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CHANGING SPACES – COMMUNITIES, GOVERNANCE AND THE POLITICS OF GROWTH

A Thesis in

Geography

by

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ABSTRACT

Metropolitan governance is on the agenda for urban regions in the twenty first century. Problems of resource allocation, environmental protection and economic competitiveness are propelling debates about the most appropriate scale for urban government, and regional solutions are being proposed in cities across the western world. Despite the presentation of such metropolitan reform proposals as novel, governance change has a lengthy history and it is incumbent upon modern policy makers and academics to understand the background to metropolitan solutions. At a broader scale the question of how to configure social space to meet local community needs is persistent over time and across place. This dissertation examines the origin and geographical imprint of successive changes to political spaces in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania between 1750 and 1929.

Allegheny County is located in southwestern Pennsylvania, and contains the post-industrial City of Pittsburgh. The county in the twenty first century is predominantly urban and contains 130 distinct minor civil divisions – cities, townships and boroughs. By examining the urban history of this county, it is evident that the current social and political form of Allegheny County was not predetermined with the original erection of the county, and instead was formed gradually through a history of guile, negotiation and violence. This dissertation presents this history through four ‘episodes of change,’ each of which identifies a different rationale for the division of space and a different response by local communities to the division of space.
Beginning in the mid-eighteenth century, the first episode tracks the imposition of colonial theories of power and identity upon a sparsely settled landscape. Colonial surveyors and politicians imposed political lines on the natural world of this region in order to legitimize claims to the region and to assist the governing of local communities. From the earliest days of the county, local communities began to reshape the political map of Allegheny County in order to meet their changing needs. During the nineteenth century, the gaze of the Pennsylvania state government was focused on broad infrastructural improvements. This inattentiveness to local politics meant communities were able to develop new municipal units to fit their changing needs. The second episode describes the burgeoning ‘geographical imaginations’ which were finding expression within Allegheny County. The county was splintering into a mosaic of municipal forms based on social, economic and political considerations.

The third episode of change starts in the late nineteenth century, when the municipal units founded on an industrial logic begin to overshadow the rural and suburban worlds of Allegheny County. This was a form of horizontal competition, whereby the different geographical imaginations for Allegheny County jostled for primacy within the county. At the same time, a vertical competition was emerging as Allegheny County became implicated in the broadening national and international economic system. County and state leaders decided Allegheny County needed a ‘regional champion’ to contend in this economic competition, and the City of Pittsburgh became synonymous with the county for this reason.
The final episode of change was a consequence of Allegheny County becoming embedded in the global world economy of the early twentieth century. The Progressive Era had given rise to a new national network of civic reformers and professional classes who advocated for change to the political and social institutions of the nineteenth century city. This advocacy was adopted by the Civic Club of Allegheny County, whose leaders accepted the logic of metropolitan governance and agitated for the creation of a Greater Pittsburgh, which would consolidate the city with the county. This advocacy would eventually fail at the ballot box, marking the first time local communities had rejected a broad restructuring of local political boundaries in the county.

This dissertation includes four key findings. First, political spaces cannot keep pace with the social evolution and changing needs of local communities and the broader region. As soon as lines are inscribed upon a map, changes are occurring to render them obsolete. Second, within existing spatial units are the preconditions for new geographical imaginations – nascent communities and concepts of place will emerge over time. Third, theories for the division of space will falter if they are not linked to local contingencies. This was especially important in Allegheny County, as national theories of the Progressive Era were not suited to the contingencies of that place. Finally, the division of space was accelerated after the first political lines were inscribed on the area which became Allegheny County. This initial abstraction facilitated future divisions as local conditions and community needs changed.
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As always, any errors or omissions in the final document are the sole responsibility of the author.
Chapter 1 Placing the Question, Questioning the Place

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Four Countries, One Question

Minneapolis, Minnesota – 1997. Myron Orfield’s book “Metropolitics” identifies urban problems associated with the hollowing out of the urban core within a metropolitan area encompassing 341.6 square miles and 2.4 million people. As wealthier segments of the population migrated from the central city to the fringe suburbs – with lower property taxes, better services, and identification with an American Dream – the inner city bled. Minneapolis was suffering with a declining tax base and population which was both less mobile and in greater need of social services. Regionalists such as Orfield contended that when the city suffers, the region suffers. Their solution to this problem of increasing regional inequity was the introduction of policy solutions derived from both ends of the political spectrum designed to alleviate urban poverty and blight.

Fair housing, equitable revenue sharing and metropolitan government were all recommended as ways to preserve the urban vitality of the entire Minneapolis region. The latter section of Orfield’s book (and the basis for several projects which followed) explained how the Minneapolis experience regarding regionalism could stimulate similar programs in other American cities such as Portland, Philadelphia and Chicago.
Auckland, New Zealand – 2006. A nationally significant metropolitan region consisting of 2,060 square miles and 1.2 million people (Figure 1), the Auckland region is comprised of four separate city governments (Auckland, Waitakere, North Shore and Manukau), three adjacent districts (Rodney, Franklin and Papakura) and one regional government (The Auckland Regional Council). The region continues to experience strong population and economic growth and faces the prospect of significant asset distribution problems since the geography of the region, constrained location of the central business district and cultural preference for low-density development all act to funnel residents toward the spatial margins of the region.

Local and national concerns about the capacity of Auckland’s municipal governments to create regional solutions led to the formation of the Auckland Regional Authority in 1963 (Memon, Davies et al. 2007), and regional governance has become even more important given the environmental protections required by the 1991 Resource Management Act. The City of Auckland consolidated with eight local municipalities in 1989, yet the bugbear of anachronistic government boundaries continued to spur debate and recommendations for further consolidation. In 2006 the prospect of merging all four cities in the Auckland region was proposed, yet community opposition stymied efforts to alter local boundaries and functions, based on a fear that the proposed changes would eliminate several historic boroughs (Thompson 2006).
Paris, France – 1848. The February Revolution of 1848 was conducted by the working classes of Paris who were discontent with the lack of social progress made during the rule of Louis Philippe. David Harvey’s account of Second Empire Paris reveals how the crisis of the Revolution provided space for debates over the shape of the city’s urban future. Different visions were proposed for the city, and eventually the plans of Haussmann won out. “Before, there was an urban vision that at best could only tinker
with the problems of a medieval urban infrastructure; then came Haussmann, who bludgeoned the city into modernity” (Harvey 2006: 3). Haussmann’s vision reshaped the city in order to align Paris with the needs of the ‘modern’ world economy.

The reshaping of the city which occurred during the 1850s and 1860s envisioned Paris as the center for French political, social and economic power. While this was Paris’ traditional role, Haussmann eradicated former spatial patterns and reconfigured the internal spaces of Paris and the connections between the city and the nation. Harvey notes that Haussmann “fought throughout, in the end not so successfully, to counter the privatism and parochialism of individual and local interests through legislation and rhetoric focused on the public interest for a rational and orderly evolution of space relations in the city” (ibid. 112). Radial highways were extended to connect the city with the suburbs, and surrounding suburbs were annexed to Paris. The city became the hub for the expanding national railroad network, and Haussmann implemented a new system of political governance for the city – twenty arrondissements with responsibility for the local area, each reporting indirectly to Haussmann.

Toronto, Canada – 1998. Long renowned for its commitment to regional governance and touted as an example of progressive idealism at its finest, the city encountered a crisis of conscience as the neoliberal government at the provincial scale sought to realign the governance structures of Greater Toronto, ostensibly to help the city retain its competitive edge in the ‘modern’ world economy of the twenty first century (Keil 2000). Opposition to a planned consolidation of Toronto and its five neighboring
cities culminated in 1996, when ‘the city that works’ experienced a one-day general strike and a march of 200,000 people protesting the planned amalgamation (Keil, ibid.: 766).

Discontent with the amalgamation of Toronto and her neighbors arose because of the blatant political motives driving the changes to the region’s political governance. During the mid-twentieth century the wealthy City of Toronto was surrounded by tax-poor cities requesting improvements in their urban services. These improvements were enabled through regional asset sharing under the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, founded in 1953. The Toronto metropolitan area did not remain static after this point, and the region experienced a profound structural change in 1967 when it was rationalized into the City of Toronto and five surrounding cities (Figure 2). Over time the social and economic balance between Toronto and its neighboring cities shifted, and the neoliberal government of Ontario acted to bolster the political power of the conservative cities by creating an amalgamated Toronto which diluted the progressive tendencies of the central city.
1.1.1 One Problem, Persisting Questions

Whether inspired by concerns over regional equity (as in Minneapolis), environmental protection (as in Auckland), or economic competitiveness (as in Paris and Toronto), these vignettes underscore a common question for urban regions – how should political spaces be configured in order to meet the needs of local populations?

This question persists over time and recurs in different contexts. The question will reemerge over time because the configuration of local and regional political organization has to conform to place- and time-specific conditions. For instance does a
region emphasize economic efficiency by consolidating political space into larger units, or does it champion local democracy by protecting a fragmented mosaic of townships, cities and boroughs? Similarly, can the physical and structural assets of a region be safeguarded most effectively through an integrated regional approach, by local stewardship or through a combination of both?

In cities such as Toronto, Minneapolis and Auckland, the question of how to configure the political spaces of a region involves contestation and choice; how to negotiate those processes to accomplish particular regional policy objectives are a core issue for policymakers. But whereas contemporary problems are often framed as novel, the history of dynamic urban change suggests otherwise.\(^1\) Furthermore, the issue of local governmental boundaries requires sensitivity to how and why they have been inherited. In Auckland, for instance, the conflict which arose between planners and communities was largely one of perception. Whereas planners and politicians considered boundaries to be anachronistic and cumbersome, communities considered them historic and necessary.

### 1.1.2 Persisting Questions, One Region

This dissertation addresses the question of how and why political spaces were configured and reconfigured to meet the demands of one region. As in the preceding

\(^{1}\) A point illustrated by David Harvey’s treatment of Second Empire Paris (Harvey 2006). This book explores the different visions proposed for Paris, while the eventual restructuring of the city’s form by Haussmann was an effort to align Paris to the ‘modern’ global economy – of 1848.
vignettes competitiveness, protection and equity all recur. In addition, similar tussles between local communities, state authorities and other interest groups occur as the appropriate regional future for the city and surrounding area are determined. Using a long term perspective, we find that the needs of local communities shift as technologies change, populations shift and theories of urban governance emerge. We also find that the direction from which changes are proposed matters immensely to the way in which the plans are received by local communities.

The region in question for this study is Allegheny County, Pennsylvania between 1750 and 1929. Allegheny County is located in southwest Pennsylvania, with the now post-industrial city of Pittsburgh located at its centre (Figure 3). Contemporary concerns over the antiquated nature of local government and its inability to address regional issues of taxation, resource management and economic development have created a lengthy and voluminous industry of debate and analysis regarding southwestern Pennsylvania’s regional future.² Amidst the rehearsal of fragmentation ‘problems’ and consolidation

² Recent examples of this research includes Orfield’s study of social and economic polarization in the region, which declares fiscal equity, better planning practices and structural governance reforms to be essential components of a regional response to these issues (Orfield 1997: 3). The Brookings Institution report “Back to Prosperity: A Competitive Agenda for Renewing Pennsylvania” expressed concern about the high rate of governmental fragmentation in southwestern Pennsylvania (relative to the United States), because fragmentation “complicates coordination, exacerbates uneven growth patterns, increases the cost of government, and undercuts the region’s economic competitiveness” (Brookings Institution 2002:4). Studies by RAND examined the extent of economic interconnectedness amongst the communities of Allegheny County (Sleeper, Willis et al. 2004), and the scope of Allegheny County’s fragmented urban governance (Sleeper, Willis et al. 2004).
‘solutions’ is a rhetoric which concludes the region is change-averse.\textsuperscript{3} Perhaps based in the shocks created because of significant economic declines following the collapse of the local steel industry,\textsuperscript{4} this somewhat defeatist portrayal of the regional mindset is reinforced by traditional explanations of the region’s institutional history and belies the historic dynamism of Allegheny County.

Figure 3 Allegheny County, Pennsylvania with Minor Civil Divisions - 2006

\textsuperscript{3} State politicians assail the incapacity of local politicians to accomplish reform (Cohan 2004), whilst local commentators reinforce impressions of torpor and institutional rigidity surrounding issues such as home-rule reform (O’Neill 1998) and local economic distress (Editorial 2004).

\textsuperscript{4} During the period 1976 to 1996, the local steel industry lost 132,698 jobs, representing a 52.7\% decline in sectoral employment (Haller 2005). For a region whose original economic success came as a center for steel and iron production (Chinitz 1960) this loss was acute (Lubove 1994), leading to long-term population declines.
The standard explanation of boundary change in Allegheny County proposed by
Teaford’s study of urban fragmentation produced a myth of early stability by claiming
1834 as the watershed year after which municipal incorporation expanded. It was in
1834 that the Pennsylvania state legislature devolved some of its incorporation powers to
local (county) courts, in an experience similar to other Midwestern cities during the
period (Teaford 1979). While this devolution is undoubtedly significant, any inference of
prior political stability is mistaken. Allegheny County communities did not wait for the
devolution of state incorporation powers – the original seven civil divisions established in
1788 had already fragmented into 24 distinct units by 1834 (Figure 4); apparently
openness to rescaling political boundaries was present from the earliest days of the
county.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\text{ Teaford explores the construction of the modern city after state legislatures in Ohio, Pennsylvania,
Missouri and Illinois give up their control over municipal incorporation (Teaford 1979: 7). Traditional
models of urban expansion begin with the idealized and unitary city. Planning perspectives which promote
metropolitanism invoke the urban ills caused by fragmentation, and call for consolidation to restore order to
the city – See Section 1.2 and Chapter 2 for a more complete discussion.}\]
Throughout the next century the county’s citizens responded to changes in transportation, residential services and economic growth by continuing to support the redefinition of local political boundaries. Figure 4 charts a series of incorporation and annexation episodes. Steady growth in the number of incorporated places to 1834 shifted to greater changes in the number of incorporated places between 1834 and 1869. From 1870 to 1907 a more chaotic urban landscape was caused by the annexation of small
boroughs by the cities. The currents of change become more turbulent underneath this history of successful boundary change. Unlisted in Figure 4 are many unsuccessful attempts to create new minor civil divisions – the story of Allegheny County is therefore one of dynamic governance reform spanning 150 years.

This reform tradition stalled in the 1920s with the rejection of a new proposal for two-tiered metropolitan government – one which would enable residents to continue enjoying a degree of democratic self-determination whilst also responding to concerns over inefficiencies caused by the fragmented state of local government. Why would communities which had previously shown openness to rescaling their political boundaries balk at a proposal for change which at its core was intended to improve the way of life for residents of the county? Does the shift in local attitudes over changes to local governance in Allegheny County provide us with broader lessons about contemporary attempts in western cities to impose (or recommend) governance reforms on (or for) local communities?

The answer to these questions might start to be found by scanning the municipal map of Allegheny County as it appeared in 1928 (Figure 5). Across the river valleys and hills of the county, the reasons for Allegheny County’s original political subdivision reflect its heterogeneous communities and assets. Original townships like West Deer and

6 This periodization is nevertheless a generalization. During each period there were events which went against the general trend, such as the merger of the City of Pittsburgh with the Borough of Northern Liberties in 1836 (Teaford, 1979: 33).
Plum featured rural areas and mining villages, and experienced land area reductions as economic and social speculation led to the incorporation of new municipal units.

Municipalities such as Duquesne and Homestead in the industrial Monongahela River Valley were established by Andrew Carnegie’s steel company to capture and contain the physical and political conditions needed to function most profitably. In adjacent areas of the county residential middle-class communities such as Sewickley Heights incorporated to provide modern residential services such as roads and sewerage works, and to distinguish themselves from less desirable immigrant populations and economic activities. Finally the cities – McKeensport and Pittsburgh – anchored and served the region. McKeensport, at the confluence of the Monongahela and Youghiogheny Rivers, regarded itself as the industrial city of the region and a natural rival to Pittsburgh. Because of its local political and economic dominance, Pittsburgh’s motives regarding any proposal to redefine local political boundaries were treated with suspicion – especially after annexing the adjacent municipalities of the South Side during the late 1860s and early 1870s and the City of Allegheny in 1907.

7 The 1935 incorporation of Sewickley Heights regrettably falls outside the scope of this dissertation. Nevertheless, the borough is certainly distinguished from its neighbors, as the borough was founded by members of the Allegheny Country Club after it relocated from Pittsburgh’s north side. The municipal buildings sit in the midst of the Allegheny Country Club demesne.
The history of political rescaling in Allegheny County during the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries exemplifies how processes of negotiation and choice do not cease with the incorporation of a given municipality. As social and economic conditions in American cities change, national and local debates foster new theories regarding the ideal form of urban governance. Consequently the urban landscape is prone to episodes of change instigated by groups which recognize a need for change, and opposed by groups preferred or protected by the status quo. Because Allegheny County’s
political history involved continual recalibrations of local political boundaries, concepts from the politics of scale are used in this study to provide a new perspective on Allegheny County’s struggles with political fragmentation. The story emphasizes how the heterogeneity of local communities created the impetus for incorporation and annexation events, and yet ultimately caused problems for the imposition of national theories of metropolitan reform. This is not simply a case study of one Pennsylvanian county’s dalliance with government and geography. Looked at from elsewhere, the story of episodic and contested change provides lessons for policymakers and academicians who might similarly consider harnessing the speed of urban change to one or another conceptual wagons. The era of dynamic boundary reform in Allegheny County ended prior to the Great Depression, with an electoral rebuke to Progressive Era proponents of political rescaling. Similar failures might be avoided elsewhere, if reformers are sensitive to the direction of proposed changes (from the national scene, or locally derived), the rhetoric used to compel or impede changes, and the perception of the plans by communities of interest (both local and non-local).
1.2 Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

Contemporary Pittsburgh is considered a ‘poster-child for regional fragmentation’ (Cohan 2004) as it is surrounded by the numerous municipalities and townships of Allegheny County. Part of this municipal map can be explained through the complex hydrography and topography of the area, as seen from satellite imagery (Figure 6). From overhead, the landscape of southwestern Pennsylvania is a complex pattern of river valleys and steep hillsides – all of which could limit accessibility between population centers. Prior to the twentieth century expansion of highway systems, tunnels, cable-car ‘inlines’ and other transportation innovations (see Tarr, 1978), local communities were somewhat isolated from one another, and hence local government boundaries had to be configured in relation to certain natural barriers. As these boundaries were formed and reformed, frustration grew at the accretion of seemingly anachronistic, fragmentary and inefficient local governments which seemed contrary to the needs of modern Allegheny County in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

The modern concern over the fragmented nature of local government in Allegheny County belies the historic nature of this issue – the problems of finding regional solutions to the social, economic, and infrastructural problems of Allegheny County have been placed at the feet of the county’s fragmentary local government since the 1920s (Egger 1929; Lonich 1991). At a broader level, other urban areas within the United States and internationally continue to debate the shape of local political
boundaries. The question for this research is why some attempts to define and redefine local political boundaries succeeded in Allegheny County, while others failed.

Allegheny County is now an urban county located in Southwestern Pennsylvania, with the City of Pittsburgh at its center. Erected by Pennsylvania in the late eighteenth century (1788) in response to competing claims over the region’s political sovereignty, population shifts and the demand for local representation, the county’s boundary and the shape of its minor civil divisions began to change almost immediately. These changes to municipal boundaries were exacerbated in 1834 when the Pennsylvania State legislature devolved some of the responsibility for municipal incorporation to the county courts (Teaford 1979).
The fragmentation of the county continued through to the 1920s as communities and businesses sought incorporation of parts of the county. This period saw the definition of Allegheny County’s local mosaic, as working class, industrial, rural, suburban and urban political units appeared as discrete spaces on the political map. Changes in the number of incorporated places suggest communities during this period were open to reshaping scales of governance when former boundaries became
inadequate, antiquated or possibly redundant. Yet by the end of the 1920s the apparent openness to change faltered as a proposal to again change the political map of Allegheny County (into a two-tiered metropolitan government) failed. The origin of this plan came from Progressive Era reformers and their local supporters who sought to create a more populous, equitable and efficient region, yet proved unable to adapt national theories of metropolitanism and coordination to the local context of Allegheny County, and to frame their arguments to appeal to the dissimilar communities of the region. By 1938 the county remained fragmented (Klein 1938), although advocates for change remained active for the next seventy years (Lonich 1991).

Although a single intensive study of one region cannot answer the question of how political spaces of other regions should be configured to meet local needs, this inability to transform is one of the key contributions of the dissertation. Whereas local communities were open to forming political spaces and reconfiguring them in the earlier periods of Allegheny County’s history, it was only when externally developed theories of how a region should be configured were introduced into the area that local communities became change averse. That the allure of regionalism was found wanting by the communities of Allegheny County indicates the need to find local solutions which do not necessarily mimic the best practice models for regional governance being proposed by advocates for change in contemporary contexts.

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8 Notably the Civic Club of Allegheny County, representing the Progressive-Era tenets of good governance, and the Chamber of Commerce, representing the Taylorism-inspired tenets of efficient governance.
1.3 Plan and Findings of the Current Study

The key goal for the dissertation is to understand why changes to the structure of urban areas are sometimes supported by local communities and sometimes refuted. In the case of Allegheny County, a period of rapid reform and eager redefinition of municipal boundaries was replaced by a sudden resistance to the proposed realignment of the county into a two-tier federative government. I argue the reason for this shift in local attitudes over changes to the structure of local governance can be understood by referring to the direction and purpose of the proposed changes; this is accomplished using a combination of prior perspectives and the concepts of scale, power and identity. Bottom-up community formation which occurred and was supported for various reasons ran against the imposition of theoretical arguments for consolidation from above. In Chapter Two I elaborate on the historical perspectives on fragmentation and on the theories of scale, power and identity used in the research.

The analysis for the dissertation is based on secondary data sources, including community statistics and newspaper reports on the events leading to community formation, and the episodes of change and resistance between 1755 and 1929. Chapters Three through Chapter Six examine different episodes in the changing form of Allegheny County’s governance, each of which shows a different aspect of the ways scale, power and identity collude to explain why some change was embraced, while other proposals for change were shunned. As the dissertation is focused on the production of successive
spaces, the language of Lefebvre is used throughout the analysis to explain how natural space gradually gave way to the abstracted spaces of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County.

Chapter Three examines the original erection of the county, tracing the events from the original European settlement of Western Pennsylvania to the point preceding devolution of incorporation laws from the State Legislature to the county courts in 1834. Examining the contestation over the space which was to eventually become Allegheny County emphasizes how the development of social space is not predetermined, but rather subject to both choice and luck. Land speculators such as Lord Dunmore of Virginia and Benjamin Franklin of Philadelphia would have created vastly different political and social spaces out of the area now known as Allegheny County. In the late eighteenth century, local citizens struggled against the hegemonic dominance of the Federal and state systems of government and toyed with the destruction of the newly formed county. Tracing the development of municipalities in the county shows how scale and identity were influential in changing the political map of the county. This chapter emphasizes the heterogeneity of community types, providing a more complex appreciation for how power and identity motivated decisions to resist further change.

Chapter Four examines the reasons for, and implications of the Pennsylvania Legislature’s devolution of responsibility regarding township incorporation to local county courts. I examine the records of the Constitutional Conventions of 1838 and 1872 to describe how the concept of local government was shaped and reformed during the period. The debates occurring during the conventions had significant implications for the
future development of minor civil divisions within Pennsylvania, and were important in Allegheny County being altered from a local world of isolated communities into an important node within Pennsylvania’s urban system. Within the county during the period 1834 to 1872, community and business groups created municipal fragmentation because of their desire to experiment with different concepts of how to divide and organize space. Within the county examples of industrial, urban and suburban worlds emerged – some became successful municipalities, while others quickly died or were subsumed by other municipalities. As this demand for new municipalities originated in a ‘bottom-up’ manner during a period in which state oversight of local government was particularly lax, local political boundaries were particularly fluid at this time.

Chapter Five examines a different type of urban rescaling, in which horizontal and vertical competition was occurring. Within Allegheny County, different urban spaces competed for power and prestige. The hegemony of Pittsburgh was contested by McKeesport and Allegheny, while new municipalities such as Munhall arose as a consequence of the burgeoning industrialization of the region. At the same time, Pittsburgh was being transformed into a space synonymous with Allegheny County, in order to function as a regional champion in the developing world economy of the twentieth century. As Pittsburgh fought economic battles with other urban regions across the United States, the dominance of the city was reinforced by the erection of monumental buildings and other metropolitan structures within Pittsburgh’s urban core.
Proposals to change local governance do not always originate with state and local politicians (as occurred in the period of county formation, Chapter Four; and municipal consolidation, Chapter Six) or because of community and business demand (as in the period of municipal fragmentation; Chapter Five). On occasion proposals for change are recommended by non-governmental organizations; by experts with theories to test and principles to serve. With the right support and momentum such advocates can enact powerful results. But if advocates for change do not recognize gaps between their theories and local conditions, the plans can fail. The effort of the Civic Club of Allegheny County during the 1920s is an example of the latter case.

Chapter Six shows how theories for change were developed at the national scale as part of the reforms prevalent during the period known as the Progressive Era, 1890-1920. Theories of metropolitanism and efficient government were adopted by the Civic Club of Allegheny County, whose subsequent advocacy led to a proposed metropolitan plan for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. The plan preserved the autonomy of local municipalities whilst enabling new levels of coordination and cooperation across metropolitan Pittsburgh. Allegheny County voters had the opportunity to accept the plan in June 1929, but the plans for governance reform were rebuffed.

Chapter Seven concludes the analysis by assessing why the shift in local attitudes to changes in local governance occurred in Allegheny County. In the contemporary context Allegheny County’s perceived entrenchment against change is in stark contrast to the fluidity with which boundaries were realigned in the first 150 years of the county’s
history. In describing this change, I describe four key conclusions arising from my analysis.

1.3.1 Key Findings

In the ‘episodes of change’ examined in this dissertation, four main themes were identified which summarize the history of municipal boundary reform in Allegheny County. These themes were apparent in each period of the analysis, although they functioned and interacted in somewhat different ways.

First, the formation of political spaces was often reactionary, and incapable of keeping pace with the social evolution of the frontier. One of the key concepts explored throughout this analysis is the ‘geographical imaginations’ developed by local entrepreneurs, communities and politicians. These imaginations or spatial visions could develop into new governmental units if consensus was reached. However, the codification of new municipalities, counties or townships could never keep pace with the changing needs of local communities, or with the changing relationship of local municipalities to other scales of political and economic activity.

Second, the colonial townships of Allegheny County contained a diversity which enabled speculative division into different social, economic and industrial landscapes. Up to the twentieth century, when the cohesion of an industrial vision for the county became hegemonic, tremendous geographic speculation was allowed to occur, and led to the fragmentation of the landscape into dozens of municipalities.
Third, differences between scales of theory and scales of practice can explain the rejection or acceptance of planned municipal reforms. This was most evident during the Progressive Era, when national scales of theory were introduced to Allegheny County by the Civic Club of Allegheny County, which underestimated the extent to which reform theories diverged from the needs of communities at the social and spatial margins of the county. Top-down prescriptions for reform seem vulnerable to failure, if they are not aligned to local conditions.

Finally, the natural world of western Pennsylvania gradually succumbed to successive layers of abstraction, as the region was inscribed with the territorial visions of colonial legislators, industrial speculators and social reformers. The abstraction of the landscape enabled speculative development and municipal fragmentation to occur, and it was only with the rise of an environmental consciousness that early forms of regionalism again began to unify the region – although these shifts would merely be new forms of abstraction, as planners and industrialists seized the geographic scope to construct an economically competitive region in the twentieth century.
Chapter 2 Interpreting Urban Boundary Change with Scale, Power and Identity

2.1 Introduction

The desire to understand and theorize the development and history of cities is incessant. As urbanization expands and steel belts become rustbelts, and as new layers of investment change the character and land use of towns and neighborhoods, academics revise their models and theories of the city. The purpose of this chapter is to describe how the changing nature of the American city has redefined the way questions about the urban form are framed.

I first provide a brief history of minor civil divisions in England and the United States, emphasizing how changes occurred in order to meet the changing needs of state and society. Three academic perspectives on this history are then discussed, each of which provides valuable – if partial – insights into the process of urban boundary change. To provide a reinterpretation of boundary change in Allegheny County, I then discuss three additional concepts – scale, power and identity. Each of these concepts is an important aspect of why local and non-local actors decided to rescale local governance, and each can provide additional insights to those provided by the traditional theories on the urban question. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how these perspectives
and concepts will be used in the following analysis chapters, each of which address a separate ‘episode of change’ in the history of Allegheny County governance.

2.1.1 Governance

The term governance is undoubtedly contested and differences in its definition can occur within the same policy and geographic context, creating significant friction (Memon, Davies et al. 2007). At its broadest, governance has been defined as “the control of an activity by some means such that a range of defined outcomes is attained” (Hirst and Thompson 1999:184). Therefore for Hirst and Thompson, governance is much broader than just ‘the state’ and its influence over territorial politics. Governance extends beyond a treatment of government to also encompass economic, social and academic actors who have an interest in adding to the debate over regional futures.

Whereas the risk of such a contested and apparently broad concept is that it loses any efficacy, my intent in using the term is that it acts as a reminder that the struggles over the rescaling of Allegheny County’s municipal forms – and especially in the post-1850 period – were not simply a matter of setting local government boundaries. Rather, they were the means with which economic, political and social agents were acting to erect, protect or capture a range of assets such as school districts, urban prestige, and spaces of production.
2.2 Development of Minor Civil Divisions – 1700-1900

The division of natural space into political jurisdictions has been a constant process since the rise of centralized states. Units of religious and secular spatial organization such as shires, parishes, ridings and townships originated in western societies during the medieval era and were subsequently modified to meet the needs of ruling classes. Kinda’s research on the township provides evidence about the evolution of one form of local government (Kinda 2001). The township had been used as the formal and basic unit for local administration since 1662, originally defined as a rural area of land containing villages. With the transfer of the township to the New World, the concept gained different usages, depending on the spatial logic used in assembling local societies. For example in New England the township was used as a unit for local planning, whereas in Pennsylvania the term was used to describe a social ordering of the landscape.

Political spaces can be established by those with the political legitimacy and power to impose them, but changing social characteristics can also compel boundary changes. Shifting geographies caused by intra- and inter-urban migration, technological change and emerging local identities have motivated local communities to demand new spatial structures. The historical pattern of such demands in the United States is the original political units designed by governing bodies are fragmented into smaller spatial units aligned to a certain function, class or ethnic division. The process of urban fragmentation is oscillatory rather than monotonous, and there are historic examples of
communities advocating for the re-consolidation of urban spaces, often within a short period of fragmentation occurring.\textsuperscript{9}

Colonial legislatures had a vested interest in stimulating the development and prosperity of local areas, yet they recognized the futility of trying to govern solely from the center (Macmillan 1990: 15). The solution to bridging the gap between the state and the citizen varied between the American colonies, with different forms of land allocation and local political offices created (McBain 1925; Lemon 2001). The common link among the colonies was that spatial units such as counties and townships were formed by the state to act as intermediary units between them and the citizenry.

The urban region developed in accordance with certain legal principles relating to property rights, private ownership of land, and local community standards and practices. Devolution of responsibility for municipal incorporation by state governments to local courts occurred during the nineteenth century and led to an explosion of incorporation activities. This in itself was not a negative thing as it codified the previously hidden social geography of local areas and allowed for local democratic self-determination. The story continues as further changes in the urban landscape led particular groups to want additional changes to the form of urban governance. Given the complexity of arguments for and against particular forms of urban governance, reworking the boundaries of local government would rely on negotiations between communities, and the successful

\textsuperscript{9} Teaford's research on political change in the American city notes the concurrency of fragmentation and consolidation (Teaford 1979).
articulation of theories of governance from the abstract to the concrete, or from the global through to the local, where they could best be accepted by the electorate.

The spatial fix designed to meet the needs of a colonial economy and society was not sufficient to meet the shifting needs of an urbanizing and industrializing nineteenth century society. Warner argues innovations in transportation and technology provided the catalyst for changing urban forms (Warner 1972). His history describes three urban forms – the big city, typified by New York in the 1820-1870 period, the specialized city typified by Pittsburgh and Chicago in 1870-1920, and the megalopolis, typified by Los Angeles. The changing requirements of those cities compelled state leaders to periodic reassessments of relations between the local and the state scale.

Different compromises were reached by the states, and in the Pennsylvania case the decision was made to provide local areas with greater latitude for reorganization than they had previously enjoyed. Rescaling urban space was seen as the solution to the problem of the evolving urban center, and so in 1834 the state granted local county courts the power to authorize municipal incorporations, hence simplifying the process by which local communities could continue the sorting of their local spaces. Communities of interest could now petition the local court for approval of a new municipality and with sufficient support and the court’s consent, a community could emerge with control over their newly-legitimized political space.
Whereas the devolution of responsibility for the rescaling of local government units provided local communities with the opportunity to construct spaces consistent with local conditions, the flexibility to rescale local government created problems by the early twentieth century for the new cadre of professional planners and politicians produced by the Progressive Era. The main problem was one of coordination and oversight for county and state officials. The rescaling of the political spaces within counties had created a regional mosaic which reflected an increased internal diversification in terms of land use and demography. Whereas in a consolidated government decisions could be made over regional issues, the fragmentation of government during the nineteenth century began to be burdensome as particular problems – such as flood prevention and sanitation – were recognized to have regional importance.\(^\text{10}\)

The need to negotiate between many independent governmental units was a new experience for the planners and politicians who were now thinking regionally. The call of these professionals to consolidate the broader metropolis to serve the functions of planning and policy were joined by civic interest groups who saw additional benefits from replacing the patchwork quilt of municipalities with the whole cloth of an integrated region. Civic boosters favored consolidation as a means to recapture the population size that central cities had lost as a consequence of early suburbanization. From their perspective, census population rankings were a horse-race which was vital to win in order

\(^{10}\) Bauman and Muller’s recent book on planning in Pittsburgh in the pre-1945 period provides vital detail on these issues, including the scope and rivalry between the City Planning Commission and the Allegheny County Planning Commission (Bauman and Muller 2006)
to secure national prestige for local businesses and institutions (Figure 7). Urban reformers also favored consolidation, although their motivation was often to solve issues of inefficiency and inequity which they perceived.

Calls for consolidation in the early twentieth century were sometimes heeded and sometimes rebuffed. This episode of recalibration did not mark the end of changes to urban regions across the United States, as the growth of post-World War II suburbanization created further challenges to the conception of local government and regional solutions. Suburban drift disempowered and depopulated the central city, and local units of government continued to generate social inequalities. As noted in the introduction chapter, a new regionalist strain has risen to consider the scale at which urban and regional structures of governance should be organized.
Figure 7 The Population Horse-Race

Source: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 1929
The conclusion to all of these trends and countertrends is that consolidation and fragmentation are two sides of the same coin – that opportunities for some are threats to others. Consolidation concerns residents who are used to local taxing authority which can bolster resources such as school districts and other avenues of local prestige. Consolidation concerns other groups who strive to protect a particular lifestyle, whether it is middle class amenities or working class identities. At the same time, fragmentation concerns communities threatened by the loss of traditional land uses, such as open countryside. Fragmentation also concerns urban boosters, who perceive the intra-urban shift of population to be a threat to the status of the region and finally planners and reformers, to whom inherited and idiosyncratic structures are a cumbersome device which hinders rational or visionary planning. Rescaling the local units of government within urban regions therefore involves negotiation between the communities of the region and between the scale of life and the scale of theory.

