Semi-Detached Britain?

Social networks in the suburban fringe of

Leicester and Loughborough,

1950-2005

Laura Balderstone

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Contents

Abstract

Once regarded as a nation central to the development of civil society, associational activity in contemporary Britain is perceived by some authors as fragile. Whereas the urban leadership provided by the middle classes was crucial to the trajectory and character of towns and cities all over Britain in the nineteenth century, it has been claimed that their relocation to suburbia has become synonymous with detachment, disinterest and the decline of the associational sphere. Depicted in literary and historical accounts, as well as in the popular media, as pursuing a suburban lifestyle that was both monotonous and disengaged, the middle classes of the twentieth century were assumed to have relinquished the management of a multitude of municipal and voluntary functions that defined an urban place. Yet such accounts stereotyped middle-class lifestyles, oversimplifying their relationship with the city, and prompting a 'new wave' of suburban research in America that has offered a revisionism that stresses diversity and challenges prevailing assumptions regarding middle-class behaviour. Assumptions of suburban detachment are contested in the research that underpins this study.

The thesis 'Semi-Detached Britain? Social networks in the suburban fringe of Leicester and Loughborough, 1950-2005' provides a detailed analysis of social and cultural networks and reviews the consequences of relocation on civic engagement since 1950. Geographically the middle classes may have distanced their home lives from the urban centre, but through an examination of their participation in the associational sphere of clubs and societies it is evident that suburban living was not synonymous with disinterest and detachment. Furthermore, analysis of cultural changes post 1950, including the issue of conservation, the shifting nature of gender relations, and the process of racial assimilation, reveal how voluntary organisations, and their middle-class membership, continued to shape the physical, spatial and cultural landscape of modern Britain. Through the intricate networks of power developed in local clubs and societies, the middle-classes found a continuing utility in the transference of knowledge and expertise, often working as mediator between the citizen and the state. Far from being disconnected, the new 'suburbans' were 'semi-detached', demonstrating a vigorous and ongoing commitment to the public sphere that contributed to the stock of social and civic capital in both town and city. In this regard the thesis provides a revisionism concerning the middle classes, suburbanisation, and the construction of civil society in the modern era.

Acknowledgements

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Glossary

Leicester Asian Business Association (LABA)

Leicester Racial Equality Council (LREC)

Leicester Society of Artists (LSA)

Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (LAHS)

Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council (LRCC)

Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society (LLPS)

Oadby Community Association (OCA)

Charnwood Community Council (CCC)

Charnwood Racial Equality Council (CREC)

Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild (EWG)

Historic Buildings Panel (HBP)

Oadby Community College (OCC)

Loughborough Echo (LE)

Leicester Mercury (LM)

Geo-coding/ Geo-referencing - a process that allows collected data, compiled in an excel file, to be plotted on to appropriate maps via the URL link *www.batchgeocode.co.uk.* In this instance data refers to membership details, particularly addresses, revealing the location of middle-class, associational participants.

Chapter One

Semi- Detached Britain? A Historiography

> The performance of government and other social institutions is powerfully influenced by citizen engagement in community affairs.[1]

Few could deny that increasing levels of crime and disorder within contemporary Britain are cause for immediate concern. The London bombings of 2005 highlighted on a national stage the extent to which aspects of community cohesion within multi-cultural Britain had eroded. Racial tensions, sporadic acts of violence by young teenagers and the increasing concern over gun crime are just a few of the issues demonstrating the underlying problems facing urban centres throughout the country. Such urban degeneration has often been attributed to a fundamental breakdown between the citizen and the state. For many sociologists and historians, the decline of the urban environment reflects the deterioration in the depth and quality of civil society and a weakening of social capital.[2] Once perceived as a great nation of joiners, modern Britain is no longer regarded as a country dominated by local and national organisations, clubs and societies, boasting an environment of inclusion and participation.[3]

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[1] Putnam, R, 'Tuning in, tuning out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America', *Political Science and Politics,* 28, 1995, 664.

[2] These conceptual issues are explored by Putnam in his study of both Italy and America. See Putnam, R, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy* (Princeton, 1993); Putnam, R, 'Tuning in, tuning out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America', 664-83; Putnam, R, 'Bowling alone: Americas declining social capital', *Journal of Democracy,* 6, 1995, 65-78. Putnam, 'Bowling alone: America's declining social capital', summarises his much publicised book *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (London, 2000). In his work Putnam emphasises the importance of civic engagement: 'it powerfully affects the performance of representative governments…..the quality of governance (is) determined by long standing traditions of civic engagement.' Civic engagement is understood as the connections between people and their communities which in turn create social capital. For Putnam life is made easier within a community that maintains a substantial stock of social capital as 'networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust'. For an introduction to civil society, and in particular the debate surrounding Putnam's interpretation see Harris, J, 'From Richard Hooker to Harold Laski: changing perceptions of civil society in British political thought, late sixteenth to early twentieth centuries' in Harris, J, ed., *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford, 2005), 13-38.

[3] Morris, R.J, 'Introduction: civil society, association and urban places: class, nation and culture in nineteenth century Europe' in De Vries, B, Morris, R.J and Morton, G, eds., *Civil Society, Association*

Academic discourse has suggested that historically disintegration can be traced to the nineteenth century when the process of suburbanisation separated and fractured communities irreconcilably. Dominated by elite inhabitants seeking a privatised lifestyle within a semi-rural location, it has been argued that the suburban ideal produced a middle-class society devoid of interest and participation within the twentieth century.[4] Such notions continue to permeate contemporary accounts, exemplified most recently by articles in the national press suggesting the continued middle-class exodus from inner cities has increased the sense of racial segregation in modern Britain.[5]

Yet contemporary research into both the process and history of suburbanisation, and the importance of civil society, reveals contrasting arguments in relation to suburbanisation as separation. In addition, the popularity of modern forms of interaction such as social networking sites on the internet, including Facebook and Twitter, suggest that participation and communication are still evident, and in some cases more popular than ever. Additionally, *The Guardian* in 2006 suggested membership levels in Britain had soared in recent years, with the average Briton a member of 17 organisations.[6] Such research raises interesting questions with regards the stereotypical account of middle-class, suburban detachment and the assumption that the country is no longer a nation of joiners, providing

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and Urban Places: Class, Nation and Culture in Nineteenth Century Europe (Aldershot, 2006), 1-16, provides an overview of the emphasis often placed on Britain as a country deeply connected to associational affiliation as a means of constructing civil society. For a historiography of associational activity in Britain see Clark, P, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800. The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000); Gunn, S, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual, Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000); Morris, R.J, 'Clubs, societies and associations' in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 1990), 405-17; Morris, R.J, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns' in Daunton, M, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain 1840-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 2001), 395-426; Morris, R.J and Rodger, R, eds., *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914* (London, 1983); Rodger, R, 'The "common good" and civic promotion: Edinburgh' in Colls, R and Rodger, R, eds., *Cities of Ideas. Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain* (Aldershot, 2004), 144-77.

4 Masterman, C.F.G, *The Condition of England* (London, 1960), 60.

5 *The Daily Telegraph*, 28th November 2006.

6 *The Guardian*, November 7th 2006. When reading this article it is important to understand the different types of organisations that are included within the study. For instance, the survey made no distinction between free and paid-for memberships. The survey also included groups connected to retail organisations, i.e. Tesco club card. There is an important distinction to be made here between organisations people are members of and organisations that promote citizen engagement and contribute to the stock of social capital in towns and cities. Definitions for the associations examined within this study will be provided in Chapter Three, Active Citizenship: Defining Associational Culture, 1950-2005.

much scope for the modern historian to analyse outer fringe areas and their networks of social interaction.

Suburbanisation

The perception of the middle-classes of the twentieth century as increasingly devoid of interest and participation is a theory continually associated with the process of suburbanisation. The movement of the Victorians to suburban areas became so embedded in nineteenth century culture that relocation to the outer fringes was understood as an important facet of middle-class identity. To reside in suburbia was not only a status symbol but a way of actualising the middle-class ideology of separate home and work life. In 1909 C.F.G Masterman termed the urban middle-classes residing in the fringes as 'the suburbans', suggesting they were a homogeneous civilization, living a detached and self-centred lifestyle at the urban periphery.[7] In more recent years academics have also connected decentralisation to the decline of social capital and civic engagement within America, further emphasising the negative connotations so easily associated with suburban areas.[8]

In contemporary society suburbia can be deemed as a particularly fluid concept with much variation and interpretation. By dictionary definition the terms refers to 'a residential district situated on the outskirts of a city or town.'[9] In the context of this thesis however, 'suburbia' is specifically understood as an area located at the edge of the urban core, a semi-rural location that remains a commutable distance from the urban core, predominantly inhabited by the middle-classes.[10] Despite its attachment to the Victorian period, the suburban concept was not an invention of the nineteenth century. McManus and Ethington inform us that the word 'suburb' appeared only once in English before Chaucer's 'treatment' in the *Canterbury tales* of 1386. References also appear in Shakespeare's work by the seventeenth century, referring to the 'urban areas lying beyond the physical limits of the city....where the unpleasant, polluting and dangerous trades were concentrated...'[11]

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[7] Masterman, *The Condition of England*, 58.

[8] For a specific example, see Putnam, 'Tuning in, tuning out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America', 664-83.

[9] *Collins English Dictionary* (Glasgow, 2004).

[10] For a more in-depth understanding of 'suburbia' in the context of the thesis, particularly in terms of distance from the urban core and the role of satellite villages, please see Chapter Two, page 47.

[11] Ethington, P.J and McManus, R, 'Suburbs in transition: new approaches to suburban history', *Urban History,* 34, 2007, 3.

According to Bourne the term was originally used to describe a condition of sub-standardness and physical and social isolation; in essence a state of sub-urbanism.[12] By the nineteenth century however, it was the urban centres that had become the dumping grounds for the unfortunates,[13] as areas located outside the urban core, the suburban enclaves, were now regarded as the most desirable locations that only the wealthiest could afford. Architectural historians suggest that the first set of detached or semi-detached homes built for single family occupancy were recorded in 1794 at the Eyre Estate (St.John's Wood, London), and the years that followed, particularly 1815-50, were ones of 'conscious suburbanisation.'[14]

Ultimately suburbia allowed the urban middle-classes to physically remove themselves from the social and physical problems of the city centre, particularly the slum areas that surrounded them on a daily basis. As Dyos asserted, a symbiotic relationship exited between the suburb and the slum: 'The fact of the suburb influenced the environment of the slum; the threat of the slum entered the consciousness of the suburb.'[15] The process of suburbanisation allowed the city to become zoned; with slums and factories and warehouses at the core, followed by respectable working-class housing and middle-class villas at the periphery.[16] As Rodger states:

> Suburbs, then, were partly a product of increasing urban size; in the wake of industrialisation the middle-classes for the first time were sufficiently numerous to produce a coherent entity rather than being confined, as previously, to a few streets or squares.[17]

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[12]   Bourne, L.S, 'Reinventing the suburb: old myths and new realities', *Progress and Planning,* 46, 1996, 163.

[13]   Thompson, F.M.L, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982), 2.

[14]   Rodger, R, *Housing in Urban Britain 1780-1914: Class, Capitalism and Construction* (Basingstoke, 1989), 38.

[15]   Dyos, H.J and Reeder, D, 'Slums and suburbs', in Dyos, J and Wolff, M, eds., *The Victorian City: Images and Realities, Volume I* (London, 1976), 360. For an additional insight into Dyos's work see Dyos, H.J, 'A theatre of suburbs: some patterns of development in west London 1801-1911, in Dyos, H.J, *The Study of Urban History* (London, 1968); Dyos, H.J, 'The slums of Victorian London', *Victorian Studies,* 11, 1967, 5-40; Dyos, H.J, 'The speculation builders and developers of Victorian London', *Victorian Studies,* 11, 1968, 641-90.

[16]   In Rodger, *Housing in Urban Britain 1780-1914,* 39, the author discusses the specialised zoning of urban centres during the nineteenth century, referencing in particular the work of Whitehand. For examples of Whitehand's work see Whitehand, J.W.R, 'Building activities and intensity of development at the urban fringe: the case of a London suburb in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Historical Geography,* 1, 1975, 211-24; Whitehand, J.W.R, *The Making of the Urban Landscape* (Oxford, 1982); Whitehand, J.W.R, *The Changing Faces of Cities: A Study of Development Cycles and Urban Form* (Oxford, 1987); Whitehand, J.W.R and Carr, C.M.H, *Twentieth Century Suburbs: A Morphological Approach* (London, 2001).

[17]   Rodger, *Housing in Urban Britain 1780-1914,* 39.

By the twentieth century the concept infiltrated many aspects of the urban environment, even becoming a template for sociologists like Ebenezer Howard. His utopian vision for the 'Garden City' sought to bring the suburban ideal to the urban masses, in the hope of transforming working-class housing conditions.[18] The impact of new technology, in particular mass transportation – initially the tramways and eventually the motor car – further accelerated the process of suburbanisation and a sense of social segregation.[19] As a sizeable commute was made possible for the urban middle-classes, suburban areas were increasingly constructed further and further away from the urban core. After the Second World War, state programmes of regeneration alongside improvements in technology and transportation further fuelled suburban development, creating what Thompson defines as 'physically distinct dormitory towns, urbanised villages.'[20]

Negative depictions and harmful stereotypes of the suburban lifestyle have permeated both historical literature and fictional novels throughout the twentieth century. Suburban enclaves have frequently been represented as sprawling artefacts of which few are particularly fond, a physical expression of monotony exemplified through indistinguishable villas and a general wasteland of housing,[21] the portrayal of which was so effectively captured in Orwell's critically acclaimed *Coming up for Air*.[22] Beyond the physical stereotype, academics have also raised concerns about social cohesion in suburban settings, arguing that 'suburbanites are becoming more and more atomised and therefore endangering the stability of the whole society.'[23] They are often characterised as symbols of a more closed society,[24] a deconstructive device particularly in the context of racial integration.[25] As early as the turn of the twentieth century, scholars like Masterman saw the escape to the suburbs as an opportunity for the urban elite to detach themselves both socially and physically, producing

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18 See Howard, E, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (London, 1945). Additionally, for an effective summary of the concepts behind 'urban utopias' see Fisman, R, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier* (New York, 1977).

19 Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia*, 155.

20 Ibid, 2.

21 Ibid.

22 Orwell, G, *Coming Up for Air* (London, 1939).

23 Lupi, T and Musterd S, 'The suburban community question', *Urban Studies*, 43, 2004, 801.

24 Bourne, 'Reinventing the suburbs: old myths and new realities', 166.

25 An article in *The Daily Telegraph*, 28th November 2006, referred to the threat middle-class suburbanisation placed on race relations in Great Britain, potentially damaging the 30 years of progress that has seen Britain described as the best country in Europe for ethnic minorities.

a middle-class devoid of interest and participation.[26] In Jackson's 1987 book on American suburban community, *Crabgrass Frontier*, the author similarly alluded to the more privatised social lives of residents that weakened community ties.[27] Yet, recent revisions into the many elements that construct suburbia have begun to show the diversity of these urban settlements, suggesting academics have often been quick to consider all middle-class suburban areas together.[28] Bourne asserts that after years of relative neglect the study of suburbia has begun to move back on to centre stage,[29] as scholars attempt to readdress the often inaccurate yet powerful myths and stereotypes associated with suburbs.[30] In particular, scholars such as Corbin Sies have argued that middle-class suburbs have been the most susceptible to stereotypical depictions. Suburbia did not necessarily mean detachment and research into American suburbanisation has begun to show this.

Sociological research into American suburbanisation has an important place in the academic discourse regarding the relationship between suburbia and the urban core, exemplified as early as the 1920s by the Chicago model of social segregation.[31] More recently historians such as Corbin Sies, Harris, Lewis and Gardner have begun to emphasise the diversity of American suburbs and the need to consider them in greater depth.[32] Gardner has suggested that in America suburbanisation was a more complex process than the simple migration of affluent city dwellers to the urban periphery, concluding that in order to understand these complexities, researchers need to examine large and smaller metropolitan

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[26]   Masterman, *The Condition of England.*

[27]   Jackson, K.T, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford, 1985).

[28]   Sies, M.C, 'North American suburbs 1880-1950, cultural and social reconciliations', *Journal of Urban History*, 27, 2001, 317-18.

[29]   Bourne, 'Reinventing the suburbs: old myths and new realities', 163.

[30]   Harris, R, 'Introduction', *Journal of Urban History*, 27, 2001, 259.

[31]   Thompson refers to the Chicago model as a generalised description of the spatial distribution of the industrial, commercial and residential sectors of a particular city, Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia*, 153. For additional references on the Chicago model see Davis, M, *The Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (London, 1999). Also, Garreau, J, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York, 1992); Goss, J, '"The magic of the mall": an analysis of form, function and meaning in the contemporary retail built environment', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 83, 1993, 18-47; Sudjic, D, *The 100 Mile City* (London, 1992) provide interesting accounts of the changing use of urban space in twentieth century cities.

[32]   The *Journal of Urban History*, 27, 2001, 259-377 provided a special issue on suburbanisation in America and acts as an excellent introduction to suburbia in the U.S. The journal examines themes and issues specific to the experience of twentieth century suburbanisation. Essays include Harris, R, and Lewis, R, 'The geography of North American cities and suburbs 1900-1950: a new synthesis', 262-92; Gardner, T, 'The slow wave. The changing residential status of cities and suburbs in the United States', 293-312; Corbin Sies, M, 'North American suburbs 1880-1950, cultural and social reconciliations,' 313-46.

areas in a comparative context.[33] Additional issues under consideration have included Lewis and Harris's research opposing preconceived notions of socially homogeneous suburbs. Commenting on the decentralisation of industry and the immediate effects on the social composition of suburbs, the authors suggest that 'although individually homogeneous, suburbs in the aggregate were socially diverse, as were most central cities.'[34]

Such research shows the contemporary historian areas of the suburban narrative in much need of revision. Specifically connected to this thesis are the arguments of Corbin Sies, who praises her fellow academics for 'spearheading the call for a fresh look at urban space and new set of research priorities.' For her, urbanists need to move beyond the stereotypical accounts of middle-class suburbia by examining areas in a cultural context. She argues that much of our understanding of white, middle-class suburbia comes from prescriptive literature, advertising or reformers' rhetoric as opposed to data collected. Instead, 'we need to understand not only who lived in a given urban or suburban neighbourhood, how it developed, and why it developed but also how constituents experienced life on the ground there.'[35] She further suggests that an understanding of the 'flavour' of local community and cultural life can be found in 'records generated by voluntary organisations, clubs, churches or officialdom; local newspapers, photographs, scrapbooks and memoirs; local histories; or oral histories.'[36] These methodological approaches however, have yet to permeate the study of suburbia outside the United States of America. In their analysis of Holland, Lupi and Musterd argue that much of our understanding of suburbanisation has dealt over proportionately with the American experience.[37] In Australia, Bunker similarly suggests that whilst the rural-urban fringe has steadily grown since the Second World War, the issue has received limited academic attention.[38] Such concerns are comparable with the British experience. Whilst much has been written on British suburbanisation in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the post-war era remains crucially neglected. With only Clapson

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[33] Gardner, 'The slow wave. The changing residential status of cities and suburbs in the United States', 311.

[34] Harris and Lewis, 'The geography of North American cities and suburbs 1900-1950, a new synthesis', 260.

[35] Corbin Sies, 'North American suburbs 1880-1950, cultural and social reconciliations', 319.

[36] Ibid, 320.

[37] Lupi and Musterd, 'The suburban community question', 2.

[38] Bunker, R, 'In the shadow of the city: the fringe around the Australian metropolis in the 1950's', *Planning Perspectives*, 17, 2002, 61. For an additional overview of Australian suburbs see Davison, G, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne* (Carlton, 1979).

and Whitehand having addressed both post-war working class suburbia and suburban morphology respectively,[39] the middle-class suburbs after 1950 remain under researched, particularly with regards the social interaction between suburbia and the urban core.

The Urban Middle-Classes

When considering the historiography of suburbanisation in Britain, the notion of geographical relocation to the urban periphery has undoubtedly become synonymous with a sense of middle-class identity. The concept of class itself can justifiably be termed as a difficult and messy subject.[40] Historically, the urban middle-class elite were understood as a higher status group at the head of urban society, a cohesive social group with leading social and political positions.[41] Traditional interpretations of their emergence depict spontaneous class formation as a result of the economic and political changes occurring in Britain after 1750.[42] According to Morris, Briggs and Perkin, their dominance in urban affairs can be traced back to the early nineteenth century when the period saw the clarification of a middle-class, socio-political identity.[43] Gunn also suggests that whilst there were substantial differences of wealth within the middle-classes – clerics and lawyers rarely matched the incomes of industrial bankers for instance – they were 'increasingly integrated through education, intermarriage and leading roles in urban institutions, as well as participation in a common style of life in city and suburb'.[44]

As an increasing proportion of the population began to inhabit urban areas between the years 1750 to 1850, academics have identified substantial economic, social and political

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[39]   See Clapson, M, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Post War England* (Manchester, 1998),156-95; Whitehand, *The Changing Faces of Cities*; Whitehand J.W.R and Carr, C.M.H, 'Morphological periods, planning and reality: the case of England's inter-war suburbs', *Urban History*, 26, 1999, 230-48; Whitehand and Carr, *Twentieth Century Suburbs. A Morphological Approach*. Clapson has also written a comparative book on England and the U.S, entitled *Suburban Century, Social Change and Urban Growth in England and the U.S.A* (Oxford, 2003).

[40]   Marwick, A, *British Society since 1945* (Oxford, 1982), 25.

[41]   Cowan, A, 'Urban elites in early modern Europe: an endangered species?' *Historical Research*, 64, 1991, 123-25.

[42]   See Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class.*

[43]   Linda Colley cites these authors whilst reviewing the different class groupings during the years 1750-1830, asserting that 'no period of British history has been more ruthlessly anatomized', Colley L, 'Whose nation? Class and national consciousness in Britain 1750-1830', *Past and Present*, 113, 1986, 98.

[44]   Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 22.

resources marshalled by the middle-classes in urban Britain.[45] The speed of industrialisation left many towns and cities lacking any sense of formalised local government, with municipal control residing in the hands of the self constructed urban middle-class.[46] Towns and cities were substantially their creations, and in turn provided the theatre within which they extended, expressed and defended their power.[47] By 1835 however, the Municipal Corporations Act worked as a 'spring board for future urban government',[48] seeking to construct a more coherent form of municipal leadership. The middle-classes sought to maintain their influence in newly formed local governments and, according to Smith, in each city centre local government was dominated by men of substantial social and economic influence, keen to serve on local councils and shape the future of municipal leadership.[49] This was a reciprocal relationship, with newly constructed councils eager to embrace the knowledge and power of the urban middle-classes.[50]

Thus, during the nineteenth century, the middle-class elite remained at the helm of urban development and whilst much of this power was exacted through developing systems of local municipal control, networks of power and influence also existed outside council offices, in the dominant sphere of associational activity. Sennett has argued that in the past, cultural form and institutional interaction helped citizens to make sense of the increasingly

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[45] Trainor, R, 'The middle classes' in Daunton, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, *Volume III*, 673.

[46] *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III* provides an excellent collection of essays on urban governance. These include Davis J, 'Central government and the towns', 261-86, Doyle, B, 'The changing functions of urban government: councillors, officials and pressure groups', 287-314, Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British Towns', 395-426.

[47] Morris R.J, 'The middle class and British towns and cities of the industrial revolution, 1780-1870' in Fraser, D and Sutcliffe, A, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983), 287.

[48] Rodger, R, '"There is no nobler sphere than to take part in municipal work": public administration in historical perspective' in Schott, D and Toyka-Seid, M, eds., *Die Europäische Stadt und ihre Umwelt* (Darmstadt 2008), 169-92.

[49] Smith, J, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, 27, 2000, 257.

[50] For examples of the influence of the urban middle classes during the nineteenth century, see Colls and Rodger, eds., *Cities of Ideas. Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain;* Fraser and Sutcliffe, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History*; Gunn, S, 'Class identity and the urban: the middle class in England 1800-1950', *Urban History*, 31, 2004, 1-19; Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class;* Morris, R.J, 'The middle class and British towns and cities of the industrial revolution', in Fraser and Sutcliffe, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History*, 286-305; Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 405-17; Morris, R.J, *Class, Sect and Party. The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990); Morris and Rodger, eds., *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History;* Morris, R.J, and Trainor, R, eds., *Urban Governance, Britain and Beyond since 1750* (Aldershot, 2000); Smith, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', 255-75; Trainor, 'The middle classes', 673-713.

anonymous experience of social life in expanding cities and towns.[51] For the middle-classes, participation in voluntary organisations provided an ideal outlet for the development of social networks and leisure pursuits. Formal association, as described by Bailey, ultimately acted as a 'moral umbrella' for the middle-classes,[52] reinforcing the awareness of collective class participation that made leisure activities self-validating.[53] Between the years 1780 and 1850, the expansion of large industrial and urban populations was accompanied by the increase and prosperity of organisational activity.[54] Morris suggests that organisations were designed:

> To achieve their aims without reference to government aid or authority, and the leaders of the dominant voluntary societies felt they were engaged in the creation of a particular set of social relationships which were intended to provide stability and legitimacy for their own power and privilege.[55]

In short, the associational sphere provided an ideal medium for expressing leadership, a place where the middle-classes could continue to make decisions behind closed doors and to their own agenda.[56]

Urban governance during these years was seemingly dominated by the influence of voluntary institutions, broadening the traditional concept of local government in terms of its distribution and delivery of status services, into a much wider role that engaged citizens and provided 'political leadership in civil society rather than bureaucratic public administration.'[57] Through voluntary activity, the urban middle-classes attempted to engage with the contemporary problems of urban society, including 'the specific crisis of epidemic, riot and economic slump.'[58] Furthermore, voluntary organisations and their leaders believed that through the sphere of associational activity, the middle-classes could educate and civilize the lower ranks of society with their cultural knowledge and influence. Yet beyond

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[51] Reference taken from Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 5. For an example of Sennett's work see Sennett, R, *The Fall of Public Man* (Cambridge, 1977).

[52] Bailey, P, '"A mingled mass of perfectly legitimate pleasures: the Victorian middle-class and the problem of leisure", *Victorian Studies*, 21, 1977, 26.

[53] Ibid, 26.

[54] Morris, R.J, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850: an analysis', *Historical Journal*, 26, 1983, 95.

[55] Ibid, 115.

[56] Trainor, 'The middle classes', 673-713.

[57] Goldsmith, M and Garrard, J, 'Urban governance: some reflections' in Morris and Trainor, eds., *Urban Governance, Britain and Beyond since 1750*, 16.

