formal reporting structures. This meant the adoption of a trustee role was simple. Previous analysis had hinted that due to a lack of elective procedures and visibility the regional assembly role is usually enacted on the basis of a council trustee. However the sudden visibility of the role shows one cannot rule out delegate conceptions in this instance.

The adoption of a sensemaking approach shows simply that there is intrinsically more to representation than simply labelling an individual as a trustee or a delegate. Only through understanding the numerous aspects in the construction of identity, the perception of limitations and capabilities, and the strategic assessment of opportunity costs and long term actions, do individuals move on to enact particular

roles in order to achieve aims. The whole process is diagrammatically depicted below

(figure 25).

Figure 25 Model for understanding the appraisal and enactment of roles (reproduction of figure 22)
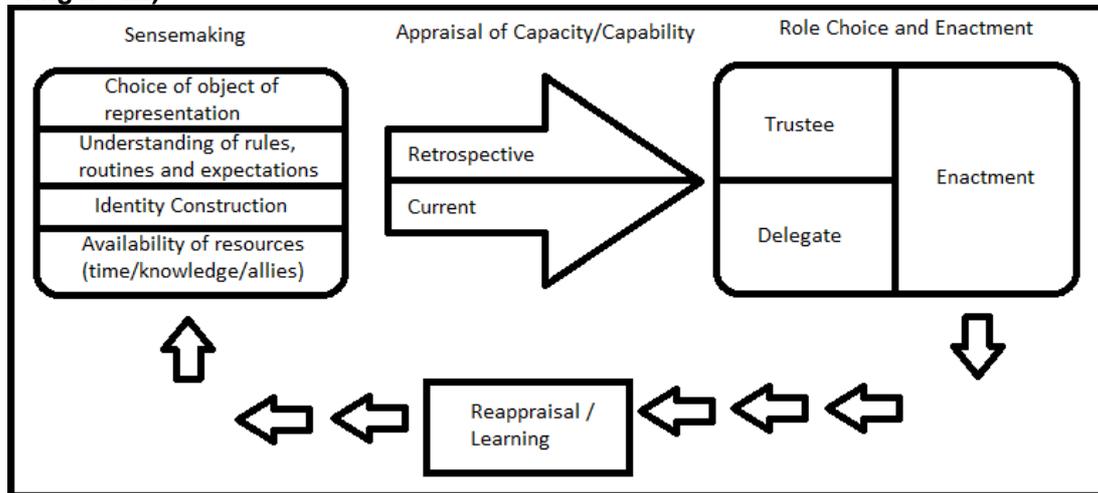
<u>Future Prospects for Research</u>

A significant contribution of this thesis is its interdisciplinary application of the

theory of organisational sensemaking to the concept of appointed representation.

Therefore the main prospect for future research is the application of this

methodology to alternative groups and contexts. The sensemaking approach was

utilised in this thesis to dismantle and reconstruct the concept of appointed

representation. This was successful in capturing the dynamic and embedded nature

of representation. It succeeded in being able to offer an appraisal of how different

factors interact which addressed the limitations of other more static typologies of

representative role. Further studies could also seek to use the sensemaking

approach to explore the relationship and agency between individuals and

institutions for other sets of actors. The approach benefits from the embedded

nature of the researcher which improves the ability to gain situated insights and a greater appreciation of context

The approach taken within the thesis to the representative role of assembly members considered the processes for the appraisal and enactment of roles however these are just two iterations of the process of representation. The possible third iteration Saward's 'representative claim' (2010) represents another snapshot of Pitkin's puzzle of representation. This element could be introduced to a comparative analysis tracing objects of representation through the process of representation. Introducing and the evaluating the strength of different representative concerns through the representative process via a sensemaking analysis would also permit and understanding of the factors which enable or limit the adoption of different role orientations. The model developed in the final chapter could also be developed to incorporate the notion of representative claims (see figure 25).

A final element for exploration from the data emerging from this thesis relates to the suggested role orientations outlined at the end of chapter four. These role types could be investigated utilising a similar quantitative approach to those used by Newton (Newton 1976), Eulau *el al*, (1959) and more recently Copus (2010).

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Interview Schedule 1: Testing politician responses to possible questions
Telephone interviews: Scripted test questions with CoR Members and MEPs

Basic introduction (along the lines of)

Good morning I am calling from the West Midlands Regional Assembly to ask a few questions about how we can best improve communications with our European stakeholders. We recently finished our European Strategic Review which highlighted a direct need to improve stakeholder engagement and the questions I will ask will help to form the basis of an 'improving relationships and engagement workshop to be held on October 12th.