2.3 The Urban Question: Prior Perspectives

The reordering of political boundaries in urban regions has received substantial attention throughout the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Prior perspectives on urban boundary reform have generated valuable information regarding the reasons for urban rescaling, the process by which reform occurs, and the consequence of fragmented or consolidated patterns of local government. The following is a synopsis of three areas of research on municipal reform, outlining the strengths of each perspective and explaining
where this research will complement or diverge from them. The first perspective emphasizes the Janus of participation and efficiency – with the size and number of minor political units fluctuating as communities change their opinions of them. The next perspective offers a compelling yet often overdetermined account of how changes in the urban landscape lead to contemporary governance arrangements. The final perspective also compares the forces of political fragmentation and consolidation, yet is more explicit in labeling the former as a pejorative condition to be solved through implementation (by planners) of the latter.

2.3.1 Participation and Efficiency

Jon Teaford developed a key perspective on the issue of urban boundary reform in his 1979 book, “City and Suburb” (Teaford 1979). Teaford provides a landmark history of fragmentation and consolidation in the American city, describing the reasons leading to urban reform and concluding the oscillation between these extremes of governance rests on the long-standing tension between proponents of democratic self-determination which tend toward fragmented local governments, and proponents of urban efficiency which generally support consolidation of municipalities.

Teaford describes the patchwork of municipalities as the consequence between opposing ideals of democratic participation and centralized efficiency, between utopic and dystopic visions of urban life. He explains how the explosion of municipalities had several causes, with different rationales driving the fragmentation of the city at different
points. What is not emphasized in this account is if processes leading to urban change were universal or specific to particular cities (although temperance and morality issues are one cited example of theories which fueled moves for fragmentation across different cities at the same time).

His analysis finds the resistance urban reform in the 1920s was based in fringes of the county (both geographically and socially), where the desire for freedom and liberty from centralized rule was strongest. What Teaford does not do is link the opposition he finds in the mill towns and the rural areas of Allegheny County back to principles of self-determination. This raises a set of questions that an added emphasis on power and identity in particular could address. For instance, what justifications were used by the groups on each side of the consolidation debates? Second, was the reluctance of mill-towns to join forces for a greater voice in a consolidated Pittsburgh due to the early influence of industrialists in these towns, which made them reluctant to again acquiesce to external forces?

Beyond Teaford, other authors have also considered the role of democracy and efficiency in explaining the root of change in urban areas. For instance, in “The Crabgrass Frontier” Jackson associates democratic values with the close local government best guaranteed through municipal incorporation (Jackson 1985). He contrasts that with efficiency as synonymous with economies of scale, and thus a leading rationale for the annexation of suburbs by their cities. As will be seen in the related
perspectives on evolution in urban government, specific interest groups were keenly interested in redefining urban boundaries for rationales based in efficiency.

2.3.2 Inevitability in Urban Development

The second perspective on urban boundary reform draws on historic, economic and geographic conditions to explain the development of urban areas. While the conditions and their development are often logical and essential for explaining fragmentation and consolidation, accounts of this type are weakened if they are overdetermined or simplified, leaving little to no room for agency, contestation and choice in the story of why some attempts at redefining local political boundaries fail while others succeed. For instance, Walker and Lewis note the academic tendency to simplify the urban form with periodic ‘rediscoveries’ of suburbanization processes based on stylized depictions of centralized industry and rings of suburban land (Walker and Lewis 2001).

What is problematic about such stylized and overdetermined analysis is if it overlooks the possibility that at certain points the outcome of regional debates – and hence regional futures and form – was uncertain. This is illustrated by the conclusion to an otherwise excellent review of urban theory by Martindale, which ends by advancing Weber’s theory of the city to the conclusion that since cities are losing their legal and political autonomy while citizens pursue non-local relations “the age of the city seems to be at an end” (Martindale 1958: 62).
The strengths and weaknesses of this antecedent-based approach to urban history are exemplified by Muller’s important article on metropolitan development in Pittsburgh (Muller 2001). Muller argues against explanations hinging on suburbanizing tendencies, showing it was the imperatives of business and the limitations of Pittsburgh’s topography which conspired to create the framework for the region’s pattern of growth. Whereas his paper effectively explains general tendencies leading to the formation of particular municipalities within Allegheny County, his focus does not explore how development of industrial suburbs diverged or mirrored the development of the more traditional suburbs. Choosing to overlook the differences between types of suburb in the region also means ignoring the political and planning relations between towns incorporated by industrialists and those incorporated by residents who sought to escape the city of Pittsburgh. Was there antagonism, or was the separate governance by these municipalities seen as sufficient, then deepened over time to subsequently explain why consolidation is so staunchly opposed?

Two recent histories of urban boundary reform in Allegheny County rely on oversimplified depictions of the communities and motives responsible for the decisions to restructure municipal boundaries. Jensen’s study of the fragmentation of Allegheny County’s governance and the first debate over consolidation raises many good points yet spends little time differentiating between the suburbs and municipalities in terms of support or opposition to the consolidation attempts (Jensen 2004). He claims proximity to the City of Pittsburgh explained support for federative rule, and bases his voting
analysis on contiguity alone, rather than on municipal characteristics. This oversimplified characterization of suburban motives and characteristics is also apparent in Lonich’s examination of Allegheny County’s municipal expansion (Lonich 1991). Lonich is satisfied to say incorporation occurred to meet the needs of local residents, ignoring the demographic or economic profiles of the different municipalities and the rationales for incorporation at specific periods. He also relies on an overly simplified dichotomy between the motives of the city and the county, presenting annexation efforts by the city as predatory, and resisted by a homogenous set of municipalities which belies the actual diversity of late nineteenth and early twentieth century suburbs. By adding to the discussion more depth and breadth about the successive changes to Allegheny County’s metropolitan composition not only is a more graphic depiction of changing urban form possible, but it can also inform discussions on the construction and reconstruction of scale, and the role of democracy and liberal concepts in geographic theories of the same.

2.3.3 ‘Problems’ of Fragmentation and ‘Solutions’ of Consolidation

The third perspective on urban boundary reform has historically been associated with the profession of regional planning, and focuses on the benefits and disadvantages of jurisdictional fragmentation in a region. As with Teaford’s contribution (Teaford 1979), the presumption of this perspective is that a plurality of local governments can be more democratic, yet curtails the economic and administrative efficiencies which arise from metropolitan governance. The perspective deviates from the participation/efficiency
approach by using the allure of heightened coordination and economic efficiency of consolidated government to advocate metropolitan solutions to local problems.

The central thesis of this approach is how coordinated planning can alleviate problems of the modern American city. Warner explains the origin of United States land law was an egalitarian ideal distinct from old-world customs of inheritance and feudalism (Warner 1972). However, the treatment of land as a private – rather than a social – resource created the conditions for exclusionary and speculative practices. In Warner’s view the local control of land policy led to conservative management styles which rebuffed any reform efforts and caused the contemporary “disordered, inhumane, and restricted city” (ibid.: p.15).

The proposed solution of this urban disorder was the ability for centralized planning to assert more influence in the coordinated governance of city regions. Adherents of the Metropolitanist regional planning tradition (Fishman 2000) believed urban planning should focus on preserving and fostering strong downtown areas, surrounded by industrial and residential zones and fringed by the suburbs. This top-down approach emphasized the construction of infrastructure to channel residents into the downtown area and promoted large-scale urban renewal projects which focused on poor, often black neighborhoods. Whereas municipal reformers sought changes to the institutions and processes within existing governments, metropolitan advocates sought to restructure the scale of urban government to reflect what they perceived as the shared needs of local municipalities (Wichern 1986).
Although the goal of planners subscribing to the metropolitan arguments did so to control or prevent social ills, a separate aspect of the fight against fragmented urban government arose from Taylor’s scientific management principles. Planners sought a reorganization of the city similar to Taylorism’s restructuring of the factory. The restructured city would be “conducive to the interests of capital”, and achieved through re-zoning (Fairfield 1994). Their intent borrowed from scientific management approaches to make the city a more efficient unit for the purpose of increasing capital accumulation. Fairfield suggests the paternalism of efficient planning in the Progressive Era detached the public from the planning process. This raises the question of whether the detachment between intellectuals, planners and the public existed in Allegheny County, and was at least partially responsible for the change in community attitudes toward urban reform, manifested as the suspicion held toward consolidation attempts during the 1900s and 1920s?

2.3.4 Unresolved Questions

To summarize, the three perspectives on issues of regional governance described above provide important pieces of evidence for explaining the question of why communities sometimes accept change, and sometimes reject it. Unresolved questions remain, and I will describe them before shifting to three additional concepts (scale, power and identity) which will form the basis for the story of episodic change in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.
The participation and efficiency perspective explains that the forces of governmental efficiency and coordination are opposed to ideals of democratic self-determination. When societies shift in their attitude toward one or another, changes in the political map will occur. This perspective is effective in providing a general sense of the processes at work in the American city, yet creates challenges for explaining the story which developed in Allegheny County over time. The narrative of accounts such as Teaford’s begins with an arbitrary date – 1834, which is the point at which the Pennsylvania legislature devolved responsibility for municipal incorporation to the county courts. While this is an important event (covered in Chapter Four of the present study), it creates a myth of prior stability in the county’s history which did not occur. The problem with beginning the story here is that it concocts the notion of a previously unitary and consolidated city which consequently fragmented. This privileges consolidation as a historic ideal state for an urban environment, and ignores the real dynamism and contestation over the form of the urban environment which can predate the erection of a county. Furthermore, the participation/efficiency perspective does not articulate the opposition and support by particular communities for particular plans; in the instance of Allegheny County, more space needs to be given to the heterogeneous interest groups – both internal and external to the county – which wielded power in debates over the episodes of rescaling which occurred.

The perspective which emphasizes the historic development of regional institutions provides valuable insight regarding the socioeconomic conditions and spatial
patterns which may explain processes of fragmentation and consolidation. Research under this banner reveal the reasons why specific municipalities have been created, whilst in the Allegheny County context recent studies have filled in many parts of the story regarding governance reform over time. What can become problematic are instances of overdetermined narratives, which reduce the room for agency, contestation and choice in the discussion of change and stability in the urban landscape. A general problem amongst these accounts is the overgeneralization of different communities and municipalities, which might conceal hitherto unnoticed heterogeneity regarding the motives and actions of communities during debates over municipal reform. Overgeneralization can also result in the formation of other mythologies, such as simplified ‘city versus suburb’ conclusions regarding reform motives and community reaction.

The third perspective arises from the planning literature, and brings a keen awareness of the origins and consequences of urban disorder. The capacity of urban professionals to recalibrate the urban environment leads to the reduction of many problems of metropolitan coordination and inequity, yet this perspective also creates a blunt choice between the problems of fragmentation and the solutions of consolidation. This mythology ignores the rationales for fragmentation that the participation/efficiency perspective would consider valuable – for instance, the development of social capital and opportunities for identity formation within smaller scales of government. A key problem
to be surmounted here is the capacity to be sensitive to the rhetoric and motives of
different groups in these debates, which could change between the periods of this study.

2.4 Reassessing the Urban Question

2.4.1 Introduction

To surmount the problems created by the traditional perspectives on
fragmentation and consolidation, I will include three additional concepts within my
research framework – scale, power, and identity. Each concept is a useful way to
surmount some of the limitations identified above. By rethinking scale as constantly
dynamic and under negotiation by actors involved in advocating for change (and
struggling against it) we have a way to remove the myth of stability at points of a
county’s history. Instead, we create the idea of horizontal and vertical contestation which
results in periodic shifts in the political map of the county. The myth of overdetermined
narratives and oversimplified explanations for change can be shed with more emphasis
given to power and power relations in the urban environment. Power is wielded
differently by different groups, all of whom can exert varying degrees of control over
different amounts of space.\footnote{Greg Crowley illustrates the efforts by community groups in post-1945 Pittsburgh to resist or shape urban revitalization projects (Crowley 2006). His case-studies describe the types of activism adopted by concerned groups, and the response by the public-private partnerships sponsoring the plans.} Finally identity is used to explode the mythology of
fragmentation as a problem to be solved by consolidation. Through identity, the
geographic expression of identity by different groups may be more apparent, helping to
disclose why at particular points change was accepted, whilst at other points it was
rejected.

2.4.2 New Politics of Scale

Geographers have traditionally considered scale to be a central and highly useful
concept, yet it was often considered neutral and unproblematic – a taxonomic device for
defining the analytic extent of a given project. The way of considering scale during the
post-World War II period was generally static – scales were considered nested and
discrete such that the terms ‘global’, ‘regional’ and ‘local’ were treated as distinct and
fixed categories for analysis, with processes occurring at one scale being contained by
that scale. Whereas that characterization was somewhat appropriate given the relative
stability of the era, economic and social conditions appeared more violently fluid after the
1970s, prompting a change in how scale was treated. Over the past thirty years the
understanding of scale and its relation to urbanization has expanded, enabling a new
perspective on processes of scale formation and change.

The new politics of scale emerged as a conceptual reaction to shifts occurring in
the processes and shape of global capitalism since the 1970s. Delaney and Leitner note
scale had traditionally been treated as “a nested hierarchy of bounded spaces of differing
size” (Delaney and Leitner 1997: 93), typically consisting of local and global spaces,
mediated by intermediate levels such as the nation-state. This static view of nested
geographic scales saw political boundaries as neutral and unambiguous, associated with particular economic and social processes which were wholly contained within them. Consequently, research on specific processes or events privileged the scales which were considered most closely associated with them. More specifically, the traditional view of scale ignored the subjective nature of scale – concepts such as the ‘local’ and the ‘global’ could vary in their specific geographic extent depending on the phenomena being discussed, although this was not readily apparent during the relatively stable post-war period. Massey illustrates this point in her critique of developmentalist responses to ‘regional problems’ in the post-World War Two era (Massey 1979). She describes the perception of ‘local’ economic problems and their solution as being contained within a bounded area. However, Massey notes the extent of the ‘local’ problem transcended the region, and was associated with capitalist processes occurring at national and global scales. Moreover, as Delaney and Leitner suggest, processes can interact and operate simultaneously at different scales, creating a more problematic relationship between ‘local’, ‘global’ and intermediate scales than traditional theories provide for.

Treating geographic scale as an unproblematic, uncontested and neutral space containing social and economic processes seemed appropriate through the post-World War II ‘long boom’ which was characterized by the dominance of national economies. The need to understand scale in a different way became apparent as global corporations became dominant economic agents, through the simultaneous articulation of global and local strategies. At the same time, state and local governments responded to the
restructuring crises of the 1970s and 1980s by retreating from an active governmental role to instead emphasizing governance – the coordination of economic and social functions with private enterprise. What became clear was the acceleration of economic globalization and the increased vulnerability of local scales to regional and global shifts meant that processes were not captured by specific scales – instead, the global and local were mutually implicated in the changes which were underway, meaning theory had to be similarly flexible to comprehend the sources and consequences of contemporary processes.

The conceptual solution to these issues came gradually, as noted by Brenner (Brenner 2000). He describes a situation in which the formation of the new theory of scale followed changes in the form of the urban question. During the 1970s, as new globalizing forces were changing the landscape of capitalism, Manuel Castells’ notion of the urban question involved looking at the urban setting as a space for the social relations of capitalism. This treatment of the urban question downplayed the production of the urban scale, and also left supra-urban processes as external parameters to the urban question. As noted above, the shifts in global capitalism which became apparent during the 1980s led urban and geographic theorists to reverse Castells’ formation of the urban question. Rather than looking at urban spaces as the arena for capitalist processes, academics began considering how capitalist processes could construct new urban spaces.

Once this transition had been made, the next progress was made by the inclusion of scalar relations into the urban question, and the development of a relational,
constructionist perspective on scale. Through the 1990s, the major contributions in this area dispelled the notion of scales as either neutral or preordained spaces. What came into focus was the manner in which different scales were constituted and reconstituted through the negotiation of different actors.

Brenner (ibid.) characterizes the main strains of this research as world cities research, in which urban areas are considered modes in global networks. Here, the imposition of global processes upon local urban regions, and the simultaneous influence of localized capacities and differences upon the global scale are considered. Second, changes in the vertical and horizontal relations between cities have been recognized. This work examines the political and economic competition between urban regions for investment and prestige, and includes the notion that hierarchical relations between cities are not fixed, and rather change over time as some urban spaces decline, and others become newly competitive. Finally, research inspired by Regulationist analysis examines cities as arenas for the re-articulation of state governance – partnerships between the state and private enterprise, new forms of entrepreneurial government and shifts in service provision all provide latitude for the new articulation of intra-urban spaces within the city, and may be subject to contestation by groups which feel threatened by those changes. The changes which have occurred since the 1970s required a new method for exploration, as it became clear that scales were neither neutral nor unproblematic – the interaction between local and global processes, and the continual reworking of political,
economic and social scales meant that new concepts and a new terminology were required.

These revelations on the fluidity of scale and political geography led geographers to develop more dynamic accounts of scale production and reproduction. The constructionist account (exemplified by (Political Geography 1997; Brenner 1998; Cox 1998; MacLeod and Goodwin 1999) holds scale as a key concept when approaching spatial analysis of social, political and economic processes. By rejecting the notion of scales as predetermined, fixed and neutral categories, constructionist accounts select analytical scales in relation to particular empirical studies, but also presume the events and actors responsible for shaping processes will extend beyond any one geographic level.

Marston recently critiqued the constructionist perspective on scale outlined above (Marston 2000). She agrees with the principle of understanding how scales are constituted and restructured, but is critical of studies which emphasize a limited set of processes in explaining the construction of scale. She argues the process of scale construction is actually constituted around three sets of relations: capitalist production, reproduction and consumption. For Marston, these relations are equally important in producing scale, and hence must be attended to equally by geographers. Marston concludes not enough consideration has been made of scale construction through processes of social production and consumption, criticizing them for not considering the “questions of difference in human agents and how power relations outside the relations of
capital and labor might also influence scale making” (Marston 2000: 238). Despite the convincing nature of this argument, it is likely any study utilizing scale as a concept will need to ignore some processes of scale formation because of the particular character of the problem under investigation.

The new perspective on scale also addresses why groups might want to redefine their local political boundaries. A key contribution by Eric Swyngedouw is the point that process (rather than scale) is the most important starting point for analysis (Swyngedouw 1997). This is because traditional approaches to regional problem-solving associated specific problems with specific scales, not allowing for the possibility that a regional issue might have an exogenous cause (Massey 1979). Swyngedouw stresses how processes could have different implications depending on the position of the observer – there could be simultaneous global and local consequences arising from an event. This is an important point regarding why local political boundaries might be redefined, because it raises the possibility that actors with different perspectives on local problems, national debates, and economic opportunities might choose to ‘solve’ those problems for the communities of Allegheny County through spatial realignment.

With these developments and critiques in mind, the question remains of how this new politics of scale can be related to the processes of fragmentation and consolidation
which were underway in Pennsylvania during the mid-eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{12} By tracing
the history of scale within the urban question, Brenner (ibid) shows how particular issues
only came into focus as a consequence of conceptual shifts. The new politics of scale
which considers scale as historically specific, perpetually contested and reconstructed of
and by social relations developed to assist comprehension of the new dynamics of global
capitalism. In the context of historic urban dynamics, I argue it is only as a consequence
of this conceptualization of scale within the urban question that the rationales behind the
scaling and rescaling of municipal government and local political scales within regions
such as Allegheny County can be explored.

Whereas the new politics of scale has arisen due to the changes in the global
economy, the notions of scale which have emerged can be transferred to other periods,
where they may explain the changes and reasons for those changes that occurred at the
time. Brenner’s discussion regarding the struggles over space as an arena of political
power under contemporary capitalism force us to consider why this concept should be
applied solely to contemporary analysis. Why were social classes and communities
unwilling or incapable of restructuring their own scales in earlier periods, even when
given the opportunity to do so – such as in Allegheny County during the late 1920s, when

\textsuperscript{12} I am not making the argument that the construction and reconstruction of scale \textit{began} here, as earlier
empires certainly had their own experience with defining and reforming political boundaries – for example,
see Dilke’s research on Greek and Roman land surveying (Dilke 1998: Chapter Six). For an example of
geographical representations of space during the Enlightenment, see Edney (Edney 1999).
the opportunity for Federative county reform were proposed? Possible reasons are that
the crises or social problems of the period were not as pressing as they are currently –
that an acquiescent working class sought to preserve the spatial structure which had
brought relative prosperity to their communities. Another reason is that the action to
preserve a fragmented county structure of government was seen by specific communities
as a very active form of political resistance – one in which political power would not be
consolidated to a centralized, proto-entrepreneurial state. Is the intensity over struggles
for space contextual?

The issue of scale permeates our question of why attitudes toward urban
governance have shifted. New political units were carved from Allegheny County’s
original townships, defining the local scales communities use to govern their daily lives.
Consequent attempts to redefine these boundaries indicate a perception shift regarding
the optimal scale for addressing community problems (such as pollution or inadequate
revenue) or opportunities (such as metropolitan growth). Finally, broader processes –
including the state’s desire to either retain central control over incorporation powers or
devolve them to local governments, economic trends influencing local industries, and
national debates over social and political issues – can have profound (if uneven)
consequences at other scales.

13 See Chapter Six of the present study.
While the current understanding of scale as fluid, contested and porous emerged from changes occurring in the last third of the twentieth century, it also provides a new perspective on the processes in Allegheny County during the first third of the twentieth century. For instance the ‘new politics of scale’ stresses how ongoing negotiation and contestation can alter the scale of political boundaries (Leitner 1997). This idea was primarily developed as a response to changes in national sovereignty occurring because of globalization, but the fluidity of scale is also evident in Allegheny County’s repeated rescaling of local political boundaries during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### 2.4.3 Power and Urban Form

The second concept informing this analysis is that of power, and how it is wielded to control the formation and development of Allegheny County’s political and social form. Examining the map of an urban region or walking down the street of any neighborhood can provoke thoughts of the power needed to generate these spaces. Structures, processes and actors are involved in replacing a formerly natural space with a region which is at once recognizable as distinct, yet also carrying characteristics found in any region. A key contribution of Henri Lefebvre’s “The Production of Space” is it compels a much broader notion of the power required – beyond physical power to the essential relations between economic, political, juridical and social power – to shape space. Lefebvre (Lefebvre 1974:1991) predicts when the presumption of space as a predetermined, neutral and transparent container for social processes is dispelled, a landscape created by violence, struggle and guile is revealed.
Lefebvre’s suggestion to look for the basis and application of power underlying the production of space is important because once a space has been altered, homogenized and abstracted, the ‘scaffolding’ which went into its creation is removed, and the original reasons for its construction are obscured. This applies to Allegheny County, because whereas the lines of political subdivision on the county maps of 1788, 1834, 1870, 1907 and 1929 might appear neutral and static, they conceal the histories of contestation and choice also implied by the ‘politics of scale’ discussed previously – in other words, the fragmentation of the county into its seven original townships and the further development of the region’s political boundaries were not inevitable events.

A useful starting point for understanding the role of power in producing space is the question of who commands the creation or re-creation of space, and who demanded this be done? This question arises from the second chapter of “Production of Space”, in which Lefebvre explores the nature of social space, its production and how it may be understood. He explains the production of social space involves the gradual destruction of nature, as humankind proceeds to make space more abstract. The reason for increasing abstraction is commodification – to enable the economic exchange of space it must be converted into a product – and this means making the features of space more universal. The production and reproduction of social space into more homogenous forms doesn’t erase the history of space, instead inscribing new land uses, imagery and boundaries onto what has gone before. Lefebvre’s theory of social space hence involves understanding form, function and structure, because the visible human-made forms in space may have
arisen through different structures and functions – understanding these helps comprehend the power relations inherent in the production and abstraction of space.

Lefebvre suggests the root of power in constructing space is unveiled by exploring who commands the creation or re-creation of space, and who demands this be done. The likeliest commanders of space are those with sufficient resources to shape space to fulfill a specific spatial vision. For instance property speculators, agents of the state including planners and politicians, and business leaders have sufficient financial and political power to transform natural space into spaces of production and consumption, while community groups might also have influenced incorporation through the rejection or support of plans to reconfigure local political boundaries.

For Harvey, the genesis of resistance or acquiescence is in the class-based differences underlying community construction (Harvey 1987). He asserts spatial practices vary based on access to resources and hence different groups – whether working class or middle- and upper-classes – will construct urban spaces differently. Low income populations faced with greater spatial constraints create tight-knit communities with an attachment to turf. Lacking any strong institutions or state assistance, communities protect these spaces by using ethnic, social or occupational discrimination. This form of social exclusion and the retention of local political autonomy are cherished, given capital can still act upon the community through broad control of the spaces of work. In the Allegheny County context, this theory might explain the resistance of working-class
municipalities and rural townships to local political reforms which were promoted by urban planners, academics and other outside actors.

In contrast, wealthy populations are furnished by abundant exchange values, spatial mobility and a sympathetic state. As their access to a broader set of resources creates less dependency on community values alone, community construction for wealthy populations is focused on enhancing exchange values. This is manifested in municipalities by a focus on preserving and increasing property values through the exclusion of undesirable groups and by the reproduction of the community as a space for consumption. Continuing the link to the Allegheny County context the rise of urban boosterism, professional planning and academic enthusiasm for regional rescaling of local government was strongest in wealthier municipalities and in the city. This enthusiasm was based in a desire to coordinate planning to alleviate county-wide problems had their foundation in non-middle class municipalities, and which prevented further gains to capital accumulation.

2.4.4 Identity Politics in the City

Social identity is the third theoretical approach used to understand why some attempts to redefine local political boundaries succeed while others fail. The key benefit of using the vexing issue of identity is it captures the role and motive specific communities adopt when presented with the opportunity (or threat) of rescaling their region. Among the problems associated with using identity is the breadth of the concept.
It can be thought of in terms of the social identity created by local groups conflating to create regional identities (Harvey ibid.). The economic realm also creates identities, whereby the Southwestern Pennsylvania region as an industrial district creates its own identity and mandates (Warner 1972; Muller 2001). Finally the identity of a region is understood differently by different groups – professional and private, local and non-local, or by different ethnic, religious or class-based groups.

The array of possible identities is made more complex by the situation in which people draw upon multiple identities – actors do not make decisions based on class, ethnicity or occupation alone, but on all of these aspects and others (Castells 1997). But despite the challenges associated with including identity in a study of political fragmentation, salient questions require understanding how identities of local communities contributed to the willingness to rescale local political boundaries, and the sudden rejection of further changes during the 1920s. For instance, how did social identity influence the creation of municipalities and local forms of attachment? Did the relative power held by different communities prompt incorporation in some instances, and did attachment to turf arise from ethnic and class-based identities, in the manner Harvey suggests (Harvey ibid.)? A related question is whether these identities created and shaped responses to proposed changes.

Finally, what communities or groups promoted and railed against change, and were specific ethnic, religious or class-based identities mobilized to provide support for their arguments? In a separate study of identity, Castells (ibid.) argues the divided ethnic
loyalties of migrant groups living in the contemporary United States created apathy toward local problems. Given the strong presence of migrant communities in Allegheny County during the period of this study, can the rejection of political change be partially attributed to a similar apathy by municipalities dominated by first-generation migrants?

2.5 Research Framework

The preceding perspectives and concepts provide a broad platform from which to reevaluate the history of political boundary change in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. I have described the general history of local political division in the United States, explaining that minor civil divisions were erected to provide the state with an intermediary administrative layer through which interactions with local communities could occur. Changes were made to the configuration of these minor civil divisions as theories of state and local relations shifted, or as changes occurred in technology, policy or society.

Traditional academic perspectives on this process of urban change have placed different emphases on how to explain nineteenth and early twentieth century boundary reform in urban areas of the United States. One perspective has favored the tussle between efficiency and democracy, yet the reduction of urban change to such a dyadic relationship ignores the agency for and against proposed changes. Another perspective provides valuable insight regarding the development of regional institutions, but the generalized categories of these accounts sacrifice the texture and exceptionalism of
specific events. The final perspective provides powerful insights about the functions and
dysfunctions of regional fragmentation, but tends to ignore the rapidity with which spatial
structures lose their currency – therefore, regional consolidation should not be considered
the final point of equilibrium for a given region.

The possibilities and limitations of these perspectives can be combined into an
exciting way of looking at change in Allegheny County and elsewhere, especially when
concepts of scale, power and identity are woven throughout. The four episodes of change
described in Part II of the dissertation emphasize five themes which draw on the concepts
and perspectives described above.

2.5.1 The direction of change

The new politics of scale calls us to be sensitive to the direction from which
changes are proposed, and to the scales at which changes will have an effect. Calls for
boundary reform may originate at the state scale as a consequence of administrative
requirements, or they may originate at the grass-roots level, with local residents
coalescing around a concept of space which demands official codification. Alternately,
boundary reform may permeate from the national or international context, with new
theories of spatial organization emerging, diffusing and touching down in specific
regions. The extent to which change might be directed is a function of the power
particular groups have – sovereignty provides the state with the right to structure its
internal spaces, yet Leviathan exists through the consent of the citizenry, and other supra-
national forces such as capital also have ways of compelling new spatial fixes (Harvey 1982).

2.5.2 Natural and abstract space

Consolidated regions or fragmented regions may occur in specific places at particular times, although as alluded to above, neither is likely to create a permanent equilibrium point. What is likelier is the continuing destruction of natural space by abstract space, as described by Lefebvre. This can be conceived of in contemporary terms by the suburbanization of metropolitan regions, or the somewhat confusing distanciation of the information society (Amin and Thrift 2002). This can also be conceived of in historic terms – how does one approach a blank map, and what occurs once lines begin to be superimposed? In North America, a region became Pennsylvania which gradually gave rise to Allegheny County. Through a set of divisions and decisions, the natural began to give way to the abstract in ways which influenced all subsequent patterning of local government boundaries.

2.5.3 Scalar relations

The container of the region was exploded after the end of the economic boom following the Second World War. As the interconnectedness of localities was recognized, geographers began to focus on how the local constituted the global, and vice versa (Lipietz 1993). Despite the modern context of these revelations, they also have deep implications in historical contexts. Horizontal relations between minor civil
divisions are important, as different concepts of how space might be organized are tested and debated as different municipal forms. Hegemonic cities are challenged by regional challengers, and urban futures compete with rural tradition. At the same time, state authorities impose their own concepts regarding urban hierarchies within the state, or notions of how other local resources – such as education (Boscoe 2000) – should be administered. Vertical relations between counties and other regions will also become more important as the episodes of change proceed, with nascent economic systems demanding new configurations of capital, power and local identities.

2.5.4 The historic development of space

At different points in the history of Allegheny County, certain themes will be more prominent. The assertion of local identities was more evident in the mid-nineteenth century, as the relaxation of incorporation powers meant new communities could emerge from the large townships. In later periods, the influence of political and economic power was more influential in shaping and reshaping local political spaces. The same formula cannot be used to understand each period in the county’s history, since the concepts of space differed over time.

2.5.5 Openness to points of choice

The final theme through the analysis chapters is choice. The spatial future of Allegheny County was not predetermined by the erection of the seven original townships, as should be apparent by the rapidity with which they were altered. At different points,
choices were required to determine the future shape of local municipalities. Whether it was the economic decision to locate a town plat in order to exploit a confluence between two rivers, the decision to gerrymander township boundaries to capture the tax revenues accruing from a steelworks, or the decision to emphasize civic pride over governance education in a reform referendum, the evolution of Allegheny County’s local government occurred through incremental changes where different decisions or resistance could have created vastly different outcomes.
Chapter 3 The Division of Space in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1682-1829

3.1 Introduction – The Abstraction of Natural Space

3.1.1 Land Policy in Colonial Pennsylvania

In his magisterial account “The Shaping of America”, Donald Meinig describes how the earliest inscription of boundary lines on the landscape represented the continuation of European imperial rivalries onto the new continent of America. Lines delineating the colonies were often based on arbitrary latitudes and great rivers, having little reference or relevance to either the topographical realities of the new territories, or to the indigenous people contained therein (Meinig 1986: 233). His key point is to assert that the political boundaries found on maps are not neutrally determined, eternally changeless artifacts. They are instead the outcome of struggle, contestation and choice which invoke Lefebvre’s argument of how natural space is gradually transformed into abstract space through the imposition of political and social frameworks (Lefebvre 1974:1991). Once these coarse colonial boundaries were formed, state and society converged to develop “spatial frameworks of local administration, which reflect some special characteristics of each society within its larger political bounds” (Meinig ibid. 235).

The systems of governance which developed in Allegheny County were modified from systems of local government in seventeenth-century England and eastern
Pennsylvania during the colonial period. These English antecedents for colonial government and their transferral to the American colonies are explained in this section. The diffusion of English administrative units such as the township underwent some changes in the translation, depending on the usage of the term in England when it was transferred to the American context (Kinda 2001). I describe the Pennsylvania system of governance in the colonial period, emphasizing the systems of land division, urban and rural governance, and the compromise of powers reached between the township and the county. During this period, the development of local governmental institutions in eastern Pennsylvania created the basis for how counties at the western frontier of the province were established, and that subject will be broached in the subsequent section (3.2).

3.1.2 Colonial Antecedents – the English system of government

England’s local government system of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries became the template for American colonial governance. Ecclesiastical and secular administrative units such as ridings, parishes and towns were adopted and modified by colonists for use in new contexts (Kinda 2001). The parish and the county are described as the two ‘national’ units of local administration in England, according to the Webb’s comprehensive history of the subject (Webb and Webb 1908). By 1662 the township was the formal and basic unit of government subdividing the county, and was defined as a unit of rural land, settlement and community containing villages (Kinda 2001). Under this scale was a fragmented mosaic of manors, boroughs and municipalities – differentiated by the extent of organization and local autonomy they possessed. The least
organized local units (by seventeenth century standards) were the manors, which were remnants of the medieval land use system that was becoming increasingly anachronistic in the modernizing English state of the seventeenth century. The ‘manorial boroughs’ were characterized by more organization, standing “midway between the thousands of active lord’s courts and the couple of hundred of municipal corporations in the cities and boroughs which were entitled to create their own justices of the peace” (Webb and Webb 1908).

Municipal corporations granted by the Crown had become more prevalent during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and gave English towns a stronger legal basis from which to control local affairs. During this period municipal corporations were not readily distinguishable from private manufacturing or trading corporations, and the differences between the two would not become legally distinct until the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 (McBain 1925). Municipal incorporation was an important privilege for towns and cities because it codified key rights that were important for the local governance of urban places. The rights granted under typical municipal charters included rights of perpetual succession and a common seal, the right to sue and be sued, the right to hold lands, and the right to issue by-laws (Archer 2000: 236).

What was already evident during this period of English urban history was a trend which would become highly important to the institutional future of American counties – the struggle between local democratic power for the counties and towns on one side, opposed by the exertion of sovereign and centralized power on the other. In medieval
and Renaissance England this struggle was evident by the prerogative of the crown to either grant or revoke both private and public charters.\textsuperscript{14} The early urban history of England has many examples of charters being granted and revoked by the crown in a cycle corresponding to the relative strength of the central government, versus local towns (Archer 2000). In addition to royal powers of incorporation, the English Parliament also had the authority to enact laws controlling municipal affairs. This authority was occasionally used to supplement charters with added rights and responsibilities, or to create new commissions to control municipal services (McBain 1925: 182). As American colonization began, the crown’s prerogative to form or dissolve municipal charters would continue – as would the desire of American localities to maintain control over their local affairs.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14} The investiture or divestiture of municipal charters would often occur for political reasons. Miller describes the process of charter provision under Charles II, concluding the formation of boroughs during the late seventeenth century was the consequence of England’s woefully underdeveloped bureaucratic class, and the concomitant desire of Charles II to ensure local charters were created which put the power of government into ‘loyal’ hands (Miller 1985)
\end{flushright}
3.1.3 Transfer of English governance to America

The familiar English systems of local government administration were transferred when the process of American colonization began. Local governmental forms in America followed English precedent with the familiar English counties, towns, townships and boroughs becoming the most important local government units in America. Despite the common heritage of these administrative units, the American colonies used the terms in different ways and created systems of government which began to diverge from both England and the other colonies.