[58] Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850: an analysis', 109.

their immediate impact on the urban environment, voluntary associations also acted as a powerful means of unification for its middle-class membership, as Gunn explains:

> Beyond the fact of property ownership, what served to unify the middle-classes above all was culture, conceived from the early nineteenth century as a sphere of consensus and reconciliation. At the art exhibition, the concert hall and the social club, men – and some cases women – could engage in activities that were deemed to transcend the division of sect and party.[59]

During the nineteenth century the middle-classes were often divided by political and religious affiliation, yet voluntary societies acted as neutral territory for interaction, with many organisations banning religious and political discourse. Morris suggests that organisations were a vital agent in class formation in a period when class and other identities were in tension with one another.[60]

In this respect, connections to organised associations not only provided status for middle-class participants but also a sense of collective identity. This identity, and its relationship with the urban place, was notably asserted through occasions of civic pride.[61] In particular, celebratory events allowed middle-class participation in public parades alongside local dignitaries, constructing a strong sense of civic identity.[62] Such events saw the middle-classes staking their claim to a place within the social fabric of the town as voluntary organisations were seen publicly alongside the municipality. Through pageantry and celebration the middle-classes found a public expression for their legitimacy and power. Local government and the associational sphere were seen as one, a physical representation of the identity of the urban environment

As the study of the middle-classes moves into the twentieth century however, interpretations have provided a more controversial account of decline and disinterest. As the rapid process of suburbanisation increased at an unprecedented rate throughout the twentieth century, the notion of a detached middle-class has gained favour. Since the Victorian period the concept of suburbia offered the perfect solution to the problem of declining standards at the urban core; the city would be the place the urban male worked in

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[59]   Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 22.

[60]   Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, 273.

[61]   See Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*.

[62]   Rodger, 'The "common good" and civic promotion: Edinburgh', 144-77. The author uses the arrival of King George V and Queen Alexandra in Edinburgh in 1911 as an example middle class engagement in Scotland at the turn of the twentieth century.

during the day, whilst suburbia offered a degree of detachment that encouraged the middle-class, domestic ideal.[63] By the mid twentieth century the division between work and leisure had become 'not only temporal but spatial', as the lure of suburbia, supported by the rapid increase in public transport and the ownership of motor cars, allowed the middle-classes to commute between city work place and suburban home.[64] Gunn argues that the process of spatial differentiation was ideologically constructed with both sanitary and industrial reformers working on the assumption that the distinction between home and the work place, commercial centre and the residential suburb was part of the rational organisation of urban life.[65] The division of urban space was clearly important to the identity of the middle-classes, with suburbs becoming intrinsically linked with the very notion of middle-class. For example, references to the suburban terrace, villa or mansion were regularly employed to signify 'middle-class.'[66] Ultimately the suburban ideal was the outcome of middle-class cultural ambition, providing privacy and the separation of home and work, a spatial expression of domesticity. [67] Yet, by the twentieth century, middle-class suburbanisation was regarded as the means through which the urban middle-classes had chosen to abandon their responsibilities at the urban core. As early as 1909, it was suggested that the urban middle-classes had completely withdrawn to privatised enclaves in the county and outer suburbs.[68] Historians such as Savage, Garrard, Morris and Thompson have similarly argued that during the twentieth century the urban middle-class were unable to take on leading roles in urban life, as their identity was no longer associated with the urban but rather the

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[63] For a full understanding of the domestic ideal and the 'separate sphere' ideology and its connection to suburbia see Davidoff, L and Hall, C, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London, 2002); Davidoff, L and Hall, C 'The architecture of public life and private life: English middle-class society 1780-1850' in Fraser and Sutcliffe, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History*, 327-48; Davidoff, L 'Mastered for life: servant and wife in Victorian and Edwardian England', *Journal of Social History*, 8, 1974, 404-28; Kerber, L.K, 'Separate spheres, female worlds, woman's place: the rhetoric of women's history', *Journal of American History*, 75, 1988, 9-39; and Vickery, A, 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history', *The Historical Journal*, 36, 1993, 383-414.

[64] Bailey, 'A mingled mass of perfectly legitimate pleasures', 17.

[65] Gunn, 'Class, identity and the urban: the middle class in England', 37.

[66] Ibid, 38. Gunn, S and Bell, R, *Middle Classes, Their Rise and Sprawl* (London, 1996) also provides an excellent account of the middle classes during the twentieth century.

[67] Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns', 404.

[68] See Masterman, *The Condition of England*. Trainor also provides a good introduction to the theory of middle-class detachment in his article 'The decline of British urban governance since 1850: a reassessment' in Morris and Trainor, eds., *Urban Governance, Britain and Beyond since 1750*, 28-46.

suburban.[69] Seemingly the middle-classes had turned their backs on the urban communities they had done so much to create.[70]

Research into the urban elite of the twentieth century however, remains limited and more recent studies by academics such as Barry Doyle have challenged the existing interpretation of detached urban elites by the 1950s. In his study of Norwich between the years 1900 to 1935, Doyle challenges the assumption of withdrawal to a privatised lifestyle, arguing increasing middle-class interest and civic participation. Few historians have extended their analysis beyond the First World War, yet Doyle suggests that by doing so, much regional variation may become apparent. Within Norwich, the urban middle-class did not abandon their responsibilities at the urban core and continued their associations with religious organisations, cultural associations and voluntary charitable groups.[71] Similarly Rubinstein and Trainor suggest that the elites retained a 'strong cultural and educational unity',[72] exuding 'an increasingly secure middle-class identity which had its roots in social activities pursued in homes and clubs as well as in town halls and the board room.'[73] Such conclusions provide an alternative interpretation to the twentieth century experience of the urban middle-classes, emphasising that withdrawal did not always occur. Evidently each town was different, and Smith argues that 'it is necessary that there should be much more detailed inter-actional study on a range of towns and cities which represent as wide a diversity of urban categories as possible.'[74] By examining the associational activity of the twentieth century middle-classes, it is possible to determine whether there was continuity or change in the relationship between the middle-classes and the urban core, and the ways in which they expressed this through voluntary organisations: Were they still exerting their

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[69] For examples see Morris, 'Structure and culture', 395-426; Savage, M, *Social Change and the Middle Classes* (London, 1995); Smith, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', 255-75; Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia*.

[70] Trainor, R, 'Neither metropolitan nor provincial. The inter-war middle class' in Kidd, A and Nicholls, D, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), 203-13.

[71] Doyle, B, 'The structure of elite power in the early twentieth century city: Norwich 1900-35', *Urban History*, 24, 1997, 179-99.

[72] Rubinstein, W.D, 'Britain's elites in the inter-war period 1918-1939' in Kidd and Nicholls, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class?*, 194.

[73] Trainor, 'Neither metropolitan nor provincial. The inter-war middle-class', 205. Also see Jackson, A.A, *The Middle Classes 1900-1950* (Naim, 1991); Jackson, A.A, *Semi-detached London. Suburban Development, Life and Transport* (Oxon, 1991); McKibbin, R, *Classes and Cultures. England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 1998) for additional interpretations of the middle-classes during the twentieth century.

[74] Smith, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', 275.

influences through powerful networks of social interaction in associational communities? Was associational activity still the preferred form of middle-class leisure? And, as Begley's study of Leicester during the period 1870 to 1939 suggests, did pageantry still play an important role in the construction of civic identity?[75] If the urban middle-classes were not in decline by the twentieth century as contemporary research has begun to show, it is important to consider the roles they continued to play in community life post 1950 and the extent to which associational activity remained a dominant force in the construction of middle-class identity.

Civil Society

Academic discourse has shown associational participation to be a fundamental aspect of middle-class identity during the nineteenth century. Can it be argued to be in decline by the mid to late years of the twentieth? Once relocated in suburban enclaves at the edge of the city, diminishing middle-class interest in social networks would have been detrimental to civil society and the stock of social capital produced through civic engagement. Tester refers to civil society as 'this fundamental experiential and relational connection between individuals going about their lives and members' doing what they are told',[76] referring to the differences between isolating oneself from society or participating within a community. Scholars have suggested that in recent years the concepts of civil society, civic engagement and social capital have begun to play an effective role in framing contemporary reconfigurations in local state-society relations.[77] The concepts have become important to our understanding of urban development and social relations and have gained

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[75] Begley, S, 'Voluntary associations and the civic ideal in Leicester, 1870-1939', unpublished Leicester PhD 2009.

[76] Tester, K, *Civil Society* (London, 1992), 5. In his seminal book *Conditions of Liberty* (Middlesex, 1994) Gellner also alluded to the reinvention of civil society in recent decades: 'A new ideal was born, or reborn, in recent decades: civil society. Previously, a person interested in the notion of civil society could be assumed to be a historian of ideas…it seemed distinctly covered with dust…and now, all of a sudden, it has been taken out and thoroughly dusted, and has become a shining emblem', 1.

[77] Mayer, M, 'The onward sweep of social capital: causes and consequences for understanding cities, communities and urban movements', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 27, 2003, 110-32. This article is an interesting example of the ways in which academics review the impact social capital has on our interpretation of the contemporary city.

increasing interest from politicians and urban scholars alike. Yet there is much deviation in the academic interpretation of what constitutes a 'civil society'.[78] For Gellner:

> Civil society is that set of diverse non-governmental institutions which is strong enough to counterbalance the state and, while not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, can nevertheless prevent it from dominating and atomizing the rest of society.[79]

Historically Britain, alongside America,[80] has been regarded as one of the classic heartlands of civil association. Social relations often took place in the associational sphere, with citizens engaging in an array of clubs and societies, only regulated by parliament and common law.[81] In Putnam's conception, following the Tocquvillean school of thought, historical roots and a cultural heritage of urban cooperation are vital to civil society. Yet in his book, *Bowling Alone,* the author recorded a decline in civic engagement in America, concluding there had been a downward trajectory in participation in voluntary organisations since the 1960s. For Putnam, an active civil society was fundamental to a successful democracy as he argued that; 'the norms and networks of civic engagement… powerfully affect the performance of representative governments…..the quality of governance was determined by long standing traditions of civic engagement.[82] Civic engagement is understood as the connections between people and their communities which in turn creates social capital, a term that Mayer describes as 'a mixed concept that implies bringing economic and social resources together and promises gains from embedding economic activities within a historically grown culture of trust.'[83] In Putnam's understanding of the concept of civil society, life is made easier within a community that maintains a substantial stock of social capital as 'networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of

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[78] For an overview of the historical interpretation of civil society see Hall, J and Trentman, F, eds., *Civil Society. A Reader in History, Theory and Global Politics* (Basingstoke, 2005); Harris, ed., *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions*; De Vries, Morton and Morris, eds., *Introduction to Civil Society, Associations and Urban Places.* Within these texts important authors are cited in relation to the definition of civil society, including Ferguson, A, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Edinburgh, 1966); Habermas, J, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Enquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Massachusetts, 1989); Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*; Toqueville, A, *Democracy in America* (London, 1835-40).

[79] Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty*, 1.

[80] See Toqueville, *Democracy in America.*

[81] Harris, J, 'Introduction: civil society in British history: paradigm or peculiarity' in Harris, ed., *Civil society in British History: Ideas, identities and institutions*, 3.

[82] Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital', 66.

[83] Mayer, 'The onward sweep of social capital', 114.

social trust'.[84] Trust is fundamental to the concept of civil society and consequently the maintenance of social order.

As a theoretical concept itself, trust has received much academic attention. As a definition, trust is understood as 'confidence in or reliance on some quality or attribute of a person or thing, or the trust of a statement'.[85] The theories of trust are intrinsically connected to the market economy and the political arena, with those who have learned the value of trust in one area of life being able to make use of trust in other areas, thus 'networks of civic engagement provide templates for subsequent cooperative ventures.'[86] It is also a basic facet of social life without which society could not function. The concept of community depends upon trust, often encouraged through networks of association with organisations, clubs and societies.[87] Fukuyama has argued that 'trust is the result of shared values that allow individuals to subordinate their interests to those of large groups, and that these shared values are the result of historically determined cultural heritage.'[88] In this context organisations can be regarded as the perfect example of the transference of culture, knowledge and heritage. Bruni and Sugden suggest that it is also through organisations that the density of civic engagement is measured, and in each organisation of which a citizen is a member, a person gains benefits by having a reputation of trustworthiness.[89] In this context networks of civic engagement can be regarded as seedbeds of trust.[90] Trust is therefore important and it is through the concept of trust that we are able to understand social capital and its importance to a functioning civil society. If we are to determine the relationship between the middle-classes of the twentieth century and the social networks in which they

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[84]   Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital', 66.

[85]   Good, D, 'Individuals, interpersonal relations and trust', in Gambetta, D, ed., *Trust: Making and Breaking Co-Operative Relations* (Oxford, 1988), 33.

[86]   Bruni, L and Sugden, R, 'Moral canals: trust and social capital in the work of Hume, Smith and Genovesi', *Economics and Philosophy*, 16, 2000, 5.

[87]   Good, 'Individuals, interpersonal relations and trust,' 31-48; Fisman, R and Khanna J, 'Is trust a historical residue? Information flows and trust levels', *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization*, 38, 1999, 79-92; Luhman, N, *Trust and Power* (Chichester, 1973), 4; Mollering, G, 'The nature of trust: from Georg Simmel to a theory of expectation, interpretation and suspension', *Sociology*, 35, 2001, 403-20. These articles provide examples of the type of research available emphasising the importance of trust within society, whilst reviewing and debating the very concept of trust.

[88]   Fukyama, F, cited in Fisman and Khanna, 'Is trust a historical residue?', 80.

[89]   Bruni and Sugden, 'Moral canals: trust and social capital in the work of Hume, Smith and Genovesi', 4.

[90]   Ibid, 6.

engaged, it is vital that we examine them in the context of the trust created through civil society, and the importance of social capital.

Amongst scholars however, social capital and participation is a contentious issue, with increasing emphasis being placed on the theory of declining interest.[91] The growing importance placed on information technology is an example of the type of issues igniting debate in relation to the impact on civic engagement. The new wave of associations, such as internet social networking sites, brings an interesting dynamic to the concept of organisational communities and contribution to social capital. According to Oxendine, Borgida, Sullivan and Jackson: 'Some scholars believe that community electronic networks may fulfil a number of civic goals including community cohesion.'[92] Others are concerned that computer technologies may weaken social ties altogether. Such issues raise interesting questions as to whether contemporary society is less involved in associational life. A thriving civil society is often measured by the levels of associational participation and, in America, it has been suggested that citizens are no longer as connected to their associational roots as previous generations, in turn leading to the decline of civic engagement since the 1960s. Putnam argues that citizens are not as civically minded as those who came before them, particularly the generations that experienced the Great Depression in America and also the Second World War.[93] However, declining civil society is a contestable issue. Some academics have challenged Putnam's methodology, suggesting his baseline does not consider the generation of men and women that experienced the unusual phenomenon of four years of national military mobilisation (the generation born between the years 1910 and 1940) and how this would have affected any comparative analysis. Such arguments suggest that a baseline taken from the 1920s may have produced a different image in relation to decline.[94] These contentions raise interesting questions for the British experience. If the urban middle-classes had become detached physically and socially in the years after 1950, did participation

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[91]   Flyvbjerg, B, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?' *The British Journal of Sociology,* 49, 210-33 and Kumar, K, 'Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term', *British Journal of Sociology*, 44, 1993, 375-95, both provide an interesting overview of the changing nature of civil society and its place in contemporary society.

[92]   Oxendine, A, Borgida, E, Sullivan J.L and Jackson M.S, 'The importance of trust and community in developing and maintaining a community electronic network', *Human Computer Studies,* 58, 2003, 673.

[93]   Rotolo, T and Wilson, J, 'What happened to the "Long Civic Generation"? Explaining cohort differences in volunteerism' *Social Forces,* 82, 2004, 1091-1121. Rotolo and Wilson use Putnam's argument at the beginning of their essay on the changing nature of volunteer activity.

[94]   Schudson, M, 'What if civic life didn't die?' in Hall and Trentman, eds., *Civil Society: A Reader in History*, 231-34, argues against Putnam's use of a base line taken form the 1940s and 1950s.

in civic engagement stagnate in the post war era and beyond? Were 'suburbans' no longer contributing to the stock of social capital at the urban core? And were they no longer part of civil society?

According to Babachuk and Booth, affiliation is directly related to social class,[95] with little interaction between differing class organisations. As previously discussed, middle-class associations were the leading groups in the urban environment during the nineteenth century, controlled substantially by an urban elite that played a significant role in urban governance. The city itself was instrumental to the process of civil society, providing the arena and opportunity for engagement, and the middle-classes interacted through active social networks constructed through associational activity.[96] These types of associations were significant as they provided the urban community with 'their greatest school of self government',[97] whilst contributing to the stock of social capital. Social scientists have argued that voluntary associations are crucial to the urban setting as they allow participants to engage in expressive activities and implement special personal interests whilst providing support for individuals.[98] In the nineteenth century the middle-classes used the associational sphere to influence urban governance, but was this still the case post 1950? Were they still civically engaged, not only through municipal control but also social networks that contributed to the stock of social capital? Did the very nature of participation change during the turbulent years of the post war era? And did civil society itself change or evolve in the context of rapid urban development and expansion?

When examining the British experience of associational activity and levels of participation during the twentieth century, it is important to consider the elements potentially affecting levels of involvement. Previous studies have stressed the importance of life cycles and the commitment associated with different stages of one's life. For example, according to Babachuk and Booth individuals of an older age range are more likely to be affiliated to clubs and societies than younger generations.[99] Once again however, such

[95]   Babachuk, N and Booth, A, 'Voluntary association membership: a longitudinal analysis', *American Sociological Review,* 34, 1969, 32.

[96]   Colls, R and Rodger, R, 'Civil society and British cities' in Colls and Rodger, eds., *Cities of Ideas. Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain,* 10.

[97]   Gamm, G and Putnam R, 'The growth of voluntary associations in America, 1840-1940', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 29, 1999, 511.

[98]   Babachuk and Booth, 'Voluntary association membership: a longitudinal analysis', 44.

[99]   Ibid, 44.

research draws heavily on the American experience. Studies have also examined the changing experiences of women during the twentieth century, in particular their increasing commitments to roles outside the domestic environment, specifically paid employment. During the period 1950 to 2005, women not only saw many barriers to employment removed but also the opportunity to build careers that could offer an alternative to marriage and family life.[100] Such issues have often been regarded as detrimental to a woman's inclination to engage in associational activity. Similarly the declining influence of religion in an increasingly secular society has arguably affected levels of associational participation in religious based organisations.[101] It is important to note however, that not all scholars subscribe to theories of decline in associational activity. Rotolo, for example, suggests that whilst the age range of those civically engaged is generally older, second generations of families were more civically engaged than their parents had been.[102] Even Putnam acknowledges in his research with Gamm that the experience of growth and decline in voluntary association is cyclical. He also argues that within America there is 'longer lasting associational growth in smaller towns and cities', asserting that 'associationalism was strongest in smaller cities and towns', raising interesting possibilities for comparative analysis.[103] Overall it is evident that current research raises interesting issues with regards to civil society, participation and associational activity. Organisations are still perceived by many to be a vital part of the fabric of contemporary society, with local and national organisations playing a crucial role as mediator between the citizen and the state. Whilst much research exists for the American experience post 1950, it is evident that Britain remains neglected, specifically in relation to middle-class organisations.

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[100] For a sample of articles and texts relating to the social progression of women during the twentieth century please see Halsey, A.H, ed., *British Social Trends since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain* (London, 1988); Lewis, J, *Women in Britain since 1945: Women, Family, Work and the State in Post-War Years* (Oxford, 1992); Little, J, Peake, L and Richardson, P, *Women in Cities. Gender and the Urban Environment* (Basingstoke, 1988); Sharpe, P, 'Continuity and change: women's history and economic history in Britain', *The Economic History Review,* 48, 1995, 353-69; Smith, H.L, 'The womanpower problem during the second world war', *The Historical Journal,* 27, 1984, 925-45; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, I, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain* (Essex, 2001).

[101] See Yeo, S, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (London, 1976).

[102] Rotolo and Wilson, 'What happened to the "Long Civic Generation"?, 82.

[103] Gamm and Putnam, 'The growth of voluntary associations in America, 1840-1940', 539.

Context

The issue of suburbanisation, the separation of the urban middle-classes from the urban core and the decline of civil society must all be viewed in the context of social change in the twentieth century. Historically a contentious era of British history, the years 1950 to 2005 were characterised by fundamental structural changes, identifiable as: the increasing role of government and state welfarism, declining class barriers, the shifting balance of gender relations and the increasing ethnic diversity of the population.

The overall success of the post-war period economically, politically and culturally remains widely debated by historians, experiencing episodes of both boom and decline. In 1950 Britain was in search of a 'New Jerusalem',[104] an idealistic notion that reflected the country's desire for a nation that befitted the sacrifices made during the Second World War. Porter suggests that by the mid 1950s unemployment stood at only 1 percent, and as state welfarism expanded, most people were better housed and fed than just four years previously.[105] As Macmillan himself declared in 1957, many people in Britain had 'Never had it so good!'[106] By the 1970s and 1980s however, consecutive Labour and Conservative governments had failed to maintain prosperity, with the loss of Empire and the steady decline of heavy industry all resulting in a growing sense of internal decay and desperation.[107] During the 1970s in particular, the country was beset by economic problems, high inflation, and, most significantly, trade unions acted like 'robber barons, holding the rest of the country to ransom'.[108] By 1978 'the winter of discontent' embodied what had been a difficult period in British history. Yet it is important to consider the social reform that emerged from the post-war period. According to Christopher, the nation experienced dramatic change as the government sought to retreat from the strict social control of the Victorian era,[109] in favour of groundbreaking social legislation that included the expansion of the welfare state, the foundation of the NHS and significant programmes of housing regeneration.[110]

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[104] Porter, D, '"Never-never land": Britain under the conservatives 1951-1964' in Tiratsoo, N, ed., *From Blitz to Blair, A New History of Britain since 1939* (London, 1997), 102.

[105] Porter, '"Never-never land": Britain under the conservatives 1951-1964', 112.

[106] Ibid, 118.

[107] Christopher, D, *British Culture* (London, 1999), 9.

[108] Tiratsoo, N, 'You've never had it so bad? Britain in the 1970s' in Tiratsoo, ed., *From Blitz to Blair*, 163.

[109] Christopher, *British Culture*, 6.

[110] Childs, D, *Britain since 1939. Progress and Decline* (London, 1995), 132.

Evidently Britain was changing and the impact was no more apparent than in the class barriers that had been fundamental to British identity. The middle-class elites that had dominated local governance for over a century were faced with changing legislation that sought to move the deferential role away from the urban elites to the control of central government. The leaders of modern Britain hoped to replace 'charity, dependency, moralism and bureaucratic surveillance of private lives by a new ethic of social citizenship.'[111] According to Harris:

> As democratic rights were extended and public authorities acquired increasingly extensive powers over social and economic affairs the great ramshackle mass of private, pluralistic and voluntary institutions that had constituted the fabric of past societies (were) progressively displaced by a streamlined, simplified, rationalised two way relationship between the individual and the state.[112]

During the 1930s Britain had been governed in terms of social division, but the post-war years arguably provided a new civic morality and a sense of national unity that required a more equal society.[113] Where once the urban middle-classes had dominated the municipal, new successive governments wished to take greater centralised control with greater reform, including dramatic social changes that moved towards the erosion of class barriers. Seemingly, as local and state government took a more assertive role in urban governance, the middle-classes could no longer boast a dominant position at the urban core, but to what extent did they relinquish control completely? And were their carefully constructed networks of association still able to influence localised policy and decision making?

British society however, was not only changing in terms of middle-class urban leadership. A more democratic distribution of goods once deemed luxurious, such as automobiles, testified to the shifting barriers of a once rigid social system. Additionally, the nation appeared to embrace a growing sense of working-class culture that was exemplified through the popularity of rock and roll music and mass spectator sports such as football. In this respect the country was rejecting the traditional cultural interests of the middle-classes. For many the era marked a coming of age for a new generation that was not prepared to be

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[111] Harris, J, 'Contract and citizenship', in Marquand, D and Seldon, A, eds., *The Ideas that Shaped Post War Britain* (London, 1998), 122.

[112] Harris, J, 'Society and the state in twentieth century Britain' in Thompson, ed., *Cambridge Social History of Britain, Volume III,* 63.

[113] O 'Morgan, K, *The Peoples Peace. British History 1945-1990* (Oxford, 1990), 3 and 17.

quite as deferential as their parents had been.[114] Symbolic British institutions, particularly those built around deferential attitudes, experienced a growing sense of adversity. Despite renewed interest around both the Queen's Coronation in 1953 and her subsequent Silver Jubilee in 1976, the royal family came under intense criticism and a decline in public favour during the years 1950 to 1980. Equally, religious practices and beliefs faltered, with a growing sense of secularisation weakening the influence of the church and the congregational community tie.[115] Deferential attitudes towards authoritative institutions that had been so significant to the success of nineteenth century, and associational activity, were seemingly in decline as Britain modernised its attitudes and its ability to openly question certain traditions.

The country was arguably experiencing a social world turned upside down.[116] Academics have suggested that the social changes of the latter years of the twentieth century may also have marked a decline in social commitment, as citizens withdrew towards a more privatised lifestyle, no longer centred on weekly congregations at the local church. Similarly, leisure activities became increasingly home orientated. McGuigan suggests that the popularity of representations of communities in urban settings on popular television shows, such as *Coronation Street*, acted as compensation for the lack of neighbourliness which existed in the post-war years of the 1950s, 60s and 70s. For him, the trend towards increasing home-based leisure consumption was not just a British phenomenon, but rather an international one.[117] Furthermore, he suggests that the years following 1950 brought a decline in the role of municipal culture, as shopping centres and cinemas replaced the importance of civic halls, gardens and theatres. Such arguments reflect the academic assumption that class based forms of social and political consciousness gave way to values of individualism and the search for social and personal satisfaction.[118] How would this affect the historic organisations and associations that had once dominated the urban core? Such changes were dramatically altering the cultural heritage of the country, a heritage that the urban middle-classes had once helped to construct; would this impact on the ways in which

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[114]   Childs, D, *Britain since 1939*, 127.

[115]   Both the decline of the church and the monarchy are addressed in Christopher, *British Culture*, 7; Marwick, A, 'Social trends, structures, values and behaviour' in Hollowell, J, ed., *Britain since 1945* (Oxford, 2003), 249; Porter, "Never-never land": Britain under the conservatives 1951-1964', 111.

[116]   O'Morgan, K, 'The Wilson years: 1964-1970' in Tiratsoo, ed., *From Blitz to Blair*, 133.

[117]   McGuigan, J, 'Cultural change' in Hollowell ,ed., *Britain since 1945,* 2.

[118]   Ibid.

they contributed to the urban environment? Once regarded as the leaders of contemporary society, would their associational activities have any bearing on the new wave of working-class culture that was seemingly dominating the urban environment?