- How would you describe your current relationship with the West Midlands Regional Assembly?

- How do you communicate with your appointing institution and other stakeholders the work you do at the Regional Assembly?

- Do you send out any newsletters, briefings or press releases on a regular basis relating to the work you do at the Regional Assembly?

- What is the best medium by which the assembly can communicate with you?

- Is there scope to hold regular face to face meetings with other members of your appointing institution to report and brief on your assembly role? Would this be useful to you?

- How do you think the assembly secretariat could better communicate with you?

- How do you think the regional assembly as a whole could better communicate our policy priorities and interests with a) the people of the West Midlands, and b) other stakeholders?

- When looking to represent regionally what are the main sources of information, briefings that you draw upon?

- Assembly members are seen as a valuable medium for information principally mediating local and sub-regional information about policy preferences to the region. What do you think are the best ways for the Regional Assembly as an institution to support you in this role?

- Are there any examples of good practice from your colleagues or from others at alternative institutions of briefing/reporting procedures?

- Communication from the region is often haphazard and piecemeal. What communication structures do you think could be put in place to improve the situation?

- A critical benefit of an improved communicative relationship would be less duplication of work through information sharing. Do you think there are any barriers for greater information sharing?

Interview Schedule 2: Loose scoping questions relating to representative role framework

When operating at the Regional Assembly where/who do you see your primary mandate?

How does this compare with your role as an elected councillor?
or
Who are you responsible to when you operate as an assembly member?
Who are you accountable to when you operate as an assembly member?

How do you assure accountability for your actions at the Regional Assembly?

Where would you place yourself on this scale? (Separate sheet)

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Mandated delegate                 Politico              Independent trustee

       |_____|_____|


Definitions:

Mandated delegate: 'I see my role as solely pursuing the policy preferences expressed by my council when
operating on the West Midlands Regional Assembly'

Politico: 'My council gives me direction to follow but I will appraise this against other interests (the region/my
political party/my constituents) before deciding how to act at the West Midlands Regional Assembly'

Independent trustee: 'I pursue what I think are the best interests of my council when I operate at the West
Midlands Regional Assembly'
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Are there any differences with regard to who you represent when you are an elected councillor and when you are an appointed assembly member?

Do you feel the system of appointment to the Assembly is suitable to ensure that the institution is representative?

Do you receive briefings from your council before you go to assembly meetings? (When, how, how often, what contents?)

How do you assure you are representing your council at the assembly?

How are you representative of your a) your council, b) your local area, c) your constituents?

How do you represent the a) council, b) local area, c) constituents when at the assembly?

Do you report back to your council post assembly meetings? (When, how, how often, what contents?)

Who is your representative focus at the regional assembly? (Geographic unit/party/pressure group/administrative organisation)

Who is your representative focus at the local council? (Geographic unit/party/pressure group/administrative organisation)

How do these focuses compare and contrast with each other, are they different, why?

How would you consider yourself against these role orientations in your local council elected role?

Generalist/specialist
Party person/independent
Ward/council/sub region/region member
Broad policy focus/individual problem focus
Representative/participant

How would you consider yourself against these role orientations in your appointed assembly role?

Generalist/specialist
Party person/independent
Ward/council/sub region/region member
Broad policy focus/individual problem focus
Representative/participant

Do your role choices/orientations vary, at what times, and in what instances?

What is your main motivation for being an assembly member?

What are the benefits of being an assembly member?

Are there any negative aspects to being an assembly member?

Are the local council role and regional assembly role similar or different? (Where and why)

What are the responsibilities of being an assembly member?

What are the responsibilities of being an elected councillor?

How do your colleagues/peers view your role at the assembly?

How does your appointing authority benefit from your membership of the assembly?

Insert hypothetical question regarding earlier answers (test)

Insert second hypothetical question regarding earlier answers (test)

Are you a member of any other regional bodies? How does the assembly compare with other partnership roles?

Are there any other assembly members who you think should be part of the interviewed sample?

Is there anything you would like to add?

Profiling Questions (Only asked if answers not already known)

Gender
Age
Seat location (rural/urban/peri-urban)
Type of council
Other mandates/council positions at alternative levels of government
Type
Time as a councillor
Years in the assembly
Committee positions held
Political Party
Political history
Specialist interests
Views on the assembly (positive/negative)

APPENDIX 2: REFLECTIONS ON PHD PROCESS

Reflections
Conducting CASE Studentship research

The research outlined in this thesis was conducted under the auspices of an ESRC

Case Studentship (PTA-033-2006-00067), which not only determined the context but

also was an influential factor informing the methodological and research techniques

employed during the study. Literature exploring the methodological dilemmas faced

by research students when conducting CASE research is limited (Bell and Read 1998;

Macmillan and Scott 2003) as CASE studentships are a relatively new phenomenon.