The origin and evolution of the term ‘township’ is an example of how a spatial unit acquired new meanings as it was adapted for use in different contexts. Akihiro Kinda examines the original usage of the term in Britain and how it was subsequently used in New England and other British colonies (Kinda 2001). Differences in the how the term was used are ascribed to the evolution of the term in Britain and the point at which diffusion from Britain to America occurred. For example the township was used as a planning concept in Britain at the point when New England settlements were established. By the time colonies in Pennsylvania were settled, the use of the township concept had evolved to encompass community and administrative functions.

In New England the township was the basic administrative unit. It was developed by early Puritan communities to emphasize a democratic structure focused around the town meeting in a way which recreated archaic English institutions of local governance.
(Allinson and Penrose 1887: xiii-xiv). At the earliest point of the New England township it “may almost be said that each of them originally formed an independent nation” (De Tocqueville 1841:Chapter V), providing for the citizens an “equitable, homogenous and introverted” scheme marrying urban planning with personal liberty (Warner 1972).

Under this scheme the important elected and appointed offices for local administration were invested in the townships, whereas the county was generally an aggregate of several townships with a limited number of political and judicial functions overseeing the township system (Allinson & Penrose, ibid.: xv-xvi).

In contrast to the New England model the Virginia plan emphasized the county as the primary unit of local administration. The larger size of land holdings, the more active role of the English crown in the colony and the lower significance given to grass-roots democracy created a system of governance in Virginia more similar to the English model of the seventeenth century. Counties were the extension of towns and plantations, and county officials gained a similar range of powers to those invested in officials of the New England townships (Allinson & Penrose, ibid.: xvii-xix).

During the colonial period American corporate law was evolving at a similar pace to England, and hence the American colonies also ignored distinctions between public and private corporations. The municipal corporations granted during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a function of the executive branch of colonial governments, rather than of the legislative branch or by the English crown. McBain notes the colonial governors relied on the extensive latitude provided by their royal warrants to justify
dividing the land: “By virtue of this office he was capable of exercising the royal prerogative within his jurisdiction, subject only to the limitations imposed by his commission and instructions” (McBain 1925: 186-88). This meant it was to be expected that systems for local governance would evolve differently in each of the colonies – under the administration of semi-autonomous governors each would be guided by local conditions and the personal views on local government held by the governors.

The power to shape local governance was perhaps strongest in the proprietary colonies such as Pennsylvania. Proprietary colonies invested considerable jurisdictional powers from the Crown to the proprietor. Derived from the palatine fiefdoms of Norman England, proprietary colonies were in essence ‘feudal principalities’ (Shepherd 1967) in which extensive latitude was given to the proprietor in exchange for fealty to the sovereign and some measure of tribute.¹⁵ Proprietary rights extended to administrative appointments, taxation, the right to have a mint, and to create a system of land division and municipal incorporation (ibid.: 6). Joseph Davis explains the right to incorporate municipalities was seldom explicit in proprietary charters yet was exercised by proprietors as “most of the proprietary patents contained an authorization, in more or less definite terms, to incorporate municipalities “(Davis 1917: 8). Colonial legislatures also could grant corporate privileges under an implied authority to act ‘under the negative of the Governor’ – but in practice the charters of colonial boroughs and cities were granted

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¹⁵ In Pennsylvania this tribute consisted of limited mineral rights – one fifth of all silver and gold ore found in the Province, as well as the annual payment of two beaver skins to Windsor Castle.
by proprietors, with the one exception of incorporation by legislative act during the colonial period being Charles City, South Carolina (McBain, ibid.: 189).

Colonial legislatures regarded themselves empowered to enact laws relating to municipal affairs (ibid. 192). In Pennsylvania, the colonial legislature enacted a number of laws dealing with subjects that could have fallen under the purview of local municipal ordinances, yet were controlled by the central government. These ordinances covered an extensive number of regulations over subjects such as fire prevention, street traffic, the running at large of animals, the storage of gunpowder, the location of noxious industries, street encroachments and building regulations (ibid. 196-197). The legislature also enacted laws creating new structures of governance and regulation including in Philadelphia overseers for the poor (1705-1706), ferry operation licenses (1721), liquor licenses, and a superintendent to gather duties on immigrants (Allinson & Penrose 1887).

### 3.1.4 Pennsylvania’s Colonial Governance

The province of Pennsylvania was granted to William Penn as payment for debts owed to the Penn family by the English crown. As with other proprietary governments, the perspective of William Penn as proprietor strongly influenced the character of Pennsylvania’s system of land division and local government. Penn’s key intention was to correct the follies of the old world by planning for low-density rural townships (Bronner 1962), with the exception of Philadelphia at the eastern edge of the province, laid out as a ‘Greene Country Towne’ (Reps 1965). Penn’s disdain for the urban world
was evident in his 1681 guide to Pennsylvania. He attacked the decline in English society arising from migration to the towns, which (in his opinion) depopulated the countryside and created an emasculated urban class, weakened by the ‘soft and delicate Usage’ and ‘lazy and luxurious living’ of city life. He sought to reverse the decay of rural virtue by creating a new society in his province which would be a reaction against the rapidly urbanizing landscape of seventeenth-century England. The size of his new province gave him the means to create a ‘traditional rural society ordered and stabilized by a common adherence to the principles of individual proprietorship and a consensus in social hierarchy and common religious conviction’. It was to be a nostalgic, conservative world dominated by Quaker settlements, a rural economy and hierarchical society (Bronner, ibid: 79).

Penn’s plan called for a ‘localized social order’ of linked rural settlements (ibid.: 88) organized into townships – hence in the early Pennsylvania context the term had an emphasis on community design, rather than as primarily a planning unit (Kinda 2001). The ideal Quaker communities were characterized by a lack of vertical organization – all members of the community had a role in the affairs of community meetings, and decisions were made through prayerful discernment: “there was no minister or leader, and all waited before the Lord for His divine leading” (Bronner ibid.: 51). Although he understood the need for tradesmen who would usually settle in urban areas, he hoped they could be distributed throughout the villages and townships. Penn described the form of settlement he intended to establish in his new realm:
We do settle in the ways of Townships or Villages, each of which contains 5,000 acres, in square, and at least Ten Families; the regulation of the Country being a family to each five hundred acres…

Our townships lie square; generally the Village in the Center, the Houses either opposite, or else opposite to the middle, betwixt two houses over the way, for near neighborhood. We have another Method, that tho the Village be in the Center, yet after a different manner: five hundred Acres are allotted for the Village, which, among ten families, comes to fifty Acres each: This lies square, and on the outside of the square stand the Houses, with their fifty Acres running back, where ends meeting make the Center of the 500 Acres as they are to the whole. Before the Doors of the Houses lies the high way, and cross it, every mans 450 acres of Land that makes up his Complement of 500, so that the Conveniency of Neighbourhood is made agreeable with that of the land.

(Quoted in Bronner, 1962: 51-52)

The land policy set out by Penn was a feudal arrangement. He would sell the land to colonists who could afford it, yet would still be owed quitrents (of one shilling per 100 acres) in perpetuity. Penn and his children reserved several large manors for their own use, many of which included the choicest land available. In practice Penn’s proposed community settlements failed to take hold partly because of the extent of his new province. Settlers from Germany, Scotland and Ireland found land prices much lower than in their source countries, creating the desire amongst settlers to purchase large tracts of land ‘to the limit of their means’ (Trewartha 1946: 584), which made Penn’s ideal village settlement more difficult to create.

16 Unless the colonist could pay 18 shillings per 100 acres, in which case the quitrent would be commuted (Bronner 1962: 60-61).
3.1.5 Local government in eastern Pennsylvania

William Penn’s new province was formed from part of the lands formerly under Dutch sovereignty, and subsequently held by the Duke of York. The Duke of York’s ‘Booke of Lawes’, published in 1664 provided statutes for local government in New York and the dependencies (including the Delaware region which was to become part of Pennsylvania). These laws were ‘very much admired and imitated’ (Allinson & Penrose, ibid.: xxxiv) by Penn when he developed the local governmental system for his new province.

The ‘Booke of Lawes” drew upon the English system of ridings, towns and parishes. The riding was an aggregation of towns devised for judicial and political purposes. As in New England, the town and parish were the principal units for local organization while county government was practically nonexistent. Each town was governed by a constable and elected overseers (originally elected for two year terms) with authority over local affairs. Local tax assessments for the towns were administered by the constable and the riding sheriff, with the taxes mainly used to support social services including the local church and the poor. People living outside of towns were assessed “by the rates of the Town next unto it; the measure or Estimation shall be By the Distance of the nearest Meeting House” (ibid: xxxviii-xxxix).

When Penn gained control of his province some changes were made to the local institutions of government. Pennsylvania’s system of local government developed into a
hybrid of the New England and Virginia models, with the powers of local governance divided between county and township. Penn’s original plan for settlement focused on ‘politically strong townships with agricultural villages’ (Lemon 1967: 509), with the primary function for townships being the provision of local self-government to rural areas (Phillips 1954: 354). Despite Penn’s plan, counties became increasingly important for local government for two reasons – one demographic and one political. The first reason was that because of low population densities in the late seventeenth century, neither the township or the borough could become as important as the county (ibid.: 344). Lemon suggests the central role of the counties was also created by the strong coalition of Quaker political leaders in the earliest phase of the province who bolstered their scale of government in the earliest phase of the province’s history, and later resisted the formation of western counties which could dilute their power in the state legislature.

3.1.6 The status of the city in colonial Pennsylvania

The Charter of Privileges granted to Penn in 1701 provided him the authority “to erect and incorporate Towns into Borroughs, and Borroughs into Citties, and to make & constitute ffaires and markets therein, with all other convenient privileges and immunities according to the merits of the inhabitants & the ffitness of the places” (Allinson & Penrose 1887: 8). He exercised this authority by laying out the ‘greene country towne’

17 These powers granted to Penn as proprietor were more limited than future charters which provided greater latitude to the legislature in the incorporation and disestablishment of municipal status and powers.
of Philadelphia because while he desired a province consisting of low-density rural settlements, he understood the importance of cities to stimulate trade and commerce. The town of Philadelphia was to become an essential node for the new province, providing a gateway to the global economy while also acting as the central place for the economic, political and social activities of the new province (Lemon 1976).

Philadelphia was originally constituted as a close corporation, meaning the corporation consisted of a self-electing corporate body, in contrast to being bound to the community or to the place. This form of local government is notable for the ‘illiberal features’ (Allinson & Penrose ibid.: 11) contained in it. Under the original charter for Philadelphia key office-holders held their positions for life terms (ibid.: 9), and the mayor had significant authority over city business, to the degree that no corporate meetings could be convened by any other party. These features of the charter were a consequence of local politics in England at the time Philadelphia’s original charter was granted. At that time Charles II had reduced the amount of democracy and autonomy from the borough system in an effort to maintain control over localities which might otherwise have opposed his actions.

For example, Penn could not grant extraordinary powers to any municipalities he created, nor could he incorporate a place without the consent of the locals.
3.2 The Historical Development of Western Pennsylvania

In the mid-eighteenth century, Allegheny County was nowhere to be found on maps of colonial Pennsylvania, since it awaited future creation as political necessity and local demand intersected. Despite the lack of strong political boundaries the region of Pennsylvania to the west of the Allegheny Ridge was already populated – first by native Indian tribes such as the Delaware and Iroquois, and gradually by waves of European settlers attracted by new land with abundant natural resources, and with climate and soils considered favorable for agriculture (Buck and Buck 1939). The precise date of European penetration of the region is difficult to ascertain but Florin’s definition of initial settlement in early 1750s by groups exploring north along the Monongahela River is an adequate benchmark date for this study¹⁸ (Florin 1977: 62-66).

In 1768 the Treaty of Fort Stanwix transferred official control over western Pennsylvania from native Indian tribes to the colonial Pennsylvania government, in return for 10,000 pounds (Donehoo 1926: 911). The sale of western lands to the state government provided the opportunity for European settlement to proceed in a more orderly and legitimate manner than had occurred previously (Day 1843: 31). However, despite the procurement of these lands, western Pennsylvania was only sparsely settled

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¹⁸ Florin used county histories as the base data in his isochronal maps of frontier expansion in Pennsylvania. While he is open about the potential inaccuracies in these records (and in the imprecise nature of defining the “frontier”), his analysis supports the general settlement pattern of southwest Pennsylvania, with expansion from the south and east.
and was not yet an uncontested space which could be divided for sale to settlers (Harper 1991: 8).

The early cartographic history of Pennsylvania shows the western part of the state was not only sparsely surveyed (and sparsely understood), but was also a sphere of contested political desires. This is apparent in a map of Pennsylvania published for the colony’s political leaders in 1770. European settlements did not appear west of the town of Bradford, Cumberland County; the main social features of the region were Indian ‘cabbins’ and towns, as well as battlefields and the military installations and road networks which created avenues for development. The white-on-black map can be used as a gauge of geographic knowledge and settlement; the southeast of Pennsylvania (including and adjacent to the three original counties of Bucks, Chester and Philadelphia) are densely annotated with topographic, hydrographic and settlement information.

Shifting to the west and north are speculative county lines, surveyed river networks, ridge lines, and mountain crossing-points. Compared to the extent of information known about eastern and (to a lesser degree) central Pennsylvania, the land to the west of

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19 PA Archives, Harrisburg. MG 11-88. “A Map of Pennsylvania Exhibiting not only The Improved Parts of that Province, but also its Extensive Frontiers: Laid down from Actual Surveys; and Chiefly from the Late Map of W. Scull Published in 1770; and Humbly Inscribed To The Honorable Thomas Penn and Richard Penn Esquires. True and Absolute Proprietaries & Governors of the Province of Pennsylvania and the Territories thereunto belonging. English Miles 69½ to a Degree. London, Printed for Robert Sayer & J. Bennett Map & Print Sellers, No. 53 in Fleet Street, Published as the Act directs 10 June 1775. Printed, in 3 colors. Laminated, 6 sections.”

20 Speculative county lines including Berks County, which included a vast territory spanning northwest beyond the Susquehanna River.

21 For example, north of Harris’ Ferry (modern Harrisburg, the state capital of Pennsylvania) is a crossing point into the Kittatinny Mountains, described as ‘one of the best Gaps in Crossing the Mountains.’
Cumberland County is largely blank. There are two notable aspects to the paucity of detail in the western-most third of Pennsylvania’s map. First, although there is no western boundary with the future state of Ohio, and no division separating Virginia from Pennsylvania the cartographer represents this area as within Pennsylvania’s political jurisdiction, as the initial charter granted by Charles II to William Penn in 1681 extended westward “five degrees of longitude from the Delaware river, and to include all the territory from the beginning of the fortieth to the beginning of the forty-third degree of northern latitude” (Cushing 1889: 1999: 14-15). Second, although the western portion of the map is annotated with major rivers and some ridge lines, the general impression is one of a blank canvas enticing potential explorers and settlers with the promise of undivided lands for settlement – which would help to legitimize Pennsylvanian claims to the region.

The legitimacy of Pennsylvania’s southwestern boundary was a valid concern for the colony’s political leaders, even after French claims to the area were extinguished with the capture of Fort Duquesne in 1758. Competing claims to the region surrounding the Forks of the Ohio River by the governments of Pennsylvania and Virginia and by groups of land speculators created uncertainty over the eventual form of the political map; each proposal for dividing land west of the Allegheny Mountains could have become

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22 The only southern boundary is the “Temporary Limits separating PA from MD run in 1739.”
23 A potential way to test this contest over legitimacy would be to compare this map to one of the same period published in Virginia, examining the extent of geographic knowledge and claims of sovereignty made over the same area.
legitimized under the right conditions. Among the speculative proposals for defining the region plans were made for ‘Pittsylvania’ in the north Ohio River Valley, which would have encompassed all of modern Pennsylvania’s land west of the Monongahela River (Buck and Buck 1939). This new colony was proposed by Benjamin Franklin and his son, and received approval from the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1772.

Arguments between surveyors and conflicting land grants kept the new colony from realization (Walkinshaw 1939: 418). The Ohio Company proposed an alternate colony called ‘New Wales’ in 1763, and began advertising for prospective settlers (Buck and Buck ibid.: 137). A third group, comprised largely of Pennsylvanian traders, formed the Indiana Company for the purpose of proposing another plan for the division of the upper Ohio Valley region. This was merged with the interests of the Ohio Company to create a proposal for the colony of Vandalia, comprising 20,000,000 acres west of the Allegheny Mountains and blocking Virginia’s access to inland areas (Williams 1976: 10). Many of the details for this colony had been resolved by 1774, and Buck posits that if not for the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, the new colony would have been successfully created (Buck and Buck ibid.: 158).

Virginia’s claims to the region were especially potent, and influenced the early political development of the region. In 1609 (and hence 72 years prior to William Penn’s Charter), James II granted a land charter to the London Company led by Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, which included the area now contained within southwestern Pennsylvania (Cushing, ibid.). While the formation of Virginia as a royal colony in 1624
meant that all vacant land within the initial grant reverted back to the king (Buck and Buck, 1939: 159), Virginia’s leaders continued to claim rights to the full extent of the territories granted under the original charter. This claim was enforced in 1772 when the withdrawal of the British garrison from Fort Pitt emboldened the Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, to enforce Virginia’s claim to the land surrounding the Forks of the Ohio River. He appointed a local agent (Dr. John Connolly) to agitate for Virginia’s interests in the area. In response to the erection of Pennsylvanian counties west of the Allegheny Front\textsuperscript{24}, the legislature of Virginia sought in 1776 to legitimize their claim to the area by creating the political District of West Augusta. The District was divided into three counties (Ohio, Yohogania and Monongalia), encompassing most of west Pennsylvania south of the Allegheny River. Whereas this boundary dispute was settled (in Pennsylvania’s favor) in 1779, the conflicting claims over the same region show how antithetical jurisdictional stability was as a concept in southwest Pennsylvania during the eighteenth century.

\textsuperscript{24} Local jurisdictions were erected in response to population shifts and modified because of topographic limits to travel. Cumberland County was divided to create Bedford County in 1771. This soon proved insufficient to meet the local demands of settlers to the west of the mountains who still had to traverse the Allegheny Front to reach the county seat of Bedford. Therefore, Westmoreland County was erected out of Bedford County in February 1773, spanning from the crest of Laurel Hill to the westernmost extent of the colony (Williams 1976: 14).
3.3 Dividing the west – Patterns of County Formation, 1770-1788

Governance structures are incapable of shifting at the speed of social change. The partitioning of space requires too much time to keep pace with demographic and economic shifts, especially in growing regions such as eighteenth century Pennsylvania. Furthermore, political leaders and communities protected by the status quo may resist reforms which would reduce their existing power. Because of these factors and despite the best attempts of the colonial government of Pennsylvania to control western settlement the formation of Pennsylvania counties was reactive – occurring in response to population shifts, territorial claims and problems with accessibility to local justice. By the early 1770s, migration into the western portion of Pennsylvania was creating new pressures for the division of land. The Pennsylvania Legislature erected Bedford County as the main instrument of local justice and representation, but the county seat of Bedford became frustratingly inaccessible to the increasing number of settlers relocating west of the Laurel Ridge.

The impetus for change arose as the local population expanded and became more permanent. Politically connected settlers such as Arthur St. Clair25 fought for the division of space into new counties during this period. Although townships, taxing structures and local justices were developed for the entire southwest Pennsylvania region

25 Arthur St. Clair had migrated to America from Scotland, and served as a military officer in the army of General James Wolfe. He later became commander of Fort Ligonier, and was the local agent for the Penns at the time of his advocacy for new counties in southwest Pennsylvania (Boucher 1939 86).
when Bedford County was erected, this division of the west into new political spaces was largely symbolic and heavily constrained by local conditions. Boucher notes the presence of “a turbulent element” of fur traders whose presence predated the creation of the new system of townships and counties. They rejected the imposition of colonial power to the extent that “one or two deputy sheriffs who came out from Bedford to arrest them were severely beaten and sent home” (Boucher 1939 85-86). Other settlers argued adherence to the law was impossible until the question of regional sovereignty was resolved – whether the land west of the Allegheny Mountains would be proven Pennsylvania or Virginia, or become another state entirely. Concerns over similar lawlessness, border security and the poor access to legal recourse led local advocates such as St. Clair to petition the State Legislature for the formation of a new county.

The early arguments for a new western county were based on spatial analysis and economic logic. The petitioners explained the county court at Bedford was at least fifty miles removed from the closest settlements west of the Laurel Ridge, such as Fort Ligonier. Bedford was over one hundred miles removed from the densest population center at the westernmost edge of Bedford County, Fort Pitt (later Pittsburgh). This imposed considerable difficulty for the development of the west, given many transactions would require a lengthy journey to and from the county seat. Compounding the tyranny

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26 Bedford County was erected on March 9, 1771 and consisted of 16 townships including Pitt Township, which included most of the land which would become Allegheny County (Albert 1882 43).
27 Albert (ibid.) notes the confusion over sovereignty was a convenient excuse to ignore the legal authority of Bedford County magistrates. The point is made by one settler who declared “when the back line comes to be run, if we are in Pennsylvania we will submit”.

of distance was “the extreme badness of the roads [which] greatly increase[d] the fees to sheriffs and other officers, to the ruin almost of many persons who are sued by common process of law for small sums of money” (cited in Walkinshaw, v. 2 1939 2). The case for county formation was delayed by groups in the colonial legislature who would lose power with the erection of new counties. The Colonial Assembly was dominated by representatives from the original ‘Quaker counties’ (Philadelphia, Bucks and Chester, erected in 1682 by William Penn), who stymied calls for change until the agitation of Arthur St. Clair and other western advocates during 1772 and 1773 resulted in the erection of Westmoreland County on February 26 1773 (Walkinshaw v.2 1939 5).

County formation presented an opportunity to recalibrate the equilibrium between population centers and legislative centers, and provided an opportunity to impose order and sovereignty over virgin, natural space. For the Pennsylvania Legislature, the petitions for the erection of a new western county also gave an excuse to counter the land claims by Virginia over southwestern Pennsylvania by enforcing Pennsylvanian laws and proclaiming Pennsylvanian customs. As noted above, the uncertainty over the eventual shape and possession of the western lands was giving a convenient excuse to settlers who preferred a more implicit (and less taxing) border. This is partly how Governor Dunmore of Virginia managed to create a Virginian district (The District of West Augusta) in the same area Pennsylvania considered to be Bedford County. The creation of Westmoreland County by Pennsylvania meant a new system of townships and local
officials to impose Pennsylvania’s authority onto this contested region from the county seat of Hannastown,\textsuperscript{28} which was a more convenient and central location than Bedford.

The active imposition of Pennsylvania laws and governance systems contributed to the defeat of the Virginia claims to the region,\textsuperscript{29} yet the Virginian presence had implications for the future development of the region. Part of the agreement reached between Pennsylvania and Virginia was that land granted by Virginian courts during the period 1774-1779 be recognized by Pennsylvania. The Virginia system of land allocation provided for larger and less expensive land holdings (Harper 1991), meaning areas of western Pennsylvania settled by Virginian settlers during the conflict (generally the southern part of the region, now included in Washington, Fayette and Greene Counties) were initially larger and less densely populated than those elsewhere. The cycle of initial settlement followed by official codification continued with the erection of Washington County in 1781 and Fayette County in 1783, both taken from portions of southwest Westmoreland County. Each new county benefited the residents who gained ready access to government officials with a presumed interest in the welfare of the local constituency. The state also benefited by the legitimization of political sovereignty over new areas, bringing with it the attached rights of governance such as powers of taxation,

\textsuperscript{28} Named for Robert Hanna, one of the original magistrates of Westmoreland County, and beneficiary of several enterprises located at the new county seat.

\textsuperscript{29} In addition to sporadic periods of warfare between settlers loyal to Virginia and Pennsylvania in 1774, the arrogant actions of the Governor of Virginia’s local agent, and the complications arising from the American Revolution of 1776.
the right to subdivide counties into townships and the associated right to create new political offices.\textsuperscript{30}

The subdivision of land could also yield valuable consequences for the class of speculators and entrepreneurs who held their own vision for the future development of these places. For instance the creation of Westmoreland County created significant competition between different factions, each backing a different location to become the new temporary county seat of government. At this point the two leading candidates were Pittsburgh and Hannastown. The prevailing location would attract a ready-made economic base of governmental services and ancillary functions. Pittsburgh had the benefit of population size and strategic location at the Forks of the Ohio River. Hannastown had the benefit of a more central location in the new county, half-way between the Laurel Ridge and the Ohio River, north of the Forbes Road. Hannastown was also the speculative settlement of Robert Hanna, a justice of the peace for Westmoreland County who also served as one of the five trustees who would select the location of the county seat (Boucher 1908: 87-88). Despite Pittsburgh’s larger population, Hanna’s political sway among the trustees meant Hannastown was chosen as the county seat when Westmoreland County was formed. The Erecting Act passed to create the county named Hanna’s house as courthouse and polling place. Hanna also

\textsuperscript{30} See section 4.2.2 for a general overview of these political units and offices in colonial Pennsylvania. In his review of local government during this period, Bockelman concludes that county officials performed an essential mediating role between the colonial legislature and local communities, functioning “…as transmitters of local wishes to provincial authorities and as translators of provincial policy into local reality” (Bockelman 1978: 233).
owned a near-by property which served as inn for those traveling to Hannastown in order to attend the court (ibid.), hence making the selection of Hannastown as temporary county seat most beneficial to Mr. Hanna.

In 1784 the debate over the location of the permanent county seat for Westmoreland County was again raised. Both Pittsburgh and Hannastown had their supporters and a third choice, Newton (now Greensburg) was also suggested (Boucher 1908: 225). It was during this period that luck played its part in the production of political space, as an Indian attack in 1782 resulted in the burning of Hannastown. Other urban places have suffered similarly violent and symbolic exogenous shocks and have recovered, but this did not occur in Hannastown. The local population and fixed infrastructure of the place were not yet of a scale which could rebuild after the attack, while the romantic ideal of Hannastown as a county seat was shattered for the potential settlers in the east (Boucher 1901: 237-238). Despite the attack Hannastown and Pittsburgh remained the leading contenders to become the permanent county seat. In a gesture of compromise and because of the creation of a new state road through Newton, the county commissioners selected that location as the eventual county seat.
3.4 The Development of Allegheny County’s Political Spaces, 1788-1800

3.4.1 The Formation of Allegheny County

Allegheny County was eventually created by an Act of Assembly on September 24, 1788. The original county boundaries were much more extensive than they ultimately became. Formed from parts of Westmoreland County and Washington County, the new unit of government encompassed the entire area west of the Allegheny River to the Eastern border of Ohio.

From north to south, Allegheny County included land from the New York state line (and the triangle of land annexed by Pennsylvania in 1792 which gave the state access to Lake Erie\(^{31}\)). The new county was comprised of mainly wilderness areas, a single voting place at Pittsburgh, and four forts (at Beaver, Franklin, Erie and French Creek) and trading posts (Harper 1931 v.1: 181). The lands to the North of the Ohio River were divided between the Donation Lands\(^{32}\) (arranged in ten districts running west of the Allegheny River to the Ohio state line) and the Depreciation Lands\(^{33}\) (arranged in

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\(^{31}\) Land “purchase from united States of America in pursuance of an Act of April 13, 1791 – See Volume 14 page 90, Law Book No. 4 Page 186. Annexed to Allegheny County April 13 1792, see Statutes at Large Volume 14, Page 234, Chapter 14, Section 4.” Annotation from Map of Allegheny County, MG11-269, PA Archives, Harrisburg.

\(^{32}\) Tracts of land between 200 to 500 acres, given to soldiers from the Pennsylvania Line who served in the Revolutionary War.

\(^{33}\) Tracts of land provided for bearers of Depreciation Certificates, which were used as forms of payment during the Revolutionary War.
ten districts running north of the Ohio River, to the surveyed border of the Donation Lands). These lands brought with them a distinctly different geometry for townships than those associated with the Virginian land aspirations. Here was an American set of spaces, no longer the residue of Quaker or English ‘shires’ (as was the case in Lancaster, York, Cumberland, Bedford etc). As Allegheny shrunk to accommodate new counties such as Butler and Beaver to the north, the space we regard as Allegheny County had already gone through eight reframings.\textsuperscript{34} It was by no means a ‘natural’ region any more.

The depreciation lands, in particular, were instrumental to Allegheny County’s developing American geometry (Figure 8). During the Revolution, soldiers of the Pennsylvania Line were paid in continental money, which was issued in large amounts and subsequently became depreciated in relation to silver and gold. The near-worthless condition of the continental money threatened the morale of those receiving it in payment for their service, and hence the General Assembly decided to rectify the situation. The act of assembly passed on March 12, 1783 explained the method of compensation for the depreciated currency – “the certificates of depreciation given to the officers and soldiers of the Pennsylvania line should be receivable at the Land office of this State, equal to gold and silver, in the payment of purchase money of unlocated lands, if the possessor or possessors of the same should think proper to purchase such lands” (Smith’s Laws of Pennsylvania, vol. ii, page 62).

\textsuperscript{34} The ‘reframings’ of Allegheny County consisted of the boundary reforms occurring after its original erection. Between 1788 and 1800, seven original townships were created and subsequently splintered to create seven more – therefore in the space of twelve years fourteen new political spaces had been created.
The act dictated that the lands west of the Allegheny river and north of the Ohio river would be reserved in payment of the depreciation certificates. 1,125 square miles were reserved for this purpose and divided into five districts organized along a north-south axis. A surveyor was appointed for each district, and sales were to commence in each district once the surveys had been conducted, which occurred between 1785 and
The Surveyor General, Secretary of the Land Office and the Receiver General of the State were appointed as commissioners to sell the land by lots in numerical order as soon as the draft surveys were completed. The survey of Daniel Leet’s (Number 2) district was first to be completed, and sales were subsequently made by auction. The distribution of land and the profits obtained by the state were satisfactory, although the average price per acre received from the public sales of this land fell below an acceptable level (the final average price was approximately 6 shillings per acre), causing the Supreme Executive Council to abandon this scheme in favor of open settlement.

By 1788 the territory which would become Allegheny County was already settled, albeit very sparsely in parts. Erection of the county was therefore reactive, given nodes of settlement were already forming around the proprietary manor of Pittsburgh, the legislature’s reserved tract north of the Ohio river, and in scattered settlements and speculative ventures across the valleys of the region. The survey of township boundaries and the eventual determination of Allegheny County’s eventual shape occurred in this context of preexisting settlement, and the decision of the state to use part of the territory for compensation of military debts arising from the Revolution.

35 The extent of land needing to be divided, and the gradual development of surveying methods meant the surveyors adopted a rectangular survey by ranges which is similar to that used by federal surveyors in the Land Ordinance of 1785, which established the county and township boundaries for Ohio (Kain and Baigent 1992:291-292)
3.4.2 Township Creation

The early division of Allegheny County followed the same pattern as Pennsylvania counties. Justices for the new county were appointed by the state legislature and given authority over legal affairs, including the authority to divide the new county into townships (Buck and Buck 1939: 433). Township formation was an important step in establishing the administrative framework over local areas, and the support local office-holders provided to the county government increased the incentive to erect townships as quickly as possible after county formation. The original townships of a new county were established by the judges of the Court of Quarter Sessions, although final approval for the boundaries rested with the state legislature (Wall, Fishman et al. 1984: xxi). The trustees therefore held considerable influence over the early development of local spaces of governance.

At the Allegheny county court’s initial session on December 16, 1788, the land was divided into seven townships – Pitt, Plum, Versailles, Elizabeth, St. Clair, Moon and Mifflin (See Figure 9). The boundaries as originally constituted had less to do with either population densities or projected settlement patterns as they did with coarse geography. The boundaries for the original seven townships were determined using the ‘metes and

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36 Townships were the basic electoral subunit for county government, and the office of constable had responsibility for local electoral and judicial affairs. Despite the decentralization of these affairs to the township, the county remained the key unit for local government – Bockelman argues empowerment of township offices was an attempt to improve the execution of county functions. (Bockelman 1978: 226).

37 The first sixteen pages of the Allegheny County Court of Quarter Sessions are missing (Wall 1984: xiv), and hence the primary record of judicial deliberation regarding township division in Allegheny County is unavailable.
bounds’ method of land division which primarily drew upon the county boundary and the region’s hydrography. For instance Moon Township was defined by the county court as the area “beginning at Flaherty’s run, thence by the Ohio river to the mouth of Chartiers creek; thence up said creek to the mouth of Miller’s run; thence by the line of the county to the place of beginning” (cited in Cushing 1889/1999: 5). St. Clair Township and Mifflin Township were also erected south of the Ohio River and West of the Monongahela River, divided by prominent creeks. The use of hydrography in determining early spaces within Allegheny County had the ironic consequence of hastening the shift of Allegheny County from a natural space to several abstract – and hence more readily changed – spaces. This is because streams and rivers form the centre of water catchments, rather than their edges. Once these most significant natural features of the county were regarded as scarcely more than convenient lines of division (rather than indicators of regional integration), any other justification for subdivision would seem no less questionable in the future.

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38 This system involved a surveyor dividing the land by physical features specific to the region being surveyed, rather than through a rectilinear (regularized) pattern of townships imposed upon the landscape without heed to physical geography (Meinig 1986: 240). The descriptions of land surveyed using the metes and bounds method rely on non-durable features including trees, cattle paths and houses, and were based on archaic measures including chains, poles, perches and rods (Martis 2001: 150-151).
Figure 9  Original Townships of Allegheny County

Source: Manuscript Group 11, Map #370.  Courtesy of Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Pennsylvania State Archives
The original townships drawn by the county trustees were essentially speculative spaces. They were speculative because they attracted and contained entrepreneurial schemes such as settlements, mills and manufactories; they were also speculative given the uncertain trajectory of future development in each of the townships, although early accounts of the region detailed the best conjecture about the potential land uses for the new townships. For example the land divided between Moon, St. Clair and Mifflin townships was noted for the availability of coal resources and for the area’s agricultural potential: “The surface is broken and hilly, but well adapted to farming, which is the principal pursuit. Trout run and other branches of Chartiers creek drain the southeastern part of the township, Flougherty run, Wilson run and Narrow run, the western; Thorn’s run and other smaller streams, the middle of the eastern portion” (ibid: 5). The other feature of this region was the low population across this area by 1800. This was partially a consequence of the early settlement of this area by settlers from Virginia. As noted earlier, the Virginian land system of lower prices and larger lots was upheld once Pennsylvania had asserted its sovereignty over southwest Pennsylvania. Nevertheless, the Virginian system was still apparent in the pattern of late eighteenth-century settlement.

Elizabeth Township and Versailles Township were erected from the land east of the Monongahela River. The former township benefited from considerable growth during the eighteenth century, as it was the region’s gateway for settlers migrating into southwest Pennsylvania from Maryland and Virginia. By 1788 the town of Elizabeth at
the forks of the Monongahela and Youghiogheny river was the largest settlement in the county, exceeding the population of Pittsburgh because of the town’s importance as a stopping point for regional travel and because of the growth of a local cluster of economic activities associated with river travel including boat-building,\textsuperscript{39} ferrying and hospitality (Cushing 1889: 98). The importance of Elizabeth Township to Allegheny County during this period is indicated by the 1804 map by Lewis, which notes only two settlements in the county – Elizabeth and Pittsburgh (Figure 10).