In terms of social change, the post-war years were also significant in relation to the emancipation of women and the changing demographic make up of the nation. The so called 'cultural revolution' was arguably a fundamental result of the 'swinging 60s'. Sexual liberation was seen more publicly than ever, not only through the behaviour of the young, but incidences such as the legalisation of homosexuality, the Profumo scandal of 1963, and the court case centring around D.H. Lawrence's novel 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'. Many other aspects impacted on the cultural and domestic life of the British citizen during this period, including the changing roles and representation of women.

According to Glynn, from 1945 the pressures placed on women intensified as the option to raise a family competed with the potential for career development. Women were expected to continue their duties as a female, including marriage, motherhood and domestic responsibilities, but in addition, from 1950 to 1980 the total UK work force grew by nearly 3 million, almost exactly the increase of part-time female employment over the same period.[119] Women had begun to carve out careers. For centuries the role of women had been defined by the family unit and domesticity. Whilst the male was regarded as the provider, the female position within society was understood as the carer. According to Gunn, when it came to civic space during the nineteenth century, for the urban middle-classes in particular, it was a male arena. Women's roles were confined to spectating, organising private parties and supervising charitable functions.[120] Trainor also suggests that the concept of 'separate spheres' for men and women had wide implications, restricting women to auxiliary roles on the public stage, with special responsibilities for home and family life, as well as the social activities and reputation of the whole family.[121] Suburbia provided the perfect habitat for the 'separate sphere' concept, and it has often been suggested that women were isolated in the detached enclaves of suburban living, themselves on the fringe of society.

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[119]   Glynn, S and Booth, A, *Modern Britain – An Economic and Social History* (London, 1996), 183.

[120]   Gunn, S, 'Ritual and civic culture in the English industrial city, c. 1835-1914' in Morris and Trainor, eds., *Urban Governance, Britain and Beyond since 1750*, 172.

[121]   See Trainor, 'The middle classes,' 673-713. In addition Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class,* provides an excellent insight into the 'separate sphere' concept.

For working-class women, whilst employment had often been a necessity, it was limited to positions in factories, such as textile manufacturing, or domestic service. By the twentieth century however, women's roles within society were adapting and changing. Both World War One and World War Two provided the opportunity for women of all social backgrounds to engage in full time employment on a global stage.[122] By the 1960s gender relations were shifting. The opportunity for women to engage in higher education allowed entry into an increasing number of previously exclusive professions. Furthermore, government reform such as the Abortion Act of 1967, Divorce reform in 1969 and the wider availability of contraception all moved to alleviate the restraints placed upon women.[123] Fundamental changes appeared to be occurring but to what extent did they alter the position of middle-class women during the period 1950 to 2005? In terms of civil society, were women more civically engaged with the urban core? In the Victorian period of rapid growth in associational activity, women were predominantly excluded from voluntary societies, charities and literary associations, and when finally accepted it was often in subordinate and passive roles.[124] Did their position and influence alter amidst the new wave of shifting gender relations? And were women able to become more actively involved in the social networks that once wielded so much power and influence?

The shifting demographic profile of Britain during the years 1950 to 2005 is a final example of the fundamental structural changes occurring during the twentieth century. In the 1950s, Britain's economic growth and demand for housing regeneration created a high demand for manual labour in low paid areas of work. A significant labour shortage however, initiated the flow of immigration to the UK. During the post-war period Britain received over one million New Commonwealth citizens from the West Indies, South Asia

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[122] See McCloskey, D, 'Paid work' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, 165-82.

[123] For references regarding the shifting nature of gender relations see Francis, M, 'Leisure and popular culture' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, 229-47; Halsey, ed., *British Social Trends since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain*; Holden, K, 'Family, caring and unpaid work' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, 134-48, Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945*; Smith, H.L, 'The women's movement – politics and citizenship, 1969-2000' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, 278-91; Zweiniger-Bargielowska, I, 'Housewifery' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, 149-64.

[124] Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns', 403.

and East Africa.[125] As the ethnic minority population rose from 60,000 in 1951 to 336,000 in 1961, immigrants settled into ghetto areas of inner cities in unplanned and uncontrolled ways.[126] Industrially Britain fell down the world league tables, causing the urban cores of large British cities to collapse, leaving hollow profiles in the population densities of inner cities. Into these areas moved post-war immigrants. Simultaneously the populations from the decreasing conurbations removed themselves to suburban areas or smaller, rapidly growing urban centres, ultimately creating a process of dissimilation.[127] Despite reform from both Labour and Conservative governments respectively, including the 1968 Race Relations Act and the 1971 Immigration Act, legislation fell short with local and central government failing to encourage assimilation. Urban areas were often socially and racially segregated, creating tensions that were famously exemplified by events such as the 1958 Notting Hill riots and also Enoch Powell's disturbing 'Rivers of blood speech' in 1968. Clearly the demographic shape of modern Britain altered dramatically during the years 1950 to 2005 but to what extent did this affect civil society? Did voluntary organisations encourage social cohesion through associational communities? How did organisations promote the participation of ethnic minority groups, if at all? In a period of radical social change, was their continuity in civil society? Did associational life have a role to play in contemporary society? Did the urban middle-classes truly relinquish their parochial roles within the urban centre, in order to retreat into their suburban enclaves? Or were they still participating in the cultural influences that had dominated the associational sphere of the nineteenth century?

'Semi-Detached Britain? Social networks in the suburban fringe of Loughborough and Leicester, 1950-2005' seeks to address such questions, considering the extent to which residents of suburban areas in two East Midland locations were separated from their urban centres between the years 1950 to 2005. Using the concept of civil society as a theoretical framework, the research analyses the participation of suburban residents in associational communities by firstly examining the residential patterns of members and then considering the extent and validity of associational activity in the urban environment. The thesis explores the various types of organisations available to the contemporary urban citizen, focusing on the structure, aims and objectives of voluntary associations in the twentieth century.

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125 Peach, C, Robinson, V, Maxted, J and Chance, J, 'Immigration and ethnicity' in Halsey, *British Social Trends since 1900*, 561-615.

126 O'Morgan, 'The Wilson years: 1964-1970', 152.

127 Peach, Robinson, Maxted and Chance, 'Immigration and ethnicity', 562.

Furthermore, the relationships between associational activity and local government are considered in order to evaluate the notion that the urban middle-classes relinquished power after the 1920s and 30s. By analysing the extent of associational participation in urban affairs the thesis argues against these depictions, revealing the extent of continued municipal influence by voluntary organisations and thus their suburban membership.

Chapter Two, Location, Location, Location: Geographical Mapping of Membership introduces the reader to the methodological approach of the thesis. The initial lack of available archival material for the study led to the development of a combined research methodology that resulted in the analysis of 30 organisations in Leicester and Loughborough and the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative data. In addition, the section examines the geographical residence of associational members. By plotting addresses obtained from private collections of minute books, programmes, annual reports and transaction papers, geo-coded membership records are used to provide a visual record of suburban participation, exemplifying the extent of suburban civic engagement after 1950.

Chapter Three, 'Active Citizenship: Defining Associational Culture, 1950-2005', moves beyond the geographical location of members to an in depth analysis of the 30 organisations under review. The chapter provides a definitional account of the various organisations, sub-dividing the associations into four clear categories: *Hobby* based clubs and societies, *Community and Interest Related Organisations, Philanthropic Organisations* and *Council Affiliated Organisations.* Furthermore, by examining the structural composition that maintains subscriber democracies and the sense of identity constructed through communities of interest, the section considers elements of continuity in associational activity. Such findings emphasise the longevity of associational culture in modern Britain whilst also acknowledging the impact of social change on the role of voluntary activity and civil society.

Chapter Four, 'Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust? continues the study by exploring the connection between suburbia and civil society post 1950, examining the extent to which the 30 associations, and thus their suburban membership, were civically engaged and contributing to the stock of social capital in their local towns and cities. The chapter observes the ways in which voluntary activity created associational communities, developing networks of social interaction that supplied an alternative to neighbourhood as an organisational basis for identity and interaction. Additionally, cultural contributions and philanthropic activity will be used to assess both middle-class participation during the latter

years of the twentieth century and how this can be interpreted as contributing to an active civil society.

Chapter Five, 'Networks: The Power of Collaborative Action', considers the relationship between voluntary activity and the municipality. What role did the associational sphere adopt during a period of increasing state welfarism? How much control of the urban environment, if any, did organisations maintain? And how did they interact with the local government? Focusing on relations based around associational activity, intricate networks of communication between various organisations and the municipality become evident. Central to this relationship were *Council Affiliated Organisations*, local community associations often acting in the role as mediator between the citizen and the state, the very definition of civil society. In this respect, voluntary activity between the years 1950 to 2005 can be seen to influence the urban environment, with the 'suburbans' maintaining a degree of power, exercised through committee rule in the associational sphere.

Chapter Six, 'Civil Society: The World of the White, Middle-Class Male?' examines the impact of social change on the nature of associational activity during the twentieth century, specifically the impact of gender relations and ethnic minority groups on the dynamics of organisational culture. When considering civil society in Britain, the traditional associational member was the white, middle-class male, but was this still the case post 1950? Had increasing female rights and the onset of the feminist movement affected the quantity and position of female members in organisations in Leicester and Loughborough? And had the ethnic diversity of twentieth century Britain infiltrated the traditional demographic make-up of the associational sphere? Whilst the research directly relates to organisational activity it also provides an insight into contemporary community relations. When we consider civil society, is it a concept that incorporates all facets of the urban environment? Or did the twentieth century town and city operate with many different levels of civil society, with each ethnic minority group involved in their own associational sphere with limited interaction?

Chapter Seven, 'Oadby: Neighbourliness and Associational Participation' provides a case study example of a specific suburban community in Leicester. The Chapter considers the possibility that the growth of associational communities have been to the detriment of 'neighbourliness' and the concept of community based on location. Using the suburb of Oadby as an example, and more specifically the Oadby Community Association during the

1960s, the section explores how twentieth century society has adapted to include both, exemplifying the complexity of the relationship between suburban areas and the urban core and the need for a more generalised account.

Finally Chapter Eight, 'Semi-Detached Britain: A Conclusion' draws together the findings of the study. Considering how the research fits into the wider debate and the potential for further analysis, the chapter will emphasise the need to develop our understanding of middle-class suburbia in Britain. In particular, conclusions highlight the need for longitudinal studies of individual areas alongside more comprehensive regional analysis. Such research would allow the contemporary historian to interpret the variation in suburban participation and engagement that undoubtedly exists in different localities, countering stereotypical depictions of the past and preventing them in the future.

Chapter Two

Location, Location, Location: Geographical Mapping of Membership

> …a homogeneous civilization-detached, self-centred, unostentatious-covering hills along the northern and southern boundaries of the city and spreading their conquests over the quiet fields beyond.[1]

The image of a detached suburban society 'conquering' the rural landscape and dominating the English countryside has long become the standard rhetoric when considering the suburban process. Throughout the nineteenth century the Victorian urban elite sculpted and retained a significant position within the urban hierarchy and for many, the relocation of the middle-classes to the suburban fringe represented a shift in the condition of the country as leaders of the urban core abandoned their roles and responsibilities in towns and cities for the privatised, disinterested lifestyle suburbia offered.

As exemplified in Chapter One however, contemporary historians and social scientists have begun to question this stereotypical depiction of suburbia. As Bourne suggests, for many the simplistic city-suburban dichotomy has become outdated and increasingly unsuited to the complexities of metropolitan life and urban development; after years of relative neglect scholarly attention has begun to refocus on the issue of suburbanisation.[2] Did the middle-classes truly neglect their duties as citizens, abandoning their roles of responsibility and rejecting the associational culture which provided opportunity for collective participation? Prominent in the revision of suburbia is the American experience, with studies questioning the extent of suburban withdrawal and the reality of historical stereotypes. Conclusions have emphasised suburbanisation as a complex process that is more than just the migration of affluent urban dwellers to the periphery of the

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[1] Masterman, C.F.G, *The Condition of England* (London, 1960), 58. The quote relates to Masterman's definition of the middle-class 'suburbans' at the turn of the twentieth century.

[2] Bourne, L.S, 'Reinventing the suburb: old myths and new realities', *Progress and Planning,* 46, 1996, 163.

city.[3] For Corbin Sies, a true understanding of middle-class suburbia must allow the historian to move beyond conventional accounts and examine areas in a cultural context. She argues that the analysis of white, middle-class suburbia generally comes from prescriptive literature, advertising or reformers rhetoric as opposed to actual data collected. Historians need to begin to question not only who lived in a given suburban neighbourhood, how and why it developed, but also how residents experienced life there.[4]

Such interpretations are relevant when analysing the British experience. Whilst much has been written on British suburbanisation in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, analysis into the post-war era remains under researched. Clapson and Whitehand have explored working-class suburbia and suburban morphology respectively,[5] yet the middle-class suburban experience after 1950 remains devoid of analysis, particularly in relation to the social connections between suburbia and the urban core. Did outer fringe suburbs truly detach from established social networks in urban centres? Did residents of middle-class suburbia no longer return to the urban core to participate in the clubs and societies that had sculpted towns and cities during the nineteenth century? Or, as Clapson has agued, had location and neighbourhood become less significant when considering the changing nature of social relations in the twentieth century city?[6]

Chapter Two explores the methodological approach of the thesis, the types of sources and research material examined and the concept of civil society as a theoretical framework for analysis. Furthermore, it develops the study on British middle-class suburbia post 1950 by examining distance in relation to the participation of members. Whilst subsequent chapters will explore associational culture and the extent of civic engagement,

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[3]   For an example of the revision of suburbanisation in America, see the special issue of The *Journal of Urban History,* 27, 2001, 259-377. The issue acts as an introduction to suburbia in the U.S, drawing out important themes specific to the experience of twentieth century suburbanisation. Essays include Harris, R, and Lewis, R, 'The geography of North American cities and suburbs 1900-1950: a new synthesis', 262-92; Gardner, T, 'The slow wave. The changing residential status of cities and suburbs in the United States', 293-312; Corbin Sies, M, 'North American suburbs 1880-1950, cultural and social reconciliations,' 313-46. In addition, Harris, R and Lewis, R, 'How the past matters: North American cities in the twentieth century', *Journal of Urban Affairs,* 20, 159-74, provides an excellent overview of American suburbanisation, using the city of Toronto as a case study example.

[4]   Corbin Sies, 'North American suburbs', 319.

[5]   See Clapson, M, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Post War England* (Manchester, 1998), 156-95; Whitehand, J.W.R, *The Changing Faces of Cities* (Oxford, 1987); Whitehand, J.W.R and Carr, C.M.H, 'Morphological periods, planning and reality: the case of England's inter-war suburbs', *Urban History,* 26, 2, 1999, 230-48; Whitehand, J.W.R and Carr, C.M.H, *Twentieth Century Suburbs. A Morphological Approach* (London, 2001).

[6]   Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs,* 156-95.

this section is concerned with defining our understanding of 'suburbia' and providing the geographical connections between associational membership and the suburbs in Leicester and Loughborough. Through the analysis of residential patterns of membership, the thesis conveys to the reader the various ways in which associations, and thus their suburban membership, were associated with the urban core during the years 1950 to 2005 and how these connections inform and revise the powerful stereotypes that have dominated the historiography of suburbanisation. Such research allows the contemporary historian to consider the British experience in the context of expanding global interest in suburbanisation, acknowledging the call for a fresh look at urban space and a new set of research priorities.[7]

Methodology

The study *Semi-Detached Britain? Social networks in the suburban fringe of Loughborough and Leicester, 1950-2005* seeks to address the complex issues associated with suburbanisation and civil society through a comparative analysis of two locations in the East Midlands. Putnam and Gamm have argued that civil society often flourishes within a smaller urban location, providing the impetus for a comparative analysis of smaller and larger urban environments. With this in mind, the thesis examines the city of Leicester and the smaller locality of Loughborough.[8] These two areas not only provide interesting case study examples in terms of size but also in relation to the distance between the two localities; Loughborough is approximately 12 miles from the city of Leicester, as Figure 2.1 shows:

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[7]   Corbin Sies, 'North American suburbs', 319.

[8]   Putnam, P and Gamm, G 'The growth of voluntary associations in America, 1840-1940', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 29, 1999, 511-57.

Figure 2.1 –Geographical position of Leicester and Loughborough

This geographical proximity raises interesting questions with regard to the stability of associational life and civil society. Is participation in a smaller locality like Loughborough affected by the proximity of a large urban centre like Leicester? Would residents be drawn to the intimacy of a small town or the diversity of a city? And what role would surrounding villages play in both areas?

An examination of the complex social relations between suburbia and the urban centre in both locations will supply the foundations for an understanding of suburban social networks during the mid to late twentieth century. The smaller of the two urban places, Loughborough currently sustains a population of approximately 55,000 inhabitants.[9] Figure 2.2 provides an image of the town and its surrounding areas:

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[9]   http://www.localhistories.org/loughborough.html.

Figure 2.2 – The town of Loughborough
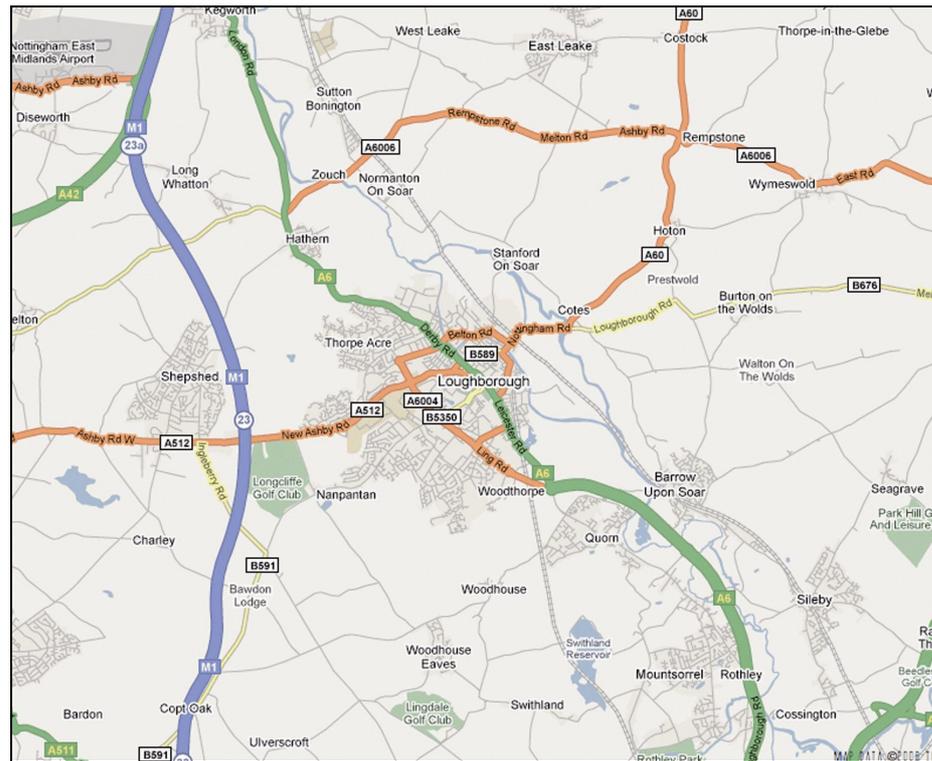
With a traditional industrial base founded on mechanical and electrical engineering, together with hosiery and textiles, chemical and pharmaceutical industries, Loughborough University now also contributes significantly as an employer within the town. Between the years 1974 and 1999 the student population increased from approximately 4,000 to 12,000, constituting nearly a quarter of the overall population. Such expansion allowed the University to increase in both size and stature, contributing directly to the local economy as the spending power of employees and students created and sustained markets for housing, retail, business and transport.[10] The position of the University as one of the leading institutions for the study of sports science has undoubtedly helped shape Loughborough's cultural identity as a sporting town. The involvement of residents in a wide range of sports from bowling to boating has led to an active associational culture traditionally centred on sports; the oldest organisation in the town is Loughborough Boat Club dating back as far as 1881. In terms of governance, the municipal borough of Loughborough was formally recognised in 1888 but reconstructed under the local government act of 1972 when the new borough of Charnwood was created, incorporating Loughborough, the urban district of

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[10]   Wix, D and Keil, I, *Loughborough: Past and Present* (Loughborough, 1988), 89.

Shepshed and the Barrow-upon-Soar rural district. The change in the administration of the town resulted in the division of Loughborough into ten electoral wards, those being; Loughborough Ashby, Loughborough Dishley and Hathern, Loughborough Garendon, Loughborough Hastings, Loughborough Lemyngton, Loughborough Nanpanton, Loughborough Outwoods, Loughborough Shelthorpe, Loughborough Southfields and Loughborough Storer as Figure 2.3 shows:

Figure 2.3 – Division of Loughborough by electoral ward
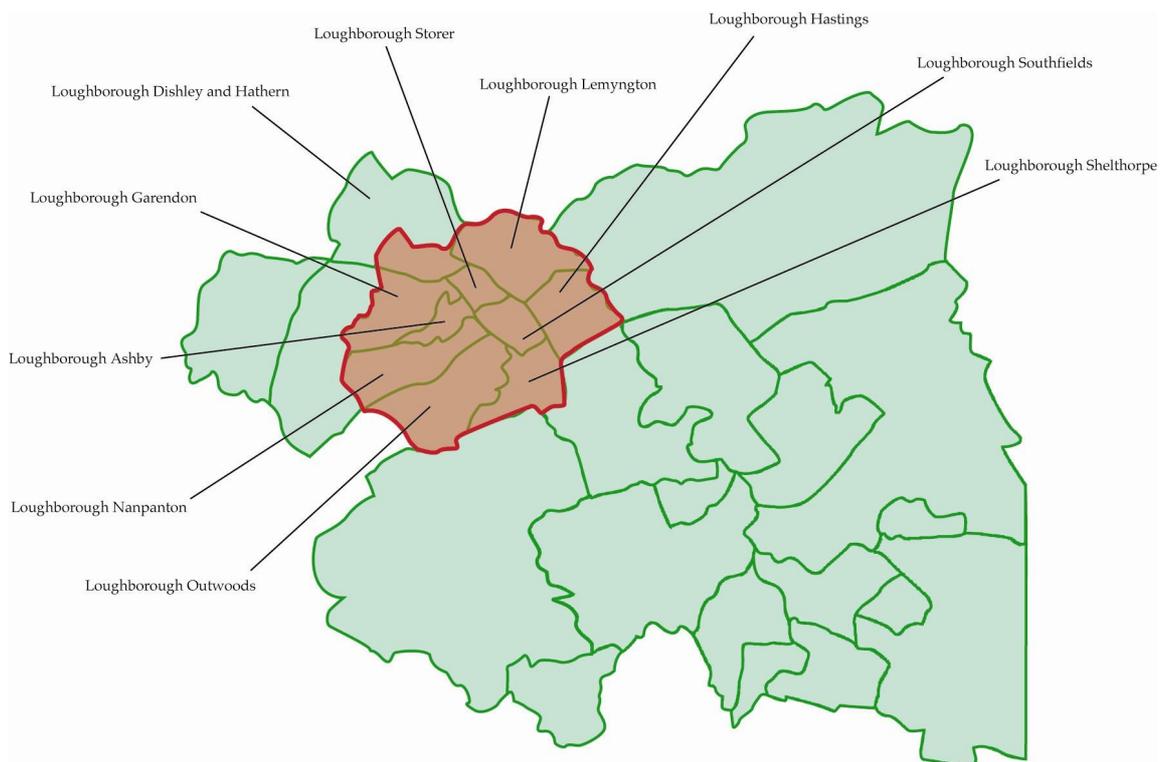
Source: This map originates from two separate images. The green area represents the borough of Charnwood and its electoral wards and was taken from www.leics.gov.uk/charnwood.pdf. The red shaded area outlines the town of Loughborough and was obtained from Charnwood Borough Council directly.

The structure of local power however, was only one area of change occurring during the period 1950 to 2005. According to Wix and Keil, in line with the cultural trends of twentieth century Britain, social customs, attitudes and conditions changed considerably. This included an ageing population, the growth of single parent families and divorced couples alongside a general increase in earnings that expanded a new consumer led society.[11]

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[11] Ibid, 3.

In contrast to Loughborough's populace of 55,000 in 2001, the city of Leicester boasted a population of 279,921 by 2001 (see Figure 2.4).[12]

Figure 2.4 – The city of Leicester
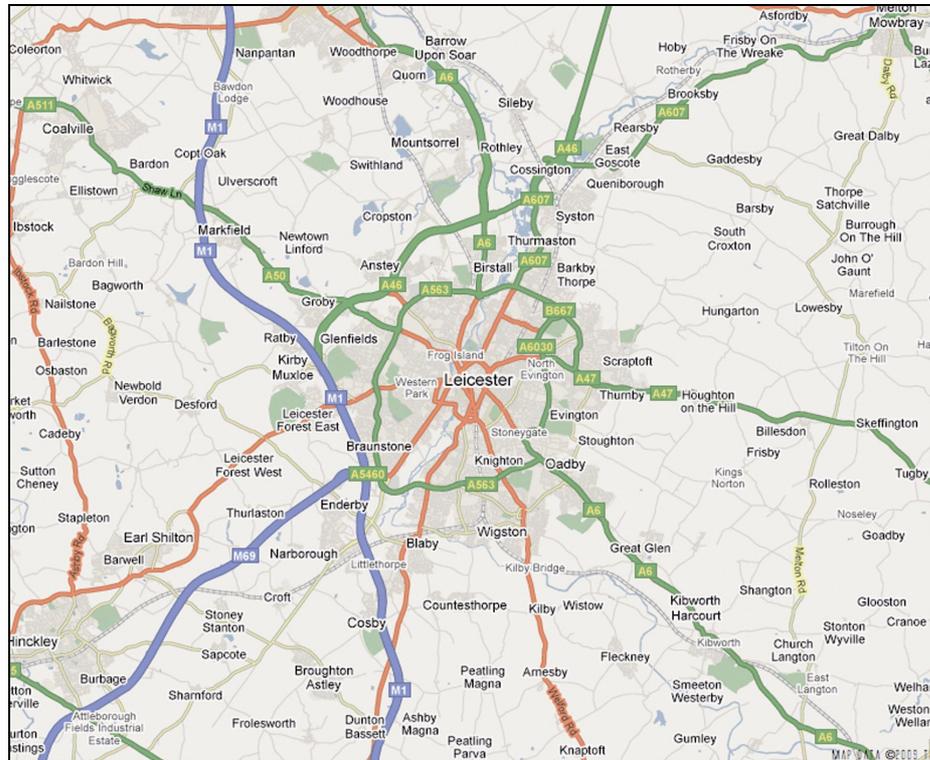
In terms of industry, older areas of manufacturing like hosiery have remained important to the city, whilst new industries such as metal fabrication, electrical and precision engineering, printing and pharmaceuticals have allowed the city to expand its industrial base well into the late twentieth century.[13] For Nash and Reeder, the city has retained a strong cultural identity, nurtured effectively by the 'much more' active role of the City Council in the twentieth century.[14] The growth of transport has encouraged the development of large suburb and satellite towns, and the Second World War brought great changes in social terms for the city, with regards housing and education.[15] For Leicester, the post-war years were an exciting period for its citizens, leading not only to the overall expansion of the city in terms of the physical but also culturally. In more recent years Leicester has become

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[12]   http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pyramids/pages/00fn.asp.