As a relatively new scheme of collaborative research, being part of a CASE

studentship proved a new and challenging environment for both me as researcher

and my research partners at the West Midlands Regional Assembly. Beginning the

thesis both research partners were set on a steep learning curve trying to manage

multiple relationships, differing expectations and adapt to different cultures and

institutional backgrounds.

From the outset of the CASE studentship there was a need to build an understanding

of the expectations of the research partner and decide on the potential deliverables

and non academic outputs of the research. It was beneficial therefore that within the

first month of the research, I held a joint meeting with my main contact Esther

Knight (Strategic Advisor, European and International Affairs), Olwen Dutton (Chief

Executive) and Rose Poulter (Director of Policy) of WMRA at which I laid out the

potential scope of the work and we agreed on dates at when it would be timely to

present some policy based research findings. The meeting also allowed the team at WMRA to explain their needs, hopes and expectations for the work.

Organising individual meetings (assisted by Esther) with each of the policy leads at WMRA allowed me to develop a structural understanding of both the institution and a contextual understanding of the numerous policy streams and the wider West Midlands regional policy context. The relationships developed out of those early meetings were invaluable throughout the course of the research. The investment of time cultivating relationships at this stage of the research allowed me to develop a solid support and contact network in terms of both access to documentation and other policy contacts. These early meetings also provided a fantastic test bed for ideas and possible research avenues when the research process was in its infancy. The opportunities and insight delivered by an immersive entry into the research context cannot be understated and are just one of the benefits of CASE research. Within the first three months of the thesis, I had attended two full assembly meetings, four officer team meetings and worked on the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) stand at the Local Government Association (LGA) Annual Conference event held at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham. The LGA conference was a significant and valuable networking opportunity to meet with senior policy makers from both local, regional and national government. At this point being seen as part of the institutional architecture through both visibility and association was a significant factor in securing access and interviews with potential interviewees.

The first opportunity to get some early project data came after six months of the

research from the European Strategic Review (WMRA 2007) which identified a need

for closer working with the region's European elected representatives, MEPs and

members of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and Congress of Local and Regional

Authority of Europe (CLRAE). I was tasked with doing a project to explore how the

region could attain more effective engagement with its representatives. The project

involved interviewing the regions elected representatives exploring their views of

their engagement with the regions institutions. Questions explored their current

situation, channels of communication and examples of best practice. The project

culminated in the facilitation of a workshop event for senior decision makers

focusing on identifying best practice, barriers to change and improving future

relationships and engagement. I also contributed to a joint report to the European

and International Affairs Partnership (Knight, Bloomfield et al. 2007) in the form of a

communication and engagement plan. Although much of this data does not feature

in the thesis, it proved a valuable learning exercise allowing me to work on

interviewing technique, increase my understanding of the institutional and policy

context as well test some of the areas for questioning which I would use later in my

research.

A critical juncture came within my relationship with WMRA with the advent of the

Sub-national Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (HM Treasury

2007). The impending decision to wind up the Regional Assembly and instigate new

regional structures meant a dramatic shift in focus for both the research and the

needs of Esther and the Assembly in terms of my non-academic output.   The

implications of the sub-national review were extensive as individual roles were changed and responsibilities and priorities shifted. The next piece of research I was called upon to complete for the Regional Assembly and English Regions Network was part of a consultation on the future of European working in the English regions in the advent of the abolition of Regional Assemblies. The research consisted of an appraisal of how each of the 8 English Regions organised and conducted their interactions with Europe and what arrangements were being put in place for working post 2010. The research formed an update paper for the Strategic Review of regional European working (WMRA 2008) and comprised interviews with relevant European stakeholders and the officer staff with responsibility for European issues in each region. The timescale for the delivery of the report was short and represented a significant challenge. This report formed my last significant piece of work for the West Midlands Regional Assembly as the organisation was dismantled and its functions and staff were shifted to other organisations.

The CASE studentship model provided a challenge for me as an apprentice academic but one which was both exciting and rewarding. The situated nature of the studentship particularly in the first year where I used the office space provided by the West Midlands Regional Assembly allowed an appreciation and more importantly understanding of a dynamic and fluid policy environment with its mix of internal tensions and power relations. Indeed when the policy context was radically changed by the announcement of the abolition of the Assembly, there was a need to adapt to new expectations and requirements in terms of non academic output in addition to addressing the implications of the changes for the research.