\textsuperscript{39} The Elizabeth boat-building industry thrived during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, during which time local firms constructed a range of craft including sailing ships, steamboats and also the pirogues used in the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1803. 312 boats had been built at Elizabeth by 1857, including several steamboats in excess of 400 tons (Cushing 1889: 104). The ability of the boat-building industry to thrive has been observed in other apparently marginal contexts (Glass and Hayward 2001).
The rest of the county was originally divided between Plum and Pitt Townships. Plum Township included the land between Versailles Township and the Allegheny River. It was bounded on the east by the county line and to the west by a line surveyed between the mouths of two creeks – one on the Allegheny River, and the other on the Monongahela River. To the west of Plum Township was Pitt Township. The township was centered on the proprietary Manor of Pittsburgh, and originally included the land north of the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers.
Allegheny County did not remain a stable county of seven townships for long; almost immediate fragmentation of the original townships occurred because of community demands for more responsive and convenient government. Before 1800 seven more townships had been created, with Moon Township subdivided to give rise to Robinson Township and Fayette Township, and the Depreciation Lands north of the Ohio River divided around 1796 into Deer, Indiana, Ohio, Ross and Pine Townships (Harper 1991: 182). It was at the same time that eight counties were created out of the large region north of the Depreciation Lands which had initially been included in Allegheny County.

Allegheny County’s published histories indicate the reason for fragmenting political spaces during this early period were not dissimilar to the reasons for county erection during the colonial period. From the local level, township erection offered a solution to problems regarding access to governmental services, and potentially as a way to distinguish a community from a much broader political identity as part of a large rural township. The desire to reduce travel time between population centers and polling places, and the desire to exert early social identities were both present in the cases where communities in Allegheny County requested erection of new townships. Moon Township provides a good example of this process – as noted above, this large original township had been divided into three townships by 1800, and the area was to undergo several subsequent transformations. The new townships were created by the Court of Quarter Sessions in response to complaints from Moon Township residents that the
township was too large for convenient access to official services. Efforts from the local communities were often granted, indicating an accommodating county government and a proactive set of residents. Divisions were not always without contention however, and occasional conflicts arose regarding the unequal division of local assets amongst the old and new townships. For instance in 1801 the proposed division of Fayette Township to create Robinson Township was opposed by residents of Fayette Township who noted that the geography of division would favor the new township – their complaint to the county court alleged that if the division occurred,

…if obtained will leave a tract of land for a township northwest of the said south fork which will not average more than four miles square, and the other township will measure about eight miles in length and average about three miles and a half in breadth [it may be observed that there is considerable disparity in the respective dimensions given]. In the four miles square township there are two justices of the peace, to wit, George Vallandingham and Joseph Walker; in the extended township none...

(Quoted in Harper, 1991)

In other words, the new township would take a small portion of Fayette Township which nonetheless includes two of the key local officeholders. It appeared that a key reason for the proposed erection of the new township was that residents in the area proposed for Robinson Township considered themselves disadvantaged when it came to traveling to township meetings. The plaintiff’s response to this was that at most, the residents had to travel six miles a year for meetings – this was “no great burthen” over the course of a year. On the other side of the argument, the citizens in the area of the new township were also aggrieved, as a road tax had been levied across the entire area of
Fayette Township, with the proceeds going to fund improvements in the area which was to remain Fayette Township.

### 3.4.3 Speculation and Contest in Town Development

The fragmentation of Allegheny County began much earlier than has been presumed because of the successful speculation and competition of local and non-local actors. During the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century, townships in Allegheny County were created by the State to provide convenient subdivisions for the administration of county affairs, and were rapidly rearticulated at the behest of local communities seeking services and the codification of their local identity. The township provided an important intermediary for the county government, as local office-holders provided the means to relay community demands to the county administrators. This layer of governance provided polling places, funding for road improvements and the vehicle for legitimizing land titles. However, the townships as spaces for government left interstices within which the demands of larger communities were not being fulfilled. The urbanizing places within the county, including Pittsburgh, Allegheny, Elizabeth and Birmingham were initially indistinct from the surrounding townships. However as their

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40 Colonial county tax assessment lists were organized by township. Each township’s assessment list was arranged alphabetically, without indication of where in the township a given tax-payer’s holdings were located. Lemon argues this indicates the state legislature and county officials were disinterested in the social cohesion or character of townships, focusing instead on governance at a broader scale: (Lemon 1978: 207).

41 Lemon notes the distinction between rural and urban settlements was even less distinct in the eighteenth century than in later periods. Whereas a few urban places were bolstered by the economic, political and
success as spaces for production and consumption grew, they began to create their own gravity and specialized needs which had the consequence of making them into very different spaces than those of the townships. By the 1830s, these urban spaces within Allegheny County had begun creating a very different county map to that originally established by the Court of Quarter Sessions.

The urban center for Allegheny County was Pittsburgh, which was the former site for Forts Duquesne and Pitt at the confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers. Although the military settlements had always been accompanied by a small orbit of domestic buildings, the town was formally plotted in 1764 by Col. John Campbell, working under the direction of Governor Dunmore of Virginia. This plan was enlarged by the Penn family in 1784 (Figure 11), who had reserved a proprietary manor of 5,766 acres centered around Pittsburgh after the treaty of Fort Stanwix. By 1792 the town was the largest settlement in the county, and the town’s population had swollen from 376 in 1784 to approximately 8,000 in 1815.\(^{42}\) By 1828 the town of Pittsburgh had become a centre for industry, as described in a contemporary account by Ann Royal:

…Pittsburg excites the most astonishment. Everything pursued in other towns is thrown into the shade in Pittsburg; even in the building of steamboats it excels, by a long way, our great city, New York. You see nothing but columns of smoke rolling out of these social activities they attracted, ‘country crossroads hamlets’ were nearly indistinct from the surrounding countryside (Lemon 2001: 124).

\(^{42}\) See Swauger for a description of the early process of urbanization in Pittsburgh. The awkward geography of the town plat (wedged between the rivers and the steep terrain of Grant’s Hill) meant the expanding population was accommodated by infill development of the large town lots, in the same manner as eighteenth century Boston and New York (Swauger 1978: 268-269).
manufactories in every part of the city and in every street. Go to the river Monongahela, and you see nothing but steamboats, two-stories high, many of them, and two tiers of windows, precisely like a house with gable ends.

(Quoted in Boucher, 1908, vol. 2:351).

Figure 11 1784 Proprietor’s Plan of Pittsburgh


Pittsburgh’s ascendance as the urban center of Allegheny County was partly based on its position as the county seat, yet this position was not uncontested. After the
Penn family had reserved the Manor of Pittsburgh in 1784 the state legislature established the City of Allegheny, which was laid out in 1788.\footnote{PA Archives, 4th Series, Volume 4 – page 41.} An area of three thousand acres across the river from Pittsburgh was surveyed, and was designated “the reserved tract opposite Pittsburgh”. Some of this land was divided into one hundred 60 by 240 foot town lots, and the rest of the land was incorporated as Reserve Township (Boucher 1908: 277-278). Here was an instance of power struggles occurring at the state scale which had implications for Allegheny County’s local political geography. The intention of the state legislature was for the new town to compete with Pittsburgh with the profits from land sales going to the state, rather than the Penn family. The designation of Allegheny in the original act of assembly as the county seat was an attempt to improve the prospects and land values of their speculative town.\footnote{Allegheny was incorporated as a borough in 1828, and as a city in 1840.} This edict was naturally opposed by residents of Pittsburgh who had supported the erection of the new county for the precise reason of having their town recognized as the centre of civilization in western Pennsylvania. The legislature acquiesced, and by 1791 Pittsburgh had reverted to the position of county seat.

After the initial tussle over the location for the county seat (which was an issue of state-level control, rather than of local identity politics), Pittsburgh and Allegheny are treated in tandem by histories of the early nineteenth century. The construction of bridges across the Allegheny River assisted the development of these two separate cities as a conjoined urban core for Allegheny County. Surrounding the cities of Allegheny

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and Pittsburgh was a growing set of distinct spaces for production. Within ten miles of Pittsburgh (Figure 12), several towns were emerging which specialized in specific industries. To the southwest of Allegheny town, the village of Manchester was developing around a regular town plat laid out in 1832 and several industries. At the same time, Birmingham and East Birmingham were founded on the southern shore of the Monongahela River, across from Pittsburgh. The towns quickly evolved from country estates into industrial villages, and are notable in that within the new American spaces of Allegheny County the town names recall (and hoped to emulate) the successful namesake manufacturing towns of England.\footnote{Chapter Four examines the development of the South Side boroughs in greater detail.}
Figure 12 Central Spaces for Production in Allegheny County

Source: (Ristow 1985: 180)
Elsewhere in the county other urban spaces were emerging to vie for the economic gains accompanying settlement of the region. The town of Elizabeth was one such alternate space in Allegheny County’s developing landscape. As mentioned above, by the early nineteenth century this settlement had become a centre for boat-building and transportation services. Whereas the confluence of the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers was a logical place for settlement (and already had a nascent town known as the ‘New Store’), it was the speculative capitalism of the proprietors which stimulated the early growth of Elizabeth. In the November 24th issue of the Pittsburgh Gazette in 1787, Stephen Bayard and Samuel McKay announced their intention to lay out a new town at the site of the New Store. Their plan consisted of a regularized survey of town lots (measuring sixty by one hundred and twenty feet), and “for the encouragement and speedy sale thereof” the first twenty settlers would be granted a lot for the low sum of two shillings per annum. Their advertisement made clear that the intention of their town was to profit from westward settlement, enticing “artists of all kinds, particularly boat builders, carpenters, joiners, masons and blacksmiths” to relocate to Elizabeth with the promise that a sawmill operated by the proprietors would soon be erected to act as an anchor tenant. This form of economic speculation was not guaranteed to be successful over a long time period, but in the instance of Elizabeth, the development arising from the proprietor’s original ambitions led to the erection of two new boroughs – Elizabeth (created out of a portion of Elizabeth Township on April 5th, 1834) and West Elizabeth (created out of a portion of
Jefferson Township on March 30th, 1848).\textsuperscript{46} By 1897 Elizabeth had been relegated to a peripheral role within Allegheny County’s urban hierarchy, yet still retained four separate boatyards and the sawmill (Figure 13).

Figure 13 The Boroughs of Elizabeth and West Elizabeth, 1897

\textsuperscript{46} The 1876 Atlas of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania includes incorporation dates for the local townships and boroughs (Muller 1988).
3.5 Emerging Identities in Allegheny County, 1788-1800

3.5.1 Local identity formation in the colonial period

The local identities which formed in Allegheny County during the eighteenth century influenced attitudes about regional governance which would be debated, altered or preserved in later periods. Traditional analysis of identity formation focused on the ethnic composition of migration streams into Allegheny County, and the purported social and political traits associated with those ethnicities. For example Ferguson’s political history of western Pennsylvania begins by describing the predominance of Scots-Irish, German and English immigrants to the region (Ferguson 1938). Whereas this is an accurate statement of early community composition, his analysis extends by ascribing particular socio-political qualities based on the country of origin for these settlers. Ferguson divides the English settlers into two classes: “while the economically favored Englishmen of the region tended to reflect the landed gentry of the homeland in political philosophy, the less fortunate reflected the traditional Englishman’s jealousy of his individual rights” (Ferguson 1938: 9). He continues by describing the Scots-Irish migrants as being staunch proponents of ‘practical democracy’, compensating for a lack of formal education with the alleged racial traits of thrift and hardiness (ibid.). Finally the German settlers were excluded from leadership roles in the western counties – according to Ferguson – because of the language barrier they needed to overcome.
The alleged racial traits brought to western Pennsylvania by the early European settlers are also recited and romanticized in the regional histories written by Harper (1931), Boucher (1929) and Cushing (1889). These romanticized and caricatured depictions of ethnic identities have recently been reexamined and supplemented by research acknowledging how religion, class and gender commingled to develop new social forms. Yet in some important ways, geography transcends gender, ethnic and class identities, and can explain how and why a ‘sense of place’ formed in Allegheny County – a fluid comprehension by residents concerning what is required to live in the newly formed political spaces on the western frontier. This sense of place influenced local reactions to the exertion of political power from the state and Federal scale, and guided local community attempts to define and redefine local spaces for consumption and production.

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47 See Smolenski for a review of the evolving historiography of ethnicity and identity in early America (Smolenski 2005). He notes the generalizations made by earlier studies about the formation of a unique American identity have been replaced by “detailed and persuasive analyses of how identities were made and remade in eighteenth century America” (p. 38), which pay greater attention to the within-group differences and cross-group interactions that transformed identity during the period.

48 For instance, Harper eighteenth century tax data to describe the class structure of Western Pennsylvania during the period 1770-1796 (Harper 1991). His analysis defines the role performed by merchants, speculative capitalists and working class communities in transforming the region at this time. His research on town development examines how entrepreneurial town development affected land patterns by raising the percentage of land ownership and increasing the gap between the top and bottom deciles of land owners.

49 Brown calls for greater attention to the historical experience of women in early America, and notes the value of 'gender frontiers' as an organizing concept to examine identity formation and power contests in the colonial period (Brown 1993).

50 And are integrated in recent research such as Jenkins, who explores the diverging political experience of Irish immigrants to American and Canadian cities during the late nineteenth century. Whereas these communities imported a group identity based in national and religious affiliation, their subsequent experience was molded by local and non-local ‘topographies of power’ (Jenkins 2007).
The emerging influences of geography on the developing identities in Allegheny County have been described in earlier sections of this chapter. Conflicts over the constitution of western Pennsylvania’s political geography involved the diverging practices of land division of Virginia and Pennsylvania which led to a tension within the region – how large would land holdings be, and what valuation would be placed on the land being sold? The different mental geographies of the people settling the region were created out of a more complicated calculus than source regions alone – the notion of how this natural space should be abstracted came from the land use practices of their home countries and colonies, the structures imposed by the sovereign powers of Pennsylvania (and in an earlier and ultimately unsuccessful framing, Virginia), and the plans of individuals and communities which often had more to do with economic motives than with their country of origin. Finally, after the boundaries of Allegheny County were established and the process of internal division had begun, the process of sectionalism arose and added another layer of complexity onto the explanation for identity formation in this period.\

This sectionalism relates to the distance of Allegheny County from the traditional Quaker power structures centered on eastern Pennsylvania. As the west was populated, and the power inherent in population size shifted toward the new counties

51 Economic sectionalism would persist in Pennsylvania through much of the nineteenth century, manifested in struggles over the location of important infrastructure such as canals and railroads, and the creation of banks. Hartz concludes that from a commercial perspective, “Pennsylvania was not a single state during our [1776-1860] period but a collection of states, that centrifugal forces were constantly at work to isolate the merchants of Philadelphia from their political compatriots” (Hartz 1948: 11).
such as Allegheny, the emergent political tensions created a growing political identity in Allegheny County.

As different aspects of identity coalesced in the new county, colonial settlers perceived their identity and role as residents of the seven original (and many subsequent) townships and boroughs, rather than of the county. Whereas the county performed an essential intermediary role for local administrators and for the state, local identity was performed at a more local scale – and probably at a smaller scale than of the original townships, given the haste with which these began to dis-integrate into new socio-political spaces created at the behest of local communities. This desire to erect new townships suggests the desire to assert some greater degree of local identity, and also indicates unwillingness on the part of locals to be contentedly subsumed under a larger political unit created by the state legislature (and their local proxies) for administrative reasons. As will be shown in the next chapter, this localism would have implications in the nineteenth century as the municipal system continued to evolve.\textsuperscript{52} However, this localism also had an immediate implication for the communities of Allegheny County and the surrounding region, in terms of the reactions of local communities to the imposition of new forms of governance from the national scale (i.e. Federal taxation) during the last decade of the eighteenth century.

\textsuperscript{52} It would also have implications for the metropolitan dreams of twentieth century reformers, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven.
3.5.2 Assertion of identity – the Whiskey Rebellion

The years 1791-1794 were politically volatile for Allegheny County, with a ‘Whiskey Rebellion’ emphasizing the county’s emerging political and social identity. At this time the long-established practice of the Federal government to raise money through an excise on distilled spirits began to be contested by settlers in the western counties. The perception of western settlers was that excises of any form were unjust, and reminiscent of the English practices which had led to the American Revolution two decades earlier. The popular resistance to central authority and their local administrative proxies is evidence of an emerging regional identity which would influence local politics and attitudes toward non-local control over local assets and administration. It also announced the transition of Pennsylvanian governance from one dominated by legislation tailored to communities in the Eastern part of the state, and into a period where regional differences required recognition.

The Federal government had collected an excise on the sale of distilled spirits since at least 1756 (Day 1843: 670). Although this excise was ignored or avoided in the western counties, the financial situation of the United States following the Revolution meant enforcement of the excise was increased.\(^\text{53}\) The added policing of the law created tensions in Allegheny County and the surrounding region for economic and social reasons. Boucher argues the Scottish and Irish settlers who settled the area had migrated

\(^{53}\) In addition, Alexander Hamilton considered Federal taxes to be a convenient method of imposing Federal sovereignty and power upon citizens and communities in the states (Buck and Buck, ibid.: 466).
with a “hatred of the excise system of taxation in England” (Boucher, ibid.: 299).\textsuperscript{54}

Given the popularity of whiskey in the west, the excise tax was considered an attack on the personal liberty of the farmers (Buck and Buck, ibid. 466). Aside from the stout individualism of the local population the financial imbalance of the excise was not lost on western producers of whiskey and other spirits. During the late eighteenth century the western markets for spirits were saturated (often literally), with the availability of locally produced liquor depressing the prices for whiskey to approximately twenty to twenty-five cents per gallon (ibid. 302). By comparison, prices for whiskey in the wealthier and more densely populated eastern portions of the state could reach fifty to sixty cents per gallon.

Given the excise on whiskey was seven cents per gallon, the geographically imbalanced consequences of the excise were plain – whereas eastern distillers paid an excise amounting to one eighth of their products value in local markets, western distillers were charged an excise amounting to one quarter of their products value in Pittsburgh and other western towns (Boucher, ibid). Although one option would have been for western producers to export their products to the east, the transportation costs to export liquor eastwards over the Allegheny mountains would have reduced profits.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{54} Excise duties are taxes tied to the sale of commodities, “imposed chiefly upon goods of home produce destined for home consumption” (Smith 1776(1937): 829). The imposition of excise taxes on American goods by the English crown preceded the American Revolution.

\textsuperscript{55} In economic terms, the transfer costs (i.e. the expenses involved in transporting materials and goods between sources and markets) involved with the transmontane shipment of whiskey from western to eastern Pennsylvania would have been prohibitively expensive. This is because with a weight gaining industry with relatively ubiquitous materials (rye and water), producers located near the eastern markets held a greater locational advantage (Hoover 1963).
As distillers in western Pennsylvania recognized this perceived injustice, they reacted vehemently and with an impressive sense of regional unity for such a recently organized region. After the United States congress passed a new excise tax on distilled spirits in March 1791, a public meeting was held at Redstone Old Fort (Washington County) which resolved to form committees in each aggrieved county to pursue resistance strategies against the excise. On the 23rd of August 1791 delegates met in Pittsburgh and held a public meeting led by prominent citizens, whose assistance was gathered in order to bolster the profile and public support for the anti-excise cause. The meeting focused on passing strong resolutions against the law (Day ibid: 671). Following this meeting, public sentiment against the excise turned into violent protests against administrators and supporters of the tax. In September 1791, Robert Johnson – excise collector for Allegheny and Washington counties – was attacked by a mob. He was tarred and feathered, shaved, and had his horse taken. The following month another man who claimed to be a collector (yet by most accounts was probably mentally challenged) was also beaten and branded.

Despite the efforts of the Federal government to reduce the burden of the excise (by reducing the amount and allowing monthly payments), discontent continued in the west. In August 1792 The U.S. army was brought in to Allegheny County, to establish an office for the collection of the excise. However, the man who originally consented to an office being established in his house was threatened by local excise opponents and forced to publicly announce that he would not cooperate with the government. Further conflict
including an exhortation by President Washington for citizens to cooperate with the tax
continued sporadically for the next two years, with violent acts committed against tax
collectors and those who cooperated with the government. The climax of the Whiskey
Rebellion came in July 1794, when government troops were sent to accompany an excise
collector on his duties. This outraged locals who attacked the house of the local army
general. The general’s house was burned down, and an attacker was mortally wounded.
Passions continued to be high in the west. Hugh Henry Breckenridge summed up the
state of opinion in Pittsburgh during this period:

“a breath in favor of the law was sufficient to ruin any man. It was considered as a badge
of toryism. A clergyman was not though orthodox in the pulpit, unless against the law.
A physician was not capable of administering medicine, unless his principles were right
in this respect. A lawyer could have got no practice without at least concealing his
sentiments, if for the law; nor could a merchant at a country store get custom. On the
contrary, to talk against the law was the way to office and emolument. To go to the
legislature or to congress, you must make a noise against it. It was the Shibboleth of
safety, and the ladder of ambition.” (Day, ibid.: 674.)

The increasing tensions between western Pennsylvania and the Federal
government worried local leaders who recognized the asymmetrical power relations
between the two sides, and the risks for anti-excise groups if the Federal government
decided to forcibly assert their sovereignty over the region. By August 1794, 15,000
Federal troops were being massed in the eastern part of the state for an invasion of
western Pennsylvania. In an effort to head off a violent confrontation, local political
leaders convened a meeting to convince cooperation with the Federal government.
Albert Gallatin⁵⁶ presented the argument that the Federal government would be prepared to enforce the laws of the United States using force, if necessary. H.H. Breckenridge also argued for law and order. The attending commissioners voted in favor of ending the insurrection, and a ballot of the citizens found a ‘decided majority on the side of law and order.’ Nevertheless, there was still dissent about the course to be taken. One of the commissioners called for further resistance, going so far as to recommend secession from the United States, with a new western Pennsylvania state to be erected. Needless to say, the presence of this vocal minority was sufficient to convince George Washington that it was necessary to send the assembled troops to Pittsburgh in November 1794, to quell the rebellion.

The Whiskey Rebellion ended without further bloodshed, but with lingering resentment among local residents that Federal and state forces had intervened against the western counties. This resentment suggests the consolidation of a regional identity in western Pennsylvania, in which the individualism and democratic spirit of western communities was being changed into a collective sense that Allegheny County (and other counties) were different spaces than those in the east. Buck (ibid.) considers the episode as the apogee of conflict between frontier democracy and eastern conservatism which ultimately shaped local political sentiments of the nineteenth century (ibid.: 473). The recognition that frames of governance which the state had constructed during an early

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⁵⁶ Gallatin was originally from Switzerland. After his migration to western Pennsylvania he established the town of New Geneva and became active in local and national politics, serving 13 years as Secretary of the U.S. Treasury.
colonial period in which the predominant population was located east of the Laurel Ridge was another consequence of this episode. Laws and taxes could no longer be strictly developed with an eye to what would be appropriate in Philadelphia or Lancaster County – Pennsylvania’s raw political spaces were metastasizing into new forms with new characters.

3.6 Conclusion

The region which was to become Allegheny County had undergone several episodes of structural change before 1788. A formerly natural space had been encountered and imagined by indigenous tribes and French colonists, and then by English and American settlers. Land speculators considered the potential for new colonies west of the Allegheny Front as governors and their advocates also imagined this region as part of either Virginia or Pennsylvania. Political decisions occurring at the state scale determined that legitimacy would be granted to Pennsylvania. Political expediency demanded that the western territory be divided among smaller and smaller counties, as communities requested that the legislature have their official boundaries keep pace with the population shifts underway during the mid- to late-eighteenth century.

As soon as the first settlers arrived in the region, the elimination of the natural world by the abstractions of different social worlds began. The process was hastened by the collision of different ideas surrounding land division, and further acceleration ensued as arbitrary boundaries were erected by the Allegheny Court of Quarter Sessions. Seven
townships were assigned, and laid out according to hydrography – dividing watersheds because creeks and rivers were the most helpful features available in an era of metes and bounds surveying.

The story did not end with the court’s decision over township boundaries. As soon as the ink was dry, communities began to contest the decisions. Access to township officials was important, as was tax revenue. Entrepreneurs began to establish speculative plats, and towns such as Elizabeth and Manchester began to pull apart the fabric of the ‘consolidated’ region. Meanwhile to the north of the Ohio River, the Depreciation Lands were established by the state for reparation to veterans of the Revolutionary War. A different geometry was laid out there which did not even rely on streams and tree stumps – a modern American geometry was dividing the county between old-world and new-world customs.

In general, the fluidity with which political spaces were changed within Allegheny County was the consequence of top-down decisions by the colonial and state legislatures, for whom the division of space was an administrative concern. Moreover, local communities during the late eighteenth century were not organized or of sufficient size to resist the manipulation of political boundaries. By 1834 the situation had changed; Allegheny County was no longer a unified region but instead a burgeoning set of spatial expressions, from the rural to the industrial. Each group with a vision for how space should be divided could petition for their idea to be codified as a new political space within the county, and in this early period who could contest that a given plan was
the wrong one for Allegheny County? Certainly after the forging of a western Pennsylvania identity in the aftermath of the Whiskey Rebellion, locally-derived concepts for the division of space were preferable to state or federal intervention.
Chapter 4 Devolution and Demand, 1834-1872

4.1 Devolution and Demand – Antecedents of Change

Allegheny County’s municipal structure continued to change through the middle of the nineteenth century. Catalyzed by local demand for new social and economic spaces, and facilitated by a laissez-faire attitude to local incorporation activity by the Pennsylvania state legislature, the number of incorporated places expanded from 24 in 1834 to 61 in 1867 (Figure 14). Local communities and entrepreneurs were eager to create their own local worlds – codified spaces reflecting a specific geographic imagination. The annexation of contiguous boroughs by the cities of Allegheny and Pittsburgh caused the reduction of incorporated places in 1867 and 1872 – these events were also the geographic expression of a particular (urban) imagining of space.

This chapter examines the period 1834 to 1872, during which the prevailing motive within Allegheny County was one of opportunity and experimentation. I first explain the broader policy context in Pennsylvania, where the gaze of the state was focused on replacing the economic sectionalism of the early nineteenth century with state-wide infrastructure such as canals, roads and public schools. I use the debates of the Constitutional Conventions of 1838 and 1872 and argue that the modernizing goals of the state legislature led to a permissive stance regarding local municipal reorganization.
The second half of this chapter describes the local consequences of a permissive state. Experimentation among local communities and entrepreneurs flourished in this environment, and enabled a variety of local worlds to emerge. Industrial towns, commuter suburbs, social experiments, romantic suburbs, cities, rural spaces – all were attempted within Allegheny County, albeit not always successfully. Although the pressures of later periods would lead to a rationalization of the types of spaces available in Allegheny County, the mid-nineteenth century provides a remarkable opportunity to consider a juncture at which several regional futures seemed feasible.
4.2 State policy toward the municipalities, 1834-1872

4.2.1 Introduction

What were the imperatives of the state legislature during the middle portion of the nineteenth century, with regard to the municipal and county governments of Pennsylvania? Examine the legislative record (1820-1872) to identify policy trends regarding local government. Teaford claims 1834 as a break-point in state-local relations, as authority is divested to the county courts with regard to incorporations. However, the state did not completely remove its authority over the local scale – the state continued to incorporate new municipalities in Allegheny County and elsewhere during the period.

4.2.2 Mid-century developments in state-local relations

By the mid-nineteenth century, the urban expansion of the United States had begun in earnest. Between 1820 and 1860 the urban population of the United States increased at three times the rate of the total population, while the number of urban places increased tenfold as underdeveloped land became available to new settlers. Monkkonen notes two key periods during the nineteenth century; during the period to 1830, the urban population remained stable. After this point, urban populations began to increase steadily for the remainder of the century (Monkkonen 1988: 70-75). His analysis of historic census data finds the number of city governments also increased after 1830, indicating
that urbanization in the United States comprised both demographic and political aspects (ibid.: 73).

With the transition from the colonial era to the federal era of American governance, compromises needed to be reached with regard to state control of local governance. The power of colonial governor to grant municipal charters had created a great degree of variation in the powers and rights of local governments within any given state. Consequently, when state legislatures gained control over local government they came to rely on special-act charters which could alter municipal powers, or else overrule decisions made at the local scale which did not fit the goals of the state. This type of legislation enabled state politicians to act with considerable flexibility since special-act charters would have completely localized effects, therefore ameliorating the risk of unintended consequences for other places. The popularity of this legislation indicates that in the early- to mid-nineteenth century state authorities still conceived of their states as ‘local worlds’. The interconnectedness of local governments across the states were still developing, and there was little need to group particular forms of local government together for planning purposes.

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57 Teaford suggests special-act charters were used by state legislatures to cater for urbanizing populations which were beginning to demand powers and services which were vastly different than those of the countryside (Teaford 1976). Whereas the capacity of urban delegations to enact special legislation varied between states, Teaford finds that in the Northeast “urban measures were not subject to unchecked rural tyranny, and farmers and small-town residents generally had only limited opportunities to toy with the fortunes of the city (ibid. p.196-197).
From the perspective of the municipalities, the localism implied by the special-act legislation was paradoxical. On the one hand localities wished to become distinct from the larger administrative units of the counties and townships, and special-act charters could recognize this through special and locally focused legislation. On the other hand, the ability of state legislatures to intervene in local affairs was a potential challenge to the self-perceived political autonomy and closely guarded privileges that earlier charters of incorporation had provided. Along with the threats to autonomy these special-act charters caused, there was also the risk of corruption and bias. Laws could conceivably be written which could favor particular land developers or utility companies, or which could increase the tax burden of municipalities by imposing mandatory payments to canal or railroad companies (Adrian and Griffith 1976: 35).

Given the threats to local democracy posed by this special legislation, reformers began examining alternative methods for governing localities such as general-act charters, which had been used in France since the French Revolution (ibid.: 36). General-act charters would apply to sets of municipalities which would be grouped based on some common criteria (such as population size). As an intermediate step between special-act and general-act legislation, early remedies included piecemeal changes which prevented specific actions impinging upon local rights or functions, or to insist special legislation could be passed, but only following public hearings.

The increasing prominence of local governments during the nineteenth century gave rise to conflicts between the localities (which claimed the rights to administer local
affairs) and the states (which claimed the rights to supersede local authority). The conflicts exacerbated by local population growth, the state’s desire to connect the social and economic spaces within their territories by infrastructure improvements, and the problems created by special-act charters all created conflicts which eventually required judicial intervention. One of the most important interventions in the battles between the localities and the states was made by Justice Dillon of the Iowa Supreme Court, who in 1863 developed a doctrine upholding the supremacy of state rights whenever there was doubt over municipal powers:

It is a general and undisputed proposition of the law that a municipal corporation possesses and can exercise, the following powers, and no others: First, those granted in express words; second, those necessarily or fairly implied in, or incident to, the powers expressly granted; third, those essential to the accomplishment of the declared objects and purposes of the corporation – not simply convenient, but indispensable. Any fair, reasonable, substantial doubt concerning the existence of a power is resolved by the courts against the corporation, and the power is denied.

(Dillon 1911: 448-450)

The consequence of this doctrine was that with the judicial opinion weighted in favor of the states, their desire to expand the influence of the central state at the expense of the municipalities was increased.58

58 See Chapter Five of this dissertation. Pennsylvania legislators relied on the state supremacy granted by the so-called ‘Dillon Rule’ in their defense of the forced annexation of the City of Allegheny by the City of Pittsburgh.
4.2.3 Pennsylvania state policy toward local government, 1820-1872

Pennsylvania followed the national trends in governance reform during the 1820-1874 period, with relations between the state and the municipalities shifting in accordance with the spatial and demographic changes characterizing the state during the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the period state legislators did not need to exert much energy on the affairs of local municipalities given the sparse settlement across much of the state. The City of Philadelphia and the few other urban areas required some additional attention, but the main goal of the state legislature was to ensure county-level government functions were adequate for handling administrative, judicial and police functions. As the state began to diversify with rural, urban and suburban worlds emerging from formerly undifferentiated and natural spaces, the legislature needed to adapt.

In order to address community demands for incorporation the legislature passed an act in 1834 granting local courts the power to grant requests for municipal incorporations. This act was better characterized as power sharing, rather than the devolution of powers to the local level – the state continued to incorporate new municipalities across Pennsylvania well after 1834. As demographic and geographic shifts occurred in nineteenth century Pennsylvania, the constitutions and constitutional debates of the nineteenth century provide evidence about the deliberative process behind the state’s shifting conception of its role in relation to the municipalities. These debates
show an evolution in state policy toward the municipalities which set the context for the incorporations occurring in Allegheny County during the period.

The Pennsylvania Constitution of 1838 contained few direct references to local scales of government, indicating a combination of inattentiveness and a laissez faire approach to sub-state governance. Counties were referred to in the context of state administrative functions, suggesting that in the early nineteenth century the foremost role of the Pennsylvania county was as the local organizational proxy for the state. Evidence of this is contained in Article VI of the Constitution which stipulates the terms of local offices including sheriff, prothonotaries and recorder of deeds, and emphasizing that they must be held at the county seat. Aside from the county, other local governmental units are mentioned in relation to local offices – conditions are given for the maximum number of constables and justices of the peace a borough or township can have, for instance. In general, the delegates to the 1838 Constitutional Convention provided significant implied latitude to local governments to establish the conditions most appropriate to them.

Article IX of the 1838 Constitution sets out the definition of Power and Government, claiming:

That all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety and happiness: For the advancement of these ends, they have at all times an unalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform, or abolish their government, in such manner as they may think proper.

(Constitution 1873).

This latitude was curbed by the first and second amendments to the Constitution which were made in 1857. The first amendment prevented local governments from
becoming stockholders of companies, associations or corporations, either by executive fiat or through popular vote. The second amendment included a statement preventing the formation of new counties in Pennsylvania without a popular vote in the county. In addition, new counties were not to be formed unless they contained less than four hundred square miles.\textsuperscript{59} By 1857, the opinion held by the state government was that local places should have the capacity to govern based on local conditions, yet without risking the financial health of the state through poor investment choices made at the municipal scale.

The next Constitutional Convention occurred twenty-five years later, by which point state perceptions of local governance had shifted to mirror national trends. The influence of judicial rulings such as the ‘Dillon Rule’ which sided with the state when local powers were ambiguous led to greater codification of municipal rights than had appeared in prior constitutions, and the problems of special-act legislation were also the subject of heated debates over the governance arrangements for Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and other cities in Pennsylvania.

The sections of the 1873 Constitution which was most relevant to local governments were Article III – Legislation and Article XV – Cities and City Charters. Article III, Section seven included a strong limitation on the powers of the state

\textsuperscript{59} Article XII, 1838 PA Constitution, 1857 Amendment.
legislature to pass any special or local laws regarding a number of issues (Box 4.1).\textsuperscript{60} At issue in Section seven was the problem of special legislation, which had gradually become an unwieldy tool for the state government.\textsuperscript{61} Constitutional Delegate Frank Mantor\textsuperscript{62} explained during the debates that over the seven years from 1866-1872 the Pennsylvania Legislature had passed 475 general laws compared to 8,755 private acts (Debates 1873, Volume 2, p.592). He argued the extensive use of special legislation added great expenses to the state and diminished its standing. Special legislation had been used to grant special rights to individuals and private corporations,\textsuperscript{63} but had also influenced local governance through the amendment of municipal charters. The problem of special legislation had already been examined by other states, and the committee responsible for examining this issue cited the experience of Ohio and Illinois in justifying the theory and language used to construct Section seven.