[13]   http://www.localhistories.org/leicester.html.

[14]   Nash, D, and Reeder, D, *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* (Leicester, 1993), XIII.

[15]   Elliot, M, *Leicester: A Pictorial History* (Leicester, 1999), 131.

the focal point for consideration regarding the changing demographic structure of the United Kingdom. According to *The Independent* on-line, the steady influx of ethnic minority groups to the city will ultimately lead to Leicester becoming the first urban centre in Britain with a minority white populace by 2019.[16]

In terms of associational activity, academics have concluded in their study of the city, that whilst the function of organisations in Leicester may have changed during the twentieth century, their participation did not. It has been argued that the mid century expansion of the functions of the state was a major factor in subverting earlier patterns of family and neighbourhood life, 'eroding the intricate subsoil of spontaneous and self regulating social groupings and networks'.[17] Seemingly the Second World War consolidated the strength of the working-classes, forcing the emergence of a state more committed to the development of the standard of lower class living, in turn creating a system that encroached upon organisations and structures maintaining civil society.[18] Others have argued against this depiction, however, claiming the post-war period:

> …swept away some of the more undesirable features of pre-war society (snobbery, unemployment, malnutrition and the grosser forms of social inequality) whilst at the same time consolidating or revising many more positive aspects, such as free institutions, communitarian solidarity, neighbourliness and family life.[19]

According to Nash and Reeder, groups within Leicester became active in new areas of cultural and associational life, based around interests and hobbies,[20] suggesting that the notion of complete disinterest in associational activity did not necessarily fit the behaviour of Leicester citizens.

The history of the associational sphere has linked the middle-classes to varying facets of urban life including local governance, culture and philanthropy, particularly during the Victorian era when they developed intricate networks of communication, disseminating

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[16] http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/leicester-to-be-first-city-where-white-people-are-minority-401968.html.

[17] Nash and Reeder, *Leicester in the Twentieth Century*, 93.

[18] Marwick, A, *British Society since 1945* (London, 2003), 19.

[19] Harris, J, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain, 1945-2001' in Burke, K, ed., *The British Isles since 1945* (Oxford, 2003), 92.

[20] Nash and Reeder, *Leicester in the Twentieth Century*, 158.

power and influence through important organisations and associations in towns and cities.[21] In America, Tocqueville described a similar array of powerful clubs and societies as the dominant feature of a stable democracy, linking participation in associational life to the greater good of society.[22] Such ideas complement the framework of civil society, an elusive concept that has received much revision by theorists and historians in recent years.[23] This thesis takes more recent interpretations of 'civil society' as a general reference point, whilst recognising their variety and acknowledging the historiography of the concept.[24]

Fundamentally civil society is a theory that encompasses all organisations and associations that exist outside of the state,[25] creating a 'mid level of society' and, if successful, linking the citizen to the state.[26] Participation in organisations and associations are central to the concept as the involvement of the individual in various forms of associational life sustains and develops the autonomous social and economic institutions that exist outside the sphere of government.[27] Through networks of social interaction and civic engagement, participation connects citizens to their communities, developing bonds of trust and creating social capital. Social capital is understood as a mixed concept that brings together economic and social resources. Gains within society are to be made by encouraging economic activities

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[21] For examples see Gunn, S, 'Class identity and the urban: the middle-class in England 1800-1950', *Urban History*, 31, 2004, 1-19; Gunn, S, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2008*); Morris R.J 'Middle class and British towns and cities of the industrial revolution, 1780-1870,' in Fraser, D and Sutcliffe, A, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983), 286-305; Morris, R.J, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850: an analysis', *Historical Journal,* 26, 1983, 95-118; Morris, R.J and Rodger, R, eds., *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History* (London, 1993); Trainor, R, 'Urban elites in Victorian Britain', *Urban History Yearbook,* 12, 1985, 1-17.

[22] Tocqueville, A, *Democracy in America, Volume II* (London, 1835).

[23] See Kumar, K, 'Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term', *British Journal of Sociology*, 44, 1993, 375-95.

[24] For an overview of past and contemporary debates surrounding civil society; Hall, J.A and Trentman, F, eds., *Civil Society: A Reader in History, Theory and Global Politics* (Basingstoke, 2005); Morton, G, De Vries, B and Morris, R.J, eds., *Civil Society, Associations and Urban Places: Class, Nation and Culture in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Aldershot 2006). For an example of this type of methodological approach when using the concept of civil society see Innes, J, 'Central government "interference: changing conceptions, practices and concerns, c 1700-1850' in Harris, J, ed., *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities and Institutions* (Oxford, 2004), 39-60.

[25] Carothers, T and Barndt, W, 'Civil society', *Foreign Policy*, 117, 2000, 19.

[26] Durkheim's reference to a 'mid level' of society is taken from Hall and Trentman, eds., *Civil Society: A Reader in History, Theory and Global Politics*, 16.

[27] Harris, J, 'Introduction: civil society in British history: paradigm or peculiarity' in Harris, ed., *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities and Institutions*, 1.

in communities that boast a historic culture of trust.[28] As suggested in Chapter One, contemporary theorists have argued that communities in general are more successful when blessed with a substantial stock of social capital. Networks of civic engagement can be seen to promote generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust.[29] However, urban degeneration is often attributed to a fundamental breakdown between the citizen and the state. For many sociologists and historians increasing social unrest in large urban conurbations reflects the deterioration in the depth and quality of civil society and a weakening of social capital. Whilst Britain was once regarded as the homeland of associational cultural, the country is no longer perceived as a nation dominated by local clubs and societies, boasting an environment of inclusion and participation. As previously discussed, for many the disintegration of society can be traced back to the nineteenth century when the process of suburbanisation separated and fractured communities. Arguably the middle-classes abandoned their dominant roles in local organisations and associations for a privatised lifestyle in a semi-rural location, ultimately damaging civil society; as recently as 2006 the *Daily Telegraph* suggested that the continued middle-class exodus from inner cities was 'increasing segregation' in a phenomenon not unlike 'white flight' from American cities.[30]

In this respect, civil society is a crucial element in the evaluation of middle-class participation. Using the concept as a theoretical framework for the study, the research considers the elements that construct a successful civil society, for example the store of social capital through regular civic engagement, and how the middle-classes contributed to this. Did they continue to interact with the twentieth century urban environment through cultural and philanthropic activities? Did they interact socially, constructing a collective identity through associational life? In what ways did middle-class organisations, clubs and societies engender notions of community through associational activity? And how do these contemporary notions of community affect our understanding of civil society? Using the concept as a theoretical basis for analysis, the study is concerned with re-evaluating the

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[28] Mayer, M, 'The onward sweep of social capital: causes and consequences for understanding cities, communities and urban movements', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 27, 2003, 114.

[29] Putnam, R, 'Bowling alone: Americas declining social capital', *Journal of Democracy,* 6, 1995, 67.

[30] An article in *The Daily Telegraph,* 28th November 2006, suggested the process of middle-class suburbanisation in Britain was threatening race relations. The article also argued that the middle class exodus was potentially damaging 30 years of progress that has seen Britain described as the best country in Europe for ethnic minorities. For an insight into the concept of 'white flight' see Jackson, K.T, *Crabgrass Frontiers: The Suburbanization of the United States* (Oxford, 1985).

notion that the urban middle-classes relinquished power after the 1920s and 1930s, abandoning their interest in the networks of voluntary societies that had dominated the urban environment. By analysing the extent of associational participation in urban affairs it will be argued that the strong municipal interest of the middle-classes continued to be expressed through voluntary organisations. Local clubs and societies not only worked alongside each other in the creation of networks of power and influence but engaged successfully with local government on matters of importance, creating social capital and stimulating civil society in two East Midland locations.

In order to examine middle-class participation in civil society, a collection of primary sources were obtained from local clubs, societies and voluntary organisations. Lack of available archive material however, led to the development of a combined research methodology for the retrieval of qualitative and quantitative data in Loughborough and Leicester. The analysis of local clubs and societies would provide the basis for examination but few organisations deposited relevant material in the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR). Additionally, research required the residential location of members in order to connect suburban membership with associational participation. In the instances where organisations had deposited minute books and annual reports, none contained residential membership records beyond 1980. With these objectives in mind and, in order to include as many organisations as possible within the study, a questionnaire was developed with the assumption that a wide spectrum of clubs and societies would be questioned about contemporary associational life, with a representative sample then to be chosen for further analysis. A list of organisations in Leicester and the borough of Charnwood (formally the borough of Loughborough) were obtained from the Leicestershire County Council Infolinx website, a community information site that covers Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. The website provides a database of local organisations, clubs, societies, organisations and self-help groups based in the region with information collected from numerous sources including members of the public, commercial directories and Council departments.[31] Initial questionnaires were distributed in Leicester and Charnwood, although respondents considered for further analysis were only chosen from organisations based in either Leicester or Loughborough. In total, approximately 800 questionnaires were

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[31]   http://www.infolinx.org/infolinx/infolinx.infolinx_xml.search.

distributed; 300 in the city of Leicester and 500 in the borough of Charnwood, from which the response rate was over 53 percent, 22 percent of which were viable for further research.

Whilst the data received from the returned questionnaires was predominantly used to establish viable organisations for further analysis, the results also provide an initial insight into the types of organisations functioning in contemporary society. Despite the belief that Britain is no longer a nation of joiners with a declining sphere of civil society originating from the 'omni-competent state' after 1950,[32] the Leicestershire County Council infolinx website revealed nearly 2000 organisations in Charnwood and Leicester alone during 2006. In America, Putnam has suggested that associational activity has been in decline since the 1960s, yet scholars such as Schudson have contested elements of Putnam's argument, specifically his use of a baseline that incorporated the unusual phenomenon of four years of national military mobilisation.[33] Whilst such issues are contentious, it is evident from the Leicester and Charnwood experience that associational activity was still flourishing in parts of Britain by the twenty-first century. This supports suggestions highlighted in *The Guardian* in 2006 that the average Briton was steadily increasing their affiliation to numerous types of organisations. Whilst the poll considered membership to include store cards and gym membership, it also emphasised that 57 percent belonged to a community group of some kind.[34]

Of the questionnaires returned in this study, organisations ranged from sporting, musical and social to political and community based associations. In the borough of Charnwood and the city of Leicester, organisations were predominantly founded during the years 1981 to 2006, exemplifying how associational life flourished during the twentieth century as Figure 2.5 reflects. When analysing the data however, it is important to consider that responses only represent those organisations that were still functioning in 2006. Comparatively the two locations are similar, although the number of organisations founded in Charnwood steadily increases in each bracket, whilst in Leicester the years 1900 to 1949 reflect a small decrease:

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[32] Harris, J, 'From Richard Hooker to Harold Laski: changing perceptions of civil society in British political thought, late sixteenth to early twentieth centuries' in Harris, ed., *Civil Society in British History*, 34.

[33] Schudson, M, 'What if civic life didn't die?' in Hall and Trentman, eds., *Civil Society: A Reader in History*, 231-34, argues against Putnam's use of a base line taken form the 1940s and 1950s.

[34] *The Guardian*, 7th November 2006.

Figure 2.5 – Number of organisations by year founded, the city of Leicester and the borough of Charnwood
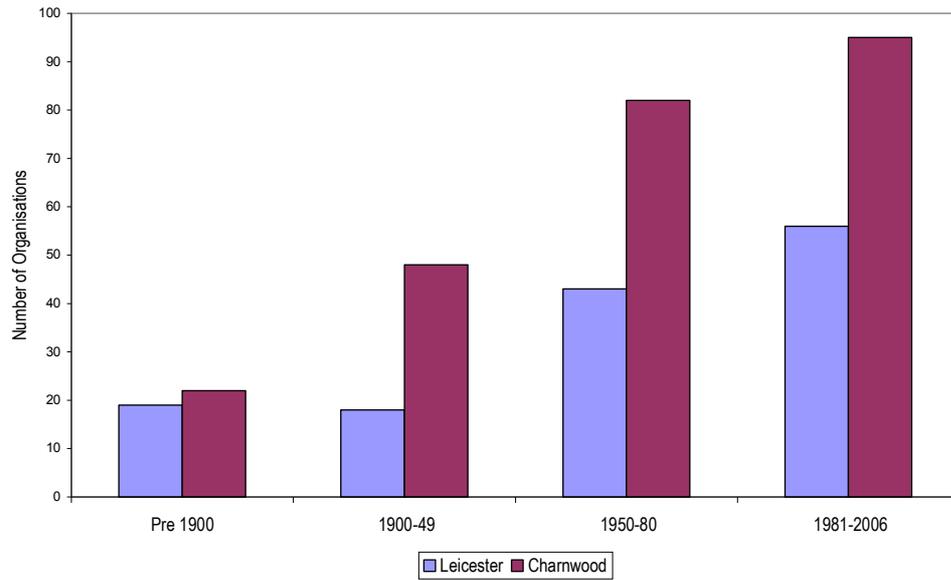
According to Rotolo an individual's position in the family life cycle will affect his or her involvement in voluntary associations, with participation increasing until an individual reaches between the ages of 35 and 50 and then decreasing as the individual continues to age.[35] The Charnwood and Leicester examples however, provide an interesting contrast to Rotolos' understanding. In both cases the most frequent age range is between 51 to 65 years, the least being the 19 to 35 year olds as Figure 2.6 shows:

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[35] Rotolo, T, 'A time to join, a time to quit: the influence of life cycle transitions on voluntary associations membership', *Social Forces,* 78, 2000, 1133-1161.

Figure 2.6 – Number of organisations by age range, the city of Leicester and the borough of Charnwood
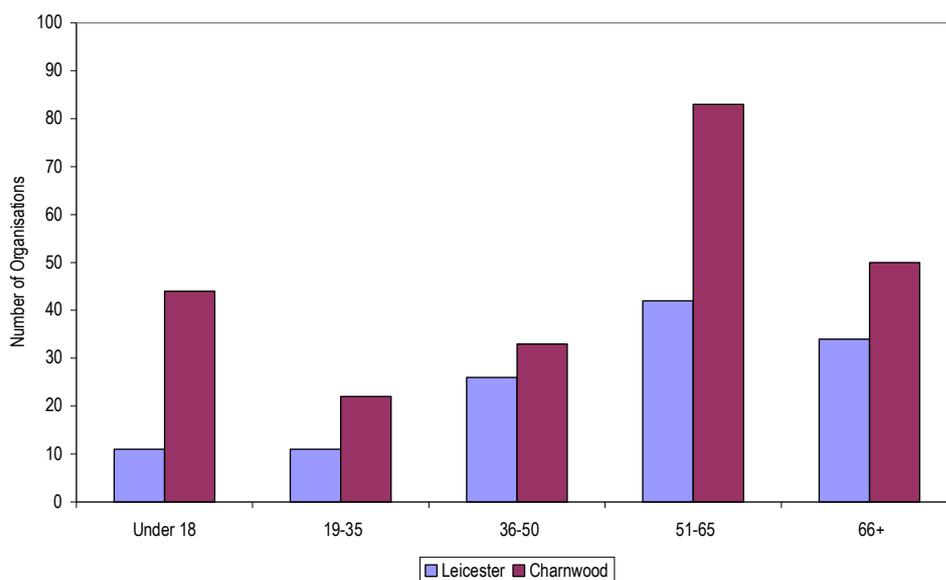
In both cases the over 66 age range represents the second highest age bracket, contrasting significantly with Rotolo's hypothesis, although more in line with the stereotypical depiction of associational activity dominated by members reaching retirement age. In the case of Charnwood however, it is also interesting to note the high number of members in the under 18 age range, suggesting that participation is not only limited to the elderly. Contextually however, this is less surprising when we consider the reputation of Loughborough as a university town, more likely to encourage the participants of a younger age bracket. [36]

Such findings begin to construct an identity for associational life in Leicester and Charnwood during the twenty-first century. Yet to understand the social networks constructed through organisational activity, a greater depth of empirical data was needed to clarify the relationship between civil society, associational life and the behaviour of the 'suburbans'. Based on specialist statistical advice, a sample of 30 organisations was identified to represent the overall spread of respondents in the questionnaires. The thesis would seek to evaluate specific social and cultural trends related to the context of the period

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[36] See Wix and Keil, *Loughborough Past and Present* and Wix, D and Keil, I, *Charnwood's Silver Jubilee. How technical, social and environmental changes have influenced the Borough of Charnwood's development from 1974 -1999* (Loughborough, 2002).

1950 to 2005, thus the sample included gender specific associations and organisations connected to ethnic minority communities. For example, two types of ethnically based associations were analysed: organisations that catered specifically for ethnic minority groups and voluntary societies that worked within the community to support minority groups. Additionally, oral interviews were used with individual organisations to assess the extent of participation and the inclusion of minority members in associational life and thus by extension the process of civil society. Furthermore, gender dynamics were an additional consideration in the thesis, particularly in the context of social change during the period 1950 to 2000. With this in mind the sample included gender specific associations in conjunction with organisations that adopted a mixed sex policy.

In total 18 organisations were analysed in Leicester and 12 in Loughborough. In order to obtain relevant qualitative material, the project moved forward through meetings with representatives from each organisation and several in-depth interviews with key association members, the overall result being a collection of private, previously unseen, qualitative and quantitative archival material that included minute books, programmes, annual reports and a series of oral accounts. Additionally, membership lists were plotted on maps using a geo-coding process.[37] This innovative method produced a collection of maps that provide a spatial representation of the residential distribution of members. The maps themselves account for 20 of the 30 organisations as membership details were only plotted for associations that kept residential records. In total 3310 addresses were plotted in Leicester for the period 1950 to 2005 and 1413 in Loughborough. The data extracted from the geo-coding process allowed for the analysis of the average distance travelled by members, collectively and also by organisation. Such data supports the visual analysis of the mapping. In order to use the most representative average, data sets were comprised using variations in the figures. For example, when analysing membership lists it is important to consider that not all members were active members, particularly those that subscribed to the organisation but lived a considerable distance from the city or town in which the association was based. This is exemplified by the membership lists of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society which included subscription from members residentially located in Australia. In terms of the average distance, the inclusion of these figures could adversely affect the numbers, thus distinct data sets were compiled; those that included larger

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[37]   Geo-referencing/geo-coding is a process which allows the collection of data compiled in an excel file to be plotted on to appropriate maps via the URL link *www.batchgeocode.co.uk*.

distances and those that omitted distances over 50 miles. This distance was chosen as a realistic commute for members.

Certain organisations, in particular the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society and the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society, also provided chronological records over the years 1950 to 2005, whilst others clubs and societies could only provide surviving records for one year or a subscriber list that incorporated an amalgamation of years.[38] Therefore, whilst suburban locations can be identified from the geo-coded data, it is important to note that the findings of this research provide a sample of years for consideration. Furthermore, the focus of this study is middle-class organisations and suburbs and their connection with civil society. This however, does not discount the involvement of working-class associations in civil society, instead acknowledging such participation but choosing to address middle-class organisations in order to develop analysis. When considering the analysis of suburbia, scholars have called for a wider understanding of the 'flavour' of cultural life and the extent of community interaction. It has been suggested that such results be obtained from 'records generated by voluntary organisations, clubs, churches or officialdom; local newspapers, photographs, scrapbooks and memoirs; local histories; or oral histories.'[39] Using membership and subscription lists in conjunction with associational records, the thesis begins to construct the 'flavour' of suburban communities in Leicester and Loughborough, and more specifically the complex relationship between the middle-classes and the urban core after 1950.

Mapping

According to Bourne the term suburbia was originally coined to describe a condition of sub-standardness, of physical and social isolation - in essence a state of suburbanism.[40] Whilst ideologically the notion of suburbia now represents a higher class of living within contemporary society, the connotations of isolation and detachment remain. However, upon consideration of the residential location of members of associational life in Leicester and Loughborough during the years 1950 to 2005, it is overwhelmingly evident that suburban

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[38] For some organisations the introduction of data protection laws in conjunction with the implementation of computer software prevented records for differentiating between decades, i.e. membership lists rolled over each year and when provided for this study were labelled 2005.

[39] Corbin Sies, 'North American suburbs', 320.

[40] Bourne, 'Reinventing the suburbs: old myths and new realities', 163.

residents, alongside participants residing in satellite villages, constituted a significant share of overall membership.

It is first important to clarify our understanding of suburbia in terms of distance. In Chapter One the notion of suburbia, in the context of the thesis, was defined as an area located at the edge of the urban core, a semi-rural location that remains a commutable distance from the urban core and is predominantly inhabited by middle-class residents.[41] Taking into consideration the distance between the core and the edge of the city at north, east, south and westerly points, the average distance of an outer suburb of Leicester is approximately 3 miles. In Loughborough, due to the expansion of the city towards the west, an overall distance is harder to clarify. For the purposes of the study, again considering the average distance from the town centre from north, east, south and westerly points, a distance of approximately 1.5 miles was determined. It is worth noting, however, that in both locations satellite villages accounted for a moderate proportion of total membership and resided outside the distances provided. These areas are significant as they show just how far social networks extended into rural areas. Additionally, despite their location beyond the urban boundary, they also retained many of the characteristics associated with suburban areas. For example, sociologist David C. Thorns suggests that the defining characteristics of suburbia should include its position as intermediate between the urban and rural; a commutable distance from town and city centres; and its dependence on the urban core for goods and services.[42] Each of these characteristics was applicable to the satellite villages considered within this study and have therefore been included within the analysis.[43]

In terms of data collected, the geo-coding process allowed for individual addresses to be measured from a central point in both Leicester and Loughborough. In both locations a monument at the heart of the town and city was chosen; in Leicester the Clock Tower and in Loughborough the Carillon Tower. This data provided a comprehensive list of membership addresses in relation to distance from the urban core, allowing the average distance of

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[41] See Chapter One, Semi-Detached Britain? A Historiography.

[42] David C. Thorns cited in Clapson, M, *Suburban Century. Social Change and Urban Growth in England and the U.S.A* (Oxford, 2003), 2.

[43] It is also worth noting that outlying areas have historically been incorporated in data collection. For an example see Birmingham and Glasgow in Mitchell, B.R and Deane, P, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1971), 24-27. The examples highlight the historical legitimacy of including satellite villages as they provide backward projections from 1911 which illustrate what towns and cities would have been like if their satellite areas, subsequently absorbed within the city boundary, had been taken over at an earlier stage. In this respect the source emphasises the importance attached to satellite areas in terms of their potential for future absorption.

residents in each organisation to be calculated. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 reveal the data for Leicester and Loughborough respectively. The collated information has been divided into four categories: the mean and median average distance for each organisation, taking all addresses into consideration; the average distance for each organisation with distances of over 100 miles omitted; and the average distance for each organisation with distances of over 50 miles omitted. These categories were designed to prevent any large distances from distorting the data. As previously stated, in the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society one member is recorded as living in Australia. Clearly such individuals were only affiliated to the organisation and would not have been able to actively participate in monthly meetings or social gatherings. Thus, 100 miles and 50 miles were chosen as possible distances for those members wishing to commute and involve themselves actively within the associational sphere of both town and city:

Table 2.1 – Average residential distances of members in Leicester

Organisation	Mean Average	Median Average	Mean Average (omitting distances over 100 miles)	Mean Averages (omitting distances over 50 miles)
Women's Luncheon Committee	3.16	1.96	2.79	2.79
St. Martin's Parish Council	2.00	1.63	2.00	2.00
Oadby Community Association	3.64	3.50	3.64	3.64
Society of Artists	10.67	4.05	10.87	9.76
Motor Club	3.73	3.15	3.72	3.72
Bat Group	10.88	8.76	10.87	9.76
Literary and Philosophical Society	4.43	2.05	3.2	3.04
Archaeological and Historical Society	40.37	4.45	9.21	6.29
Bradgate Twinning Association	4.02	3.85	4.02	4.06
Weighted Average	17.61		5.66	4.45

Source: Data obtained from private archive collections, including address books and transaction papers for each organisation.

Table 2.2 – Average residential distances of members in Loughborough

Organisation	Mean Average	Median Average	Mean Average (omitting distances over 100 miles)	Mean Average (omitting distances over 50 miles)
Probus Club	2.01	1.37	2.01	2.01
Philatelic Society	10.87	2.61	3.32	3.31
Naturalists Club	20.13	3.39	5.56	5.10
Knights of St.Columba	1.62	0.58	1.62	1.62
InnerWheel Club	3.73	1.04	2.60	1.97
Emmanuel Women's Guild	1.05	1.07	1.05	1.05
Civic Trust	4.28	1.15	1.68	1.68
Chess Club	1.78	1.05	1.78	1.78
Boat Club	5.04	1.33	3.28	3.28
Archaeological and Historical Society	2.04	0.71	2.04	2.04
Amateur Operatic Society	3.46	2.44	3.46	3.46
Weighted Average	6.66		2.88	2.75

Source: Data obtained from private archive collections, including address books and transaction papers for each organisation.

In Leicester a suburban area was classified as being approximately 3 miles from the urban core. Using the data obtained from addresses omitting distances over 50 miles, it is evident that the majority of organisations have, on average, members that can be termed as 'suburban', with the furthest average distance being 9.8 miles for the Leicester Society of Artists. In Loughborough a suburban area was determined to be any region of 1.5 miles or more from the town centre; each organisation, apart from the Emmanuel Women's Guild, had members on average residing over 1.5 miles away from urban core, the furthest average being 5.1 miles. Interestingly, to omit addresses over 50 miles does not significantly alter most organisations; the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society and the Loughborough Naturalists being the most notable exceptions. This suggests that in both Leicester and Loughborough, the majority of all members resided at a commutable distance from the urban centre.

Organisations with an average distance lower than 3 miles in Leicester, or 1.5 miles in Loughborough, fell short by only a marginal percentage, with the average member still residing a considerable distance from the urban core; in Leicester the average member of the

Women's Luncheon Committee resided 2.8 miles from the city centre and for St. Martin's Parish Council the average was 2 miles. In Loughborough, the average member of the Emmanuel Women's Guild lived 1.1 miles from the town centre. Interestingly all three associations were affiliated to a religious denomination, suggesting the propensity for congregations to remain close to the urban core and their religious communities. Additionally, two of the three associations were female only organisations, implying that women were more likely to reside closer to the urban core and the organisations they were affiliated to. Both of these issues will be considered in greater depth within subsequent chapters.[44]

Initial connections have, therefore, been identified between suburban areas and associational activity. However, is it possible to categorise these suburban areas as 'middle-class'? How can this information be interpreted in relation to different types of organisations? And did patterns of suburban participation change over the period 1950 to 2005? Using Leicester Society of Artists as an initial example, the geographical spread of membership shows the extent to which participants joined from residential locations at the urban fringe. In total 63.3 percent of members within the Society resided outside of the city and on average a member of the organisation lived 9.8 miles from the urban core, still choosing to partake in the 'subscriber democracy' created through associational activity.[45] The furthest distance a member travelled within the county was Market Harborough, 17.8 miles from Leicester's city centre, whilst the suburban area of Oadby represented a 10 percent share of the total residential distribution. Additionally the satellite villages of Glen Parva (4.3 miles from Leicester) and Kibworth Beauchamp (9.4 miles from Leicester) both constituted 3.3 percent of the residential dispersal of membership. Such data emphasises the extent to which the middle-classes were residing in satellite villages as well as suburban areas, ultimately pushing further and further into the rural landscape but still returning to the city centre to participate in associational activity. The membership records of the Society are plotted in Figure 2.7:

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[44]   For issues relating to associational activity and religion, please see Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust? For analysis on the influence of gender in the associational sphere, see Chapter Six, Civil Society: The World of the White, Middle-Class Male?