Working in two different environments and writing for different audiences' added value to my experience of the CASE studentship and far outweighed the challenges posed in terms of changing goals and managing expectations. The West Midlands Regional Assembly proved a rich source of information but more importantly Esther played a fundamental role in helping to secure initial access to potential interviewees. Although the policy work was often tangential to the research it kept me abreast of policy developments during a particularly fluid period for the structures of governance in the West Midlands. The West Midlands Regional Assembly and the staff working within it provided me with a constantly evolving context which delivered numerous potential avenues for both policy-based and academic forms of research.

Reflections on Doing a PhD

From the initial application for the ESRC CASE studentship and throughout the course of the research this thesis has proved to be both challenging and demanding in equal measure. The process has been a journey punctuated by moments of confusion and clarity, where ideas were often set free before being reined back in. The element of uncertainty proved the most significant challenge and no more so when mid thesis the government announced the abolition of Regional Assemblies. However this juncture forced me to re-evaluate and consider the potential reach and applicability of the research and redirect the analysis towards a greater consideration of individuals as opposed to institutions.

My first year was spent exploring potential research avenues and reading journal articles and books taking quite a splatter gun approach, taking me off at tangents and up blind alleys. However it was this process that ultimately helped me become more directed and critical in my reading as I read began to pick apart elements in the literature and ask questions of gaps in analysis. As I began to synthesise my thoughts on paper I developed a more comprehensive understanding of the research issues I was addressing and the potential contributions the research could make. It was only then that I felt comfortable with questions from both peers and friends about what my thesis was about. The task of doing a PhD was at times very isolating which affected my motivation. As an inherently individual process dominated by the activities of reading and writing, the movement to collecting interview data and attending conferences proved the perfect counterpoint. Asking questions and testing ideas with politicians using the frameworks and approaches developed from my reading was intensely enjoyable and rewarding. I think the highlight of the thesis was returning to councillor five (subject of the case study) with the chapter I had written on how he made sense of and enacted his role and receiving a positive appraisal of the accuracy and insight of what I had written about him. This was particularly rewarding as I throughout the thesis I found the interpretation of the positions of others particularly challenging. At the start of the thesis the realm of interpretation seemed dominated by the potential pitfalls of misrepresentation and misattribution of importance and I found it hard to gain confidence in being able to assert the positions of others. However developing the confidence to ask the simple question "why" and ask for confirmation of the positions taken by interviewees allowed me to begin to address this issue. Indeed the application of a sense making

approach (Weick 1995) to the final stage of interviews provided an ideal framework to surface and secure the motivations, ideals and desires of those I interviewed. This element of methodological innovation was a tailored solution to conceptually mapping the multi faceted nature of representation occurring in different institutions.

I think the main area of personal development has been delivered through fulfilling the task of organising and conducting research and ultimately being responsive to problems which arise. The fact that I was solely responsible for the direction of the thesis and the delivery of academic output has tested my confidence, motivation and resolve. Most significantly as an environment different to others I had experienced it was difficult at first to know what to expect of the process as a whole. The regular interactions with peers and colleagues in the department aided my understanding of their processes but ultimately it was an individual journey and marked with periods of uncertainty and doubt, before I finally felt assured in the direction and content of my thesis. Undertaking research in the form of a PhD also presented me with an issue of being able to switch on and off as the thesis pervaded boundaries and every hour could become an 'office hour'. This presented me with a particular challenge and prompted me to make more of my spare time, taking up blogging and going to the gym. Adopting these activities allowed me to more coherently detach from the research but also meant that periods of time away from work were spent doing something slightly constructive. This element had a positive spill-over effect into my work on my thesis as I found periods of inactivity often brought about further periods of inactivity. Whilst it is unlikely that any thesis will progress at a regular

speed from instigation to finish I learnt that it was best to really put the effort in when the motivation was there and not be too hard on yourself in periods when it was not.

The final area of challenge was with regard to opening up my work to others. The process of writing to a prescription with regards to the papers I delivered for the Regional Assembly was simple and something I had done before. However opening up my work to the views of supervisors and colleagues in the department was not something I was used to. Being called upon to justify my work, my views, receive criticism and clarify individual points and then return to my work to amend it accordingly was a hard task but one which ultimately help me develop both my ideas and how I expressed them. Starting out as very precious about my work I soon accepted the ongoing and iterative nature of research and let go of the notion of completeness and instead focused on the idea of findings as the start, informing further questions and developing theory.