\footnotesize

\textsuperscript{60} The broader context for Article III was a general discontent with the legislature arising from ten years scandal, corruption and favoritism (Fisher, Kelley et al. 1952: 1217). Consequently, Article III contained (and was criticized for) numerous legislative provisions written in response to earlier problems. \\
\textsuperscript{61} In their commentary on Article III, Fisher et. al. explain the intention of section seven was to prevent special interest groups from obtaining special legislation (often through “log-rolling and vote trading”) which created inequalities between similar people, places or things in the state (ibid. p.1223). \\
\textsuperscript{62} Delegate of the Twenty-Ninth Senatorial District (Crawford County). \\
\textsuperscript{63} Many of these corporate privileges pertained to railroads. Mantor noted 450 special acts related to railroads were passed between 1866 and 1871.
Box 4.1: The Pennsylvania Constitution, 1873. Article III – Legislation, Section seven

The General Assembly shall not pass any local or special law authorizing the creation, extension or impairing of liens; regulating the affairs of counties, cities, townships, wards, boroughs or school districts; changing the names of persons or places; changing the venue in civil or criminal cases; authorizing the laying out, opening, altering or maintaining roads, highways, streets or alleys; relating to ferries or bridges, or incorporating ferry or bridge companies, except for the erection of bridges crossing streams which form boundaries between this and any other State; vacating roads, town plats, streets or alleys; relating to cemeteries, graveyards, or public grounds not of the State; authorizing the adoption or legitimization of children; locating or changing county seats; erecting new counties or changing county lines; incorporating cities, towns or villages, or changing their charters; for the opening and conducting of elections, or fixing or changing the place of voting; granting divorces; erecting new townships or boroughs; changing township lines, borough limits or school districts; creating offices, or prescribing the powers and duties of officers in counties, cities, boroughs, townships, election or school districts; changing the law of descent or succession; regulating the practice or jurisdiction of, or changing the rules of evidence in, any judicial proceeding or inquiry before courts, aldermen, justices of the peace, magistrates or constables; regulating the management of public schools, the building or repairing of schoolhouses, and the raising of money for such purposes; fixing the rate of interest; affecting the estates of minors or persons under disability, except after due notice to all parties in interest, to be recited in the special enactment; remitting fines, penalties and forfeitures, or refunding monies legally paid into the treasury; exempting property from taxation; regulating labor, trade, mining or manufacturing; creating corporations, or amending, renewing or extending the charters thereof; granting to any corporation, association or individual any exclusive privilege or immunity, or to any corporation, association or individual the right to lay down a railroad track; nor shall the General Assembly indirectly enact such special or local law by the partial repeal of a general law; but laws repealing local or special acts may be passed; [nor shall any law be passed granting powers or privileges in any case where the granting of such powers and privileges shall have been provided for by general law, nor where the courts have jurisdiction to grant the same or give the relief asked for.]

Constitution (1873), pp.1308-1309.
Article XV of the Constitution concerned Cities and City Charters (Box 4.2). In its final form the article was restricted to two issues – when cities could be chartered and how debt could be contracted and repaid. However, the debates concerning this article had covered a much broader array of issues concerning urban governance, including why it was necessary to create a restrictive legal definition of the ‘city’, the amount of legislative autonomy local municipalities were to be granted, and the importance of the State Legislature retaining the flexibility to pass laws governing local areas.

Box 4.2: The Pennsylvania Constitution, 1873. Article XV – Cities and City Charters

Section I: Cities may be chartered whenever a majority of the electors of any town or borough having a population of at least ten thousand shall vote at any general election in favor of the same.

Section II: No debt shall be contracted or liability incurred by any municipal commission, except in pursuance of an appropriation previously made therefore by the municipal government.

Section III: Every city shall create a sinking fund, which shall be inviolably pledged for the payment of its funded debt.

Constitution (1873), pp. 1328.

During the initial debates, an early section stipulated that “[t]he Legislature shall pass general laws whereby a city may be established whenever a majority of the electors of any town or borough voting at any general election shall vote in favor of the same being established”. This raised strong objections, partly as a consequence of concerns over the potential for so-called abuse by small towns seeking the glory of a big-city
Mr. Dodd voiced the main opposition to the section, warning that small towns would ignore the “cumbersome, useless and expensive” nature of city charters when used to govern smaller communities. He concluded by warning that “hundreds of the unimportant towns of the State will obtain city charters, and will have an honorable mayor and an honorable council under salary” (Debates, Volume 6, p.216). This article was passed after a clause was added setting the base of ten thousand residents before a city charter could be pursued. The debate was telling in the opposition to any potential shifts in the urban hierarchy of the state; the very chance that Shacknasty City could jump the queue and join places such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia was a risk state legislators were unwilling to take.

During the 1873 Constitutional Convention, another pressing issue regarded the extent of legislative autonomy provided to local municipalities – and, by extension, the problem of special-acts charters discussed earlier. Considerable discussion occurred amongst the convention delegates regarding the wording of specific sections of the draft constitution providing cities and municipalities with extensive rights over local legislation. Concerns amongst the delegates can be summarized into two arguments – the risks of local corruption and incompetence, and the threats to state legislative flexibility.

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64 Samuel Dodd, Delegate at Large (Venango County – county in northwest Pennsylvania).
65 Dodd’s home county of Venango was replete with several small settlements with names such as Oil City. He argued that “if every town, no matter what its population may be, can obtain a city charter as will be the case if we adopt this section, every little town in the oil region, because they are ambitious, will vote for a city charter. They are all called cities now. We have in our county Allamagoozlam City, Pithole City, Shacknasty City and many others which by any name would not smell sweet. They are cities in name, but they will soon become cities in reality if this passes. They all start up in a day and they fall in about a week” (Debates, Volume 6, p. 215-216).
At issue was Section II of the draft article. Mr. H.W. Palmer objected because the changes could adversely affect cities which had been established with a unicameral council structure, and would be burdened if they needed to add a second. He also raised the specter of local corruption, declaring his reluctance to give legislative power to the cities given “the municipal governments in the cities are generally controlled by gangs of very corrupt scoundrels, and if they have legislative power they may take advantage of it to legislate my money out of my pocket into their own, and I do not like it” (Debates, Volume 6, p. 216).

The third issue relating to local governance arising from these debates related to the overarching desire on the part of the state legislature to retain the flexibility to interfere in local affairs is the need arose. On the one hand, some delegates considered it important that the powers of the state legislature should be curtailed in order to prevent callous interference in local affairs during times of ‘high political excitement’ (Debates, p. 222). Mr. Alricks declared his intention that the duty of the Convention was to create a settled and permanent document. Mr. J.R. Read added that local problems would be much better understood and investigated by local municipalities, and therefore the powers to do so should be left there. However, the prevailing perspective preserved the state legislature’s rights to intervene in urban affairs. This perspective was summarized in the

“Every city now existing or hereafter established shall be governed by a mayor and a select and common council, in whom the legislative power shall be vested.”

Delegate of the Thirteenth Senatorial District (Luzerne, Monroe and Pike Counties).
Delegate of the Twelfth Senatorial District (Dauphin and Lebanon Counties).
Delegate of the Second Senatorial District (Philadelphia)
debates by Mr. Armstrong,\textsuperscript{70} who stated that given the Convention was already set to eliminate special-act legislation in favor of general laws, no further reduction of the state’s rights to govern over municipalities would be needed:

It is not wise for us to further restrict the power of the Legislature when we cannot foresee the exigency which may call forth the exercise of that power. It is much better to leave it to the Legislature without any trammels being placed in the Constitution that in the future may be found embarrassing or injurious.

(Debates, Volume 6, p.223).

In the period between 1820 and 1874, the attitude of the state legislature toward the municipalities had shifted. In the early part of the nineteenth century, the largely rural and unsettled nature of Pennsylvania meant that state legislators could ignore the most local scales of government and instead focus on the City of Philadelphia and – to a lesser extent – the City of Pittsburgh. The 1838 Pennsylvania Constitution codified this stance, emphasizing the freedom of governments to conform to local conditions, and reasserting the long-established role of the county as an administrative proxy between local communities and the state. The power-sharing which occurred in 1834 with the granting of powers of incorporation to county courts did not stop the state legislature from intervening in local affairs on occasion, yet the cumbersome and expensive nature of this special legislation led to the changes made in the 1873 Pennsylvania Constitution. At this point, the deviating nature of rural and urban Pennsylvania was unmistakable, and the state Legislature was forced to codify the urban hierarchy, local powers and the role

\textsuperscript{70} Delegate at Large.
of the state. This was the context in which mid-nineteenth century incorporations occurred in Allegheny County. A diversifying social geography, state debates over economic sectionalism and local authority, and evolving political conceptions of governance.

4.2.4 Local government attitudes toward state government

As state legislators debated their stance concerning the governance of local areas at the 1823 and 1873 Constitutional Conventions, local communities and municipal leaders were shaping their own opinions about the role of local governments within the Pennsylvania political system. As mentioned earlier, municipal opinions during the nineteenth century were shaped by the perceived risks to local sovereignty posed by interference from state or regional policy makers. Such attitudes have endured over time, and were summarized as a set of axioms by John Debolske, writing in the late twentieth century. He noted that intergovernmental politics were shaped by the relative position of a government within the urban hierarchy. Politicians at a given scale would act according to the following rules: 1) the level of government I am with is good, 2) any level of government above me is putting it to me, and 3) any level of government below me cannot be trusted (Berman 2003: 1-18). These axioms held true in Allegheny County municipalities during the nineteenth century, although one addition can be made to

71 John DeBolske was affiliated with the League of Arizona Cities and Towns.
Debolske’s axioms: other municipalities at my level of government should be treated with suspicion.

4.3 Rural Incorporations – Fragmentation of the Depreciation Lands

4.3.1 Introduction

By the time of the 1838 Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention, Allegheny County’s original seven townships were fragmenting because of community demands for smaller and (theoretically) more responsive political units.\textsuperscript{72} As mentioned above, the state legislature’s attention seldom dipped below the county level and held a laissez-faire approach to local rights over self government. For its part, the Pennsylvania county of the mid-nineteenth century lacked the capacity or will to generate a regional identity which could direct local municipal affairs.\textsuperscript{73} State and county inattentiveness to local governance provided a fertile environment for the continual restructuring of social and political space by local leaders, entrepreneurs and communities who saw little utility in retaining the township lines inherited from the previous generation of settlers and surveyors.

\textsuperscript{72} See Figure 15 for the map of municipal boundaries and names in Allegheny County, 1855.
\textsuperscript{73} In the early nineteenth century, the United States county was responsible for routine matters of governance such as tax assessment, rural policing, road administration and judicial affairs (Duncombe 1977: 24). None of these powers necessitated inter-governmental coordination, or strategic planning to the extent required of twenty-first century counties.
One important caveat applies to the relationship between the state and local municipalities concerning the creation of free schools. During the 1820s and early 1830s, agitation for free and public education led to legislation in 1834 setting aside funds for the creation of common schools across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In the first section of the Act, the stipulation was made that “every ward, township and borough,

74 See Boscoe, Chapter Six for an explanation of the context and expansion of the Pennsylvania common schools (Boscoe 2000). His research finds all municipalities in Allegheny County voted in favor of establishing the common schools (ibid.: 209).
within the several school divisions, shall each form a school district” (Wickersham 1969: 313). In addition to using minor civil divisions as the cornerstone for the public school system, the legislature provided local municipalities with the authority to levy district school taxes to assist the local schools. The conflation of school districts with local municipalities was possibly an expeditious move, or else a philosophical precursor to Article IX of the 1838 Pennsylvania Constitution (upholding the authority of local governments to set conditions appropriate for that locality). In either case, the actions of the state legislature had the indirect consequence of hindering future efforts to amalgamate municipalities, once their associated school districts began accumulating resources and prestige at different rates to those of their neighboring boroughs.75

The continuing abstraction of Allegheny County into an increasing number of local governmental units originated in the natural, rural spaces of the region. The previous chapter has described some of the incorporations south of the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers, which occurred almost immediately after the erection of the county in 1788. It was to the north of these rivers that a new political geography was emerging, developed and divided according to the rectilinear geometry of the modern regular land survey used to set out the Depreciation Land districts. By 1876, the north-south orientation of the original districts were still evident in the townships created up to that point (Figure 16). Although this area had a similar topographic profile to the rest of the county, the division

75 Beyond the scope of this dissertation, there is a vast literature concerned with school district consolidation and the spatial inequalities in education from the perspectives of civil rights (i.e. Leigh 1997), consumer choice and public administration.
of the northern third of Allegheny County resembled the regularized Midwestern pattern used in Ohio and elsewhere, more than the older English pattern which dominated the areas of the county settled in earlier periods.

Figure 16 Northernwest Allegheny County, 1876

Source: Muller (1988)
4.3.2 Powers and Functions sought by local communities

The new political units carved from the Depreciation Lands were often caused by the quest for power over space. Preexisting township boundaries were no barrier to entrepreneurs who identified some political or economic gains to be had through appeals to the county court for further subdivisions. This type of political speculation caused the erection of both Richland Township and McCandless Township (Figure 16). Richland Township was erected 1860 by decree of court, from West Deer and Pine (Cushing 1889: 1999: 141). Charles Gibson Jr. argued for the creation of the township, pleading the cause of ‘political autonomy.’ Gibson’s interests in creating the new township may have been influenced by the location of his steam-powered flour mill – according to the Atlas of Allegheny County (Muller 1988), his land holdings included property in the centre of the new township (west of the largest settlement at Bakerstown), and east of the Pennsylvania Northwest Railroad in the southeast corner of the township. Division into the new townships was simplified by the sparse settlement of the area – the land was originally secured in large tracts by eastern capitalists for speculative purposes, and had not received attention by settlers until later (ibid.). McCandless Township was erected at the request of local leaders who sought to create a more convenient election district out of the southern half of Pine Township. In this instance there was significant recorded hostility against the erection of the new township. Objections to the plan were based

\[76\] Later the site of the town of Gibsonia.
upon the number of election districts currently existing (ibid: 171), and the questionable merit of any further districts being created.

Within the rural spaces of Allegheny County’s northern tier there were also instances where the development of new settlements and townships were the consequence of migrant communities seeking to assert ethnic and national identities in their new locales. The sparsely settled nature of the Depreciation Lands enabled new migrant groups to assert their identity through the creation of new spaces. Whereas the earlier settled portions of the county had been developed by communities with English and Scottish origins, communities in the North established spaces which were associated with groups at the margins of nineteenth century society – the Germans and the Irish.

Therefore, towns emerged such as Talleycavey in Hampton Township situated on the Butler Plank-Road, is a name of a locality in the north of Ireland and was suggested by settlers from that place.

The region was still rural and agricultural during much of the mid-nineteenth century. For example Fawn Township is described in a county history as “an exclusively agricultural township. There is a small hamlet in the western part, on Bull Creek, which bears the name of Millerstown, but no villages of importance” (Cushing 1889). The as-yet natural character of the region was gradually giving way to the encroaching abstraction of modernity as the area became integrated into the broader context of Allegheny County, with local worlds of rural settlement giving rise to industries and residential developments.
An early stage in this development were the increasing relations and interconnectivity between the townships in this region. Railroads were established along the river valleys and north toward Lake Erie, providing a means for access across the county and enabling a sense of regionalism that earlier modes of transportation did not create. In addition to transportation infrastructure, regional nodes were developing for services. For example, the water works servicing Sewickley Borough was constructed in the neighboring Aleppo Township, although it carried the name ‘Sewickley Water Works’. Similarly, educational facilities such as the Sewickley Academy catered to children of the social elite from across the region until they were of age to be sent to east coast preparatory schools for further inculcation in the rituals of the upper class (Ingham 1988).
4.3.3 Rural Spaces, Urban Spaces – Forms of Speculation

The speculative real estate and economic developments within this largely rural area were establishing the preconditions for new incorporations which would occur in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Atlas of Allegheny indicates locations where speculators established town plots, hoping to capitalize on the potential for urban growth in those locations. For example, Leet Township contained an area marked as “Gazzam’s Plan” – some form of speculative suburban development attempting to capitalize on its proximity to the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad (Figure 17).
Along the upper Allegheny River valley, several towns were platted by capitalists seeking to benefit from early industries such as salt mining. The municipalities of East Deer and Springdale are symbolic of the types of development occurring during this period. The town of Hitesville emerged around the saltworks and associated industries of PY Hite (Figure 18). Oil refining and coal mining were also present, giving rise to a town plat to benefit from the prospective development. Similar speculation occurred in Springdale, where a small borough emerged. The Pennsylvania canal was also responsible for much development in towns such as Tarentum. Tarentum was a canal town, and also an early industrial site in the northwest corner of Allegheny County. The town was surveyed under the direction of HM Brackenridge, who was a prominent political and legal figure in the Pittsburgh community. After the natural gas reserves in the vicinity of Tarentum were utilized after 1857, the town expanded further, aided by the increasing activity of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which relied upon urban places in the Allegheny Valley for service and labor functions.
Figure 18  East Deer and Springdale, 1876

Source: Muller (1988)
4.4 Speculative Incorporations – Pittsburgh’s South Side

4.4.1 Economic Spaces of the South Side

At the same time that rural spaces in the northern part of Allegheny County were being rearticulated to conform with local demands, nascent manufacturing spaces were emerging adjacent with the City of Pittsburgh. Rather than a simple monotonic expansion of Allegheny County’s urban core, these boroughs were established because of what Walker and Lewis term the ‘politics of space’, with industrialists seeking geographic control over the land containing their manufacturing operations (Walker and Lewis 2001). Founded with names evoking an industrial heritage from England (such as Manchester and Birmingham), these economic spaces were distinct from the larger cities of Allegheny and Pittsburgh in terms of their higher degree of economic specialization, their smaller land area,77 and the limited number of entrepreneurs profiting from their performance.

77 The eleven boroughs of Pittsburgh’s south side were contained within a land area of 4.2 square miles (Sauer, 1974: 267).
Across the Monongahela River from Pittsburgh, the boroughs of Birmingham and Sligo were developing as industrial spaces (Figure 19). The descriptions provided by Sherman Day emphasize the economic character of these spaces. The Borough of Sligo is described from an industrial perspective, emphasizing the presence of ironworking, boatbuilding and glassmaking enterprises. Birmingham is described as having a ‘beautiful’ location, yet the account of this space is focused on the manufactories situated in the borough:
Its location is a beautiful one; and in manufacturing interest it partakes of the character of its English namesake – having within its limits four glass manufacturing establishments – two of all kinds of window and green glass, belonging to Messrs. C. Ihmsen and S. M’Kee & Co., and two flint glass works...there are also two extensive iron establishments belonging to Messrs. Wood, Edwards & M”Knights, a large lock factory belonging to Mr. Isaac Gregg, several extensive coal establishments, and breweries, together with artisans of various kinds – the whole constituting as useful and industrious a population as any place of the size in our country can boast of.

(Day 1843: 89).

The boroughs on the Monongahela River’s southern shore underwent great demographic and structural changes during the period 1850 to 1870 as a consequence of the success of the local manufacturing enterprises. The population density of the south side boroughs in 1870 was much higher than the City of Pittsburgh, although this was due to the annexation by Pittsburgh of the sparsely populated estates of the East End in 1846. Sauer notes the population of Birmingham and East Birmingham increased by 338 percent during this period, fueled in part by the employment opportunities created by an expanding core of coal, glass and iron making establishments. Sauer’s analysis drew upon nineteenth century maps to quantify the growth of the south side’s industrial base. He notes,

In 1852 only one iron producing factory existed in East Birmingham. By 1872 machine shops, planning mills, foundries and eight factories related to the iron industry were in operation. New services were necessary for the increasing population; the map of 1872 shows the establishment of two gasworks, a sawmill, and three lumberyards.

(Sauer, ibid.: 274).

78 See Tarr, 1989: 231-232. The South Side communities had a population density of 11.7 persons per acre in 1870, compared to the City of Pittsburgh’s population density of 5.8 persons per acre.
Not all the emergent political spaces south of Pittsburgh were strictly economic. Temperanceville is one example of an alternate space founded on social—rather than commercial—speculation. Located to the west of the industrial boroughs of Sligo and Birmingham, Temperanceville was created in 1835 by a group headed by John B. Warden which purchased land from the estate of West Elliot and subdivided it into lots. While this land development was presumably executed with the intent to create profits for the proprietors, the sale of land was originally tied to the temperance movement which was gaining attention in Pittsburgh during this period (Sponholtz 1963). The Pittsburgh Gazette advertised lots for sale in “Temperance Village” with property sales made contingent on the condition that liquor should never be sold on the premises (Baldwin 1937: 245). As the sparse settlement of the town plat suggests (Figure 20), this agreement did not guarantee success for the development, and there are indications that the temperance covenants were never honored. However, this episode is notable for the early social engineering attempted by the land developers, and for the novel manner in which the area was branded so as to differentiate itself from the industrial spaces with old-world names such as Sligo, Manchester and Birmingham.

79 The appropriately-named Mrs. Lusher operated a popular Temperance Hotel on Hand Street near Penn Avenue in Pittsburgh (Sponholtz, ibid: 555).
80 Baldwin notes Temperanceville eventually bore the reputation of having more saloons in proportion to its size than any other place in the county.
4.4.2 Intra-urban relations

During the mid-nineteenth century, the industrial boroughs adjacent to the cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny were economic competitors with their neighbors, yet also linked within the same production system which was emerging at the time. The tax revenues arising from the south side borough’s industries were coveted by the City of Pittsburgh, and a leading rationale for the efforts made by urban leaders and advocates to
annex the adjacent boroughs (Sauers, ibid). This was also the reason why the political autonomy of the boroughs was protected by their local leaders. Beyond the scale of intra-urban competition over tax revenues, the Pittsburgh district was part of the broader North American manufacturing belt (Winder 1999), especially after the 1860s when transportation networks and westward migration were bringing markets for iron and later steel closer to Allegheny County (White 1928: 126-127).

The increasingly interdependent relationship of the industrial boroughs and the cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny were aided by the increase in physical infrastructure and capital transfers. In his study of the local industry, Ingham notes how mercantile capital from Pittsburgh was instrumental in facilitating the expansion of industrial production in the south side (Ingham 1991). The relationship between the better-established Pittsburgh merchants and the new generation of industrialists was mutual, based on shared Scots-Irish Presbyterianism (ibid.: 23) and the expansion of available capital in need of re-investment. In a prime example of Harvey’s spatial adaptation of the circuits of capital (Harvey 1982), this reinvestment manifested itself in the fixed assets of the industrial boroughs which were steadily transformed from separate villages into pieces of the burgeoning metropolis.81

81 See Tarr for a description of the infrastructural improvements which followed the annexation to Pittsburgh of the boroughs of the South Side. The street grids were integrated, with Pittsburgh street numbering extended to the South Side. Commuter transportation was also introduced, as were sewers – for the first time – during the 1890s (Tarr 1989). See Dilworth for a recent explanation of how the desire of
4.5 Suburban Incorporations in the Allegheny Valley

4.5.1 Municipal fragmentation in the Allegheny Valley

As rural and urban spaces were being articulated throughout Allegheny County, other spaces were becoming demanded were neither completely urban (as characterized by the industrial boroughs of Pittsburgh’s south side) or completely rural (as characterized, at least initially, by the townships of the Depreciation Lands). What was occurring in places such as Penn Township and Plum Township were the initial expressions of an American suburban ideal, again striving for the abstraction of natural space and ultimately requiring the redefinition of local political boundaries in order to protect and sustain the philosophy of space which they depicted. In each instance, the emerging suburban spaces were the consequence of the ascendancy of industrial towns – indirectly in the case of Wildwood, and directly in the case of Verona.

4.5.2 Spaces of production and consumption

4.5.2.1 Wildwood

The 1876 Atlas of Allegheny County included plans for a space of consumption platted one quarter of a mile beyond the City of Pittsburgh’s eastern border. Wildwood (Figure 21) was designed in the ‘romantic suburb’ mold popularized by Llewellyn Park developers to extend urban infrastructure such as sewerage systems to the suburbs was responsible for girding suburban resistance to later attempts at urban consolidation (Dilworth 2005).
in West Orange, New Jersey and Riverside, Chicago (Figure 22). The industrial city of
the nineteenth century was a blend of wealth and pollution, opportunity and
overcrowding.

The American romantic suburb arose from English planning traditions and offered
a compromise for middle-class communities between the urban amenities of America’s
rapidly expanding cities and the bucolic rural world which was being eroded by the onset
of late-nineteenth century modernity. By the 1850s certain design principles had been
codified for romantic suburbs. As Archer relates, an editorial in Harpers magazine
declared “roads in suburban towns “ought to wind”, in order to preserve “quiet” and
facilitate “rural enjoyment”” (Archer 1983: 151). Other principles included easy access
to transportation from the city, low-density development, park-like surroundings and
amenities such as gas, water, schools, footpaths and shrubbery.

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82 Sidewalks.
The plans for Wildwood include all of the essential elements for a romantic suburb. The generally curving drives provide respite from the grid street pattern associated with areas that were either already urban (such as the City of Pittsburgh), or which had urban pretensions (such as Hitesville or Tarentum). The plat included 250 square acres, with 177 plots ranging in size from one quarter acre to ten acres, ensuring that the residents of Wildwood Village would have sufficient room for the “rural

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83 Given the hilly terrain of the site, the curving street pattern was also better suited to the topography than a grid pattern would have been.
enjoyment” sanctioned by the editor of *Harpers*. The site provided views of the Allegheny River and the “unparalleled surrounding countryside”, and as was common with other romantic suburbs, the names associated with the plan were often arboreal or topographic – Chestnut Street intersected with Bluff Street, and Branch, Vine and Walnut Streets were also available.\(^{84}\)

Figure 22 Riverside, Illinois – Chicago’s Romantic Suburb

Source: http://architronic.saed.kent.edu/v6n1/pix/3fig02.jpg

\(^{84}\) Krieger discusses residential “Elm Streets” in the United States, considering them to be a compromise between the public good and private prerogative, embodying “a fragile harmony of architecture and landscape” (Krieger 1987: 48).
Access to Pittsburgh and Verona was also at hand along the Allegheny Valley Railroad. The Wildwood plan formed a crescent with two rail stations (Wildwood Station and Sandy Creek Station) at either point; the accompanying sales pitch describes the stations to be “within 30 minutes ride of the Union Depot and accessible hourly by all trains, Express and Accommodations.”

Figure 23  Wildwood Advertisement - Detail

The final selling point for this proposed suburb came at the end of the description for Wildwood (Figure 23). “Being just outside the limits of the City, the smoke and the more to be dreaded taxation…” This was the hook – to enjoy the prestige and amenities of a sub-urban life while still remaining within the urban world of production that enables a middle-class standard of living. Dissatisfaction with taxation or overcrowding led to the demand for new political spaces containing the social mix most appropriate to a given

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constituency – in the case of Wildwood, to businessmen resentful of the higher taxes required by an expanding and modernizing city. The creation of new worlds was facilitated by the presbyopia of the state legislature which remained philosophically opposed to delving in local affairs, regardless of possible regional consequences.

The Wildwood settlement was eventually unsuccessful, numbering about 100 residents by 1880 but eventually failing. The reasons for the decline of the planned settlement are unavailable, although the failure of the plan coincides with the demise of Allegheny County’s other romantic suburb, Evergreen Hamlet. Begun by a group of businessmen in the mid-nineteenth century, the planned collective fell apart through internal discord, possibly stymieing the plans for the much larger Wildwood. Fittingly however, the area proposed to be set out as Wildwood Village continued as a space for middle- and upper-class consumption into the twenty-first century as the exclusive Longue Vue Country Club (Toker 1986).

4.5.2.2 Verona

The rise of spaces of production was concurrent with the development of spaces of consumption, such as Wildwood. During the later part of the nineteenth century, Allegheny County’s urban spaces expanded at its spatial margins because the expansion

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86 The provision of water for sanitation, industry and fire prevention was a major concern for industrial cities of the late nineteenth century. Between 1850 and 1895, Pittsburgh had expanded the water supply network from 21 miles of water pipe to 268 miles – this capital expenditure was the greatest cost to the city during the period (Tarr 2002: 514), and a factor in the increasing tax burden on city dwellers.
of the regional transportation infrastructure required the development of ancillary service
towns such as Verona (Figure 24), whose development was tied to the development of
the Allegheny Valley Railroad (Cushing 1889: 1999: 135). The town plat is strongly
related to the activities of the railroad, with numerous facilities occupying space near to
the riverfront. The expansion of the town was accompanied by a social sorting which is
depicted in a contemporary account:

The streets are wide and regular. There is no large part of the population below the
railroad; that part of town has been overflowed by river freshets several times within the
last score of years, and is consequently regarded with a degree of disfavor. The avenue
above the railroad is lined with beautiful residences, while the ascending slope in the rear
presents many specimens of tasteful suburban architecture. Taken as a whole, the town
and its surroundings cannot fail to impress the visitor favorably (ibid.: 135).
The development of the residential section of Verona with its ‘tasteful suburban architecture’ began to differentiate the working-class areas from the middle-class sphere. The riverfront was associated with intermittent flooding, the noise and smell of industry and with the stark industrial architecture of the nineteenth century. Allegheny County’s topography had the benefit that communities with sufficient means could relocate to a hillside with a more pleasing aspect while remaining within commuting distance from factory offices and railroad stations. The innovation of the suburban world, along with the occupational sorting it entailed would have serious implications for places like
Homestead and Braddock, where gerrymandering of municipal boundaries would redirect the profits of regional tax assets to small, wealthier communities. In addition, differentiation of property values in locations including Verona would result in late-nineteenth and twentieth century incorporations throughout Allegheny County, as property-owners began to protect their property values and philosophies of space by restructuring municipal boundaries.

87 See Chapter Six.
4.6 Concluding Comments

Nineteenth century Pennsylvania was characterized by a permissive state legislature which championed local control over municipal affairs. At the beginning of the 1830s, the state legislature still considered their state to be comprised of ‘local worlds’ – the interconnectedness of local areas was not yet apparent, and therefore legislators perceived little need to construct an integrated theory of regional governance. This is supported by the prolific use of special legislation during the first half of the nineteenth century, and the economic sectionalism which dominated political debates during this period. The consequence of this excessive localism for Allegheny County was the rapid fragmentation of its political spaces to accommodate the desires and spatial theories of increasingly disparate communities of interest.

By the time of the 1873 Pennsylvania State Constitution, Allegheny County had already undergone significant social, economic and political changes. Therefore, the controls imposed by the state legislature on issues such as special acts legislation and the nature of Pennsylvania’s urban hierarchy occurred too late to prevent the spatial expression of local communities and leaders. These changes were not confined to Allegheny County, and are another example of how legislation has a difficult time keeping pace with social change – regions within the United States were becoming integrated in a national system, and rapidly changing the mode of governance which had been adequate during an era of local worlds.
Chapter 5 Metropolitan Dreams, Municipal Schemes – 1880-1930

5.1 Introduction

Allegheny County’s industrialization during the late nineteenth century provided the basis for a new phase of boundary reform. On the one hand, the municipalities which had emerged over the past century began to jockey for positions of prestige and renown within Allegheny County (See Figure 25). Political and social spaces such as McKeesport, the City of Allegheny and Homestead sought to rebuff the notion of a hegemonic Pittsburgh by exerting their identity as the location of specific manufacturing plants or ethnic enclaves. This was a horizontal contest over the profits of industrial success; it depicts Allegheny County as a galaxy of ‘regional worlds’, where home-rule municipalities provided communities of interest with a geographical base from which to promote their spatial perspective of where the county’s center of gravity was located.

On the other hand, Allegheny County was becoming more deeply entwined in the ‘modern’ capitalist world system, linked to and competing with other regions in the Midwestern United States and beyond, all of which held a vested interest in capturing the fixed assets and capital flowing from the burgeoning industries of the early twentieth
Therefore, Allegheny County was emerging as a regional world at a different scale where the competition was inter-urban, rather than intra-urban. The rising competition between regions during this period required an identifiable regional champion, and the City of Pittsburgh was granted this mantle by vested local interests – including politicians and business leaders, and abetted by the state’s willingness to allow the City of Pittsburgh to forcibly annex adjacent boroughs and the City of Allegheny.

This chapter is therefore the story of two concurrent competitions. Within the county, the contest over space continued with the fragmentation of some municipalities (such as the disintegration of Mifflin Township), in an attempt by industrialists to set the conditions and to capture the profits of the steel industry. During the 1880-1910 period, social and economic spaces strove to define themselves as alternatives to the increasing political and cultural hegemony of the City of Pittsburgh.

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88 This perspective owes a great deal to David Harvey’s extensions of Marx during the nineteen-eighties, when he developed the spatial implications of capitalist production (Harvey 1982; Harvey 1985).
The rise of Pittsburgh as a dominant space within the county is the other competition. Whereas the city had always been the primary urban center for western Pennsylvania, the increasing competition between Allegheny County and other regions increased the need for Pittsburgh to be seen as an economic capital. This status was achieved through the consolidation of adjacent boroughs and cities, occurring with the assistance of the state legislature and the courts in the case of the consolidation with the City of Allegheny. Additionally, the construction of symbolic spaces within the city also
emphasized the hegemonic status of the City of Pittsburgh, conflating the city with the county and ultimately causing resentment among peripheral municipalities which saw this as a threat to their rural or suburban identities.

5.2 Allegheny County in competition as a ‘Regional World’

5.2.1 Municipal growth in Allegheny County, 1880-1930

During the period between 1880 and 1924, the number of municipalities within Allegheny County increased from 70 to 119 (Figure 26). This increase was driven by the industrialization and suburbanization which had begun during the mid-nineteenth century, and which continued to make preexisting political spaces susceptible to redefinition by actors with an interest in differentiating space for social or economic motives. In his analysis of the growth of Pittsburgh’s industrial suburbs, Edward Muller concludes that development of the urban landscape was prompted by the centrifugal tendencies of industry (which were relocating from the urban core of Allegheny County to find suitable sites for the large integrated steel mills and associated enterprises). He writes that by 1920,

The Pittsburgh district, as contemporaries called it, presented a complex urban landscape with a large dominant central city, surrounded by proximate residential suburbs, mill towns, small satellite cities, and hundreds of mining patch towns (Muller 2001: 70).
The steel industry of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were dependent on a specific formula of labor, management and land inputs which caused industrialists to look beyond the city of Pittsburgh for suitable sites for expansion.\(^8^9\) Towns were sometimes built for the workers at the new sites for production – for example, the town of Wilmerding in the Turtle Creek Valley, built by George Westinghouse adjacent to his new headquarters. The urge to avoid problems caused by organized labor also prompted capitalists to create towns such as Vandergrift and Monessen (both located in Westmoreland County).

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\(^8^9\) See Mosher for a description of the changing needs of the steel industry in western Pennsylvania. In particular, the evolving land and transportation requirements for steel production were creating significant implications for the industrial town of Vandergrift, Pennsylvania which was built to George McMurtry’s specifications (Mosher 2004).
The growing complexity of Allegheny County’s municipal system is indicated by Figure 27, which shows the changes in political boundaries and population for Allegheny County in 1880 and 1930. In 1880 Allegheny County’s population was 855,869⁹⁰ and the political geography of the county was still dominated by large townships. Some suburban incorporations had already occurred in places such as the boroughs of Verona and Sewickley. The cities of Allegheny and Pittsburgh were the largest population centers, and the adjacent townships to the east and southeast had the next highest populations.

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⁹⁰ Tenth Census of the United States, Volume 1, page 76
By 1930, the population of the county had risen to 1,374,410, with the large increase caused by migrants drawn by the economic opportunities created by expanding local industry. The municipal landscape had also changed, with the 49 new municipal incorporations creating the complicated mosaic of local governments which was to cause considerable debate and action during the 1920s and beyond. New municipalities were created along the river valleys of Allegheny County to accommodate the production facilities of manufacturing companies. Suburban incorporations also occurred, including the separation of Bradford Woods from Marshall Township (1915), Rosslyn Farms from Robinson Township (1913), and Mount Lebanon from Scott Township (1920).

The growing fragmentation of Allegheny County into an increasing number of political units would create future implications for communities responding to the eventual de-industrialization of western Pennsylvania in the late twentieth century. Historian Roy Lubove argued the political fragmentation of Allegheny County decreased the potential for a regional response to the rapid closure of mills (Lubove 1994).