[45]   Morris, R.J, 'Clubs, societies and associations' in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 1990), 412.

Figure 2.7– Residential distribution of members of the Leicester Society of Artists,

cumulative membership, 1950 - 2000
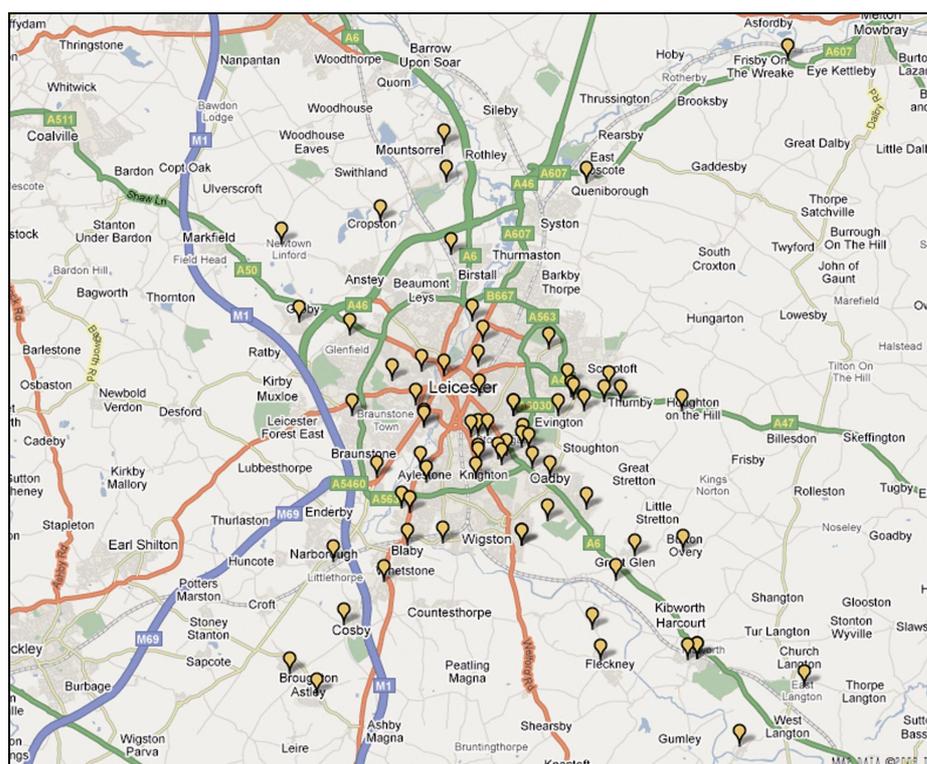
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Leicester Society of Artists.

The Leicestershire Motor Car Club also provides an interesting example for analysis. From a total of 265 addresses plotted, covering the years 1950 to 1980, 55.1 percent resided in suburbia, surrounding satellite villages or nearby towns as Figure 2.8 reflects. In terms of distance, the average member resided 3.7 miles from the city centre. Whilst this qualified members' to be termed 'suburban' this was not one of the largest average distances calculated. This is particularly interesting when we consider the nature of the organisation, motor transport. Car ownership increased dramatically during the post-war period, with the total number of vehicles on British roads expanding from 3, 728, 432 in 1948 to nearly 20, 000,000 by 1981.[46] For an organisation like the Leicestershire Motor Car Club, the nature of the club could lead to the presumption that participants were more likely to live substantial distances from the urban core. However, on average members chose the suburban fringe as their residential location. Figure 2.8 shows a clustering of membership to be particularly evident in suburban areas like Oadby, where 10.1 percent of members resided, a significant

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[46] Wood, B, 'Urbanisation and local government' in Halsey, A.H, ed., *British Social Trends since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain* (London, 1988), 335.

proportion for a single suburban area when we consider Leicester itself only contained 44.9 percent. Similar patterns of dispersal are evident in smaller numbers, in other suburban areas such as Wigston, Glenfield and Leicester Forest East:

Figure 2.8 – Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Motor Club, cumulative membership, 1950-80
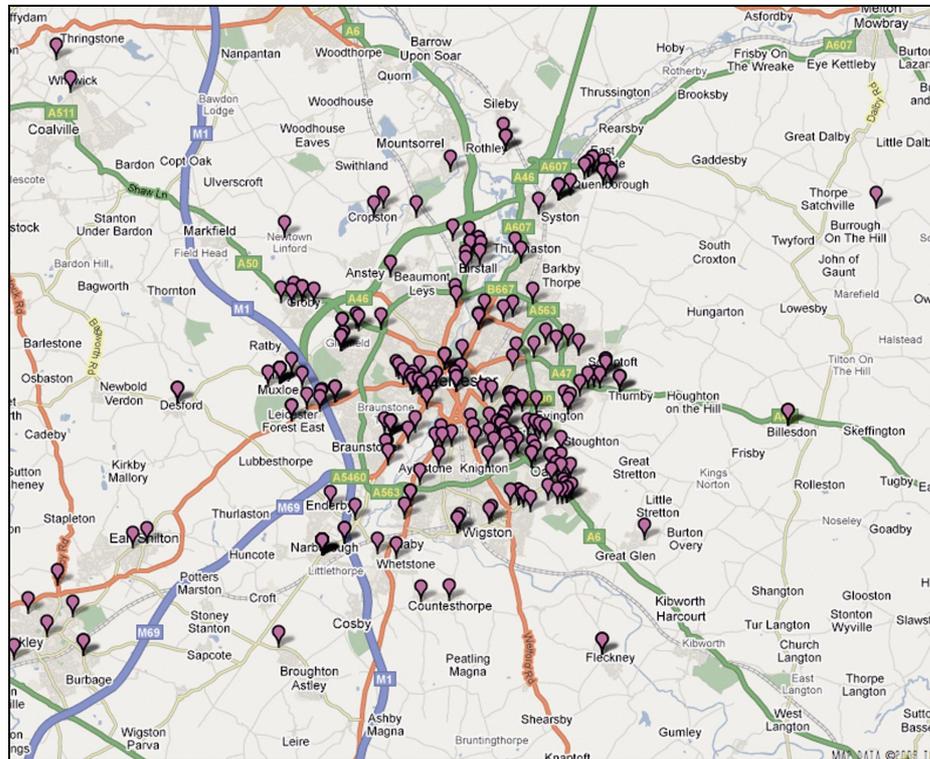
Source: Data obtained from Leicestershire Motor Car Club Address Book, ROLLR, DE 2172/31.

The geographical spread, however, was not confined to the suburbs with an increasing number pushing further into the countryside to satellite villages such as Kirby Muxloe to the west and Birstall to the north of the city; in total members were dispersed in 31 different local towns and villages outside of Leicester. Such varied residential distribution was not unique to the Motor Car Club but representative of a frequent pattern emerging in the analysis of the organisations based in the city.

Thus far, the data has highlighted the extent to which associational participation continued to construct the types of social networks that dominated the middle-class

experience in the nineteenth century city.[47] Far from endeavouring to sever ties by removing themselves to the urban fringe and beyond, organisations such as the Leicester Society of Artists and the Leicestershire Motor Car Club reveal to the contemporary historian the degree to which 'suburbans' remained engaged with the urban environment through subscription and affiliation. Yet can the areas inhabited by members be termed middle-class? Declining class barriers had allowed the number of households termed 'middle-class' to increase exponentially during the period 1950 to 2005. In 1981, 13.6% of the British workforce occupied professional, scientific or managerial jobs, an increase of 9% since 1921[48]. Would this impact upon the participatory rates of the middle-class in local clubs and societies?

When considering the census of 2001 and the indicators of unemployment, occupation and education it is clear that the majority of locations inhabited by members were those areas occupied by the urban middle-classes. A significant spread of membership in both the Leicester Society of Artists and the Leicestershire Motor Car Club existed around the southern areas of the city, particularly the south-east where residential areas contained a higher proportion of middle-class inhabitants. This can be seen in the analysis of statistics taken from the 2001 census. Figures 2.9 to 2.11 reveal the residential location of the unemployed in Leicester; the highest and lowest concentration of senior officials and managers within the city; and finally the areas of the city inhabited by the most qualified citizens:

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[47] As previously mentioned, for examples see Gunn, 'Class identity and the urban: the middle class in England 1800-1950', 1-19; Gunn, *Public Culture of the Victorian Middle-Class,* Morris, 'middle class and British towns and cities of the industrial revolution, 1780-1870', 286-305; Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850: an analysis', 95-118; Morris and Rodger, eds., *The Victorian City*; Rodger, R 'Slums and suburbs: the persistence of residential apartheid' in Waller, P.J, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Landscape* (Oxford 2000), 233-68.

[48] Brooke, S, 'Class and Gender' in Carnevali, F and Strange, J.M, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London, 2007), 45.

Figure 2.9 – The 2001 Census, number of unemployed by area, city of Leicester

Source:www.lsr-online.org/
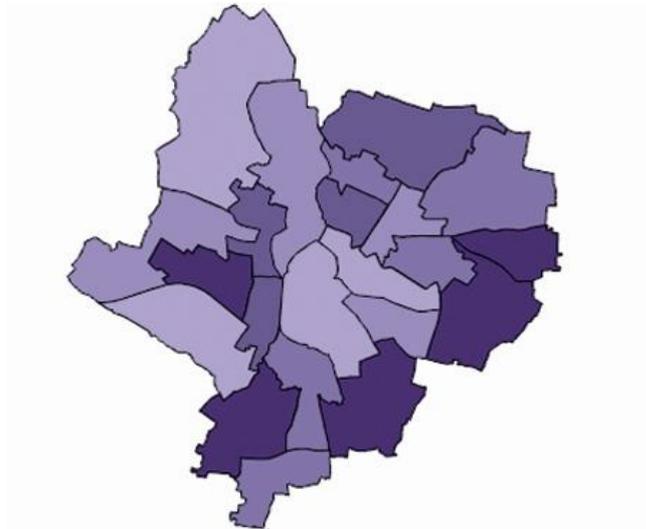
Colour					
Quantity	249.00-327.01	327.01-432.00	432.01-541.00	541.01-726.00	726.01-1,041.00

Figure 2.10 – The 2001 Census, number of senior officials and managers by area, city of Leicester

Source:www.lsr-online.org/
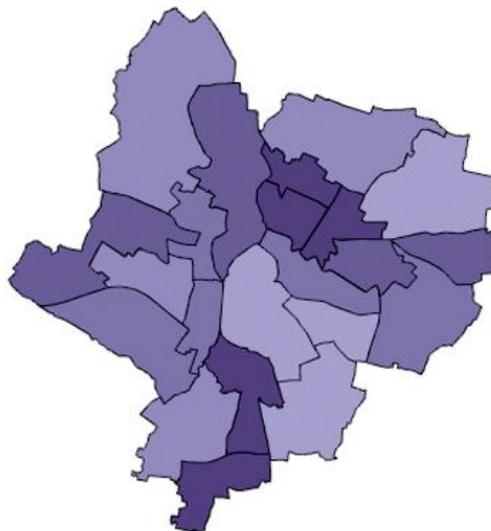
Colour					
Quantity	250.00-286.00	286.01-434.00	434.01-536.00	536.01-649.00	649.01-1,186.00

52

Figure 2.11 – The 2001 Census, number of most qualified citizens by area, city of Leicester

Source:www.lsr-online.org/
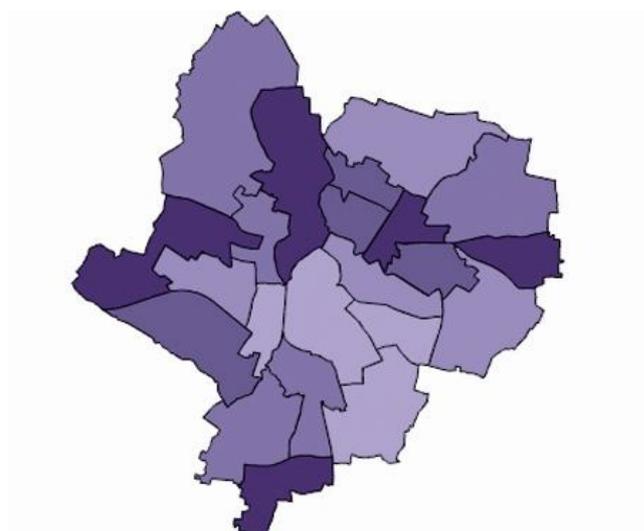
Colour					
Quantity	4.17.00-740.00	740.01-1,172.00	1,172.01-1,298.00	1298.01-1,975.00	1,975.01-4,363.00

The 2001 census indicates that the areas towards the south-east of the city - locations predominantly inhabited by members of the Leicester Society of Artists and the Leicestershire Motor Car Club - were the locations least inhabited by the unemployed and significantly populated by senior officials or those of a managerial profession. Additionally they were occupied by the most educated element of the city, often a useful indicator in terms of class analysis.

Used comparatively, the Leicester experience draws distinct parallels with the residential distribution of association members in Loughborough. Patterns of associational dispersal mirror the trend in Leicester for a demographic clustering in the south-east regions of the town. Figures 2.12 and 2.13 represent the Loughborough Naturalist Club and the Loughborough Boat Club. On average a member of the Boat Club resided 3.8 miles from the town centre, whilst for the Naturalist Club the figure was 5.1 miles – both residing outside the 1.5 mile definition of a fringe suburb in Loughborough. Interestingly the suburban spread of members appears to be drawn towards the city of Leicester, particularly when we consider the dispersal of membership in satellite villages. In both organisations only a small percentage of participants lived in satellite villages to the north of city, whilst the

predominant spread of satellite membership was dispersed towards Leicester in villages such as Mountsorrel and Sileby. Additionally, 4.4 percent of the Boat Club lived in Leicester but were members of the Loughborough organisation; for the Naturalists' Club the percentage more than doubled with over 10 percent residing in the city but commuting to Loughborough, a distance of over 12 miles. Both of these percentages were generally higher than for organisations based in Leicester; for example the Leicester Society of Artists had no members residing in Loughborough. Evidently members residing in a larger urban environment were more likely to travel to a smaller location to participate in associational life rather than the other way around:

Figure 2.12 – Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Naturalists Club, cumulative membership, 1960-75
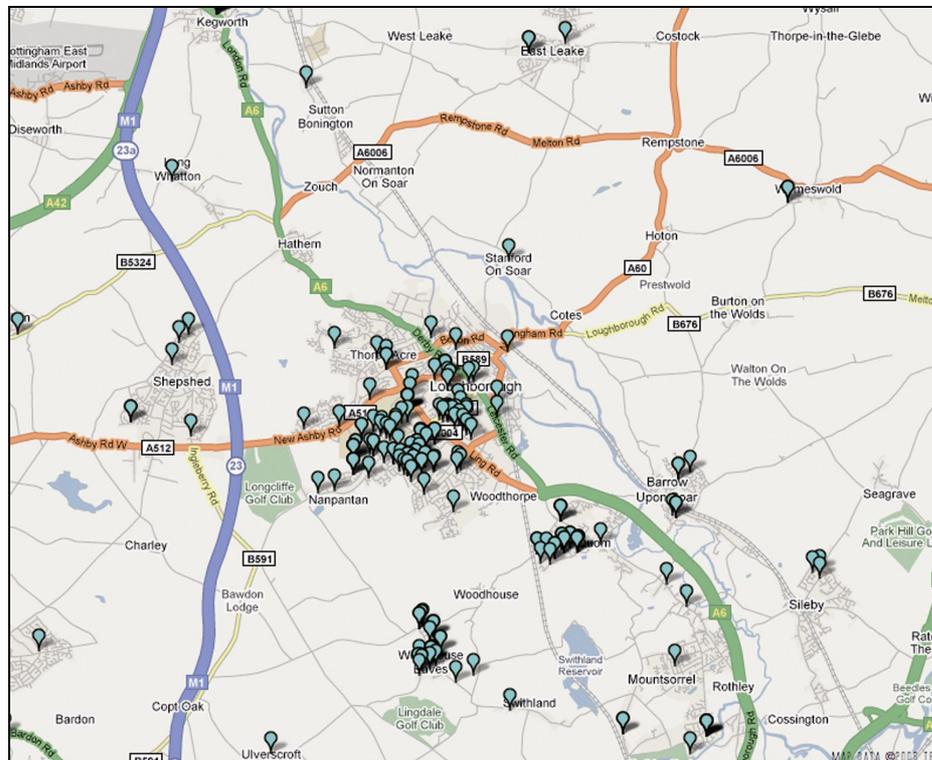
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Naturalist Club.

Figure 2.13 – Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Boat Club, 1980
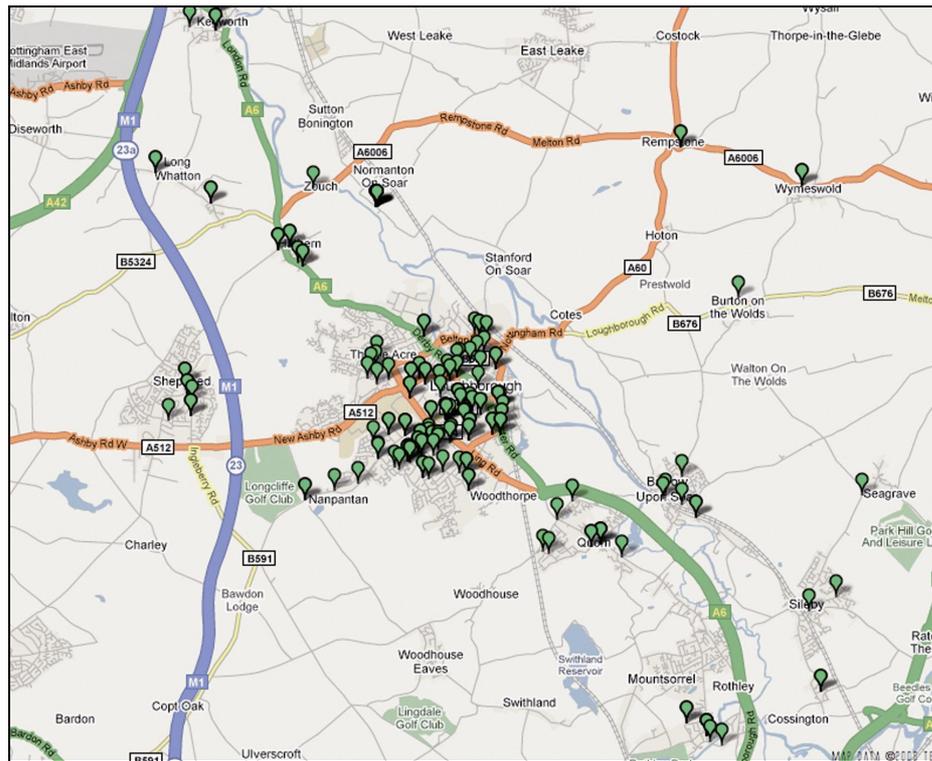
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Boat Club.

In the Naturalists' Club a total of 67.4 percent of members resided at the suburban fringe, surrounding satellite villages or nearby towns. For the Boat Club numbers were slightly lower with 48.3 percent outside the urban core. A significant proportion of these members resided in the south-west of the town, spreading towards the south-east, with very few residing in the northern areas of Loughborough. These images are particularly significant when we consider the 2001 census for Charnwood. Due to the electoral division of Loughborough into separate wards, census images were not available for the town. Additionally, census data was only provided for the ten individual wards, not the town collectively. However, by comparing an image of Loughborough divided into electoral wards (Figure 2.14) with the census data (Table 2.3) residential patterns according to class begin to emerge. For the purpose of analysis, in Table 2.3 education has been taken as the highest qualification attained, occupation refers to highest percentage of managers and senior officials, whilst unemployment relates to total unemployed within all Loughborough wards:

Figure 2.14 – Division of Loughborough by electoral wards
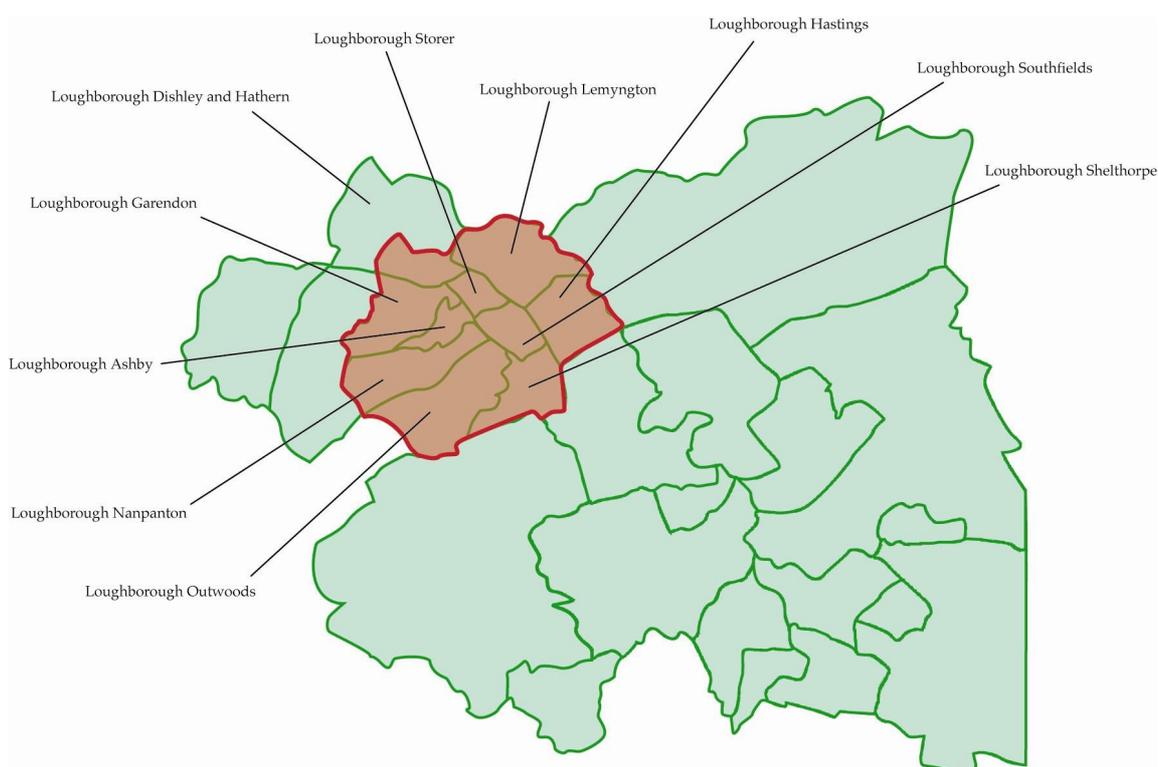
Source: This map originates from two separate images. The green area represents the borough of Charnwood and its electoral wards and was taken from www.leics.gov.uk/charnwood.pdf. The red shaded area outlines the town of Loughborough and was obtained from Charnwood Borough Council directly.

Table 2.3– The 2001 Census for the borough of Charnwood, education, occupation and unemployment indicators

Loughborough Ward	Education (%)	Occupation (%)	Unemployment (%)
Ashby	9.20	6.05	2.19
Dishley/Hathern	19.76	12.31	3.3
Garendon	24.52	12.06	2.78
Hastings	18.8	10.92	5.38
Lemyngton	19.77	10.02	4.79
Nanpantan	31.32	12.4	1.14
Outwoods	32.08	17.10	1.66
Shelthorpe	19.91	12.57	4.26
Southfields	33.08	11.21	2.43
Storer	16.02	8.18	2.58

Source:www.leics.gov.uk/index/your_council/about_leicestershire/research_info_population/research

As the census shows us, in areas to the south of the city, particularly the wards of Nanpantan and Outwoods, education levels are at their highest whilst unemployment is low, indicating a high concentration of middle-class inhabitants. As was the case in Leicester, these 'middle-class' locations were the areas where voluntary organisations predominantly drew their membership. Comparing the census data with Figures 2.12 and 2.13 it is clear that members of the Loughborough Naturalists Club and the Loughborough Boat Club generally lived in the wealthier areas of the town, particularly locations towards the south-west. These results mirrored the residential patterns of all the organisations analysed within the town.

Initial findings have, therefore, emphasised connections between middle-class participation and suburban residence, a relationship that is further exemplified through the chronological analysis of membership records. Overall membership numbers, and how these fared between the years 1950 to 2005, reveal the variation that existed in the associational sphere during the latter years of the twentieth century. A successful civil society is often measured by the levels of associational participation.[49] In the oral interviews collated for this study, much variation existed in the ability of organisations to maintain membership. Within Loughborough, both the Probus Club and the Emmanuel Women's Guild (EWG) recorded gradual decline in their membership,[50] whilst the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society commented: 'We're about the same, probably one or two more in recent years….I don't think the actual numbers of membership changed as there is a finite number you can put on stage.'[51] Similarly the Civic Trust added: 'we have roughly the same, 60 individuals in our group…you get some who drop out, some who die, we don't actively pursue membership, but people decide it's a good thing…'[52] In Leicester similar results were recorded. Jaffar Kapasee of the Leicester Asian Business Association revealed: 'When we started we had around 400 paid up members, now on our list we have about the same…even if you have

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[49] Rotolo, T and Wilson, J, 'What happened to the "Long Civic Generation"? Explaining cohort differences in volunteerism', *Social Forces*, 82, 2004, 1091-1121. Rotolo and Wilson use Putnam's argument at the beginning of their essay on the changing nature of voluntary activity.

[50] Taken from interviews with Philip Wilson, founding member of the Loughborough Probus Club, March 2007 and Margaret Beet, member of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild, March 2007.

[51] Interview with Gerald Granger, secretary of the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society, October 2006.

[52] Interview with Tony Foord, member of the Loughborough Civic Trust, June 2007.

more members there is no way to service them.'[53] In this case there is potential for growth but not the administrative capacity.

Membership levels for the Leicester Lawn Tennis Club, Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society and Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society during the period 1947 to 2005 are presented in Table 2.4:

Table 2.4 – Membership of various organisations in Leicester, 1947-2005

Leicester Lawn Tennis Club		Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society		Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society	
1975	865	**1947**	223	**1947**	221
1985	810	**1954**	219	**1954**	242
1995	970	**1963**	265	**1963**	400
1999	925	**2000**	216	**2004**	336

Source: Data collected from private archives of the Leicester Lawn Tennis Club and the Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society. The transaction papers of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society (ROLLR) provide a full account of membership during the period 1947-2000.