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91 Fifteenth Census of the United States, Volume 3, page 937
92 See Chapter Seven for a discussion of the actions taken to consolidate the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County into a larger metropolis. David Lonich and Brian Jensen have researched the episodes of interest in “solving” the urban fragmentation of Allegheny County during the twentieth century (Lonich 1991; Jensen 2004).
93 Jensen concludes later resistance to consolidation in the Monongahela River Valley was politically motivated, with the dominant Democratic party leadership fearing that consolidation of political offices would weaken the party’s power in the region (Jensen 2004).
Figure 27 Allegheny County Municipalities, 1880 & 1930

Source: 1880 US Census; 1930 US Census
5.2.2 Regional economic networks, Global Economic Power

Allegheny County’s ascendancy as a center for manufacturing and heavy industry developed during the last third of the nineteenth century. What during the early part of the nineteenth century had been a relatively isolated region serving local markets was transforming into a node within a much larger economic system through westward expansion of the United States and the increasing efficiency and reach of transportation networks connecting Allegheny County and other locations.

The area known generally as the American manufacturing belt stretched from the east coast of the United States as far west as Milwaukee and St. Louis by 1880. The belt was comprised of regional industrial systems centered on urban manufacturing centers such as Pittsburgh which served the expanding markets of their hinterlands (Meyer 1983). The reliance of manufacturers on local markets was beginning to shift by the 1850s and 1860s as communication and transportation channels improved between the cities of the manufacturing belt. Examples of this expanding economic geography are found in the correspondence of individual manufacturers in the Midwest who maintained an extensive set of interactions with customers, investors and suppliers across the United States (Winder 1999; Winder 2001).

The interactions between Allegheny County and other regional worlds included flows of capital, labor and products. Allegheny County’s growth as a manufacturing center, as well as the notable concentration of profitable natural resources in the region
gave cause for the region to become integrated into a broadening sphere of investment flows. Conzen’s analysis of banking measures provides evidence of Pittsburgh’s increasing prominence as a destination for capital flows between 1881 and 1910. During this period, the annual clearing receipts\textsuperscript{94} from Pittsburgh banks increased from $140 million to nearly $3 billion (Conzen 1977: 95). This large increase in capital flows was the consequence of venture capitalists directing assets into Allegheny County to benefit from the economic activities occurring throughout the region, and because of the profits being accumulated by local companies from a broadening array of investments. Mark Samber’s research on the history of these capital flows finds the Pittsburgh banking industry rose to prominence during the late nineteenth century and enjoyed a symbiotic relationship with the local manufacturing industry (Samber 1995: 144). For a period until the second decade of the twentieth century, the availability of capital in Pittsburgh’s banks enabled local business leaders such as Andrew W. Mellon to gain control over both local and non-local enterprises.\textsuperscript{95}

Although it could be anticipated that social linkages such as marriage would also be used to extend the networks of elite families of Allegheny County to other regions of the United States, Ingham notes a peculiar iconoclasm within Pittsburgh and Allegheny

\textsuperscript{94} Clearing receipts provide a measure of the money shifting through a regional economy, and reflect the total commercial transactions across all sectors of the economy (Samber 1995: 127).

\textsuperscript{95} Andrew W. and Richard Mellon had majority holdings in the Pittsburgh-based Union Trust Company. The portfolio of companies controlled by the Union Trust included an extensive range of industries, including utilities, oil, natural gas, coke & coal, steel and aluminium (Samber, ibid.: 177). Only a few of these companies did not have a presence in Allegheny County – an issue which would later become a weakness, with the eventual decline of manufacturing in the region.
County. He contends that in contrast to Baltzell’s general model of an emerging ‘national’ upper class during the 1890s (Baltzell 1958), the leading families of Pittsburgh resisted the trend of interurban marriages. Whereas the scions of leading families would be sent to East Coast preparatory schools and participate in other social interactions with the upper classes of other cities, marriages would occur between Pittsburgh families (Ingham 1988: 285). Ingham argues that “their cosmopolitanism was perhaps more of a veneer…and this relative provinciality, this rootedness and still rather prudish Calvinism, may have continued to dominate the style of Pittsburgh long after New York, Philadelphia, and Boston had succumbed to an undifferentiated cosmopolitanism” (ibid.). Part of this provincialism arose from the success and specialization of the Pittsburgh steel industry.

5.2.3 Alternate Spaces – the role of peripheral spaces

As the economic world of Allegheny County was increasing through the influx of immigrants and the globally renowned industries located there, alternate spaces which had developed in the earlier phases of the county’s history were becoming marginalized by the industrial successes of the county. Whereas in the 1830s the county had been generally rural with large natural spaces dominating the landscape of the Depreciation Lands north of the Allegheny River and south of the Ohio River, within fifty years these
areas had become invisible portions of the county consciousness.\textsuperscript{96} As industrialization and urbanization advanced, the rural identities which had been forged in the peripheral spaces of the county were giving way to a landscape dominated by the factories along the river valleys, and by the mining villages which were appearing in the townships. The vision of Allegheny County was cohering around an industrial identity, and Lubove argued that the Pittsburgh region could only be considered cohesive from the perspective of industry. In terms of social and political life, Southwestern Pennsylvania was highly fragmentary due to the focus on work over other aspects of life, because of the topographic, cultural and class barriers operating at the time (Lubove 1969).

5.3 Power and Identity amongst the municipalities

Below the scale of inter-urban competition, the political spaces within Allegheny County were also being redefined. Capitalists and politicians were seeking to assert their power over local spaces; modern production of steel could proceed more smoothly if the means of production were located in areas where the steel-master could provide oversight and the tax structure. Politicians saw the benefits of being associated with the wealth that local industries were generating – hence intra-urban competition began in earnest, with different regions within Allegheny County fighting for hegemonic status. Pittsburgh was the largest population center, and also the largest political center. However, McKeesport

\textsuperscript{96} The increasing absence of the rural community from the image of Allegheny County had progressed so far that by 1938 Klein’s sociological study glossed over the rural spaces of the county, simply noting the decline in land devoted to farming between 1884 and 1935 (Klein 1938): 86-87).
and Allegheny City would not submit without a struggle. This section describes the efforts by capitalists to seize control over their spaces of accumulation, and the efforts by politicians to seize the prestige and status due to the capital of the region.

5.3.1 Local spaces of power – Homestead and the struggle for control

The area which became the Borough of Homestead originally was part of the rural Mifflin Township. Until 1870 the land had been occupied by two farms – the McClure and West homesteads, with several small holdings scattered around the area. Transportation from this area to the City of Pittsburgh was possible by road or rail (the latter with a two mile detour to Braddock, across the river from Homestead). The City of Pittsburgh had another link to this area – the City Farm (Figure 28). This was an area of 144.48 acres which contained the City Poor House, built in 1851 and capable of housing up to 300 paupers, and the Home for the Insane which could house up to 150 inmates (Krause 1992: 274). Located over six miles from the City of Pittsburgh, the City Farm was a sign of Pittsburgh’s spatial and institutional reach into the rural areas of Allegheny County, and also an indication of how far removed from the nineteenth century city undesirable populations such as the insane and indigent had to be located, so as not to be considered ‘in my backyard’. The agricultural character of the region began to change

97 This section uses Margaret Byington’s study of Homestead for the 1907 Pittsburgh Survey (Byington 1974 (1910)), which provides invaluable information about the historic development of this region.
98 The ‘Not In My Backyard’, or NIMBY principle gained notoriety during the twentieth century to explain the reluctance of local populations to accept odious land uses in close proximity. A common tactic to avoid community opposition was to locate unwelcome facilities in remote – and often rural – areas, where
when the Homestead Bank and Life Insurance Company purchased the farms with plans 
to transform Homestead into a residential suburb for people working in Pittsburgh 
(Byington 1910: 5). The notion of Homestead as a bucolic suburb on the banks of the 
Monongahela River was soon dispelled when the convenience of the site for industry 
began to be recognized. In 1878 a glass factory was opened by Bryce and Highbie, and 
in 1881 Klomans built a steel mill on the riverfront (ibid). This mill was bought by the 
Carnegie Steel Company in 1886, setting in motion an industrial trajectory which would 
continue for close to a century.

opposition was lower. Another example of this was the Western Penitentiary, located on the Ohio River in 
Kilbuck Township, six miles south of Pittsburgh.
The markets for steel were expanding in the 1880s, and the Carnegie Steel Company was at the forefront of production and organizational change. Steel traditionally had been manufactured into rails for the railroad industry, yet the maturation
of that sector\footnote{Ninety percent of steel production went into rails in 1882. This had dropped to less than fifty percent of steel production in 1890 (Brody 1998: 4).} and technological advances in steel production led to greater opportunities in structural steel products destined for urban markets (Chandler 1990: 29-35). Carnegie decided to use his new works at Homestead for the manufacture of structural steel products and because of the profit potential from this new market, it was in his best economic interests to exert as much control as possible over the land and labor comprising the Homestead Works.

An example of how Carnegie and his company sought to control the physical environment of his production facilities at Homestead involved the City Farm, which was adjacent to the Homestead Steel Works. In 1890, Andrew Carnegie, company chairman Henry Clay Frick and Republican boss of Pittsburgh Christopher L. Magee conspired to transfer the land to the Carnegie Steel Company in order to expand the Homestead Steel Works. In essence, the deal involved collusion between the company and the political machine of Pittsburgh to transfer publicly-owned land valued in excess of $1,000,000 to the Carnegie Steel Company for about $496,000 (Krause 1992: 276; 281). Paul Krause describes the land deal as “replete with juicy conspirational details” which in hindsight reveal the depth of connections between business, politics and ‘Dollar Diplomacy’ that were altering the political geography of the Monongahela Valley (Krause 1992: 274-283).
During the early 1890s the attention of the Carnegie Steel Company had turned to reducing the power and influence of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers (AAISW). The Amalgamated Association had gradually levied a number of conditions for its members, including equalized hours, output and wages (Brody 1998: 50). The increasing strength of the union threatened manufacturers who felt hamstrung by the increasingly complex contracts negotiated by the AAISW. Arguing that the efficiency of steel production was being stymied by the unions, H.C. Frick wrote to Carnegie stating “The mills have never been able to turn out the product they should, owing to being held back by the amalgamated men.” Carnegie’s reaction was to harden his stance in contract negotiations with the Amalgamated Association at the Homestead Steel Works – creating the conditions for the violent Homestead Strike of 1892, which broke the power of the union at that facility.

While the details of the strike are beyond the scope of this dissertation, the consequences are not. Throughout the 1907 Pittsburgh Survey, the authors strike a sympathetic tone when describing the consequences of ‘unbridled capitalism’ on working families in the ‘Pittsburgh District’. Soon after the Homestead Strike was broken, the Carnegie Land Company bought the land adjacent to the expanding Homestead Works.

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100 The AAISW had 24,000 members nationwide in 1891 (Brody 1998: 50).
101 Frick to Carnegie, October 31, 1892, quoted in (Brody 1998: 53).
102 Refer to Byington (1910), Krause (1992) and Brody (1998) for details on labor unrest in Homestead, and the broader context of labor relations in the United States steel industry. See Bridge for a valuable and detailed account of the Carnegie Steel Company, including information regarding the Homestead Strike and its context (Bridge 1972).
and laid out streets, municipal services and housing – most of which were reserved for mill employees (Byington, ibid.: 18). Rather than increasing the boundaries of the preexisting Homestead Borough, the Carnegie Land Company was allowed to incorporate this area as the borough of Munhall (Figure 29). As Byington noted, “Consequently we have the curious anomaly of a town that is a social and industrial unit parceled off into three politically independent boroughs” (ibid).

Figure 29 Mifflin Township Gerrymandering

Source: (Klein 1938)
In Klein’s 1938 “Social Study of Pittsburgh”, the Munhall-Homestead case is provided as an example of corporate gerrymandering. Three quarters of the Homestead Works, along with the housing stock for United States Steel Corporation\textsuperscript{103} managers were located in Munhall, whereas the majority of mill workers lived in the adjacent borough of Homestead. Because the tax-generating mill is located in Munhall, the millage rates for the managers and skilled workers of Munhall could be kept lower than in Homestead, where as Pittsburgh Survey contributor Shelby Harrison notes, “some one must build and maintain schools and public works, protect person and property, and support local government” (quoted in Byington, ibid.: 20). Harrison found the inequity created by this gerrymandering of the industrial landscape was heightened because small properties tended to be valued closer to market value than large industrial plants, and because the Carnegie Steel Company was a more efficient manager of Munhall than the “utterly haphazard” governance of Homestead.

5.3.2 Local identity politics in Allegheny County

The hegemonic status of Pittsburgh as the main urban center for Allegheny County was not universally accepted during the early twentieth century. In particular, the City of McKeesport had local boosters who considered their city to be the rightful leader of the region, given its location in the center of the ‘steel valley’ of the Monongahela River. This perspective was based in the local presence of the large industrial works of

\textsuperscript{103} The Carnegie Steel Company became the United States Steel Corporation in 1901.
the National Tube Company. Enterprises such as the National Tube Company could dominate the economic and social fabric of municipalities, with civic pride and identification with the local company becoming synonymous.

Identity politics were not only bound by geographic affiliation during this period. Ethnicity and class also conspired to create new identities within Allegheny County, occasionally cleaving to minor civil divisions which protected a community against the expanding power of the county’s industrial world. For the social elite of Allegheny County, this protection was afforded by the East End of the City of Pittsburgh (Borchert and Borchert 2002). This would become significant in the next period of the county’s history, as the concentration of social power in Pittsburgh would provide the momentum for future metropolitan reform initiatives. Working class communities were also developing local identities, often in conjunction with ethnic identities, since immigrants from particular regions formed enclaves within Allegheny County’s industrial towns and performed similar tasks in the mills (Oestreicher 1989: 132-136).
5.4 Metropolitan Dreams – Pittsburgh as Allegheny County

While communities across Allegheny County were competing over the benefits accruing from industrialization, the City of Pittsburgh was becoming the dominant urban space within the county and a prominent representative at the national scale. The conflation of Pittsburgh with Allegheny County was aided by the construction of metropolitan symbols of power within Pittsburgh and the state-sanctioned annexation of neighboring Allegheny City, which denoted the increasing perception of external communities that Pittsburgh was the key political space in western Pennsylvania.

5.4.1 Regional spaces of power – metropolitan symbolism in Pittsburgh

The rise of metropolitan symbolism in Pittsburgh’s downtown area – the ‘Golden Triangle’ stretching from the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers east to Grant Street – was facilitated by the inward flow of capital and political and economic power. For example, the banking industry described by Samber was not simply an abstract space of capital flows. To the contrary, the capital accumulation from the industries of Allegheny County transformed Fourth Avenue into a mighty financial corridor of banks and insurance companies. The corridor began with the Arrott Insurance Building (designed by Frederick Osterling - 1902) near Market Square, was focused on the many banks located on the 300 Block of Fourth Avenue between Wood and Smithfield Streets, and led to the City-County Buildings at Fourth Avenue and Grant Street (Toker 1986: 35-41).
If the Fourth Avenue corridor was an architectural symbol of the Pittsburgh region’s economic power, the City-County Building (designed by Henry Hornbostel and Edward B. Lee and completed in 1915), on Grant Street was the accompanying symbol of metropolitan unity and political power. The building was designed to function as the Pittsburgh City Hall and to accommodate county government functions which had overflowed from the neighboring Allegheny County Courthouse and Jail (Toker 71). The Courthouse (designed by Henry Hobson Richardson and built between 1884 and 1888), the City Hall and the County Building (designed by Stanley Roush and completed in 1929) occupy four city blocks near the center of Grant Street.

The planned symbolism of these architectural spaces is captured in Martin Aurand’s elegant envisioning of Pittsburgh (Aurand 2007). He concludes a discussion of the site location and architectural design of the county buildings by emphasizing the symbolism underpinning their erection:

Like the Campanile di San Marco in Venice, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C., the courthouse tower dominated the skyline as an emphatic center point for the entire city and a visible expression of the *axis mundi*. At the same time, as *caput mundi*, the County Buildings reasserted the role of the civic authority. With the land – Grant’s Hill – no longer much apparent in the landscape, the County Buildings assumed the role of the sacred mountain. In these buildings, Grant’s Hill – like a true immortal – remains present to this day.


In this description, Aurand refers to the eradication of Grant’s Hill, which had been a prominent natural feature marking the eastern edge of the colonial city. With the exertion of metropolitan power (and particularly with the 1911 Frederick Law Olmsted
Jr.’s plan for Pittsburgh), this natural feature was destroyed by a series of ‘hump cuts’ which enabled easier development on the site. Aurand’s work has a topographical emphasis throughout, and he correctly identifies a transition between Pittsburgh’s formerly natural world (dominated by Grant’s Hill) and the abstracting landscape of the city’s urban monumental architecture.

The Olmsted Plan mentioned above was another important expression of metropolitan symbolism. The Pittsburgh Civic Commission employed Olmsted to design a plan for civic improvement, and he delivered a comprehensive plan (Olmsted 1910) designed to modernize the city’s urban infrastructure of roads, parks and riverfronts (Bauman and Muller 2006). Olmsted was a disciple of the integrated planning approach which considered cities to be “interrelated systems” (Scott 1969: 72). The implication this had for Pittsburgh’s metropolitan dreams was significant, as described in Bauman and Muller’s analysis:

…nearly half of the plan addressed traffic improvements beyond the downtown and even beyond the city boundaries, providing an outline of highway building for the county for decades to come. Olmsted advanced eighty recommendations for street, bridge and tunnel projects that “would, even if it were possible to implement them at once, impose an altogether unreasonable financial burden.” He urged the city and county to tackle some of these urgent issues before costs and other difficulties increased markedly.

(Bauman & Muller 2006: 76)

The city and the county were becoming inseparably linked through strategic plans and the metropolitan visions of Pittsburgh’s civic leaders. In 1907 their efforts would be assisted by the Pennsylvania state legislature when the rival city of Allegheny was annexed to Pittsburgh.
5.4.2 The expanding City of Pittsburgh

If there were any remaining doubts about the role of Pittsburgh as the region’s economic and political epicenter, they were erased in 1907 with the annexation of the City of Allegheny. This was not an amicable consolidation, and Allegheny City litigants spent two years attempting to prevent and then overturn the decision. Mayor George Guthrie of Pittsburgh was insistent upon the consolidation of the cities, arguing that both cities were of the same legal classification under Pennsylvania law, shared numerous connecting bridges and unification would boost Pittsburgh’s population to over 450,000 people – elevating the city to sixth largest in the United States.\(^{104}\)

The Pennsylvania legislature agreed with the arguments for annexation, and an Act of Assembly was approved on February 7, 1906 “to enable cities which are now or may hereafter be contiguous or in close proximity, including any intervening land, to be united under one municipality, in order that the people may avoid unnecessary burdens of maintaining separate municipal governments” (PA Archives, RG-28, Box 192). By taking this stance, the Pennsylvania state legislature re-entered the forum of local government politics in order to sanction the City of Pittsburgh as the dominant urban center in western Pennsylvania.

\(^{104}\) Information regarding the litigation is available at the Pennsylvania State Archives, RG-48 Records of Municipal Government, Allegheny City (Allegheny County) Common and Select Councils. Supreme Court of the United States Pleadings, 1906 (7-1434, box 192, Folder 10)
5.5 Concluding Comments

Allegheny County had become a much different place between 1870 and 1920. What formerly had been a series of local worlds had changed, and the entire region was now implicated in a broadening scale of economic activity. At the municipal scale, the political spaces of Allegheny County were challenged by the ascension of the industrial world – whereas a range of geographic imaginations had been tolerated and coexisted in an earlier period, the capitalist imperatives of the modern world economy were causing hard choices to be made. Rural townships such as Mifflin in the Monongahela River Valley were being lost to a landscape of industrial towns. Suburbs were developing quietly within the county, yet the main activity of this era was focused on Pittsburgh – newly anointed as the regional champion for Allegheny County in the struggle for economic survival and prosperity.

The dominance of the new industrial world was accompanied by deleterious social and environmental impacts. The response to this situation would come from the economic and social elites located within Pittsburgh. As we shall see, their strategy was to codify the new metropolitan region through consolidation of the city and county. For the economic elites this would mean a geographic manifestation of their economic imagination – the region as enterprise. For the social elites this would mean a better government which could recalibrate the growing inequities caused by industrial success. The only thing left was to determine how the communities at the spatial and social margins of the county would react.
Chapter 6 Advocates for Change: Progressive Era Planning and Reform in Allegheny County, 1911-1929

6.1 Introduction

Proposals to change local governance do not always originate with state and local politicians or because of community and business demand. On occasion proposals for change are recommended by non-governmental organizations; by experts with theories to test and principles to serve. With the right support and momentum such advocates can enact powerful results. But if advocates for change do not recognize gaps between their theories and local conditions, the plans can fail. The efforts of the Civic Club of Allegheny County during the 1920s is an example of the latter case.

This chapter shows how theories for change were developed at the national scale as part of the reforms prevalent during the period known as the Progressive Era, 1890-1920. Theories of metropolitanism and efficient government were adopted by the Civic Club of Allegheny County, whose subsequent advocacy led to a proposed metropolitan plan for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. The plan preserved the autonomy of local municipalities whilst enabling new levels of coordination and cooperation across metropolitan Pittsburgh. Allegheny County voters had the opportunity to accept the plan in June 1929, but the plans for governance reform were rebuffed.
The Progressive prescription for reform of local government failed because of a combination of voter apathy, legislative compromise and advocate exhaustion. Voter apathy arose because of a gap between how the public perceived their communities and the changes proposed by expert advocates. In this regard the story of Progressive Era Pittsburgh reflects differences in how groups represent and perceive space (Lefebvre 1974:1991; Harvey 1985). Whereas the professional experts and advocates represented Allegheny County’s municipal fragmentation as a problem to be solved through more efficient coordination, communities experienced their municipalities as places in which their identity was formed, and they held power to control important local issues.

Advocate exhaustion was visible by 1929, and led to legislative compromises in the 1929 plan. The process of formulating, promoting and implementing changes to Allegheny County’s governance structure began in 1911 and proceeded for the next 18 years. The advocates who fought for a greater Pittsburgh had devoted long years to enacting change. As the desire for results mounted (partly based in the timing of the 1930 census, and the motivation to see Pittsburgh’s population ranking increase) legislative compromises occurred. The original intent to create better forms of local governance was watered down to gain broader support for the plan. These compromises dampened enthusiasm amongst the advocates for change, and increased suspicion amongst voters who ultimately rejected the plans.

The following sections evaluate the trends and events leading to the referendum on local governance reform in June 1929. I first explain the Progressive Era context in
which these events occurred. Using a national scan, I show how rapid urbanization and
the professionalization of the social sciences created a class of reform-minded experts
intent on using their knowledge to reform nineteenth century institutions to meet the
challenges of the new century. I then describe the advocates of Progressive ideals in
Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. The Civic Club of Allegheny County was actively
involved in a broad range of reform activities, and seized onto the national rhetoric of
metropolitanism as a means of solving perceived local problems. By examining the
history of advocacy for a metropolitan Pittsburgh I show how the initial basis for reform
evolved; I also explain how the gap between these expert theories and local perceptions
of Allegheny County were perpetuated.

In the final section, I describe the local community reaction to the proposed
reforms. Whereas conventional accounts attribute the metropolitan plan’s failure to the
high threshold for ratification, I contend voter apathy was a more important barrier to the
Progressive agenda. This apathy is evident in the voting results, and is symptomatic of
the widening gap between Progressive theories and local needs. Contemporary accounts
provide further evidence that the advocates for change underestimated the capacity of
local communities to understand their reasons for reform, and relied instead on an uneasy
mix of civic boosterism and fear which failed to garner support.
6.2 Metropolitan reform and the Progressive Era

6.2.1 Introduction

Broad social and economic changes were occurring across the United States at the end of the nineteenth century. Standards and institutions suited to rural conditions were overwhelmed by an urbanizing and industrial society. Reform-minded professionals began advocating for change on behalf of communities across the country, what is often known as the Progressive Era. This movement had implications for how local political boundaries were re-scaled. Progressive reform debates were disseminated nationally by research bureaus, commissions, professional organizations and foundations linked through shared methods and theories. The politically fragmented urban landscape affronted notions of efficiency and order held in high esteem by Progressive reformers. Metropolitan consolidation became a key goal for Progressive reform.

Different approaches were used by reformers to modernize the way of life in American society – targets for reform were voting rights, housing quality, corruption in government and inefficiency in urban management. Metropolitan reform was important to reformers interested in improving the structural efficiency and geographic logic of urban regions. Political fragmentation was problematic for reformers who believed static boundaries of nineteenth century cities should be re-formed to conform to the new distribution of firms and populations shifted by centrifugal trends of the period. Reformers adapted Frederick Taylor’s scientific management principles of efficiency and
coordination to solve social problems (Haber 1964; Foglesong 1986). These notions of rationalism directed recommendations for urban reform toward consolidation. Consolidation of political units was a prime solution for municipal reformers because it would recapture the activities of an urban region within a more efficient functional unit. Research was mustered to support the goal of consolidation – surveys, census data and municipal research provided reformers with evidence that urban fragmentation was a national problem.

The national scope of Progressive reform activities influenced the solution to local metropolitan problems. The national character of the debates over efficiency and metropolitanism left little room for understanding or accommodating local variation. Advocates for change were active across the United States arguing municipal fragmentation was deleterious to any urban region. Their prescription was for some measure of political consolidation of local municipal units. The gap between the national scale of advocacy and local contingency created confusion between advocates and communities. The space between them reduced the potential for ‘con-fusing’ local governmental units.

6.2.2 The Progressives

Following the American Civil War, the United States entered a period of rapid change. Cities grew because the opportunities they afforded spurred in-migration from rural areas and immigration from abroad. Urbanization grew rapidly (Table 1), with
increases in the number of urban places and a four-fold increase in urban populations between 1850 and 1930. By 1900 one third of the population was urban and by 1930 a majority of citizens resided in urbanized areas. This period of rapid urbanization increased stress on city services as nineteenth-century infrastructures to provide services such as clean water, sewerage and transportation proved inadequate for supplying larger populations in expanding urban areas. Inadequate housing was another infrastructural deficiency fuelling the demand for change, because overcrowding led to associated problems such as disease which constituted a threat to urban residents beyond the slums (Ward 1989). The political machines which had temporarily integrated increasingly disparate urban communities succumbed to charges of inefficiencies and corruption (Jackson and Schultz 1972; Schiesl 1977: 367), and were unable to respond to the changing urban landscape. The ensuing calls for protection from the speed and direction of social changes led to the unanticipated reforms of the Progressive Era (Fox 1977; Wiebe 1967).
Table 1: Increases in United States Urbanization, 1850-1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Number of Places over 5,000</th>
<th>Total Population (millions)</th>
<th>Percent urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1,467</td>
<td>105.7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1,803</td>
<td>122.7</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bureau of the Census (1975, 1993); Yeates 1997

Reform-minded groups and individuals responded to late nineteenth century social and political conditions by advocating for change. This advocacy was nationally organized, broadly targeted and proposed innovative structural reform. The 1890-1920 period became known as the ‘Progressive Era’ (Wiebe 1967) because their broad and radical reform platform reached all areas of the United States. Many Progressive reformers emerged from newly organized professions of regional planning, political science, social work and civil engineering (Schiesl 1977). Some reformers sought to adapt scientific management principles developed by Frederick Taylor to reduce waste and improve efficiency in factories to reform social and political institutions. The enthusiasm with which Progressive Era reforms embodied Taylorist principles was linked to the importance within scientific management of the expert-manager – a role the reformers hoped to play in their reconstructed society (Fairfield 1994).
6.2.3 Progressivism as a national reform movement

Proponents of structural change during the Progressive Era were united through their acceptance and promotion of an ideology emphasizing efficiency-driven change, and reliance on scientific methodologies which provided data supporting their arguments for reform. Taylorist principles of scientific management were particularly effective in linking the Progressive reform movement at the national scale – just as scientific management principles diffused across businesses, the underlying arguments of efficiency and rationalism were used by urban reformers to advocate for municipal consolidation and metropolitan cooperation in many cities. For example Progressive Era reform principles infiltrated Los Angeles in response to perceived inefficiencies in local governance at the beginning of the twentieth century (Fogelson 1967). The reformers in Los Angeles sought to enlarge the role of municipal government, arguing a lack of democracy made city government unresponsive. Groups interested in change campaigned to shift government from a legislative focus toward an administrative focus sensitive to the requirements of business – an example of the pro-capital efficiency rubric employed by the national Progressive movement. Taylorist values of centralized coordination and rationalism also informed Progressive reforms contained in the Regional Plan for New York (Fishman 2000). The plan (1929-1931) intended to re-emphasize lower Manhattan as the center of the New York region, defined as the 22
counties across three states surrounding lower Manhattan. This was to be accomplished by relocating and coordinating different economic functions based on location away from Manhattan, which was to be reserved for cultural, financial and corporate activities (Fishman 1992: 106-107).

The proposed region was vast in its scale. Based on the 50 mile perimeter surrounding New York City Hall, the RPNYE would include an area of some 5,528 square miles and create a metropolitan area with a population of 8,979,055 (Delano, Forest et al. 1929: 21). In comparison, the metropolitan charter for Allegheny County captured an area of 724 square miles and 1,600,000 people.
During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, the emerging class of middle-class reformers (Wiebe 1967) created forms of professional unity and cooperation through development of professional organizations (Griffith 1977).
Organizations including the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM – founded 1895), the Association of American Geographers (AAG – founded 1904), the American Political Science Association (APSA – founded 1903), the American Sociological Association (ASA – founded 1905) and the American Planning Association (APA – founded 1917), provided national forums for diffusing new research and ideas amongst their memberships. APSA was particularly proactive in promoting Progressive goals of urban consolidation through their national meetings and publications (Stivers 2000). This skein of networks united reformers and enabled national diffusion of their programs and practices. Membership in professional organizations, employment in research bureaus and commissions and the nation-wide advocacy of prominent reformers constituted a social network supporting the reform project and at the same time diminishing the sensitivity of Progressive reformers to local specificities.

Bureaus of Municipal Research were established by reformers to catalog the character of America’s changing cities and examine their failings (Schiesl 1977). The infusion of knowledge and fact provided by these agencies influenced the debate over urban form. The research conducted by these agencies was broad, examining aspects of urban governance including accounting practices, school administration and redundancies between governmental offices. The first research bureau was established during 1906 in New York and bureaus were consequently established in Philadelphia (1908), Chicago (1910), Milwaukee (1913), Detroit (1916) and other cities (Gill 1944 – See Table 2).
Analysts with a Progressive reform mindset spread across the country to staff these new bureaus, taking their techniques, ideologies and preconceptions with them (Stivers 2000: 41). While the social networks of these organizations have not been fully researched, the diffusion of staff between bureaus suggests these organizations provided the basis for social interactions between reformers active at the national scale, creating in some ways a national perspective on Progressive reform projects. The broad (although predominantly Midwestern) distribution of these research centers and the relations they had with private and institutional funding created a new nationalized scale for advocacy of Progressive reforms.

Table 2  Geographic Expansion of Municipal Research Bureaus, 1906-1929

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bureau</th>
<th>Year Founded</th>
<th>Bureau</th>
<th>Year Founded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Cincinnati, OH</td>
<td>1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td>1910</td>
<td>St. Paul, MN</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton, OH</td>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Duluth, MN</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee, WI</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Des Moines, IA</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis, MN</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>St. Louis, MO</td>
<td>1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester, NY</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Newark, NJ</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron, OH</td>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Schenectady, NY</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo, OH</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Buffalo, NY</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit, MI</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Atlantic City, NJ</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>1929</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gill (1944)

Evidence gathered by the new survey movement also supported the Progressive movement (Ward 1990). The survey movement was assisted by the Bureaus of Municipal Research and funding from foundations such as the Buhl Foundation of
Pittsburgh and the Russell Sage Foundation\textsuperscript{106}. The survey movement was publicizing the need for reforms in the modern American city in a professionalized version of late nineteenth century muckraking journalism (Steffens 1904/1963). The survey reports were praiseworthy for the scope of their investigations and their utilization of qualitative and quantitative research techniques although they were often no less sensational than the muckrakers’ breathless journalism.

United States Government Census research was another significant data source for the social surveys and for the broader reform movement. The Census influenced reform advocacy because they defined metropolitan areas and provided data showing how suburbanization was shifting populations away from core cities. For example the population of the City of Pittsburgh had increased from 50,000 in 1850 to 588,343 in 1920. But beyond this expansion the Census defined large metropolitan districts with even larger populations. Metropolitan Pittsburgh was defined as an area of 659 square miles, containing a population of over 1.2 million people (Table 3). Reformers used these statistics to depict a developing ‘problem’ in cities across the United States waiting for a ‘solution’. For instance the National Municipal League was created to provide a national, united body for conceiving and enacting urban reform (Stewart 1950). The organization used data from the United States Census and from their own research to bolster their arguments for consolidation of local governments (Studenski 1930).

\textsuperscript{106} The Russell Sage Foundation provided in excess of one million dollars for the Regional Plan of New York and its Environs (Fishman 1992).
Finally, the activities of professionals such as Thomas Reed, Roland Egger and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. indicate a nationally active network of Progressive advocates.
responsible for recommending and administering projects for change in different cities across the United States. Thomas Reed was a political scientist based at the University of Michigan, and Roland Egger was trained in public administration. They advocated for municipal consolidation in several locations during the Progressive Era (Teaford 1979). Olmsted Jr. was tasked with implementing Progressive ideals through plans such as the metropolitan park system in Los Angeles (Hise and Deverell 2000) or the municipal redevelopment of Pittsburgh, which included provision for a large complex of city and county civic buildings (Olmsted 1910).

6.2.4 Municipal reform and consolidation

Ideals of order and rationalism held in esteem by Progressive advocates were challenged by the increasingly complex American city of the late nineteenth century. Transportation innovations and changing community standards were causing centrifugal shifts in the scope of urban populations and economic areas. The speed and direction of these changes were considered too chaotic by communities already uneasy over exogenous influences such as migrants and Catholicism (Wiebe 1967), and reformers used the opportunity to propose consolidation as a means to recapture control over the new functional extent of regions. The association between Progressive values and Taylorist scientific management principles was influential for advocates of urban reform. Advocating consolidation based on the rhetoric of Taylorism was comprehensible and acceptable to local business and civic leaders who were concerned about their ability to
control the fate of urban regions in which they had vested social and commercial interests (Hays 1964; Muller 1996).

Debates over the relative merits of regionally scaled governance versus locally scaled governance were not new; arguments over land ownership and control had occurred since the early European colonization of America. In his broad reaching volume entitled “The Urban Wilderness”, Warner describes how colonial law enshrined private ownership of land as a bulwark of liberty (Warner 1972). Treating land as a private – rather than a social – resource created conditions for exclusionary and speculative practices despite the egalitarian principle behind this doctrine. Surrendering land control to the local scale also created conservative management which tended to rebuff reform efforts perceived to threaten local economic power.

Reformers engaged in the regionalism/localism debates concluded increasing population pressures and the expanding geographic scope of cities had taken the luster off traditional modes of governance. Their solution to this perceived problem used scientific principles based in the logics of functionalism and practicality. Research at the National Municipal League compared benefits derived from consolidation to a list of negative consequences derived from consolidation (Studenski 1930). In contrast to the rational benefits of consolidation the second list was much more emotive and qualitatively derived – concerns over inaccessibility to representation and loss of identity, along with fear of the unknown, sentimental attachment to place, and racial or class-based bias. The National Municipal League comparison depicts how Progressive advocates perceived
regionalism versus localism. They perceived a conflict between progress versus regression, of knowledge versus ignorance, of region versus the local. The pejorative treatment of localism suggests the reaction of reformers was to support the side of regionalism when considering the urban problem.

They supported political coordination for cities based on the geographic, social and functional integrity of regions which surpassed municipal jurisdictions designed for nineteenth-century communities. The following passages taken from the report of the National Municipal League Committee on Metropolitan Government (Studenski 1930) belies the exasperation of reformers near the end of the Progressive Era who continued to argue the solution to entrenched urban problems was the elimination of (perceived) fragmented regional governance.