For the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society the participatory rates of members dramatically increased until the late 1960s, followed by a small downturn by 2004, although this was in no way a drastic or immediate decline with membership actually higher in 2004 than 1947. In a similar way, membership to the Leicester Lawn Tennis Club was 6.9 percent higher in 1999 than in 1975. For the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society membership also increased until the 1970s when participatory rates begin to decline. However, it is worth noting that whilst this decrease is steeper between the years 1970 to 1980, by the 1990s membership levels stabilised, with a downturn of only 3 percent overall.

Ultimately much variation is apparent when we consider the quantitative data in conjunction with oral interviews. In Table 2.4 memberships were generally strong until the 1970s and 1980s when we begin to see a degree of decline. Such findings are perhaps unsurprising when we consider the economic downturns experienced by the country as whole during the 1970s.[54] However, it is significant that for Leicester Lawn Tennis Club and

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[53] Interview with Jaffar Kapasee, founding member and Director of the Leicester Asian Business Association, June 2007.

[54] The 1970s are generally regarded as a period of economic turmoil for Great Britain, resulting in the 'winter of discontent' when nearly 2 million workers were involved in 4,500 strikes. For further

the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society membership begins to prosper again during the 1990s. For certain organisations within the study, down turns, and subsequent financial difficulties, eventually result in the dissolution of the club. Within this study Oadby Community Association, the Leicestershire Motor Car Club, the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee, and St. Martins Parish Council Social Committee had all disbanded by 1985. However, despite concerns in America of associational decline,[55] it is important to consider that dissolution or declining membership numbers are not necessarily a phenomenon of the twentieth century. In his analysis of the associational sphere in the eighteenth century, Clark informs us that 'Conflict, secession, poor attendance and financial difficulties imposed great strain on many societies and contributed to their limited life span.'[56] Even Putnam acknowledges in his research with Gerald Gamm that the experience of growth and decline in voluntary association can be viewed as cyclical.[57]

Analysis of membership rates in terms of chronology have therefore highlighted the variation that often existed in the fortunes of voluntary organisations during the mid to late years of the twentieth century. Such chronological records however, can also be used to provide insight into suburban participation in terms of the average residential location of members between 1950 and 2005. It has been argued that the majority of organisations in both locations had a membership that resided within a middle-class, suburban location, but did this change over time? Were middle-class participants residing in locations that pushed the urban boundary further and further into the county? Table 2.5 provides the distances in four separate time periods for two organisations in the city of Leicester; the Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society and the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society. The table provides the data for the organisations omitting all distances over 50 miles:

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examples see Brooke, 'Class and gender', 46 and Rubinstein, W, *Twentieth Century Britain. A Political History* (Basingstoke, 2003), 281-336.

[55]   Putnam, R, *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (London, 2000).

[56]   Clark, P, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800. The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000).

[57]   Gamm and Putnam, 'The growth of voluntary associations in America, 1840-1940', 539.

Table 2.5 – Average distance of organisation members in Leicester,

1947, 1954, 1963 and 2000

Year	Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society (miles)	Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (miles)
Average Distance, 1947	5.1	2.3
Average Distance, 1954	5.6	2.5
Average Distance, 1963	6.8	2.8
Average Distance, 2000	6.9	3.4

Source: Data obtained from private archive collections, including address books and transaction papers for each organisation.

In both cases the average distance lengthens steadily between 1947 and 2004, showing an increasing suburban commute for members of both organisations. Additionally, in terms of our definition of a 'suburb' as 3 miles in Leicester, these results emphasise the importance of satellite villages and local towns when considering the residential location of members. Such findings are supported visually by the geo-coded mapping of membership. Considering Figures 2.15 to 2.18 in sequence it becomes evident that a migration from the urban core continued throughout the twentieth century, with suburban participants increasingly pushing the urban boundary in their quest for the semi-rural ideal. Clearly the middle-classes had chosen to geographically distance themselves from the city centre, but the membership records of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society also show that relocation to suburbia did not necessarily mean they were devoid of interest in the city; seemingly the suburbans were 'semi-detached', culturally and socially, with many still connected to the city centre, engaging in associational communities and contributing to the town and stock of social capital through civic engagement:

Figure 2.15 – Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 1947
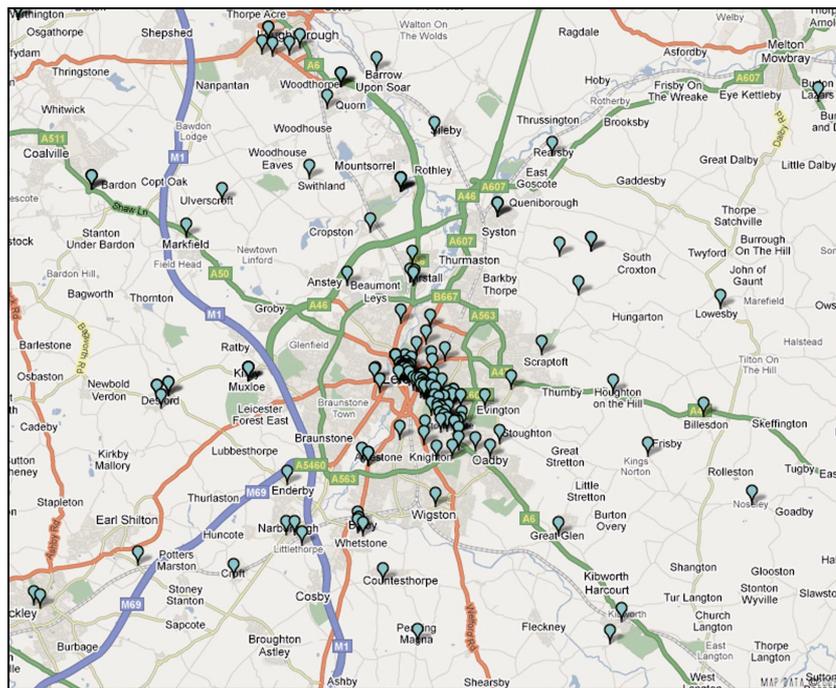
Source: Data obtained from the transaction papers of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (ROLLR).

Figure 2.16 – Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 1954
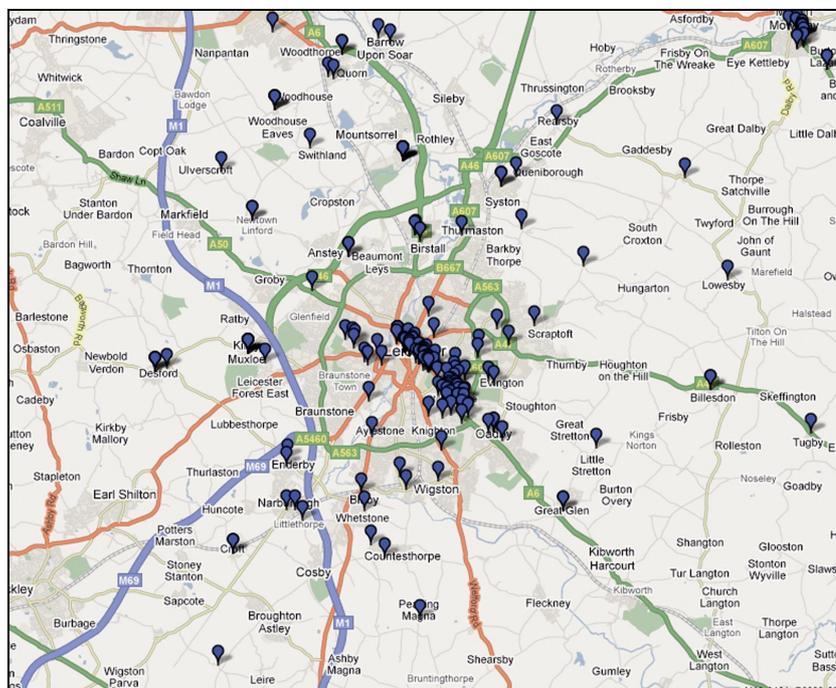
Source: Data obtained from the transaction papers of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (ROLLR).

Figure 2.17– Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 1963
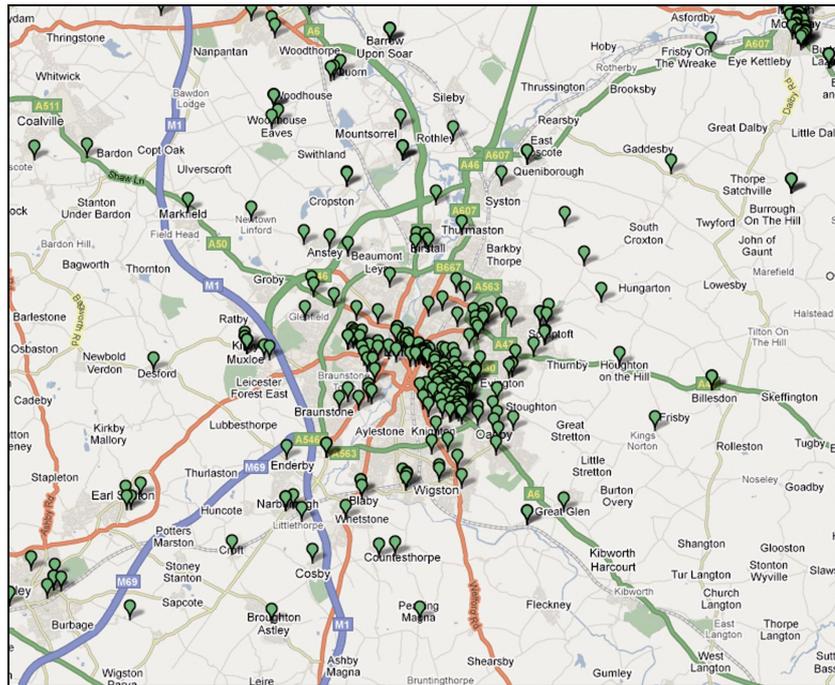
Source: Data obtained from the transaction papers of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (ROLLR).

Figure 2.18 – Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 2004
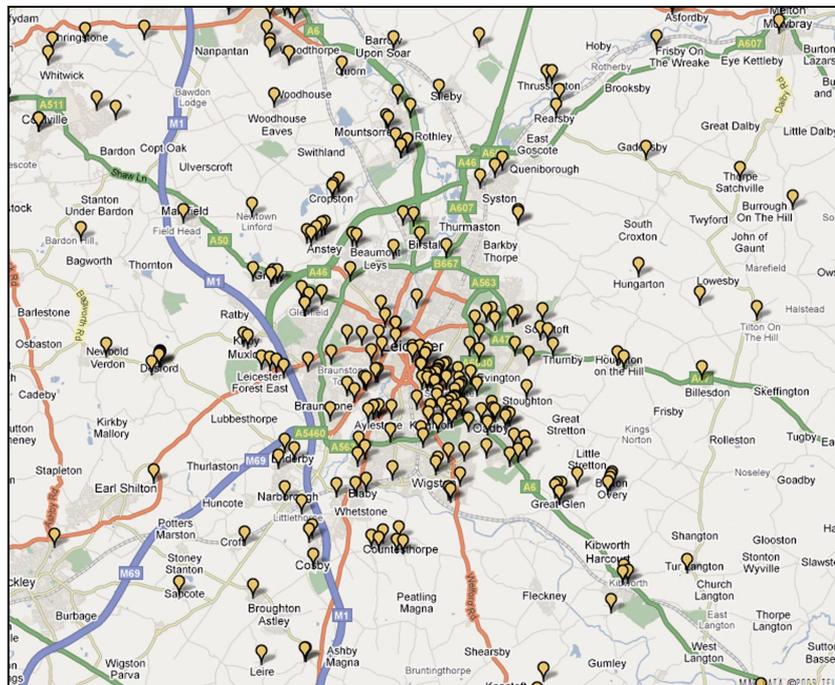
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society.

The maps show that in 1947 approximately 45 percent of the Archaeological and Historical Society already resided in an outer suburb, surrounding satellite village or nearby town; by 1954 this had increased to 56.4 percent, in 1963 it was 61.5 percent and by 2004 it had grown to a 71.8 percent share of the membership. Academics have suggested that associational life has the power to envelop citizens with a sense of security that comes from community and belonging. In this way participants form the organisational basis of a democratic culture and its social networks of communication. In short 'voluntary associations create the bonds of social solidarity that are the basis for civil society and democracy.'[58] Clearly members of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society were prepared to travel considerable distances back to the urban core to belong to an organisation which potentially had the power to create a sense of community and belonging. Figures 2.15 to 2.18 show members residing as far as Melton Mowbray, 17.8 miles from the centre of Leicester and also Market Harborough, 16 miles from the urban core.

The increasing geographical spread of associational participants in terms of chronology was not unique to the Archaeological and Historical Society, as the cumulative image of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society shows. Figure 2.19 emphasises the extent to which suburban membership continued to influence the demographic make up of organisations throughout the latter years of the twentieth century:

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[58] Newton, K, 'Trust, social capital, civil society and democracy', *International Political Science Review*, 22, 2001, 206.

Figure 2.19 - Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Literary and

Philosophical Society, 1954 and 2000
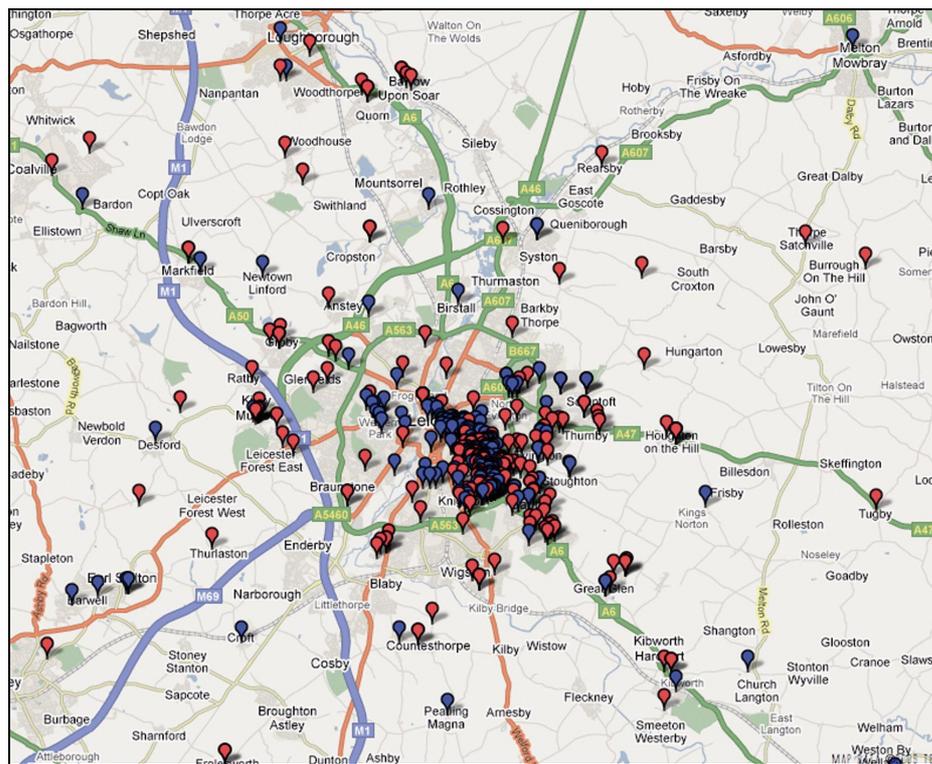
Source: Data obtained from the transaction papers of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society (ROLLR). Blue markers represent members in 1954, whilst red markers represent members in 2000.

As the blue markers show, in 1954 the percentage share of members residing in fringe areas or satellite villages totalled 17.3 percent; by 2000 this number had increased to 47 percent. Whilst the percentage of suburban participation was not as high as the Archaeological and Historical Society's share, the steady increase in 'suburban' interest was apparent. Comparatively the geographical spread of membership within the county also mirrored the behaviour of the Archaeological and Historical Society with residential locations reaching as far as Hinckley and Melton Mowbray, distances of 15 and 17.8 miles respectively. Additionally, when we consider the number of areas recorded in both organisations, it is evident that between the years 1950 to 2005, not only were members living in suburban areas but increasing number lived in local towns and villages outside of the city. Table 2.6 provides the quantitative data relating to the number of villages or towns outside of the city of Leicester recorded in both organisations over four separate decades:

Table 2.6 - Number of suburban areas, satellite villages or local towns recorded outside the city of Leicester

Year	Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society	Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society
1947	56	25
1954	64	24
1963	94	36
2004	96	48

Source: Numbers taken from the private collection of records from the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society and the Literary and Philosophical Society, 1947 to 2004.

Used in conjunction with the average residential distance of members from the urban core, it is clear that as each decade passed, associational participants not only lived further from the city centre but satellite villages and towns became increasingly popular residential locations for members of the associational sphere. Therefore, through the chronological analysis of two organisations in Leicester, it is apparent that both the plotted addresses and the quantitative data support the conclusion that suburban participation in associational life not only continued during the period 1950 to 2005 but increased considerably, pushing the urban boundary further into the rural fringes. Such conclusions support Trainor's perception of an 'increasingly secure middle class identity which had roots in social activity' within the twentieth century,[59] contradicting Thompson's belief that the suburb was 'without any society; social gatherings or institutions.'[60]

However, the analysis of residential locations in Loughborough reveals an interesting contrast. Whilst the first section on mapping emphasised the clustering of middle-class participants in Loughborough around the suburban fringe and in areas of higher demographic wealth, chronologically it is evident that, unlike Leicester, this concentration changed very little over the period 1950 to 2005. Tables 2.7 and 2.8 reveal the average distance members lived from Loughborough town centre in two organisations between the years 1970 and 2000:

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[59] Trainor, R, 'Neither metropolitan nor provincial. The inter-war middle class' in Kidd, A and Nicholls, D, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), 25.

[60] Thompson, F.M.L, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982), 3.

Table 2.7 - Threshold distance of members in the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild by decade

Year	Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild (Miles)
Threshold distance, 1970	0.9
Threshold distance, 1980	1.1
Threshold distance, 1990	1.1
Threshold distance, 2000	1.3

Source: Data obtained from private archive collections, including address books and transaction papers for each organisation.

Table 2.8 – Threshold distance of members in the Loughborough Probus Club, 1979 and 2000

Year	Loughborough Probus Club (Miles)
Threshold distance, 1979	1.9
Threshold distance, 2000	2.09

Source: Data obtained from private archive collections, including address books and transaction papers for each organisation.

In Leicester, the average distance from the urban core of a member of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical and Society increased by 1.8 miles and 1.1 miles for the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society. In Loughborough however, the Emmanuel Women's Guild increased by just 0.4 miles and for the Probus Club the distance was little as 0.2 miles. Additionally, for the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild only four separate areas were recorded in relation to residential distribution between the period 1970 to 2000, the four locales being Long Whatton, Shepshed, Quorn and Loughborough itself. In 1970 only 2 percent of members resided at the fringe of Loughborough or beyond, by 1980 this increased by a fraction to 2.5 percent and then 5 percent by 2000. These results can be seen in sequence in Figures 2.20 to 2.23:

Figure 2.20 - Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild, 1970
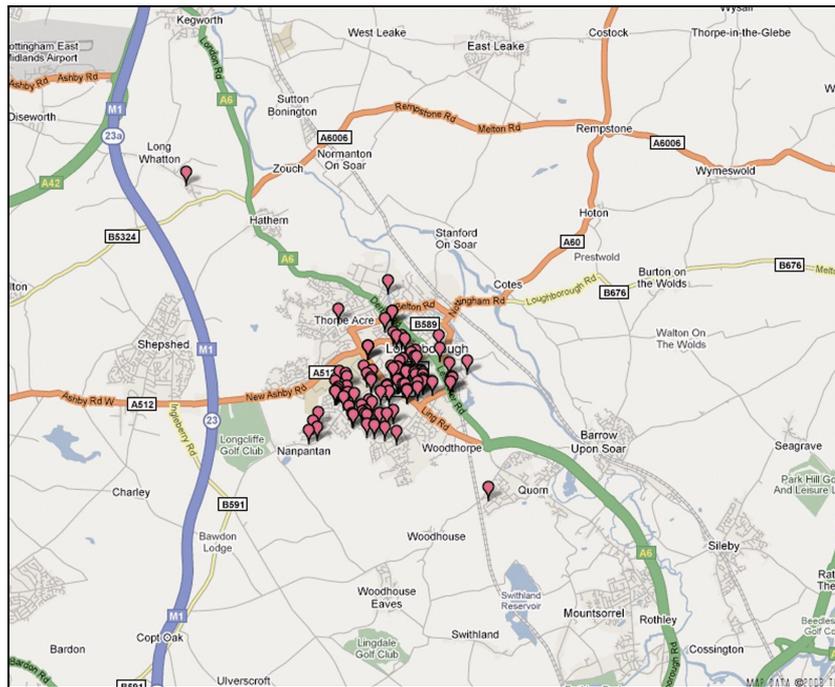
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild.

Figure 2.21 - Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild, 1980
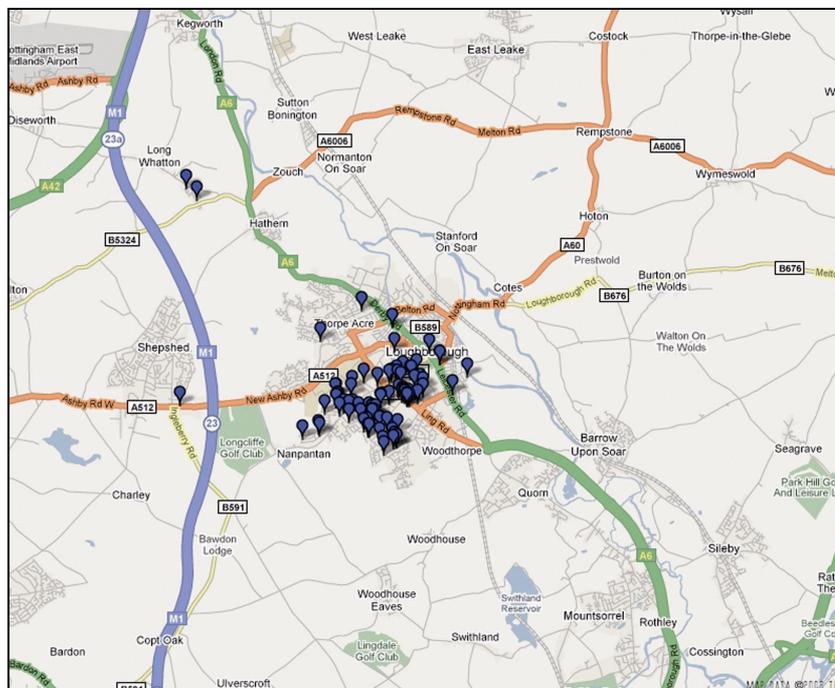
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild.

Figure 2.22 - Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild, 1990
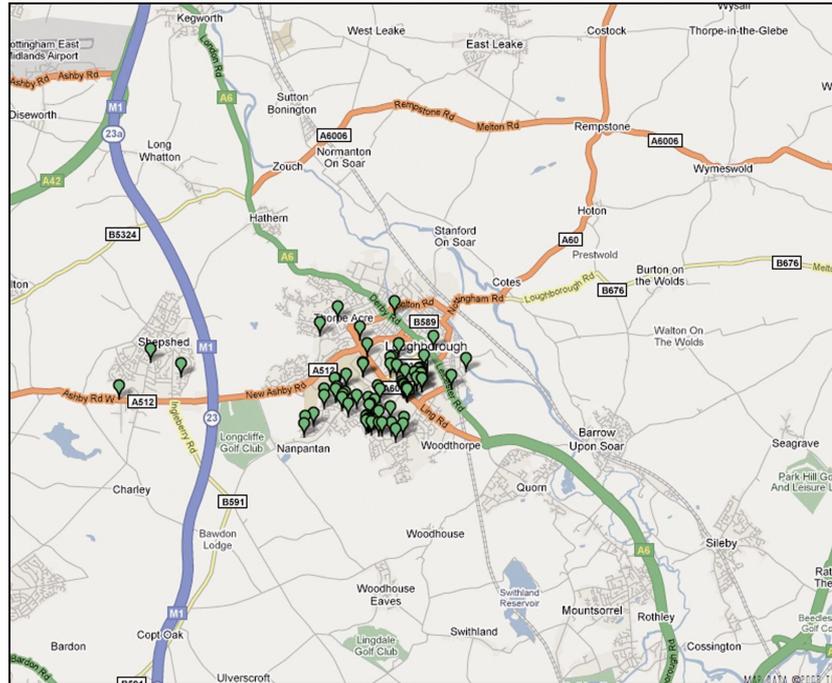
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild.

Figure 2.23 - Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild, 2000
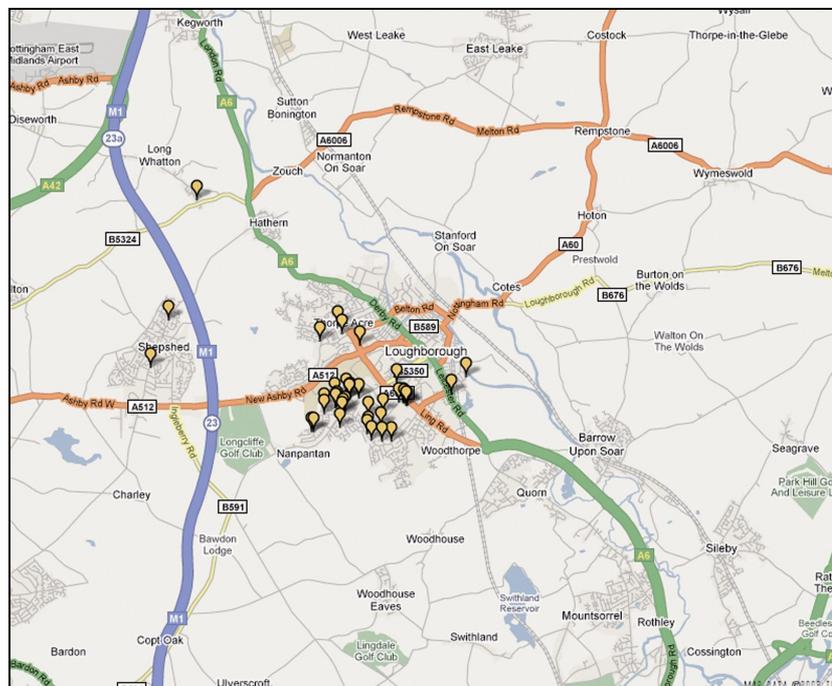
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild.

Evidently the number of members residing outside of Loughborough did increase but at a significantly slower rate when compared to the Leicester Archaeological and Historical Society and the Literary and Philosophical Society. Additionally, the longest distance any member resided from Loughborough town centre was only 4.6 miles in contrast to organisations in Leicester where members resided distances of 18 miles from the city. A similar account is evident when we consider the Loughborough Probus Club in Figure 2.24. The furthest distance members were willing to travel in 1979 was 7.6 miles and 14.2 miles in 2000. In terms of suburban participation, in 1979 a total of 35 percent of members lived at the suburban fringe or in satellite villages and this percentage actually decreased to 33 percent by the year 2000:

Figure 2.24 - Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Probus Club, 1979 and 2000
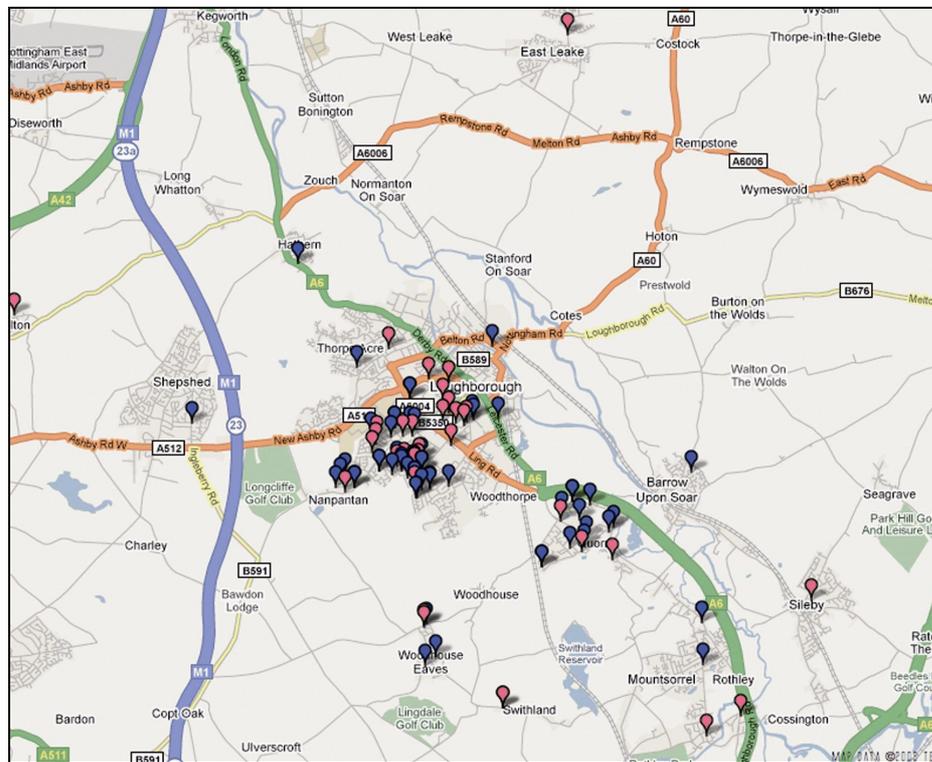
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Probus Club. The pink markers represent members in 1979, whilst the blue markers represent members during the year 2000.

It is worth noting however, that both the Probus Club and the Emmanuel Women's Club were organisations with a significantly smaller membership than the Societies examined in Leicester, such as the Literary and Philosophical Society. In addition, both organisations

suffered declining membership during the period under review. When analysing a larger organisation in Loughborough, such as the Naturalist Club, comparative patterns of dispersal and longevity are more evident as Figure 2.25 shows:

Figure 2.25 – Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Naturalists Club, cumulative membership 1960-75
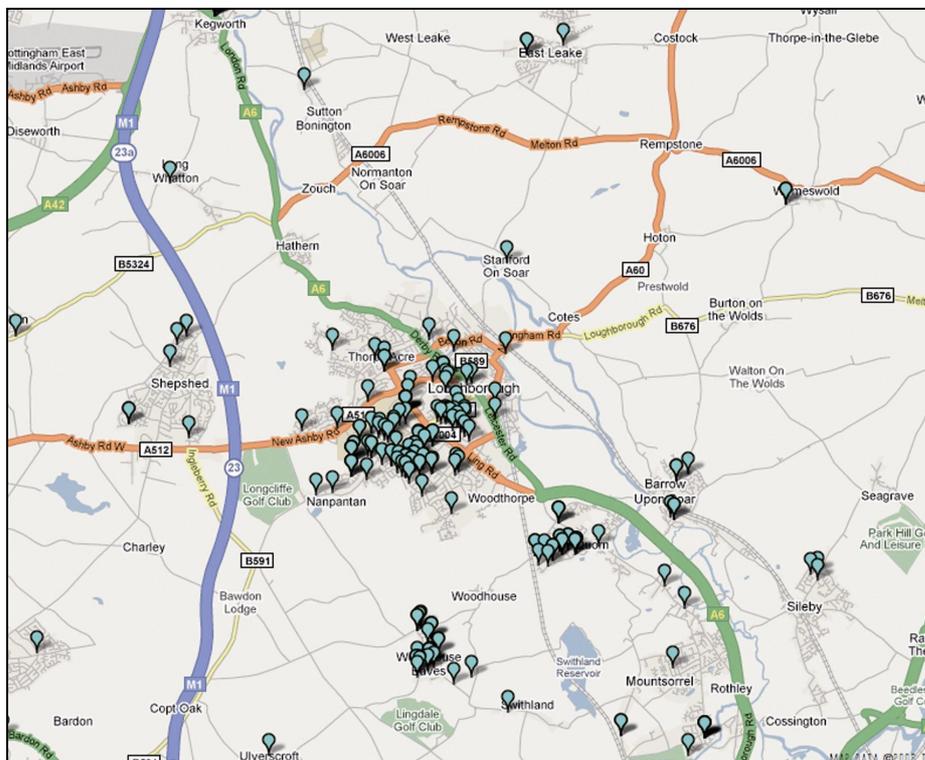
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Naturalist Club.

In general however, organisations in Loughborough tended to maintain smaller memberships, making Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild and Loughborough Probus Club more representative of the organisations analysed within this study. Thus, it is fair to conclude that a larger number of organisations with sizeable memberships existed in Leicester, whilst in Loughborough organisations tended to be smaller in nature. In this respect it can be argued that urban environments on a smaller scale were more likely to produce lesser organisations in terms of size and thus a more confined, homogeneous spread of membership. Larger urban areas however, like the city of Leicester, produced clubs and societies on a grander scale with participants dispersed further into county areas and increasingly away from the urban core. Such conclusions support the findings of this study but would benefit from wider regional analysis.

Conclusions can therefore be drawn that Leicester and Loughborough experienced differing residential patterns when considering the chronological distribution of members. Over time Leicester participants appeared to spread further into the county with each passing decade, with an increasing emphasis placed on satellite towns and villages. In Loughborough residential distribution appeared more static and homogenous. Yet it is also fair to conclude that both locations showed distinct similarities. In terms of the average residential distance of members from the urban core, for both locations the majority of organisations could be defined as having 'suburban' participants, with an increasing distance recorded between the years 1947 to 2004. Additionally, in both Leicester and Loughborough members were often clustered in areas of increased demographic wealth, with membership spreading predominantly towards south-east areas.

Overall, this chapter has shown that relocation to suburbia did not necessarily mean that the middle-classes were devoid of interest in the city. Despite the universal popularity of motor transport by the end of the twentieth century and the ability of the middle-classes to live increasing distances from the urban core, suburban participation remained constant. In general the larger urban environment of Leicester produced the largest organisations and as a result the widest geographical spread of membership during the period 1950 to 2005, pushing the urban boundary beyond the immediate sphere of the city. Vital to the increasing prosperity of these organisations were the 'suburbans'; semi-detached, middle-class participants who remained connected to urban life through a 'subscriber democracy' despite geographical relocation to the suburbs and beyond.[61] In Loughborough smaller associations dominated associational life, also dependent on the participation of the middle-classes but less inclined to disperse beyond the immediate boundary of the town. In both locations the continued participation of the 'suburbans' in the latter half of the twentieth century reflected the ability of the urban middle-classes to retain patterns of associational engagement despite geographical relocation away from the urban core. Such connections continued to define their identity as their interest in philanthropic and cultural activities contributed to the stock of social capital in the towns and cities they frequented. The thesis now moves beyond the physical connection between the 'suburbans' and associational life to consider the various types of organisations populated by the middle-classes in Leicester and Loughborough and

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[61]   Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 412.

the ways in which associational life actively contributed to civil society during the period 1950 to 2005.

Chapter Three

Active Citizenship: Defining Associational Culture, 1950 to 2005

> To exercise the rights and duties of citizenship means to have the
> opportunity and will to participate, both as individuals and as groups.[1]

Initial connections between outer fringe suburbia and civil society within Leicester and Loughborough have noted sustained suburban participation in associational activity. Middle-class interest was central to the popularity of the associational sphere after 1950, with suburban membership in both locations acting as a bridge within and between communities.[2] Before examining the extent to which this associational activity contributed to civil society, it is important to consider and refine our understanding of associational life during the period 1950 to 2005. Academic discourse suggests a decline in the influence of voluntary organisations in Britain, and thus the urban bourgeoisie, by the mid twentieth century.[3] Morris argues that the development of a working-class culture in the urban environment began to dominate cities and towns during the 1900s, arguably initiating the collapse of the close relationship between the urban place, civil society and the municipality.[4] Seemingly the spread of a Labour ideology disrupted middle-class urban leadership with the elites increasingly abandoning their roles in local towns and cities.[5] The middle-classes appeared to decisively turn their backs on the remnants of the urban communities they had done so much to create.[6]

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[1] Hill, D.M, *Citizens and Cities. Urban Policy in the 1990s* (London, 1994), 33.

[2] Nash, D and Reeder, D, *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* (Leicester, 1993), 158.

[3] For examples see Morris, R.J, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns' in Daunton, M, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain 1840-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 2001), 395-426; Thompson, F.M.L, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982); Garrard, J, *Democratisation in Britain: Elites, Civil Society and Reform since 1800* (Basingstoke, 2002).

[4] Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns', 425-26.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Trainor, R, 'Neither metropolitan nor provincial. The inter-war middle class' in Kidd, A and Nicholls, D, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), 203-13. Additionally, Trainor provides an overview of the academic discourse regarding the declining influence of the urban middle classes in Trainor, R,

For the most part these themes have remained at a generalised level, lacking detailed case studies of middle-class participation in organisations and civic life. An examination of suburban interest in associational activity in Loughborough and Leicester from 1950 to 2005 suggests a sustained and complex relationship between fringe areas, civil society and the urban core. Having confirmed suburban participation, Chapter Three develops the analysis by exploring the organisational dynamics of the associations themselves. Did organisations adhere to the same structures and methods of cohesion as the countless voluntary associations that had preceded them? Did clubs and societies choose to express their collective identity through the traditional interests and practices associated with voluntary activity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Or had the rapidly changing cultural environment of the twentieth century society bred diversification in the very nature of associational culture? The chapter begins by defining and categorising organisational activity in Leicester and Loughborough, providing a general overview of the numerous associations, clubs and societies available to the contemporary urban citizen, emphasising the ongoing associational activity in towns and cities. In addition the issues of continuity and change in the organisational structure and identity of voluntary organisations are addressed by analysing their importance in relation to the longevity of associational culture in modern Britain.

Defining Contemporary Activity

The overall number of organisations in Leicester and Loughborough by 2005, as exemplified by the Leicestershire County Council infolinx website,[7] does much to confirm the longevity of associational activity in Britain. The historiography of active citizenship suggests a critical link between the growth of associations and class formation. According to Clark, whilst the nineteenth century has often been regarded as the 'great age' of British societies, the origins of an associational culture began much earlier:

'The "decline" of British urban governance: a reassessment' in Morris, R.J and Trainor, R, eds., *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (London, 2000), 28-46.

[7] Please see Chapter Two, Location, Location, Location: Geographical Mapping of Membership, where the use of the infolinx website, http://www.infolinx.org/infolinx/infolinx. infolinx_xml.search, was explained in relation to the methodological approach of the thesis.

Clubs and societies were not some kind of Darwinian outgrowth of the Industrial Revolution, but the product of that expansive period of English social and economic development from the time of the English Revolution to the late eighteenth century … it is arguable that the special pressures and conditions of the early modern period moulded the distinctive character of British clubs and societies, and so their role in the modern society.[8]

With rapid industrialization and urbanization during the period 1780 to 1850, the growth of large industrial and urban populations was accompanied by the foundation of an increasingly diverse array of organisations, clubs and societies. In the eighteenth century alone Clark summarised the existence of approximately 130 different types of associations that included artistic bodies, debating clubs, literary societies, Masonic lodges, neighbourhood clubs and political and sporting group.[9] By the Victorian period associational activity was considered a fundamental part of middle-class identity and a mechanism for exerting power and influence at the urban core.[10] Whilst many academics have argued that suburbanisation bred a decline in active citizenship during the twentieth century,[11] contemporary research into towns like Norwich between the years 1900 to 1935 have exemplified continued middle-class participation in a variety of organisations that included religious societies, cultural associations and voluntary charitable groups.[12] By examining and defining the various organisations used for analysis within this study, it is increasingly apparent that far from signalling the decline of associational activity, the twentieth century produced a rich and diverse organisational culture, incorporating many of

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[8] See Clark, P, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800. The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000), *viii.*

[9] Ibid, 2.

[10] See the work of Gunn, S, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual, Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000); Morris, R.J, 'Middle class and British towns and cities in the industrial revolution, 1780-1870' in Fraser, D and Sutcliffe, A, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983), 286-305; Morris, R.J, 'Clubs, societies and associations' in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 1990), 405-17; Morris, R.J and Rodger, R, eds., *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914* (London, 1983); Rodger, R, 'The "common good" and civic promotion: Edinburgh' in Colls, R and Rodger, R, eds., *Cities of Ideas. Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain* (Aldershot, 2004), 144-77, for an overview of middle-class associational activity during the Victorian period.

[11] For examples see Morris, 'Structure and culture', 395-426, Smith, J, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, 27, 2000, 255-75, Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia*, and Savage, M, *Social Change and the Middle Classes* (London, 1995).

[12] Doyle, B, 'The structure of elite power in the early twentieth century city: Norwich 1900-35', *Urban History*, 24, 1997, 179-99. For an additional example of twentieth century voluntary activity see Begley, S, 'Voluntary associations and the civic ideal in Leicester, 1870-1939', unpublished Leicester Phd 2009. The author refers to an active associational culture in Leicester right up until the outbreak of the Second World War.

the elements historically associated with the distinct character of British associational activity.

In Chapter Two the methodological approach of the thesis revealed a sample of 30 organisations used for analysis. The sample was taken from a substantial collection of returned questionnaires and was designed to represent the diverse character of voluntary activity in Leicester and Loughborough during the period 1950 to 2005.[13] Many of the organisations were identical in nature to the associations historically identified by academics such as Clark, Morris and Rodger, exemplifying the extent to which the character of active citizenship has often remained constant.[14] In order to understand and consider the nature of the various organisations analysed for the thesis, Table 3.1 provides a categorisation of the clubs and societies examined. Though the activities of many of the organisations overlap, categorisation helps to interpret the density of associational activity and the ways in which these contribute to our understanding of civil society in both locations. As in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, considerable variation existed, with numerous organisations offering members participation in a specific aspect of associational life.

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[13]   Please see Chapter Two, Location, Location, Location: Geographical Mapping of Membership for additional information on the methodological approach of the thesis and, in particular, the sample of organisations chosen for analysis.

[14]   Please see Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*; Morris, 'Structure and culture,' 395-426; Rodger, 'The "common good" and civic promotion,' 144-77.

Table 3.1 – Categorisation of clubs and societies

Hobbies	Philanthropic	Community Interest	Council affiliated
Leicester Amateur Operatic Society	Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee	Leicester Asian Business Association	Leicester Racial Equality Council
Leicester Lawn Tennis Club	St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee	Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society	Leicester Rural Community Council
Leicester Photographic Society	Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild	Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society	Charnwood Council for Voluntary Service
Leicester Philatelic Society	Loughborough InnerWheel Club	Leicestershire/ Bradgate Twinning Association	Charnwood Racial Equality Council
Leicester Society of Artists	Loughborough Knights of St.Columba	Oadby Community Association	
Leicestershire Motor Car Club		Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society	
National Women's Register		Loughborough Civic Trust	
Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group		Friends of Charnwood Museum	
Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society			
Loughborough Boat Club			
Loughborough Bowls Club			
Loughborough Naturalists Club			
Loughborough Probus Club			

Perhaps the most common form of associational activity, in terms of the historiography of associational culture, is the categorisation of *Hobby* based clubs and

societies. These organisations, like many of the associations under analysis, can be understood to represent what Clapson termed as interest-based communities – a community that is not defined by location but rather a collective interest in a specific hobby or leisure pursuit such as sport or music. [15] Hobby based organisations are a traditional part of British associational culture, with historians recording the existence of artistic bodies and sports clubs as far back as the eighteenth century.[16] Constitutionally organisations are governed by clearly defined codes of conduct and rules, exemplifying the established customs associated with participation in a 'subscriber democracy.'[17] Loughborough Ladies' Bowls Club provides an example of a typical Hobby based organisation. Managed by a small committee of women who met regularly at the club house over tea and biscuits, the primary objectives of the club were winning matches and encouraging participation. Social and fundraising events were arranged for the sole purpose of promoting the association and uniting members in a community based around a collective interest. Organisations were distinctly focused on a specific leisure pursuit with limited concern for wider urban issues.

For the Loughborough Probus Club, associational interest lay in the promotion of social interaction among its largely business membership. Founded in 1979, the primary objective of the club was to bring together retired, local businessmen in the community of Loughborough. Whilst organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce interacted with local organisations and their respective councils, Probus Clubs were founded on sociability with the simple ethos of friendship amongst members. According to founding member Philip Wilson, the Club offered fellowship and 'a purpose in retirement' through lecture series, day trips and regular meetings.[18] Beyond these objectives the organisation had no other purpose, including a strict policy against charity work which Wilson explains: 'Probus is not for doing charity work. It was set up to be autonomous and self indulgent, if we can

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[15]   In Clapson, M, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Post-War England* (Manchester, 1998), Clapson describes how communities were formed after the Second World War through an involvement in associational activity. These 'associational communities' were important for the twentieth century as they emphasised the variations in the concept of community and showed that the term was no longer synonymous with residential location and can be alive at specific points of interest. The concept of associational communities in twentieth century society will be developed in subsequent chapters, particularly Chapter Four, Leicester and Loughborough: Seedbeds of Trust?

[16]   Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 2.

[17]   Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 412.

[18]   Interview with Philip Wilson, founding member of Loughborough Probus Club, March 2007.

put it that way, and it has remained that way.'[19] Similarly the Leicester branch of the National Women's Register (NWR) worked to unite local women and enhance networks of interaction. The concept behind the organisation was sociability, allowing women newly located to the area to join an association, instantly connecting them to a group of like-minded people, building bonds of trust through social interaction and intellectual discussions. Historically clubs and societies have been regarded as 'social institutions', cultivating ties of friendship often through intellectual discourse.[20] Whilst hobby based organisations are not immediately concerned with wider issues connected to the urban environment, the associations are important to our understanding of civil society through their ability to socially connect citizens to the urban place, creating communities that prevent feelings of isolation. In Putnam's understanding of the concept of civil society, life is made easier within a community that maintains a substantial stock of social capital as 'networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust'.[21] Fukuyama has also argued that 'trust is the result of shared values that allow individuals to subordinate their interests to those of large groups, and that these shared values are the result of historically determined cultural heritage.'[22] In this context the NWR and the Loughborough Probus Club stimulate the growth of trust within a community through social interaction and the transference of knowledge. It has been suggested that it is through associational activity that the density of civic engagement is measured, and 'in each association of which she is a member, a person gains benefits by having a reputation of trustworthiness.'[23]

Thus, whilst hobby based organisations may not be as connected to the urban environment in terms of networks of interaction, they remain civically engaged by creating the types of networks that 'foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust'.[24] The durability of single interest associations is a valuable dimension to local civil society as members engage with one another for the advancement of an agreed purpose. For an organisation like the Loughborough Ladies' Bowls Club, they

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[19]   Ibid.

[20]   See Gunn, S, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 85.

[21]   Putnam, R, 'Bowling alone: America's declining social capital', *Journal of Democracy,* 6, 1995, 65-78.

[22]   Fukyama, F, cited in Fisman, R, and Khanna J, 'Is trust a historical residue? Information flows and trust levels', *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization,* 38, 1999, 80.

[23]   Bruni, L and Sugden, R, 'Moral canals: trust and social capital in the work of Hume, Smith and Genovesi', *Economics and Philosophy,* 16, 2000, 4.

[24]   Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital', 66.

literally are not 'bowling alone' since their activities on and off the green create bonds of trust through sociability and networks of communication through engagement.[25]

Associations categorised under *Community Interest Organisations* share commonalities with Hobby based organisations: they are often based around a specific theme and are structured around the traditional 'subscriber democracy' concept.[26] However, societies such as the Loughborough Civic Trust and Oadby Community Association show a wider civic awareness, often working on projects that directly influence the urban environment. Loughborough Civic Trust, for example, is principally concerned with the structural preservation of the town. Founded in the 1960s the organisation worked on various schemes and projects involving the physical fabric of the town, including the foundation of memorial gardens, preservation of historic buildings, and pedestrianisation of the town centre. The Civic Trust maintains a healthy relationship with the local council and as an organisation was often asked to consult on specific planning applications.[27] Additionally, the Trust remains affiliated to a national organisation and upheld strong links with other local groups in the area. Constitutionally the organisation retains a small management committee controlled by privately elected members. Whilst there is a social dimension to the Trust, as reflected in excursions and other forms of sociability, this is not the fundamental purpose of the Society, as Trust member Tony Foord explained: 'people who join and the people who are on the committee do so altruistically, they don't look for benefits or rewards.'[28]

Oadby Community Association and the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society are further examples of Community Interest Organisations despite their foundation in separate centuries. Established in the 1960s to meet the specific needs of a suburban locality, the Oadby Community Association sought to maintain a community dynamic

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[25] These are the conceptual issues Putnam explores in his study of both Italy and America. See Putnam, R, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy* (Princeton, 1993); Putnam, R, 'Tuning in, tuning out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America', *Political Science and Politics,* 28, 1995, 664-83; Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital', 65-78, an article summarising his much publicised book *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (London, 2000).

[26] Morris's concept refers to the democratic practices adopted by members of the associational sphere since the nineteenth century. This included specific administrative structure and committee rule, consistently voted for at AGM's. In this respect the middle-classes subscribed through affiliation to a form of associational democracy. See Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 405-17.

[27] Interview with Tony Foord, member of the Loughborough Civic Trust, June 2007.

[28] Ibid.

despite its geographical location at the urban fringe. The organisation was maintained by a small committee of Oadby residents, working on projects that included the foundation of a local community college and campaigns to maintain the city boundaries and preserve Oadby's distinctive suburban status.[29] By comparison, the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (LAHS) is one of the oldest organisations analysed within this study. Officially founded by a group of eminent Leicester professionals in 1855, the Society is an organisation based on an intellectual interest, holding regular lectures on varying themes connected to archaeology or history. The Society differs from previous Hobby based associations however, through the density and variation of civic engagement. Specifically during the twentieth century, the Society became engaged in issues concerned with the preservation of historic buildings within the city. Between the years 1945 and 1965 approximately 900,000 slum dwellings were demolished in England and Wales.[30] In response to slum clearance proposals by Leicester City Council in the 1950s, the LAHS formed the Historic Buildings Panel and became active in the issue of historical conservation, developing a strong relationship with the City Council with regards the preservation of specific buildings.[31] Their interest in conservation continued throughout the second half of the twentieth century leading to the perception that the organisation was a public voice in the city on archaeological and conservation issues.[32] Their continued links with the Council on such projects, as well as a strong relationship with the University of Leicester and other prominent organisations within the city, has ensured that the LAHS develop a policy-based dimension to the association through the members' underlying interest in historical topics.[33] As with other associations, the sociability of the LAHS – regular organised annual dinners, anniversary celebrations and regular excursions - reflects a degree of social interaction

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[29] Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (hereafter ROLLR), DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association Minutes, 1961-68. The association will be used in Chapter Seven as a case study example of community relations in a specific suburban location.

[30] Burnett, J, *A Social History of Housing, 1815-1985* (London, 1986), 288.

[31] *Transaction papers of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* (TLAHS), 1950-2005.

[32] Interview with Dr Alan McWhirr, secretary of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (LAHS), July 2007. The work of the LAHS with regards the issue of historical conservation will be developed in subsequent chapters, considering the ways in which their activities can be interpreted as acts of civic engagement and thus contributing to the store of social capital and civil society. In particular see Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust and Chapter Five, Networks: The Power of Collaborative Action.

[33] An analysis of inter-associational activity will be provided in Chapter Five, Networks: The Power of Collaborative Action. The chapter will examine the relationship between different organisations in both Leicester and Loughborough and the extent to which intricate networks of power and bonds of social trust were created through associational activity and joint acts of civic engagement.

designed to retain and develop membership. In this, and in other cases, individual interest together with sociability forges a group identity that has become embedded in civic engagement.

Of the 30 clubs and societies analysed as part of the research, Community Interest Organisations present a medium between organisations that are completely civic orientated and those that are purely founded for social interaction. Their commitment to active citizenship exemplifies a degree of engagement that is not apparent in Hobby based associations, yet the level of social interaction also creates the bonds of trust and networks of communication vital to the maintenance of an active civil society. Interestingly, the organisations also exemplify the distinct change in the nature of associational culture during the twentieth century. Whilst the longevity of civic participation is evident within voluntary organisations, by the 1950s interest in the urban environment related to the specific interest of the club or society. In this respect Harris suggests that associations are best termed as 'single issue,' a distinct characteristic of twentieth century associational culture.[34] In previous eras clubs and societies often combined associational activity with philanthropic roles or a wider interest in issues connected with the urban core. However, during the period 1950 to 2005 organisations increasingly became involved in the issues directly related to the nature of the club or society. For Colls and Rodger, whilst modern Britain may contain a wealth of associational activity, the commitment of organisations to their own specific agenda remains one of the biggest threats to contemporary civil society.[35]

Philanthropic *Organisations* add an additional dynamic to the associations under consideration. Founded predominantly to act as charitable organisations, the societies within this category respond to the philanthropic needs of the urban environment through the distribution of financial aid or the commitment of time and energy to deserving causes. These benevolent objectives however, do not prevent associations from extending their reach to social interaction and cultural interests, although the primary focus remains altruistic. In this respect associations share similar objectives to Community Interest Organisations; they seek to improve the lives of Leicester and Loughborough citizens and their work is beneficial to the wider urban community. The organisations tend to be small in size and generally run

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[34] Harris, J, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain, 1945-2001' in Burke, K, ed., *The British Isles since 1945* (Oxford, 2003), 100.