For the common needs of these metropolitan areas, or greater cities, our existing systems of local government make little or no provision. Each of them contains from two to 149 municipalities scattered, in most cases, over three or more counties. Each of these political divisions possesses its own government independent of that of every other. Each is concerned with its own problems and interests and is inclined to regard its neighbors with a jealous eye. Except in those rare instances where special authorities of metropolitan scope have been created to care for particular matters, there is no unity of action. Still worse, there is insufficient awareness on the part of the people of the metropolitan area that they constitute a real community.

Yet common problems of planning, sanitation, traffic, transportation, water supply, light and power service, health administration, police and, inevitably, finance press insistently for solution. Proper community development means unification and coordination of metropolitan governments. How this can best be accomplished is the subject of the present study.

(National Municipal League: 10, emphasis added).
Most galling for the authors of this report was the lack of political innovation during the prior thirty years which contradicted the Progressive Era spirit of bold change throughout society. The lack of innovation in local government organization had the practical implication that limited advocacy for municipal annexation and consolidation was insufficient to counteract trends toward suburban expansion of metropolitan areas (Table 4 – Fox 1977).

Table 4  Urban Consolidation Efforts, 1890-1940

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area of central cities of 1910 (square miles)</th>
<th>Increase in area by annexation (square miles)</th>
<th>% increase due to annexation</th>
<th>Proportion of metropolitan area population in central cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>985</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>1,432</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2,273</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>3,088</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>3,119</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fox (1977) p. 149

Consolidation attempts had some success during the Progressive Era as land annexed to central cities increased steadily between 1890 and 1930 (Table 4). In the twenty year interval between 1890 and 1910, central cities increased their land area through annexation by 59%. In the next twenty years, central cities expanded their land area by 36%. However, these increases were not sufficient to keep pace with the centrifugal population shifts causing the expansion of metropolitan areas surrounding the central cities. Progressive reformers in many United States cities fought these trends by
advocating the national principles of efficiency and coordination to states, cities and communities. These reformers argued regions could benefit from the efficiency and coordination promised by unitary or federative regional governments by foregoing the tradition of self-determination inherent in fragmentary regional governance (Teaford 1979). Advocates for change also successfully integrated urban regions in other ways – circumventing fragmentation through the introduction of special districts which could administer metropolitan projects, such as in the case of the Port of New York Authority. Concerns over economic efficiency and an awareness of how metropolitan issues bleed over local boundaries generated the impetus for this special district (Doig 1992).

6.2.5 Limiting national reform – contingencies of place

Advocacy for change was a hallmark of the Progressive Era. Municipal consolidation was a guiding principle and target for reformers interested in urban governance and its perceived problems. The Progressive movement became national in scope because changes were observed affecting institutions and practices from coast to coast and in rural as well as urban locations. National advocacy for metropolitanism created a momentum for change resulting in numerous attempts at new, regional forms of urban governance. When these attempts were unsuccessful could the actual precepts of Progressivism be blamed? National debates over metropolitanism obscured local contingency – a problem heightened by research conducted by non-local academics who, Fairfield contends, developed exclusionary and top-down strategies for solving problems (Fairfield 1994). An associated problem recalls the idiom of a hammer perceiving
everything else as a nail. The Progressive Era was captured by logics of efficiency, growth and progress – and whether warranted or not – advocates for change perceived the universal necessity of reform.

Three elements could be blamed if national debates over metropolitanism obscured local contingency. First, the cohort of metropolitan researchers engaged in survey research on local areas were often outside observers translating their national experience and presumptions regarding urban problems to the local research context. For instance the Municipal Research Bureaus established to research conditions in cities across the United States were staffed by researchers from the original New York bureau (Stivers 2000). The Pittsburgh Survey was criticized by local communities because non-local researchers were interpreting local conditions (Klein 1938). Second, advocates for metropolitanism may have overlooked the personal motives of their local supporters. Hays describes the adoption of Progressive metropolitan solutions by local business and civic leaders was as a means to ensure social control over the central city after they had left for outlying suburbs – and not for reasons of efficiency or progress reformers might have intended (Hays 1964).

Third, cultural or social differences between Progressive researchers and their subjects (the relative position of the observer) could mean relevant local knowledge or contingent aspects of a region are ignored. This corresponds to Massey’s observation regarding the treatment of ‘place’ by researchers of globalization. She argues the ‘power geometry’ of researchers and the researched create different perspectives on the role of
place – while contemporary progressives may consider attachment to place a regressive retreat from globalization, communities could consider their own construction and attachment to place as a proactive and progressive challenge to broader change (Massey 1993). Massey’s contribution is useful in the Progressive Era context because it suggests different ways of considering fragmentation. Advocates of metropolitanism perceived fragmentation as regressive and inefficient but local communities may have held onto local governments for reasons aside from the irrational fears and sentimental excuses suggested by the National Municipal League’s report on municipal government (Studenski 1930).

Alongside external presumptions the Progressive reform movement held internal logics explaining the generalization of reform recommendations made to local communities. First, the logic of efficiency and rationalism has already been discussed as a key motivation for the advocates of change. Urban fragmentation was considered wasteful, inefficient and uneconomic – an impediment to coordinated regional planning and good government. Casting urban fragmentation as a problem presumed the superiority of metropolitan governance although this remains a contentious and unclear premise (Sleeper, Willis et al. 2004). Second, the logic of economic growth as positive for society was adopted by reformers who synthesized urban reform with reforms amenable to capitalism. Third, reformers were captured by the logic of progress inherent within the Progressive Era. Given the broad problems associated with outmoded forms of governance and government, change was championed over stability.
6.3 Local Advocacy for Progressive Era Reforms

6.3.1 The Civic Club of Allegheny County and Consolidation Debates

On January 28th, 1935 the Civic Club of Allegheny County was proud to sponsor a performance of “As Thousands Cheer” – the satirical revue of modern America written by Irving Berlin. The performance acted as a valedictory spectacle for the Civic Club. For the past forty years the Civic Club of Allegheny County was prominently engaged in an increasing array of local reform projects. The club was responsible for many civic improvements such as the free public bath-house in Soho, coordination of Pittsburgh’s charities and urban beautification campaigns. All of these successes were cited in the evening’s program, yet the Civic Club also acknowledged their recent defeat in a twenty year campaign to bring Progressive Era theories of urban governance to Allegheny County. Club leaders in the early twentieth century perceived benefits of urban consolidation which were popular with Progressive Era reformers throughout the United States during the period.

These local advocates sought to introduce national concepts into Allegheny County but could not act fast enough to align national concepts with local conditions. The history of the Civic Club of Allegheny County during the 1911-1929 period traces interest in urban governance following the forcible annexation of the City of Allegheny by the City of Pittsburgh in 1907-1908. The local adoption of urban consolidation policies by the Civic Club leadership drew on the recommendation of national experts
and successful example of cities such as Boston, which had grown by 34.5 square miles by annexing six towns during a 58 year period to 1926 (Studenski 1930: 75). Early attempts to enact changes to Pittsburgh’s governance were met by active resistance from representatives of local communities who reacted negatively to the suggestion that Allegheny County should follow the model of other cities. Plans for a two-tier consolidated county government were developed in collaboration with the State government, were voted on by county residents and failed. Resistance to change was not universal among municipal units of Allegheny County\textsuperscript{107}, yet the Civic Club plans ultimately failed because of a mismatch between the ideals of Progressivism and local conditions. In the case of Allegheny County and the Civic Club, this mismatch was manifested as legislative compromise, voter apathy and advocate exhaustion.

6.3.2 Early Involvement in Urban Governance, 1907-1911

The Civic Club of Allegheny County originated in the late nineteenth century as part of the Twentieth Century Club, a women’s club founded in 1895 (Toker 1886). Civic Club founder Kate Cassatt McKnight and others were concerned with local health issues including smoke control, tuberculosis prevention and civic beautification. To influence these local issues they formed the Woman’s Health Protective Association of Allegheny County in 1890. By 1895 the organization was renamed the “Social Science Department of the Twentieth Century Club”, and eventually as the Civic Club of

\textsuperscript{107} The support and opposition to the Civic Club proposals is discussed in section 6.4, ‘Local Responses.’
Allegheny County. These successive names indicate an ethic of reform which used professional methods to modernize local institutions.

The cover art for the fortieth anniversary program (Figure 31) leaves little doubt as to how the Civic Club perceived the City of Pittsburgh, the Civic Club’s role in the city, and the key Progressive-Era accomplishments of the Club. Rising from beyond a stretch of water plied by commercial boats rests a cityscape shrouded in shadow – or more probably, smoke. In the background the Civic Club emerges bright as the sun, illuminating the benighted city with the benevolent rays of Progress, Pride and Planning! The Civic Club presents a new dawn for Allegheny County as the twentieth century proceeds, implying that with the right expert leadership the region could build on its profitable history to create a brighter future.

108 The Twentieth Century Club divested itself of direct involvement in philanthropic enterprises, as they feared it would take away from their core mission to create “…an organized centre for women’s work, thought and action: advancing her interests, promoting science, literature and art; and for providing a quiet place of meeting for its members” (Twentieth Century Club Archives, Pittsburgh PA). Independence from the Twentieth Century Club enabled men to join the Civic Club.
Figure 31  Civic Club of Allegheny County 40th Anniversary Program Cover

Source: Civic Club of Allegheny County Archives, University of Pittsburgh
More specifically, the rays of the Civic Club’s sunshine promote a disturbingly corporatist ideal of urban revitalization, avoiding mention of religious morality while promoting goals of individual and social responsibility to create a better region. The Civic Club perceived a role for itself in every area of civic life, from art to government. ‘Efficient government’ was an early goal of the Civic Club, originally manifested through programs for garbage removal, and consequently expanding into projects on tax assessment and metropolitan governance. The ‘good citizenship’ and ‘civic pride’ programs of the Civic Club consisted of civic training for children and adults, while ‘health and recreation’ had long been part of the CCAC platform, with the creation of public baths, and advocacy for smoke abatement and tuberculosis prevention.

The Civic Club first became involved in issues of urban governance during the 1906-1911 period, in an apparent extension of the Club’s early interest in local charitable works. Whereas the first decade of the Civic Club (1895-1905) was dominated by institution building, the second decade had a new emphasis on consolidating gains and building on the Club’s growing profile. By 1907 the Civic Club was calling for a ‘Federated Charities’ organization which could provide a centralized ‘clearing house’ for local charities to coordinate their activities and reduce the occurrence of overlapping work. The Federated Charities was formed with the support of the Civic Club and the Chamber of Commerce – the first in a series of cooperative arrangements where the two organizations promoted centralization, efficiency and coordination principles for Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. These principles were introduced to the arena of urban
governance, and Civic Club leaders became more vocal in voicing support for the familiar Progressive platform of good government. For example, in 1909 the Civic Club passed a resolution in support of reforming the City of Pittsburgh to government by commissioners, as “the present system of administering the municipal affairs of cities of the second class in Pennsylvania appears to be antiquated, incompetent and expensive” (Board of Directors Minutes, 1/29/1909). The Civic Club’s position on city-county consolidation at this juncture was a stated opposition to forcible annexation of municipalities, but support for consolidation where this could improve urban governance.

The Civic Club formed links to the national Progressive movement during the early twentieth century through institutional memberships and sponsorship of conferences, lectures and research. The Executive Board of the Civic Club decided to affiliate with the American Civic Association in early 1907, indicating a belief that the City of Pittsburgh shared common problems and interests with other American cities. Links to the Russell Sage Foundation were fostered by inviting experts to lecture on issues such as juvenile delinquency, and by sponsoring Foundation research on local problems. The Civic Club donated funds for the research behind the Russell Sage Foundation’s famed ‘Pittsburgh Survey.’ The decision to assist the survey followed

109 J. Horace McFarland, President of the American Civic Association corresponded with the Civic Club during the first three decades of the twentieth century on several matters, including billboard control, urban planning and public relations. Civic Club secretary H. Marie Dermitt considered McFarland a mentor and the American Civic Association an important organization for shaping opinions on reform, writing “The more I think of the American Civic Association as a propaganda organization, the more I believe it will be doing a great service and there are a number of matters which now are coming up that they could promote” (Personal Correspondence, PA Archives - Harrisburg, Dermitt to McFarland 4/23/1918).
Civic Club debates concluding a need to understand – amongst other things – the “lack of coordination” in local responses to poverty (Board of Directors Minutes, 2/4/1907). The results of the Pittsburgh Survey were presented at a session of the 1908 Annual Convention of the National Municipal League, hosted in Pittsburgh by the Civic Club.

Whereas the hosts were proud and eager to share the findings of this research, it revealed a discord between the findings of Progressive experts, and the perception by local citizens of their region. The presentation of the Pittsburgh Survey findings ruffled the feathers of locals by discussing the city’s perceived problems in vivid terms. Contemporary accounts reported negative reaction such as “We don’t like to talk back to our guests, but just wait till we catch some of the Civic-Municipal reformers in their own back yards, or on neutral ground,” while Pittsburgh Survey editor Paul U. Kellogg was criticized for ‘failing to strike an average’ in his condemnation of the city’s home environment…”(Pittsburgh Dispatch 11/17/08).

The Civic Club of Allegheny County first formal support of county consolidation was proposed in 1911 by William A. Magee, who exerted considerable power as President of the Civic Club and later as the Mayor of Pittsburgh. He drafted a metropolitan charter for Pittsburgh based on the Metropolitan District of Boston. In order to gain support for the charter, a test questionnaire was mailed to registered voters in four Boroughs. However, the draft legislation failed to gather either popular support or that of the State Legislature, and the effort to push the issue failed.
6.4 Active Advocacy – 1920-1923

For in his might the wearied city sleeps,
Like a great dreaming smith whose forge still flares
While he sits musing...
And custom, interest and the powers of gold, and old complacency,
Twined by a myriad selfish ministers,
Have bound him, sleeping; muted his deep voice,
Enchained his limbs, and filled his passing dream
With false enchantments.

And I must ever strive,
First, to awaken him, and loose his bonds;
And after that, to guide the willing feed,
Uphold the helpful hand, join heart to heart
That beats for the good cause, the holier hope,
For justice, and the right of every soul
To soar, free-winged, into the open blue.

Excerpt from “The Smith”, commissioned to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Civic Club of Allegheny County, 1920.

By late 1920 the Civic Club was ready to resume advocating for a Greater Pittsburgh. The catalyst may have been the recommendations for consolidating city and county taxing bodies made by the Civic Club’s Special Taxation Study Committee in early 1917. The committee was comprised of three local professionals – a University of Pittsburgh economics professor, an engineer and a director of the Keystone Housing
Corporation. Their final report recommended the City of Pittsburgh absorb outlying suburbs “whose inhabitants make their living in the city, but now pay no taxes for the city privileges they enjoy” (Special Taxation Study Committee 1917). It was a conceit of the Taxation Study Committee to presume suburban residents were enjoying urban privileges – residents may have considered it more of a privilege to escape the pollution and crowds of the city for the burgeoning municipalities at the fringes of Allegheny County and beyond. Regardless, the Committee urged action be taken creating of a metropolitan district to solve both perceived problems – replication of services and revenue loss from regional population shift.

The records of the Civic Club do not explain whether this fiscally based recommendation prompted the next round of advocacy, but along with the support for metropolitanism by the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce (and their publication ‘Greater Pittsburgh’), the Executive Board of the Civic Club began to explore a metropolitan reform strategy to lead Allegheny County toward consolidation with the City of Pittsburgh. It was Alex Dunbar – President of the Civic Club and Vice-President of the Bank of Pittsburgh (Brownscombe 1924) – who arranged the first meeting of the Greater Pittsburgh Committee on October 11th, 1920 in the Bank of Pittsburgh building at 226 Fourth Avenue – the heart of Pittsburgh’s banking district, and four blocks away from City Hall. The strategy for assembling the Greater Pittsburgh Committee consisted of approaching elected officials and municipal experts, with little discussion given to community representation. As an example, Alex Dunbar wrote to the Civic Club
secretary H. Marie Dermitt, discussing his approach to gathering support for consolidation:

With reference to the ‘Greater Pittsburgh’ Committee, I am getting in touch with some of my Banker friends in the various outlying Boroughs with a view to securing the names of three of the ‘livest wires’ in each of such boroughs, in order to make my Committee appointments at an early date. The purpose of this Committee would be first to ascertain, in a friendly way, the borough’s reasons for ‘staying out’ of our great City, and also to cooperate in the matter of finding a way to mutual understanding.

(Letter from Alex Dunbar to Miss H.M. Dermitt 8/6/1920).

There is no record of who attended the meeting, but Alex Dunbar notes they included Civic Club members and representatives from Allegheny County’s boroughs. Reports on local municipal conditions obtained from borough representatives were shared along with similar statistics on the City of Pittsburgh. Dunbar convened the Committee to gauge interest in closer relations between the municipalities of Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh through a “Metropolitan Idea”. This idea was to reduce inefficiencies and waste by centralizing control of public services in Allegheny County, and to promote greater voluntary cooperation and coordination between local governmental units. Morris Knowles was elected as chairman, and suggested a metropolitan district would be the first step to complete annexation of the boroughs by the City of Pittsburgh, “once the value of annexation was recognized” (Greater Pittsburgh Committee Minutes 1920). Knowles was a member of the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce and several other local commissions. Trained as a civil engineer, he moved to Pittsburgh in 1897 to lead the construction of the Pittsburgh Filtration Plant. After this
project was completed he focused on his consulting practice, and lectured on the history and prospect of regional planning.

The inaugural meeting of the Greater Pittsburgh Committee reached consensus that some consolidation was beneficial to the region – borough approval being granted through the elected representatives in attendance. Befitting a gathering of Progressive luminaries, the evening’s discussion was described as “frank and friendly”, with no critical voices raised regarding the planned reforms. Dunbar recalled that support for the Metropolitan Idea was given by Borough representatives with the provision that “each Borough should be given its choice of method to be pursued with respect to its particular locality,“ and concluded “the attitude of the various committee members seemed to favor a closer relationship with Pittsburgh, conditioned upon such relationship being established upon a ‘Golden Rule’ basis, without force (either real or implied)” (Dunbar 1920).

The Greater Pittsburgh Committee followed this meeting with a period of information gathering. Borough Chairmen were requested to supply the Committee with voter information for their municipalities, in order for surveys to be disseminated to “get an idea as to the sentiment in his community at the present time” (Letter from Alex Dunbar to Mr. Knowles, 10/14/1920). A survey was prepared and disseminated to five Boroughs adjacent to the City of Pittsburgh in January 1921 (Figure 32). Rather than a scientific instrument which could have elicited information on the local conditions and opinions of the Boroughs, the Civic Club chose to send a much simpler question asking
whether the voter was “in favor of an improved form of organization” to improve efficiency and Pittsburgh’s census ranking (Appendix A). The cover letter for the survey emphasized the Civic Club’s opposition to forced annexation, but stressed the need for regional unity in order to reduce waste. The booster’s argument also appeared in the letter: “when such a plan has been worked out, the Pittsburgh Metropolitan District will be able to take its rightful place among the cities of the United States to which its industrial production of two billion dollars per year and its metropolitan population properly entitle it” (Civic Club 1921).

Table 5: Canvass Responses, Citizen Survey on Metropolitan Pittsburgh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boroughs</th>
<th>1920 Borough Population</th>
<th># Cards Sent$^a$</th>
<th># Cards Returned In Favor</th>
<th># Cards Returned Not in Favor</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chartiers Twp.</td>
<td>5,934</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharpsburg</td>
<td>8,921</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bellevue</td>
<td>8,198</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingram</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafton</td>
<td>5,954</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>31,907</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,027</strong></td>
<td><strong>1656</strong></td>
<td><strong>467</strong></td>
<td><strong>30%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Civic Club of Allegheny County, University of Pittsburgh.

Post-scripted numbers (1-5) refer to areas denoted in Figure 32 (Canvass areas)

$^a$ Cards were sent to households, explaining difference between study size and population

The response to this survey should not have heartened the advocates for metropolitanism. Although the majority of those responding were in favor of the
statement, the response rates in four of the surveyed boroughs were low. Of the 2,100 households polled in the Borough of Sharpsburg, only 16% responded to the Civic Club survey (Table 5). The low response rate (an average of 30% across the five municipalities) indicates a considerable degree of apathy regarding the need for change as presented by the Civic Club.

Figure 32 Allegheny County municipalities canvassed by the Civic Club

Source: Civic Club of Allegheny County, University of Pittsburgh

The Greater Pittsburgh Committee was also proactive in developing a relationship with non-elected representatives of the boroughs. A key organization during the period was the League of Boroughs and Townships of Allegheny County, chaired by Joseph
Miller of Edgewood. He represented the League at early meetings of the Greater Pittsburgh Committee, and his suggestions of cooperation led to the formation of two public forums in 1921 regarding the metropolitan plan. The first forum featured B.A. Haldeman of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Municipalities, who discussed the mechanics of metropolitan organization, and the second forum featured borough representatives making the case against annexation.

As discussions proceeded the desire to mitigate tensions with boroughs fearful of domination by Pittsburgh led to Progressive principles being sacrificed for expedience. Haldeman’s presentation argued metropolitan districts could be organized for a specific purpose without Constitutional amendment, hence avoiding the lengthy process which the Civic Club’s proposal would lead to. This comment prompted discussions between the Committee Chairman and John Eichaneaur, an expert in the area of constitutional law. Eichaneaur advised most districts would be impossible to form under the present Pennsylvania state constitution, but there was a chance for a district to be formed if it didn’t come into conflict with previous court decisions. The discussions indicate Civic Club committee members were open and determined for any form of consolidation to proceed. When asked about the district most likely to succeed, Eichaneaur acknowledged arguments could be made against any type of district. City Planning Districts couldn’t exist without granted powers of taxation. Flood Districts were possible, but given the need for this type of district to include watersheds exceeding county boundaries, the politics involved were deemed too ambitious at present time. Sewerage Districts were
also problematic because of State legal precedent, although metropolitan water districts held fewer legal impediments. The Civic Club sought information from other cities which had pursued city-county consolidation, in order to learn from their experience.

6.3.4 Compromising Positions: The State Commission on the Metropolitan Plan

Advocates for the metropolitan district recognized from an early stage that objections would arise if any given organization was seen as leading the efforts for change. So as not to injure the cause for governance reform Mr. Dunbar of the Civic Club, the Committee of the League of Boroughs and Townships and others collaborated to determine the common ground in the matter of obtaining a metropolitan district for Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh. The consequence of this negotiation was a Governor’s Commission to study the Metropolitan Plan. “Fifty prominent men” were corralled onto the Commission, including leaders from the Civic Club, League of Boroughs and Townships and the Chamber of Commerce, as well as local government politicians and representatives. Because of the number of local government units in Allegheny County and the desire to gain broad consensus from across the county, a majority of Commission representatives were drawn from the Boroughs, with fewer representing the interests of the County’s third-class cities, and a distinct minority present to push for the City of Pittsburgh’s cause.

The Commission used three techniques to come to their final conclusions on metropolitanism for Allegheny County. First, ten meetings of the full Commission were
held between May 12th 1924 and March 6th 1925. Second, public hearings were held to elicit reaction of the draft plans by interested citizens. Invitations to the public hearings were sent predominantly to municipal representatives who (it was argued) could present the views of citizens, civic bodies and trade organizations. Third, a profile of Allegheny County was created using 1920 Census data, in order to assess the extent of service duplication and waste across local government units. This data was compared the experience with government reform of three types in other American cities – annexation, metropolitan districts and enlarged city government which retained municipal autonomy over local matters.

Although the Commission had the support of Pennsylvania Governor Pinchot, their work was hamstrung from the outset by insufficient funding and resources from the state. In 1926 Mr. Joseph Miller, Chairman of the Pennsylvania Commission to Study Municipal Consolidation in Allegheny County, sent a letter to the Board of the Civic Club of Allegheny County. He stated the Commission’s early research had found ‘agitation for a Greater Pittsburgh’, and was eager to make a survey of the communities of Allegheny County in order to ‘secure the facts essential to the preparation of a detailed plan.’ However the work of the Commission had stalled without funding from the State Legislature. He requested the Civic Club make a direct donation to the Commission, and to use their influence with the municipal authorities to have them also contribute(Board of Directors Minutes, 2/26/1926).
The results of the Commission were presented to Governor Pinchot in February 1925. The Commission noted Pittsburgh’s preeminence as a manufacturing center required regional development strategies which the archaic structure of county government could not supply. They concluded the public sentiment was for “consolidation and credit for the full regional population – ‘this population question is of the greatest importance in the minds of the vast majority of the people affected and desiring the change.’” To achieve this goal the Commission recommended creating a two-tier federated government to centralize many functions of government and boost the population ranking of Greater Pittsburgh, while also preserving local municipal autonomy. This was admittedly a large and complex task but the Commission found it the best format for catering to the small and intimate needs of citizens while also attending to the ‘greater things’ of interest to the region including the reduction of governmental waste which “can not but cause an unavoidable amount of inefficiency and much waste along the usual lines of government and management” (Municipal Consolidation Commission 1925: 11).

The Commission came to its recommendation by comparing the experience of American cities with three general forms of local governance reform – annexation, metropolitan districts and city consolidation. Annexation is ‘offensive’ to most living outside the city. The authors argued annexation led to reduced benefits at greater cost by a more remote government. “To many, annexation seems the most desirable solution, and yet there are others fearful of its effect, and who were originally proponents of this
scheme, and now, after years of study, are opponents – certainly now, opponents of any forcible method of procedure” (Municipal Consolidation Commission 2/28/1925). The Commission found metropolitan districts for public service provision were unsatisfactory solutions to most stakeholders. Such districts could function as a consolidated region for the purpose of coordinating public works such as sewerage, policing and parks (in the manner suggested by state official B.A. Haldeman to the Civic Club). However, metropolitan districts would do nothing to alter the population of Pittsburgh (an important goal for civic boosters) or the system of local government at work (which was important for Progressive advocates). City Consolidation was the third option for change, creating a new layer of municipal government responsible for administering those duties which affect the greater city, whilst leaving issues deemed of local interest to the municipalities.

The final commission report recommended consolidation of four cities\textsuperscript{110}, sixty-eight boroughs, and fifty-four townships in Allegheny County, creating a new metropolitan area with a land area in excess of 700 square miles and a population if 1,600,000. The unit would be called the City of Pittsburgh, and would have jurisdiction over functions including public utility systems, police and fire services, the county parks system and other recreational assets. Most disappointing for the advocates for change interested in better government was the plan assured the autonomy of the cities, boroughs, and townships, and no local politicians or power structures were to be

\textsuperscript{110} The four cities were Pittsburgh, McKeesport, Wilkinsburg and Duquesne
eliminated. This was hardly the precondition for streamlined and efficient metropolitan governance intended by the proponents for Progressive reform, and members of the Civic Club were bitterly dismayed that in the process of legislative compromise the precepts of good government had been seemingly abandoned (Board of Directors Minutes, 3/22/1929).

These compromises were deemed necessary by the Commission, which concluded city consolidation through a two-tier system was most practical and acceptable to local Allegheny County interests. This two-tier system would retain the local autonomy of Allegheny County municipalities, protecting them from forcible annexation by Pittsburgh or other county boroughs. Given the Commission membership was dominated by municipal representatives, this stipulation seemed inevitable. Retaining autonomy was also important to allay fears that wealthier boroughs would be forced to subsidize infrastructural developments in less well-developed boroughs. The commissioners recognized a general willingness to cooperate when beneficial results could be seen, but they also understood this spirit of metropolitan cooperation would dissipate should some areas of the county be seen as benefiting more than others (Municipal Consolidation Commission 2/28/1925). Because of this, the proposed plan recommended “property adjacent to and benefited by public improvements [would] be assessed for these improvements, and for the purpose of taxation for these improvements property is to be divided into urban, suburban and rural” (ibid.). The two-tier system was ultimately recommended as a compromise – it provided the City of Pittsburgh with the means to
improve its population ranking in the 1930 census, and would provide municipalities with a hedge against annexation by Pittsburgh. It also appealed because of its structural similarity to the United States federal model – with the municipalities equivalent to states, overlaid by a broader structure of governance overseeing activities with import to the entire county.

6.4.1 Lobbying for Change – 1927-1929

Following the Commission’s report, the Metropolitan District Bill was drafted. Early discussions on the Bill by the Executive Board of the Civic Club indicate a lukewarm reception to the form of metropolitanism which emerged from the Commission and the legislative process. Mayor Magee, Morris Knowles and others agreed the federative plan did not constitute either real consolidation or concentration of powers similar to annexation, because local authority was kept over local matters – police, fire, etc. The grudging acceptance of these compromises shows a shift in the Committee’s attitude to urban reform position compared to the statements of the committee in 1920-1922, where the rhetoric of real consolidation was accepted as the best option for a metropolitan Pittsburgh. Despite reservations, the general sentiment of the Civic Club was that the metropolitan district as presented was a now or never choice with building regional momentum toward consolidation. Committee members argued that even if the amendment fails, it would provide good evidence for Progressive reformers across the United States working on similar plans.
The exchanges between committee members noted several perceived flaws to the Metropolitan District. The issue of resource allocation within the district was raised, as members contended outlying, less developed municipalities within the District could take an unfair proportion of resources for projects which would not benefit the entire community. The committee contrasted these projects to projects in larger and more urban portions of the district which would benefit the entire community. What emerged from this debate was a differentiation between two types of sub-unit within the Pittsburgh district, with the smaller units considered to be less important to the overall well-being of Pittsburgh. This is at odds with the earlier spirit of unity and interwoven interests cited in the letter sent by CCAC to residents in boroughs targeted for annexation.

After the final draft Metropolitan Plan Charter was released in 1929, the Municipal Affairs Committee of the Civic Club examined it and consequently recommended the Civic Club endorse it prior to the public referendum. The Committee endorsement was based on the metropolitan scope of the charter, the improvements to local governance it would create and most importantly, “the proposed new government will powerfully promote a community of interest of all the people of Allegheny County and stimulate that spirit of cooperation which, having due regard for all essential local values will contribute largely to the progress of the whole metropolitan area” (Minutes, 34th Annual General Meeting 1929). This resolution was seconded and passed, and adopted at the Annual Meeting.
The support of the metropolitan plan by the Civic Club was more a matter of expediency than heartfelt enthusiasm. Several Civic Club leaders voiced serious misgivings over what they considered a dangerous compromise in the interests of ‘getting the ball rolling’ toward the eventual consolidation of Allegheny County governments. Among the most vocal complaints raised about the plan which was to be presented to voters in 1929 was the added layer of government the plan would create, the dependence on suburban goodwill to make the plan work and the potential costs to the City of Pittsburgh of infrastructural improvements at the fringes of the county. Across all of these misgivings is the sense that Progressive ideals of efficiency and regionalism would be lost without true consolidation.

Morris Knowles voiced the sentiment of expediency and compromise characterizing the later stages of advocacy for a metropolitan plan. He countered the Civic Club “would never have a better thing, placating the surrounding communities” to the extent that the current proposal did. He was in favor of the plan, “although we fully recognize its faults and defects.” Rather than a polished plan, Knowles considered the metropolitan plan of 1929 one with which local politicians could get some experience with the machinery of regional government, “and work with some of the things needed in later” (Greater Pittsburgh Committee 11/2/1926).

Civic Club Secretary H. Marie Dermitt was convinced this compromise was a bad idea. In a statement to the Board of Directors she said she could not vote in support of the metropolitan plan, as it seemed unworkable. She noted the reliance of the plan on the
goodwill of the State Legislature was dangerous, as shifting priorities at the State scale could result in changes to the plan. She also contended the metropolitan plan was too dependent on Borough representatives to “do the square, honest thing by the city”, which she considered unlikely given the municipalities were assured of their autonomy by the scheme. In concluding, she argued:

We are fooling no one – not even ourselves. We are adding hundreds of acres [to the government]. Forty-three square miles in the City of Pittsburgh, eight hundred square miles in Allegheny County, in what is in large part a rural district. The boroughs are certainly going to benefit at the expense of the taxpayers in the City of Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh will be immensely burdened under the complicated machinery. We are voting with a mental reservation for something that will have to be amended before anything can be done with it. (H. Marie Dermitt to the Board of Directors 2/1/1927).

Despite the grave reservations of many Civic Club leaders about the metropolitan plan that would be voted on by County residents, the Executive Committee gave its consent to supporting the plan. The committee went on record arguing that this proposed constitutional amendment was just the first step towards the ultimate consolidation of the county. The opinion was also given by these Civic leaders that any further delay or negotiation in framing a metropolitan plan would just confuse voters. In the final debates regarding how to proceed, committee members concluded the general public do not understand the subject of metropolitan consolidation, and if doubts are thrown in the way they will either abstain from voting or vote “no”.

By the time the proposed constitutional reform came to the vote, Civic Club leaders had been involved in advocating for a Greater Pittsburgh for eighteen years. During this time Progressive principles of efficiency, consolidation and centralization had
been debated amongst local politicians, governmental experts and Civic Club members. These debates had emphasized the mechanics of governance at the expense of gathering information about local conditions and the grass-roots sentiment concerning proposed changes to community boundaries. The time it took to compel action on Progressive governance reforms created a gap between theories of governance and local conditions, leading to apathy amongst voters. This apathy would be fatal when the metropolitan plan was voted on in July 1929, but was notable during the earliest attempts to enact change in 1911, and in the information-gathering exercise by Civic reformers in 1921.

Legislative compromise with the State government and with Borough representatives also affected the Progressive principles underlying Civic Club efforts at governance reform. A fear of failure led to a broad commission on metropolitan reform. Without any actors willing to cede power in the restructuring of government, the notion of a simplified and efficient consolidated city and county gave way to a two-tier scheme which interjected an additional layer of government between the county government and the municipal governments which retained much of their autonomy. A further consequence of this compromise was the length of time it took for the initial metropolitan plans to exit the Legislative process. The 1920s were a period of frenetic lobbying activity. By 1929 the Civic Club leadership was showing signs of exhaustion which further compromised the Progressive vision they began with. The next section examines the results of the 1929 referendum on the Metropolitan Pittsburgh plan, describing the
negative reaction of Allegheny County communities to the planned reforms, and the reaction of Progressive leaders to the failure of their grand scheme.

6.5 Community Reaction to Progressive Era Reforms

With successful passage of the constitutional amendment in 1928, progressive advocates received their opportunity to create a greater Pittsburgh. By 1929 the Pennsylvania State Legislature had approved the draft metropolitan charter developed by the Metropolitan Plan Commission. However, a last-minute change to the language of the amendment gave a much more difficult threshold for victory. The original wording of the charter stipulated ratification would proceed after a “majority vote in the County and by a two-thirds majority in each of a majority of the cities, Boroughs and Townships within the County”. Whether by simple error or calculation, the final charter altered the conditions for passage to a majority in at least two-thirds of the county municipalities (Teaford 1979: 127). While most authors conclude the high threshold doomed the proposal, this conceals how advocates for change were unable to garner popular interest in the plan – local communities were simply apathetic regarding the proposal. Beyond the symptom of community apathy, the real foe to success in 1929 was the widening gap between Progressive theories and local needs.

Part of the problem in generating support for the plan was advocates underestimated the capacity of local communities to understand the logic behind the proposed changes to local governance. Easily digestible tenets of civic pride and urban
boosterism were used at the expense of explaining the theories and concepts which
instigated the plan in the first place. For example Mrs. Miller, Director of the Allegheny
County League of Women Voters, sought to allay fears of reduced municipal identity to a
suburban audience\footnote{Presentation on the Metropolitan Plan made to the Civic Club of Wilkinsburg, June 13\textsuperscript{th}, 1929.} by emphasizing the big-picture of metropolitan pride: “do not be
over-rided by technicalities or petty objections – see the picture as it really is, a ‘Magna
Charta’, the beginning of a better government and a community united in its interests”
\textit{(Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 6/14/1929)}. The reaction of the audience to these comments
are not recorded, but a potential response may have been to note how the technicalities
and petty objections of one group are the closely-held and heartfelt values of another.
Mrs. Miller’s comments might be taken as an isolated example if not for the record of
private comments and public hyperbole concerning the information campaign. In 1927,
Mr. J.W. Cruickshank of the Civic Club of Allegheny County argued the key to
successful passage of the constitutional amendment was to keep the explanation simple:
“The general public do not understand the subject [of the need for metropolitanism] and
if doubts are thrown in the way they will either abstain from voting or vote “no”. It may
be said that the slogan is followed of “when in doubt vote no” (CCAC Board Meeting
Minutes, 2/1/27).
As the time for the vote approached, pro-charter advertisements appeared in local newspapers. In one memorable advertisement, the rallying cry for the metropolitan charter, was “Microbes Know no Municipal Boundaries” (Figure 33). In this full-page advertisement, an anonymous group explains the community health benefits which the metropolitan charter would guarantee. The key feature of the advertisement is a graphic depicting a Caucasian middle-class family – husband, wife and two small children –
happily protected from infection within a unified Allegheny County. The boundary line of the county rises to form crenellated walls bristling with guns, whilst a moat provides another barrier against the microbes which presumably infest neighboring counties. Banners on the wall emphasize a ‘purity’ which the metropolitan charter would allow – pure food, water and milk, as well as disposal of waste and protection from communicable disease. The militant regionalism of the image is certainly striking, and conjures the late-twentieth century rhetoric of ‘regional worlds’ (Storper 1997) which are comprised of similarly homogenous regions united in action against external threats.

What was probably more puzzling to readers of the advertisement at the time was how or why microbes are willing to respect county lines any more than municipal boundaries. It might also have raised the issue of whether the metropolitan wall could be widened to encompass friends and families in adjacent counties. Hence the argument for metropolitan reform represented in the advertisement is another oversimplification of the case for change, implying the penalty for rejecting the metropolitan charter will be the visitation of plagues and other external ills upon the families of Allegheny County.

This is not to say that concerns over clean drinking water, pure food or infectious disease were irrelevant issues for residents of Allegheny County, as the calculus for prior municipal realignments were often based on the scale of governance best suited to provide adequate services (Teaford 1979: 167-169). To this extent the producers of the ‘microbes’ advertisement can be excused for raising the issues of family health and wellbeing. However, in mid-1929 many Allegheny County communities already had
these services, albeit in a piecemeal manner often tied to businesses with a local presence, such as railroads or steel corporations. Whereas the Progressive advocate chafed at the lack of coordination and loss of efficiency caused by municipal (rather than metropolitan) services, the residents of Fair Oaks, Leetsdale, Edgeworth, Sewickley, and Glen Osborne served by the Edgeworth Water Company saw their Sewickley Water Works as a local asset and landmark. By supplanting arguments for efficiency with appeals to civic pride in the lead-up to the metropolitan vote, advocates for change ignored the contemporary conditions in local communities they needed to convince. While tailoring an information campaign to the specificities of each minor civil division would have been both impractical and contrary to the interdependent spirit of metropolitanism, this gap between theories of governance and the practical conditions in Allegheny County communities contributed to the failure of the metropolitan charter.
The vote occurred on Tuesday June 25th, 1929 with only 50 of 122 Allegheny County municipalities supporting the metropolitan charter with majorities of over 66% (Table 6). As the revised benchmark for ratification was 61 municipalities (i.e. half of the total number of minor civil divisions), this attempt to create a greater Pittsburgh failed. How can we interpret this failure? The voter registration data for the 1928 and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Municipality</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Municipalities over/under two-thirds threshold¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Municipalities</td>
<td>128,780</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=122)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Charter: Yes</td>
<td>87,807</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Charter: No</td>
<td>40,973</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Population</td>
<td>1,374,310</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>67,717</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Charter: Yes</td>
<td>52,151</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>15,566</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Votes Cast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Population</td>
<td>761,136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>44,541</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N=74)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Charter: Yes</td>
<td>26,769</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Charter: No</td>
<td>17,772</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Votes Cast</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough</td>
<td>427,928</td>
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<tr>
<td>Township, 2nd Class</td>
<td>4,202</td>
<td>46.69</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>(N=17)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Charter: Yes</td>
<td>1,962</td>
<td>46.69</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2,240</td>
<td>53.31</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Votes Cast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Township Population</td>
<td>43,338</td>
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<tr>
<td>Township, 1st Class</td>
<td>11,637</td>
<td>54.19</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>(N=27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Charter: Yes</td>
<td>8,306</td>
<td>54.19</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Charter: No</td>
<td>5,331</td>
<td>45.81</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Votes Cast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township Population</td>
<td>141,908</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The Metropolitan Charter would be ratified if two-thirds of voters consented in a majority of municipalities.

Source: Civic Club of Allegheny County Voting Records; U.S. Census.
1929 elections are unavailable (Jensen 2004), making the question of voter turnout difficult to gauge. While the number of votes cast can be compared to the population of Allegheny County (Table 6), imputing the number of voting-age residents would require information on the age structure of each municipality. Despite these data problems, the voting record does support the argument of apathy amongst county residents toward the question of a greater Pittsburgh. Even in the municipalities with the most ardent opposition to the metropolitan charter, few total votes were cast (Table 7), suggesting the threat of metropolitanism was not incentive enough to rally large numbers of voters to the polling stations. The voter turnout was highest in the cities and boroughs, and lowest in the townships (Appendix B).

Table 7 Apathy Regarding Metropolitanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Population (^1)</th>
<th>Total Votes</th>
<th>Votes for</th>
<th>Votes Against</th>
<th>Percent Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRAZER</td>
<td>1,639</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>8.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCKEESPORT</td>
<td>54,632</td>
<td>7,705</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>7121</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VERSAILLES</td>
<td>2,473</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>6.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST DEER</td>
<td>3,928</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBERTY</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) 1930 Population, U.S. Census

Source: Civic Club of Allegheny County Records
The geography of the charter vote (Figure 34) shows a general distance-decay pattern, whereby the lowest proportion of votes cast in favor of the metropolitan plan were in communities at the fringes of Allegheny County, with municipalities at the centre of the county generating the highest support for the charter. There is also an apparent contiguity effect, whereby the majority of municipalities with over 66% support for the metropolitan charter are contiguous to the City of Pittsburgh. Brian Jensen suggests this pattern is due to the metropolitan charter’s protection of local autonomy against forced annexation. Since communities closest to Pittsburgh were theoretically at most risk for
annexation, their support for the charter was greatest than those communities at the (spatial) margins of the county (Jensen 2004). While the threat of reduced autonomy was a real concern of the League of Allegheny County Municipalities and Townships, the voting record of several municipalities contiguous to Pittsburgh do not conform to the theory that the threat of annexation determined support for the charter. For instance, the Borough of Homestead cast fewer than 200 total votes for the charter, nearly evenly divided between yes and no votes. The small population and adjacency to Pittsburgh of Kennedy Township would seem to make this municipality threatened by annexation, yet Kennedy Township voted against the charter (as did most townships), with 40 votes cast in support of the charter to 59 against, from a total population of 1,311. With fewer than 100 votes cast, it seems apathy regarding the issue of a greater Pittsburgh is a likelier cause for their vote than simply a fear of annexation.

As the advocates for change examined the wreckage of the metropolitan charter, further evidence emerges to denote a gap between the reformers and those whom they intended to reform. In one instance, an editorial cartoon depicts a shabbily dressed man in the fine lobby of the ‘Greater Pittsburgh Hotel’, refusing to give up his bag to the bell-hop (Figure 35). The man represents Allegheny County, refusing to provide the two-thirds majority to the metropolitan charter bell-hop. It also represents the attitude of metropolitan charter supporters who were mainly middle- and upper-class urbanites and suburbanites, denied of their plans for change by country bumpkins and working-class hunkies at the fringes of the county (Teaford 1979).
Figure 35 The Greater Pittsburgh Hotel

Reproduced from the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 6/27/29
The two-thirds majority requirement was used widely as an excuse for the plan’s failure by the advocates for change, although privately some civic leaders conceded the boroughs became suspicious because of the type of coalition created in support of the plan. In a private letter to a fellow Progressive reformer, Civic Club secretary H. Marie Dermitt considered failure to be the consequence of the broad coalition of supporters gathered through compromise:

You will note in the amendment the adoption is authorized by a two thirds vote each in a majority of units. Since we have 124 municipal units in this county you can see we had an overwhelming defeat. The boroughs were antagonistic. Personally, I think this is because the County Commissioners and other hard boiled politicians came out so strongly for the charter that the boroughs were suspicious. Perhaps I am wrong about this but there are a great many people who will agree. The mistake was made when the organization politicians jumped into the matter with such vim and vigor. If it could have been carried out along civic lines without their interference but with the cooperation of getting their organizations in line it might have stood a better chance. This is not an official opinion.

(Letter – H. Marie Dermitt to Mr. Herman Kehrli (City Club of Portland)

6/28/1929).

While Dermitt’s comments may not have reflected the official opinion of the Civic Club leadership, her point regarding the strong support of politicians of all stripes can be corroborated. During the six-week publicity campaign for the charter, republican and democrat political leaders were united behind the metropolitan plan. On June 12th, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette praised the non-partisan support for the charter – republicans and democrats had named committees and established headquarters to work for passage of the charter. Republican leaders had been first to support the metropolitan plan because
it guaranteed the autonomy of local municipal units and was also a chance to get home rule for Allegheny County – a long-term dream for the local republican party (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 6/14/1929). Democrats soon provided their support, but for slightly different reasons. David L. Lawrence, Democratic County Chairman and future Mayor of Pittsburgh proffered his support, explaining how he considered it a “patriotic duty to the community” to act for a greater Pittsburgh, as “the metropolitan plan would mean better public service and prosperity” for the region (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 6/12/1929). Whereas gathering support from influential stakeholders is typically desirable, the ardor with which both political parties embraced the metropolitan charter may have reminded voters that the plan safeguarded all existing political positions and structures. This fact when linked with the expert-led development of the charter could well have caused the suspicion amongst the boroughs noticed by Miss Dermitt.

It is unclear what form of civic campaign Dermitt would have preferred, or whether it could have overcome the apathy which occurred amongst Allegheny County communities. In any case, she expressed doubts about the resurrection of the plan, writing to another contact that “there are quite a large number of men here who were anxious only to see Pittsburgh take a higher place in the census and the fact that such a possibility is out of the question for ten more years is going to dampen the ardor of that group whose chief interest has been shattered.” (Letter – H. Marie Dermitt to Mr. Welles Gray, Municipal Administration Service (NML), New York, June 28th 1929). What is notable about these private letters is the recipients were a member of the City Club of
Portland, Oregon and the National Municipal League in New York. Although the Pittsburgh plan for Progressive reform had experienced a setback advocates continued to operate in a national network, providing information for similar campaigns in other cities. Dermitt’s letter to Welles Gray also supports the idea that by the end of the metropolitan charter campaign, advocates who had initially been driven by the formulation of plans to make significant changes to the governance of Allegheny County had been replaced by others whose more functional intent was to improve Pittsburgh’s census ranking. As that goal was now to be delayed by at least ten years, the fatigue accompanying eighteen years of advocacy was revealed.

6.6 Conclusion

By the end of June 1929, the public of Allegheny County had rejected the proposals to once again rescale the boundaries of local governance. In this instance the plans for change originated at the national scale, amongst a cohort of reform-minded experts intent on changing the conditions in local areas through the rubric of efficiency and coordination. Three conclusions can be drawn from this episode of attempted reform. First, national concepts were not made compatible with local conditions. Second, local advocates were willing to compromise and mask their principles in order to enact change. Third, the gaps between theory and practice and between rhetoric and principle alienated voters in Allegheny County, whose apathy led to low voter turn-out in the 1929 vote.
A national network of reform-minded professionals emerged during the late nineteenth century, determined to make a difference to their local communities. They were educated in the new sciences of planning, political science and sociology. They were engaging one another in new professional organizations such as the Association of American Geographers, the American Political Science Association, and the American Planning Association. They were employed in Bureaus of Municipal Research, the National Municipal League and by private foundations who sponsored research into local conditions. The members of this network used similar methodological and rhetorical devices to create more order and efficiency in a modernizing society. Favoring the nomothetic over the ideographic, the progressive advocates created a prescription for reform not necessarily compatible with conditions in each locality.

In Allegheny County the local Civic Club became interested in the Progressive prescription for reform, and advocated creating a metropolitan district in order to reduce service replication and to combat revenue loss arising from regional population shifts. As perceived from the Civic Club offices in the centre of Pittsburgh, regional fragmentation was an efficiency problem to be solved through application of the metropolitan ointment used in places such as New York and Boston. However, the naïve idealism of the reformers succumbed to the political realities of Allegheny County politics. To navigate the local interests threatening the formation of a Greater Pittsburgh, the local advocates compromised their Progressive principles by allowing for a plan which preserved the integrity of the local municipalities, whilst emphasizing the urban booster’s argument that
the main benefit of a metropolitan Pittsburgh was for the city to improve its census ranking.

The metropolitan plan failed to capture the imagination of voters, with low voter turnout across the county doing more to sink the scheme than the oft-cited threshold given for ratification. The gap between rhetoric and principle played its part. Emphasizing urban boosterism did little to motivate rural communities at the fringes of Allegheny County who saw little connection to the City of Pittsburgh, or larger communities across the county who saw themselves as rivals to Pittsburgh’s local hegemony. The gap between theory and practice was also important. What the experts saw as problematic fragmentation was conceived of by local communities as the opportunity for representation and control over local issues. Whereas experts presumed suburban residents enjoyed urban privileges (and should be taxed for it) those residents were leaving the city for fresher air and lower population densities – why would they wish to be drawn back into the city they wanted to leave?

The final question surrounding this episode of attempted reform is whether a top-down, expert-led plan for change could have succeeded with due attention paid to local conditions across Allegheny County. This would have required more focus on resident opinions across the county, rather than on the opinions the Civic Club leaders sought from “prominent men” and banking colleagues in select boroughs. It would have required holding the communities at the margins of Allegheny County in higher regard, and engaging in open dialogue regarding the theories underlying the proposed changes to
local governance structures. These requirements might have been difficult to meet, if the
disparaging view of the electorate revealed in the aftermath of the referendum is any
indication. Ultimately, changing the plan to accommodate local conditions and concerns
in all 124 Allegheny County municipalities would have gone against the precepts of
shared concern and civic interdependence upon which metropolitanism is based.
Chapter 7 Changing Spaces, From the Natural to the Abstract

7.1 Introduction

This study has traced four episodes in the history of Allegheny County between 1788 and 1929. From the beginning of the period to its close, the space which became Allegheny County was transformed almost continually. The fervent geographic imaginations of actors at all scales who came in contact with this region endeavored to leave some monument to their vision. The prevailing tendencies of each of four critical periods are summarized diagrammatically in Figure 36, and are used here to discuss the evolving municipal form of Allegheny County. In the subsequent sections I also explain some of the key implications arising from this research.

In the years preceding the erection of Allegheny County, the colonial legislature of Pennsylvania imposed their sovereign power and authority upon the landscape which recently had been determined as ‘Western Pennsylvania’. The low population density and relatively disorganized society of the western frontier initially led to acceptance of the arbitrary township and county boundaries which were inscribed onto the new maps of the region. During this era the natural world still predominated – cartographic representations of the region were devoid of either the social patterning or topographic data featured in maps of eastern Pennsylvania. Early administrators inscribed their theories of spatial organization upon this seemingly blank canvass. The organization of the region began with colonial administrators in Philadelphia (the regional center marked
in Figure 36, Box 1) establishing large transmontane counties. These counties gradually were fractured into smaller units as populations increased. Ridges and rivers helped shape these natural boundaries, save for the rigid Cartesian logic that continued Mason and Dixon’s colonial line west of the Allegheny Front as a new state line, and that bracketed off western Pennsylvania from the new Ohio territory.

Figure 36 Allegheny County Municipal Development, 1750-1929
The dashed ellipse in Figure 36, Box 1 represents the abstracting form of Allegheny County within Pennsylvania’s own recently determined boundary. Loyalties beyond the locale were still tender, and were certainly strained when Washington sent federal troops into the county to quench the Whiskey Rebellion. The county was also abstract in the sense that large portions of the original Allegheny County were broken off into new counties soon after Allegheny County was formed. In addition, different logics of land allocation were actively shaping the county in different ways – the Ohio and Allegheny Rivers could be considered a fault zone – to the south, colonial English and Scottish land practices were the remnant of old-world practices including the idiosyncratic metes and bounds survey method. To the north, a new American logic of land division was carving the countryside in a different fashion – scientific methods were regularizing the landscape in a way that accelerated the process of spatial abstraction.

In the second phase of municipal development, the immediate changes to the township boundaries which had been made following the erection of the county were accelerated. The influence of state authorities has been left off this box, as it was their laissez faire attitude to local government which enabled the rapid dis-integration of Allegheny County into a number of new spaces.\textsuperscript{112} Given the attention of the state was focused on integrating the state rather than micro-management of municipal affairs, this

\textsuperscript{112} It could be argued that a separate ellipse be included to represent the economic sectionalism and infrastructural developments which had captured the interests of the state at this time. However, the key process implicated in municipal development during this period is the horizontal sorting within Allegheny County.
period gave rise to several different conceptions of how space might be arranged. In the Depreciation Lands, large rural townships were erected by local business leaders seeking to carve a local identity for themselves and the communities they represented.

Several types of spatial speculation arose along the river valleys of the county. In some instances, manorial estates gave way to diversified manufacturing towns, such as in Birmingham, East Birmingham and Manchester. Early industrialists built town plats to accompany their manufactories, some of which were successful enough to incorporate as separate boroughs. Suburban communities were also emerging at this time, such as Sewickley Borough on the Ohio River.

The remarkable aspect of the county during this era was the diversity of geographic imaginations which were enabled by the relaxed views on incorporation adopted by the state and local authorities. Whereas some experiments, such as the romantic suburbs of Evergreen Hamlet and Wildwood were unsuccessful, others were more profitable with towns such as Tarentum, Sewickley and Elizabeth prospering well beyond the nineteenth century. Other municipalities were a product of their time, with Temperanceville a notable instance of social proclivities uniting with economic motives to create a novel urban form.

The third period of this study began in the late-nineteenth century, when the capacity of Allegheny County’s local worlds to emerge and thrive was being threatened by the intrusion of new scales, processes and actors. During the late-nineteenth and
early-twentieth centuries vertical and horizontal processes were acting within and upon Allegheny County. These processes would conspire to change the local worlds which had emerged in Allegheny County; whether or not their founders had intended words like change and progress to be part of the story for romantic suburbs or social experiments such as Temperanceville, change was incessant. The horizontal process was occurring within the urban, rural, suburban and urban spaces of Allegheny County – they constituted different ‘regional worlds’ which were competing to establish the identity for the county. Continuing fragmentation occurred as capitalists sought to seek control over the physical environment in which their economic interests were located.

A prominent example of this rationale for rescaling are the Monongahela River Valley boroughs of Homestead and Munhall, with the latter capturing the tax-rich resources of the Homestead Steel Works. These boroughs are often discussed in terms of their antagonistic relationship based on class relations, yet they can also be considered an example of the urban vision for the county. This urban-industrial vision was in conflict with rural Mifflin Township – one of the original townships of the county which was gradually reduced in size, population and resources through the selective municipal incorporations of entrepreneurs and communities. In this horizontal contest between a rural world and the urban world, Mifflin was gradually losing ground as the economic value of specific parcels of land was realized.

113 Depicted in Figure 36, Box 3 as activities occurring within and between two different ellipses.
The vertical dimension, depicted in Figure 36 by the bold vertical arrow of Box 3, consisted of the gradual conflation of Pittsburgh with Allegheny County. Political and economic leaders acted to solidify the internal hegemonic status for Pittsburgh, so that it could assume the mantle of ‘regional champion’ in a developing economic space which transcended local, state and gradually national boundaries. Box 3 of Figure 36 shows an ellipse above the scale of Allegheny County, with Pittsburgh appearing in both spaces. During this period cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee and St. Louis which anchored other urban regions were competing for the spoils of the industrial United States.

In the final stage, the hegemonic status of Pittsburgh as the locus for economic and political power has been secured. Pittsburgh’s power was successfully extended throughout the new scales of economic activity, and the benefits were flowing to the greater Pittsburgh district. It is during this time, at the height of Pittsburgh’s economic success, that civic groups seek to enact change in the spatial articulation of the county. While their intentions are based in a good government reform ethic, and are supported by the new professional occupations of planning and political science, many of the justifications for imposing a metropolitan vision upon the county are based in an economic logic – the language of efficiency, rationalism and management. This new spatial structure is developed through a national skein of experts and theorists who have derived their solutions through examination of general tendencies and ‘problems’ in a number of urban settings. It is not surprising that the tendencies are found, given the
shared epistemology of the theorists, and the unifying conditions which the burgeoning capitalist system is imposing on hitherto disparate regions.

The problems with their plans for consolidating the metropolis lie at the spatial and social margins of the county – in the municipal pockets where memories of alternate spatial strategies remain. The tendency of the reformers to generalize conditions throughout the region does not serve their cause well in the mining villages, rural regions and ethnic enclaves which do not share the same needs or the same language. Complicating matters further is the insistence of the reformers to obfuscate the good government intentions of the plan, instead relying on platitudes such as civic boosterism and fear in order to compel cooperation with their planned reforms. As illustrated in Figure 36, Box 4 and as described in Chapter Six, they failed – rebuffed by the contrary geographical imaginations that can see the merit in other spatial configurations of their county.
7.2 Key Findings

7.2.1 The Reactive Formation of Political Spaces

A recurring problem for groups devising new political geographies for Allegheny County was the difficulty in implementing new spatial units which could keep pace with the social evolution and changing needs of local communities and the broader region. This was a problem for colonial administrators, whose policies were designed to limit the migration of settlers beyond the Allegheny Front. Their plans were not successful in curtailing the flow of migrants into the region of Western Pennsylvania and the erection of local administrative units became a reactive exercise, instead of state authorities having the latitude to establish a proactive and comprehensive plan for the political geography of an empty western region.

The original township boundaries within Allegheny County were quickly rendered obsolete by the enthusiasm of local communities. As soon as the ink was dry on the original political maps of the county, specific communities began to chafe at the unresponsive and inaccessible institutions of local government. Their response was to redraw the map to fit their own needs – and in certain situations such as in Moon Township, the residents even experimented with early forms of gerrymandering by drawing their new township to include the homes of local justices.

From the earliest point in Allegheny County’s history through to the 1920s, communities and leaders were willing to codify their geographic imaginations in the form
of municipalities, cities and counties. At certain points, and especially during the mid-nineteenth century the oversight from the state legislature supported this climate of experimentation through their liberal stance on local democratic self-determination. The problem with the codification of space into political units is the time it takes to build consensus around a particular spatial vision. By the time the vision is codified as a court-approved municipality, conditions may have changed and rendered the new space obsolete.

7.2.2 Interstices allowing for Speculative Division

Within the large rural townships of early Allegheny County, social homogeneity never predominated. The county’s diverse ethnic composition, the uneven population distribution and the uneven access to land meant that there were areas which were beginning to pull apart the original township boundaries from the moment they were established. If Pittsburgh was a town which geography demanded because of its strategic location at the confluence of the three rivers, the same could be said of Elizabeth, Hitesville, Allegheny and Talleycavey.

The uneven geography of Allegheny County, the liberal incorporation laws and the fervent imaginations of prospective speculators provided an ideal incubator for the fragmentation of the landscape into dozens of municipalities. This geographic speculation followed a similar principle to the Penrosian notion of economic interstices. In her formulation, Penrose describes a universe of economic firms which never
adequately fill the needs of the market (Penrose 1995). The interstices between firms provides the room for new firms to emerge and grow – like weeds rising from between paving stones.

For Allegheny County, the large townships erected by the county court were the equivalent to the hypothetical paving stones – broad enough to cover the county, yet inadequate when compared to the nascent communities and concepts of place which the settlers were formulating. New municipalities rose to fill new needs or new communities, and the process continued until the county became too deeply entwined with other scales to act in such an idiosyncratic and spontaneous manner.

7.2.3 Scales of Theory, Scales of Practice

In the Progressive Era, advocates for change identified municipal fragmentation as a key problem to be solved. In their opinion, the inherited municipal boundaries of Allegheny County were anachronistic and unworthy of the modern metropolis – to which their solution was to be proactive in redrawing the map. The Civic Club leaders relied on the best practices available at the time, which were arising from the emerging professions of political science and planning. These groups were distributed nationally yet were united through a network of professional associations, foundation support and national agencies such as the Bureau of Municipal Research and the American Civic Association.

The national scope of the progressive reform movement was manifested in a set of policy prescriptions which had been generalized from observations of local conditions
across the United States. At the core of these prescriptions was the pejorative treatment of urban fragmentation, and the credence given to regional planning and governmental structures as a means to solve the fragmentation problem.

The availability of a policy prescription for modern urban problems, the proselytizing zeal of the national advocates for regionalism and the links of Civic Club leaders to the national network of advocates meant the Civic Club of Allegheny County was quick to adopt the rhetoric of regionalism for use in the Pittsburgh region. However, the scale of theory was not synonymous with the scale of social practice in Allegheny County, and this gap led to the rejection of the reform plan.

### 7.2.4 From Natural Space to Abstract Space

Throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century’s, the natural world west of the Allegheny River gave way to Allegheny County, and this was consequently altered through a successive layering of abstractions. The process of English and American abstraction began with the earliest representations of the region by colonial cartographers, who depicted a western region devoid of topography, permanent settlements or land uses. This blank canvas became inscribed with the territorial visions of eastern legislators seeking to legitimize Pennsylvania’s land claims to this area.

The earliest representation and crudest division of the landscape into large counties and townships facilitated the increasing departure of the region from a natural world into many social and political worlds. Metes and bounds survey methods invited
the abstraction of natural space because it considered natural features as convenient tools for spatial division, rather than as indications of regional integrity. For example, the waterways of Allegheny County were used throughout the explanation of land boundaries – by using these centerlines of watersheds as the boundary lines of townships, colonial surveyors and courts were demoting the significance of the natural world.

If these most apparent and significant features of the landscape could be divided, then any other rationales for division could also be permitted. This abstraction was hastened to the north of the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers, where the new American geometry of rectilinear land survey was creating another patterning within the county. Regularized boundaries were imposed and created a set of townships which did not conform to the underlying geography of the Depreciation Lands. The imposition of this pattern denoted the emphasis placed on the sale of land, rather than any curiosity or sympathy to the regional integrity of this area.

The abstraction of the landscape facilitated the speculative development and municipal fragmentation of Allegheny County through to the early twentieth century. Economic and political imperatives compelled further division, and it was only with the rise of an early environmental consciousness (based around smoke control, clean drinking water and flood prevention) that the language of regionalism began to be applied to debates over the appropriate forms of governance for Allegheny County. The environmental discourse began in the 1890s with Kate Cassatt McKnight’s personal mission against litter and local health concerns. Her activism in the Woman’s Health
Protective Association of Allegheny County, the Twentieth Century Club and the Civic Club of Allegheny County prompted an increasing number of socially connected women (and later, men) to protest aspects of urban blight throughout Allegheny County.

Early campaigns focused on billboard control, tuberculosis control and civic beautification – such as tree-planting on the denuded slopes of Mt. Washington, the prominent hill overlooking Pittsburgh’s Central Business District. Casting a Figurative and literal umbrella over these campaigns was a lengthy battle to mitigate the infamous smog and smoke problems of industrial Pittsburgh. Their campaign was aided by advice from the Civic Club’s contacts in the American Civic Association, and by the catalogue of environmental damage recorded by the investigators of the Pittsburgh Survey (Tarr 1996).

Other forms of regionalism emerging during the late period of this study included flood control efforts, which led to the development of a Flood Commission to develop a comprehensive (i.e. regional) solution to this problem. These shifts toward regionalism were simply new forms of spatial abstraction, providing planners and other commanders of space with the tools and spatial scope necessary to create an economically competitive region. For instance the work undertaken to prevent flooding

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114 See Grinder (1978) for a discussion of pre-World War I smoke abatement strategy. The air pollution was so severe that an oft-repeated local tale is of businessmen who would travel to work with two white shirts – the spare would be donned at lunchtime, since by then the first would be grey from airborne particulates.

115 See Roland Smith’s research for additional information on the history of regional flood control (Smith 1975).
was a blatant effort to protect the fixed capital infrastructure located in Pittsburgh’s vulnerable ‘Golden Triangle’ and in other industrial spaces along the river valleys.

7.3 Concluding Comments

By 1930 the regional identity of Allegheny County had been determined, and the industrial worlds of the region had emerged victorious. The codified expression of other geographic imaginations also persisted beyond 1929, with the proudly independent suburbs and rural remnants saved by the failure of the consolidation vote and by the national and world events which drew attention away from municipal affairs during the 1930s and 1940s. At the county’s spatial and political core was Pittsburgh, ensconced as the regional representative in economic competitions against other cities in the developing world economy of the twentieth century.

Yet the industrial world of Allegheny County was not to last, defeated by the overwhelming success of the industrial worlds in vanquishing other spatial alternatives.\textsuperscript{116} Because the municipalities of the county rebuffed efforts to change the structure of government throughout the twentieth century (see Jensen 2004: Lonich 1991), local business and political leaders decided to begin a regional renaissance in the City of Pittsburgh – the symbolic core of Allegheny County, as well as the minor civil division in which they could exercise their combined power to the greatest degree.

\textsuperscript{116} In economic terms, the region suffered from an overspecialization in steel and other heavy industry – something which had become apparent by 1960 (Chinitz 1960).
The consequences of Renaissance I were profound, revitalizing Pittsburgh’s downtown area by reshaping the landscape. The public-private partnership between the businessman Richard King Mellon and the reform mayor David L. Lawrence succeeded in changing the city by utilizing every scale of governance, and every tool of government available to them (Lubove 1969: Chapter Six). In a subsequent phase, the continuing deindustrialization of Allegheny County was countered by a new focus on a regional future anchored by advanced manufacturing, high-tech employment and the service sector, and higher education in particular (Lubove 1994).

Pittsburgh’s universities performed a key role in stimulating growth within the City of Pittsburgh during the late-twentieth century, but civic leaders were concerned that the old industrial worlds of the Monongahela Valley and other areas in Allegheny County could not use similar strategies to recover (ibid. Chapter 3). The solution was to exhort Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Pittsburgh to become more entrepreneurial, so that the benefits of their research could extend to other parts of the county. By the end of the twentieth century, the coalitions of capital and labor had revitalized the Central Business District of Pittsburgh and had navigated a transition to a post industrial world which had preserved many pre-industrial political spaces.

The historic and contemporary maps of Allegheny County’s political spaces do not readily divulge the violence, guile and negotiation inherent in their construction and

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117 Including the formation of the powerful Allegheny Conference on Community Development, which was the vehicle used to facilitate public-private partnerships during Renaissance I and II.
reconstruction. As Lefebvre noted, once a space is made the scaffolding and rough work is taken away (Lefebvre 1974/1991: Chapter 2). Landscapes can be deciphered back to the process, groups and periods responsible, and the preceding analysis chapters have outlined four episodes of change which have involved the interaction of many groups and several processes. Lefebvre warned that this was only a first step in understanding the production of space – what the deciphering of seemingly benign political maps leads to is comprehension of power – of the commanders and demanders responsible for particular spaces.

I remembered this warning while attending the Marcella L. Finegold Public Debate at the University of Pittsburgh in April 2007. The topic under discussion was “Should Pittsburgh merge its City and County Governments?” Speaking in support of the idea was a politician from Louisville, Kentucky – a city which had succeeded in consolidating with its surrounding county. She posed the hypothetical question of whether any business corporation would choose to structure itself in the same way as Allegheny County – with so much fragmentation, so much duplication, so much inefficiency. Concluding that no company in its right mind would structure itself in such a way, she proclaimed the success in Louisville and noted the city’s rise to sixteenth according to the latest U.S. Census rankings.

118 Joan Riehm, Chair, Alliance for Regional Stewardship.
Speaking in opposition to the notion of merging government was an economist from a policy analysis group in Allegheny County. He noted that consolidation was not sufficient to prevent population loss in cities such as Philadelphia, and that the City of Pittsburgh’s debt, unfunded pension obligations, high unionization and lack of unincorporated land all posed significant barriers to consolidation between Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. In his closing remarks, he dismissed regional consolidation as “just the latest fad in regional economic development”, and instead proposed the simplification of tax structures to improve the regional climate of Allegheny County.

Consolidation on the agenda again, and the debates about how to configure urban governance are alive and well in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, as well as in Minneapolis, Auckland and Toronto. The question for this generation of advocates, whether in favor of change or stability, consolidation or fragmentation should be: ‘is this the appropriate point for consolidation of city and county government?’

The history of Allegheny County is one of reactionary boundary change that never kept pace with the social and spatial evolution of the region. In the early twenty first century the region continues to evolve with the exurban development of bedroom communities in Cranberry (Butler County) and Southpointe (Washington County). Beyond the Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Area, Jefferson County (Ohio) markets itself as ‘Pittsburgh’s suburb’. The consolidation of city and county would eliminate

119 Frank Gamrat, Senior Research Associate, Allegheny Institute.
seemingly anachronistic municipalities formed in the nineteenth century, but it would not be sufficient to construct a scale of government to keep pace with regional shifts. Perhaps more important is the search for regional solutions which respect the geographical imaginations of constituent communities and which are flexible enough to accommodate continually changing spaces.
Appendix A: Circular Letter to Borough Representatives

Circular letter sent by Alex Dunbar, President of the Civic Club of Allegheny County (January 1922).

Let us all work together for the Welfare of the Whole Pittsburgh District!

The interests of all of the municipalities in Allegheny County are so closely interwoven that the welfare of each is for the good of all. Under the present form of organization, however, we pull apart instead of together; we duplicate officials, public service and expense and waste public funds. The greatest good of the greatest number in our community will never be accomplished until some plan of improved municipal cooperation has been developed and adopted.

The Civic Club of Allegheny County is absolutely opposed to forcible annexation, but believes that a plan of voluntary cooperation and coordination can be worked out based on the “Metropolitan Idea”, under which the public services of the district can be administered efficiently under centralized control in which the various portions of the district are represented, while the various municipalities retain local control of matters affecting purely local interest and policy.

At the same time, when such a plan has been worked out, the Pittsburgh Metropolitan District will be able to take its rightful place among the cities of the United
States to which its industrial production of two billion dollars per year and its metropolitan population properly entitle it.

In order to secure the sentiment of the various communities interested, we are mailing this card to a selected list of several thousand citizens in the Boroughs adjacent to Pittsburgh, asking them to make reply upon the return card. (signed Alex Dunbar, President Civic Club of Allegheny County).

[Reply card has Borough information and a for/against reply to the following statement]

“I am/am not in favor of an improved form of organization under which the various municipalities in Allegheny County can cooperate to secure better efficiency and greater economy in public service, and to enable the Pittsburgh District to take its rightful place among the leading cities of the United States. When a plan has been worked out based on the “Metropolitan Idea”, by which the various sections of the District have representation, while permitting each municipality to retain local control of matters of purely local interest and policy, I will/Will not favor its adoption as the best method of advancing the interests of the entire district.

Source: Civic Club of Allegheny County Archives, Archives Service Center – University of Pittsburgh.
Appendix B: Correlation between Borough Size and Charter Support

Table 8  Correlations between Population Size and Charter Votes

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**  Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Bibliography


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Presentations


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