[35] Colls, R and Rodger, R, 'Civil society and British cities' in Colls and Rodger, eds., *Cities of Ideas,* 19.

by informal committees, although structured rules and regulations play an important role in associational activities, exemplifying a continued commitment to the concept of the 'subscriber democracy.'[36] Philanthropic Organisations were often connected to a religious organisation or local church, highlighting connections between religion, the local state and the urban environment post 1950.[37]

The Loughborough InnerWheel Club is an example of this type of organisation. The female only club retains strong links to both a national and international network of InnerWheel organisations and as such works collaboratively with many local and national organisations. The Club offers Christian fellowship to members and works tirelessly on charitable events in local areas. Scholars have argued that after 1950, the introduction of the welfare state crowded out philanthropic associational activity as municipalities themselves became more directly responsible for implementing policies in relation to the social welfare of the poorer elements in society.[38] Yet the engagement of the InnerWheel Club throughout the mid to late years of the twentieth century shows a wide range of activity, with community interaction varying from fundraising for specific causes and donations of money to local charities, to commitment of time and energy to local social services and collaborative ventures with the local council on numerous committees. In this respect *Philanthropic Organisations* not only contributed to civil society by turning the 'I' into the 'we', but also constructed strong relationships of trust and networks of communication with various facets of the urban community.[39] These bonds of trust were also evident in the degree of social interaction within the organisation itself, expressed through regular social engagements that included whist drives, annual dinners and anniversary celebrations, all of which exemplify a culture of sociability that existed alongside their commitment to the philanthropic needs of the wider urban community.[40]

The Knights of St. Columba represent a similar organisation with an associational culture deeply embedded in religious affiliation. The Loughborough branch of this national organisation drew membership from the congregation of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church,

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[36] Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 412.

[37] The issue and changing role of religious influence in associational culture will be analysed in Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust?

[38] See Harris, J, 'Society and the state in twentieth century Britain' in Thompson, ed., *Cambridge Social History of Britain*, *Volume III*, 63.

[39] Putnam, 'Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital', 67.

[40] Private collection of minute books, Loughborough InnerWheel Club, 1950-2005.

with an organisational structure that was steeped in traditional and distinct customs, contrasting to an extent with other associations analysed within the study. Much like the Masonic lodges, members acknowledged one another as 'brothers' and leaders as 'Grand Knights.'[41] Beyond these rituals however, the organisation was fundamentally a charitable group, donating time and energy to local causes. Over the period 1950 to 2005 the association raised funds for local benevolent and children's funds and, like the InnerWheel, were involved on numerous municipal committees. Social interaction also remained an important facet of the group with regular cricket matches, lectures and dances.[42]

Beyond these elements, Philanthropic Organisations can also be used to exemplify the longevity of associational culture. During the early years of the nineteenth century, the absence of a coherent municipal structure allowed for the growth of the middle-classes in terms of urban leadership, with philanthropic associations representing an important facet of organisational control. Middle-class commitment to and responsibility for the education of the lower classes was regarded as part of their effort to uphold the moral balance of urban society, often using religion and philanthropic organisations as a medium for disseminating an elitist ideology.[43] As Gunn suggests for an earlier period, within the chapel community a sense of discipline was encouraged by the presence of particular organisations.[44] In much the same way Philanthropic Organisations of the twentieth century, particularly those closely affiliated with organised religion, often expressed a social conscience and a determination to influence the urban environment on specific issues. Despite the increasing secularisation of Britain since 1950 – Brierly suggests that during the 1970s and 80s alone church membership declined by nearly two million - religious organisations still retained significance at the urban core.[45] For example, the Knights of St. Columba took a very public stance against the

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[41] Private collection of minute books, Loughborough branch of the Knights of St.Columba, 1950-2005.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Gunn, S, 'Class identity and the urban: the middle class in England 1800-1950', *Urban History,* 31, 2004, 1-19; Morris, 'The middle class and British towns and cities of the industrial revolution', 286-305; Morris, R.J, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850: an analysis', *Historical Journal,* 26, 1983, 95-118; Smith, J, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', 255-75; Trainor, R, 'The middle classes' in Daunton, M, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain 1840-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 2001), 673-713; Morris and Trainor, eds., *Urban Governance, Britain and Beyond since 1750*; Thompson F.M.L, *The Rise of Respectable Society* (Glasgow, 1988); Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia.*

[44] Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class,* 125.

[45] Brierly, P, 'Religion' in Halsey, A.H, ed., *British Social Trends: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain* (London, 1988), 522.

legalisation of abortion during the period 1950 to 2005.[46] Thus, despite the introduction of state welfare after the Second World War, Philanthropic Organisations continued to make a contribution in their local towns and cities. In this respect, the term 'care in the community', more recently associated with the care of the elderly, actually captured the motivation and deep-seated public engagement by associations in community care. It was a transparent element in the public discourse and accordingly an important contribution to the enrichment of civil society.

Whilst Philanthropic Organisations exemplify a degree of longevity in associational culture with regards the engagement of voluntary organisations in varying aspects of urban life, *Council Affiliated Organisations* show the development of associational activity. Despite the trend for social and cultural change during the twentieth century, the associational sphere in Leicester and Loughborough showed a remarkable ability to adapt and evolve with the needs of the contemporary urban environment. Much like philanthropic societies, members of Council Affiliated Organisations joined associations with a clear objective to improve the lives of citizens in Leicester and Loughborough. However, organisations such as the Charnwood Racial Equality Council (CREC) and the Leicestershire Rural Community Council (LRCC) show variation from previous categories with a strong connection to local government, working collaboratively with the municipality and other local organisations on numerous community related projects. As previously noted, some academics have suggested that state welfarism encroached on the ability of the associational sphere to contribute to society post 1945.[47] However, the introduction of Philanthropic Organisations has already emphasised the ability of associational activity to develop with the needs of contemporary society. In a similar way, Council Affiliated Organisations provide examples of the continued influence of associational activity on urban leadership. Clearly after 1945 local and central government adopted an increasingly active position in the maintenance of society, yet the shift in government perspective did not eradicate the role of the associational sphere and their middle-class participants. Instead, intricate networks of power were created, with organisations employed by local councils in an advisory capacity, both publicly and

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[46] The issue of the legalisation of abortion was regularly referred to throughout the minute books of the Knights of St.Columba during the years 1960-2000. The organisation was involved in several high profile demonstrations and recorded correspondence with both local and state government on the issue.

[47] Harris, 'Society and the state in twentieth century Britain', 63.

privately. [48] Ultimately Council Affiliated Organisations assumed the role of mediator, constructing a more pronounced link between the citizen and the state, the very definition of a civil society.

In terms of administration, Council Affiliated Organisations were independently run, working collaboratively with members of the public, local community groups and local councils, with a managerial committee comprised of middle-class participants. Colls and Rodger have argued that the rich associational culture of modern Britain takes its democratic DNA from the organisations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although they also suggest that the extent to which organisations can think beyond their own agendas and engage in a successful civil society remains to be seen.[49] In this respect Council Affiliated Organisations go some way in exemplifying the ability of contemporary associational activity to unify various facets of the urban community through the consideration of issues outside the immediate sphere of their organisation.

The Charnwood Community Council (CCC) – now known as the Council for Voluntary Service - is a clear example of this type of organisation. Regarded by the local municipality as an authoritative voice on community issues, the CCC retains a strong voice and cultural influence in the town of Loughborough. Founded by 'prominent members of the community' in 1966, the CCC keeps offices at John Storer House (JSH), the local community centre. [50] The organisation works tirelessly on various community related projects, often attempting to bridge the gap between the numerous minority groups residing in the town. Like all organisations in this category the CCC is independently run, receiving a degree of funding from Charnwood District Council and employing several full time members of staff and volunteers. However, control resides with a privately elected management committee, referred to as the Board of Trustees. Fundamentally the organisation works to enable the foundation of new clubs and societies in Loughborough,

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[48]   The complex relationship between Council Affiliated Organisations and the local council will be analysed in subsequent chapters, particularly Chapter Five, Networks: The Power of Collaborative Action and Chapter Six, Civil Society: The World of the White, Middle-Class Male? The chapters will examine how Council Affiliated Organisations worked alongside local councils, urban leaders and other associations on important municipal issues. On certain occasions members attended unofficial meetings where important decisions on the future of their towns and cities were decided. Council Affiliated Organisations played an important role in these discussions, despite any formal election by the public.

[49]   Colls and Rodger, 'Civil society and British cities', 19.

[50]   Interview with Gerry Jacobs, Deputy Chief Executive of Charnwood Council for Voluntary Service, May 2007.

providing advice on voluntary activity and linking various organisations together. According to the Deputy Chief Executive of the CCC, Gerry Jacobs, this type of organisation is often referred to as an 'enabling body, because they enable community action and community activities to take place.'[51] In addition the organisation works in an advisory capacity to various council committees, including an equal opportunities committee and a crime and disorder partnership through which the CCC provide a direct input to the local authorities offering 'a different kind of expertise'.[52] The CCC works alongside a variety of associations in both the town and county and has, at one time or another, interacted with each of the other organisations in the category. In general, Council Affiliated Organisations are highly active within community life, representing a density of activity that does not revolve around social elements or participation through mutual interest. In 1957 an additional organisation in the category, the Leicestershire Rural Community Council (LRCC) wrote: 'Our aim is to assist the work of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations in the furtherance of our community....and to promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of these purposes.'[53] In 1970, the organisation added to their objectives by concluding:

> The right relationship between the statutory bodies and voluntary organisations lies at the heart of the problem of a healthy community whether urban or rural. The Rural Community Council exists as an independent, non-specialist, informal body, able and willing to try to ensure that suitable joint action is taken by statutory and voluntary bodies....To a local authority its values lie in its interests, its informality and its independence, its need and ability to increase confidence, its capacity to experiment and its success in mobilising voluntary action.[54]

Council Affiliated Organisations have a very specific organisational structure with clear aims and objectives, ultimately exemplifying a new form of associational activity in twentieth century society. These organisations balance the relationship between the citizen and the state, 'enabling' active citizenship through various forms of civic engagement and can be understood as a crucial facet of contemporary associational culture. Working collaboratively with local councils on numerous projects they influence urban governance

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Private collection of minute books, Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council (LRCC), 1950-2005.

[54] Ibid.

through the distribution of expertise on various committees. Their primary objectives were to bridge the gap between the citizen and the state and as such provide a clear example of associational activity contributing and maintaining civil society in modern Britain.

Overall, each of the organisations in the categories considered has exemplified the diverse associational culture in Leicester and Loughborough during the period 1950 to 2005. Each organisation contributed to the stock of social capital through some degree of civic engagement, whether this was social interaction, philanthropic responsibility or collaborative action with the municipality. The extent to which these acts of civic engagement can be understood to contribute to an active civil society in both locations will be examined in greater depth in subsequent chapters. In Chapter Two clear links between suburban participation and associational membership were made evident. By analysing civic contributions through the associational sphere, we are able to consider how the 'suburbans' continued to influence the urban environment and civil society throughout the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first.[55]

Structure and Identity

The categorisation of voluntary organisations in Leicester and Loughborough allows the contemporary historian to consider the breadth and diversity of associational culture in modern Britain. The academic discourse of scholars such as Clark, Gunn, Morris and Rodger has provided the urban historian with an authoritative understanding of associational activity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but to what extent did traditional elements of organisational culture retain significance after 1950?[56] Chapter Two examined

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[55] Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust and Chapter Five, Networks: The Power of Collaborative Action, analyse various forms of associational activity and how they can be interpreted as contributing to an active civil society. Chapter Six, Civil Society: The World of the White, Middle-Class Male moves beyond this to consider the extent to which women and ethnic minority groups were involved in this associational world between the years 1950 to 2005.

[56] For examples please see Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*; Gunn, S, 'The rites of civic culture in English provincial cities, 1830-1914' in Morris and Trainor, eds., *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750*, 226-41; Gunn, S, 'The middle class, modernity and the provincial city: Manchester, c.1840-80' in Kidd, A and Nicholls, D, eds., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1999), 112-128; Morris, 'Middle class and British towns and cities in the industrial revolution, 1780-1870', 286-305; Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 405-17; Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850: an analysis', 95-118; Morris, R.J, *Class, Sect and Party* (Manchester, 1990); Morris, R.J, 'Civil society and the nature of urbanism: Britain 1750-1850', *Urban History*, 25, 1998, 289-99; Morris and Rodger, eds.,

the degree of suburban participation in associational communities during the twentieth century but was this activity reminiscent of the middle-class associational world of previous generations? In terms of structure and identity, did clubs and societies reject the traditions of the past? Or were they richly embedded in the very nature of associational culture, evolving only to meet the needs of a contemporary urban environment?

Taken from recent anthropological and sociological definitions, the basic principles associated with modern voluntary organisations include: participation without financial or coercive pressures; intermittent (albeit regular meetings); voluntary leadership; and a tendency towards oligarchy.[57] This has much in common with what Clark highlights as the elements central to the identity of clubs and societies in the eighteenth century: private associations were overwhelmingly male, met on a regular basis, and combined a common sociability with a more specific purpose that was recreational, educational, political or philanthropic. From the 1780s, he suggests, a greater sense of formality and institutionalisation became apparent, including the growth of bureaucracy and a hierarchy of officers.[58] In his study of voluntary societies and the British urban elites, Morris supports the idea of a more bureaucratic associational culture, arguing that: 'The characteristic institutional form of the nineteenth century voluntary society was that of a subscriber democracy.' [59] Almost two centuries later this terminology still resonates. In his understanding of associations in the Victorian period Morris reveals:

> Money was collected from members. The funds were distributed and activities organised by a committee and officers elected by the subscribers at the annual general meeting. One subscription, one vote, was the general rule and uncontested elections the normal practice.[60]

Such principles remained enshrined in the associational sphere of modern Britain: members joined organisations and paid an annual subscription, officers were elected at the annual general meetings, and rules of code and conduct were rigidly observed. Central to the 'subscriber democracy' of the mid to late twentieth century was structure and, in

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The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History; Rodger, 'The "common good" and civic promotion', 144-77.

[57] Originally taken from Warner, W.K, 'Voluntary associations and individual involvement in public policy-making and administration' in Smith, D.H, ed., *Voluntary Action Research* (Lexington, 1973) but also summarised effectively by Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 12.

[58] Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 12.

[59] Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850', 101.

[60] Ibid.

particular, committee rule. Administration through elected committee officials remained a fundamental aspect of associational activity, the only variant being the overall size and number of committees, which was directly related to the general size and function of the particular organisation. For example, whilst less formal associations like the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild (EWG) were run by a committee, it was of a diminutive size. During the period of 1950 to 2005 membership varied between 35 and 100 participants, yet the size of the committee remained constant. Members paid an annual subscription and voted for committee members at their version of an AGM, adhering to the acknowledged format of the 'subscriber democracy'.[61] Clark suggests that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries:

> Virtually all formal societies had officers of some kind. At the most basic level this might mean only one or two stewards to arrange the society meeting … .but often the arrangements were more complex with a hierarchy of officers and a committee structure.[62]

Whilst the EWG represented the less formal organisation, the InnerWheel Club was administered with a more structured approach. The Club shared common elements with the EWG: members paid annual subscriptions and held elections for new committee officers. However, when the subdivision of their administrative committees is considered, dynamics differed. Subdivision allowed an increasing number of members to accept positions of responsibility in the organisation. Table 3.2 shows comparatively the administrative committees of both organisations:

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[61]   Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 412.

[62]   Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 251.

Table 3.2 - Officers of the Loughborough InnerWheel Club 1970-71 and the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild, 1962-63

EWG, 1962-63		InnerWheel Club, 1970-71	
Committee position	**Officer**	**Committee position**	**Officer**
Leader	Mrs Meakin	**President**	Mrs Bailey
Deputy Leader	Miss Cofe	**Vice President**	Mrs Walters
Treasurer	Miss Godden	**Treasurer**	Mrs Wells
Secretary	Miss Wood	**Secretary**	Mrs Walker
Assistant	Mrs West	**Assistant Secretary**	Mrs Morgan
Register	Mrs Handcroft	**Council Member 1 Year**	Mrs Man
Tea Maker	Mrs Hill	**Council Member 1 Year**	Mrs Oakland
		Council Member 1 Year	Mrs St.John
		Council Member 2 Years	Mrs Bates
		Council Member 2 Years	Mrs Guest
		Council Member 2 Years	Mrs Morgan
		Speaker Finder	Mrs Heckingbottom
		Club Correspondent	Mrs Huster
		International Service	Mrs Butler
		Sick Visitor	Mrs Cockerill
		Delegates to District	Mrs Guest and Mrs Walters
		Entertainment Committee	Mrs Moss
		Social Service Committee	Mrs Huster
		Community Service Committee	Mrs Bates

Source: Data obtained from private archive collections of the Loughborough InnerWheel Club and Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild.

The InnerWheel Club and the EWG were both female only, religiously orientated organisations functioning in the same town, yet they can be used to exemplify the structural differences described by Clark; one has a small committee, almost like stewards, to run the group, whilst the other is dominated by a more complex, hierarchical management committee.[63] In general, smaller or less formal associations were administered by more

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[63] Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 251.

confined committees, whilst larger organisations with more clearly defined objectives, divided the standard committee dynamic to include various facets - in the case of the Loughborough InnerWheel Club this included committees for community and social services.[64] These organisations are representative of the structures that existed in the 30 associations analysed within this study. The size and structure of committees were not influenced by location or the passing of time, emphasising the longevity of structural practices within associational culture. However, it is important to acknowledge the diversity within these practices; organisations of the same nature and within the same town could share both similarities and differences in terms of administration. As Clark's definition of structural 'arrangements' demonstrated, such variation was not unique to contemporary associational activity. Seemingly, modern associational life reflected many of the same patterns of organisation, structure and ideology as the associational communities of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Variation continues to exist and for this reason, no singular definition can be used to definitively describe the structural practices of all voluntary organisations.

The oligarchic nature of associational culture can also be used to justify aspects of continuity in organisational activity after 1950. Academic discourse suggests that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries oligarchic leadership was a vital aspect in the construction of public subscription association.[65] Organisations provided an ideal medium for expressing leadership in towns and cities, with committee posts used to structure this form of leadership and a sense of power and authority.[66] Urban bourgeois culture was self selecting and exclusively reserved for the middle-class elites through high annual subscription rates to specific clubs and societies.[67] Within these associations it has been argued that organisations devised elaborate hierarchies of patrons, vice-presidents, trustees and grades of membership in order to secure trust and active participation from its membership.[68] Influential members of society, particularly local councillors, were given

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[64]   Private collection of minute books, Loughborough InnerWheel Club, election of officers 1970-71.

[65]   For examples please see Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 256; Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850', 101-02; Morris, 'Middle class and British towns and cities in the industrial revolution, 1780-1870', 286-305; Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 405-17 and Morris and Rodger, eds., *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History;* Trainor, R, 'Urban elites in Victorian Britain', *Urban History Yearbook,*12, 1985, 1-17.

[66]   Trainor, 'The middle classes', 673-713.

[67]   Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 29.

[68]   Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850', 102.

important committee posts and associational meetings became the forum for middle-class decision making, generally behind closed doors and to their own agenda.[69] Patrons and influential committee members were an important part of associational structures and identity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Morris suggests that: 'Committees included a number of hard working regular attendees…Normally the result was rule by an oligarchy selected from the higher status members of the society.'[70]

During the twentieth century - and also by the beginning of the twenty-first – oligarchic leadership remained apparent in both Loughborough and Leicester. In Table 3.3 the elected committee officials for the LRCC between the years 1960 and 1961 reveal an array of high status association members occupying important committee positions. Once elected to office, members generally retained their responsibilities for substantial periods of time. In this respect the creation of oligarchic control, exemplified particularly during the Victorian period, was reproduced into the latter years of the twentieth century.

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[69]   Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, 224.

[70]   Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850', 101-02.

Table 3.3 – Officers of the Leicestershire Rural Community Council, 1960-61

President	Sir Robert Martin
Vice Presidents	Mrs Bernard Everard
	Lady Martin
	Councillor A.M.Walker
	T.A Woodcock
Chairman	Major R.E. Cruickshank
Vice Chairman	S.C.Gibb
Treasurer	H.A. Sentle
Auditors	Messrs Rivingstone and Lawrence
Executive Committee	G.W.Glover
	S. Pennsmith
	T.A. Walden
	Mrs Elliott
	R.L.Bishop
	C.J.W Davey
	Miss Fraser
	B. Palmer
	Miss Lawson
	Mrs Dickinson
	Rev. L.W. Foster

Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council.

However, oral testimonies suggest that oligarchies post 1950 were often created out of necessity rather than choice. Increasingly committee members found it difficult to encourage new candidates for committee positions, due to the time consuming nature of these roles. Tony Foord reveals this to be the case for the Loughborough Civic Trust:

> You know what happens in voluntary organisations, particularly small ones; you put up a list of committee (positions) and ask "any volunteers?" No! ......We have managed over the last ten years or so that I have been associated to swap around the committee, the officers, otherwise organisations do tend to get, what's the word I'm looking for? Fossilised! Particularly when members get older and they are the ones who have the time…..all committee members are ex-professional people of some extent…they are highly literate and knowledgeable and take a strong interest in their own areas.[71]

Similarly, when asked how easy it was obtain committee members for the LAHS, Society secretary Dr Alan McWhirr commented:

> People like to sit on the committee but it is not always easy to persuade them to take on active roles, we have just launched a new venture this year in which two recently recruited members have taken on the work of what they are organising and they have found it quite difficult.[72]

It is worth noting however, that within certain organisations, rules existed to ensure a rotation of elected committee members, as Jaffar Kapasee of the Leicester Asian Business Association states:

> Committee members are all elected every year, we have to, in fact one third of the board retires. We actually rotate it so that the oldest get out first and we also have a new input, making sure that new board members have different skills to offer.[73]

In this respect, it is again evident that variation existed. Whilst many organisations continued to adhere to the practice of oligarchic control, other contemporary associations demonstrated the ability to embrace new methods of committee administration in terms of regularly electing officials. Therefore, a degree of variation could exist on local associational committees, often allowing organisations to develop their skills for the benefit of the wider urban environment.

The formality of organisational structure thus remained an important feature of associational culture between the years 1950 and 2005. At times it adapted to fit the specific requirements of the contemporary urban situation, yet in general the ideology of the 'subscriber democracy' remained constant. This is also the case when considering the issue of identity and the construction of a public image through the expression of ritualised

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[71] Interview with Tony Foord, member of the Loughborough Civic Trust, June 2007.

[72] Interview with Dr. Alan McWhirr, secretary of LAHS, July 2007.

[73] Interview with Jaffar Kapasee, Director and founder of Leicestershire Asian Business Association, June 2007.

tradition. In the Victorian era organisations were designed to achieve their aims and objectives without reference to government aid or authority, with the leaders of dominant voluntary societies engaging in the creation of a set of social relationships that were intended to provide stability and legitimacy.[74]Voluntary organisations and their leaders believed that through associational engagement the middle-classes could educate and civilize the lower ranks of society with their cultural knowledge and influence, and this ethos continued to resonate into the twentieth century. Influence in the urban environment, however, could only be exerted by organisations of stature. Gunn argues that the associational culture of the nineteenth century used symbolic practices to construct public images that emphasised social distinction, authority and the assertion of power. The relationship between the middle-class and the urban place was openly and powerfully exerted on occasions of particular civic pride and, by participating in parades, social groups and institutions shared a collective identity that was visible to the urban public, solidifying their claim to a place within the social fabric of the town.[75] In this respect, as Cannadine argues in his research of the Colchester Oyster Festival during the Victorian period, ritualistic events could be seen not so much as the expression of an urban community but its actualisation.[76] Whilst Gunn and Cannadine suggest that the public expression of civic pride declined during the twentieth century, Siobhan Begley's study of Leicester between the years 1870 and 1939 emphasises the continued importance attached to the practice of ritual and tradition in the creation of civic identity.[77]

In a similar way, symbolic practices, used to construct a public image of social distinction and authority, continued to retain significance in both Leicester and Loughborough after 1950. Despite historical interpretations of declining interest in voluntary activity, validity, stature and identity continued to play an important part in associational culture throughout the twentieth century, never more prevalent than when considering the public expression of tradition. During the period 1950 to 2005, ritualistic events were most popularly conveyed through traditional anniversary celebrations. Publicly these occasions allowed clubs and societies to express a collective identity whilst also emphasising a specific connection to the urban environment. In 1955 the LAHS centenary celebrations initiated the

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[74] Morris, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850', 115.

[75] See Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class.*

[76] Cannadine, D, 'The transformation of civic ritual in modern Britain: the Colchester oyster feast' *Past and Present*, 94, 127.

[77] Begley, 'Voluntary associations and the civic ideal in Leicester, 1870-1939'.

formation of a special 'centenary sub-committee', successfully organising an evening reception in the Lord Mayor's rooms. The location of the celebration was particularly significant as it formally connected the organisation to the municipality, validating the importance of the Society to the city. The occasion was officially related to the general public through an acknowledgement in *The Leicester Mercury:* 'Sir Robert Martin, president of the Leicester Archaeological Society received the guests at the Society's centenary reception at the Lord Mayor's rooms, in Leicester last night…'[78] Articles such as this reflected an interest in associational culture by the local press and consequently the public, with the local media arguably providing a link between 'the governors and the governed.'[79] Additionally they operated as a medium for presenting the hierarchical image of the organisation to the mass public, as readers observed Society members interacting with the Mayor and local councillors, cementing their authoritative identity and public image.

In Loughborough, despite its smaller location, anniversary celebrations remained a popular and important tradition, emphasising the longevity of associational practices in different geographical areas. Gunn argues that the appearance of the middle-classes during the Victorian period was strongly ritualised and in this respect comparisons can be drawn with the involvement of the Loughborough 'suburbans' in associational activity post 1950.[80] For the InnerWheel Club, events such as the annual 'Charter Anniversary' celebrations acted as a formal occasion for the Club to inaugurate a newly elected club president. The anniversary was traditionally held at the town hall with local dignitaries, including the wife of the Mayor, and the presidents of many of the local organisations in Loughborough and Leicester in attendance:

> The 25th Charter Anniversary was held in the Victoria Room at the Town Hall in Loughborough on Monday 21st January 1963. In attendance were the Club President, Treasurer, Secretary and 30 members. Also the following guests: The Mayor and Mayoress, President of the Rotary Club, Association President, District Chairman, President of the Soroptomist, B+P Women's Club, Loughborough Townswomen's Guild, Loughborough Ladies Circle and members of the following InnerWheel Clubs; Alfreton, Beeston, Coalville, Corby, Hinckley, Kirkby in Ashfield, Leicester, Long Eaton, Nottingham, Shephed, SwadlingCote and Newark.[81]

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[78]   *Leicester Mercury (LM),* 11th January 1955.

[79]   Cox, H and Morgan, D, *City Politics and the Press* (London, 1974), 5.

[80]   Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class,* 29.

[81]   Private collection of minute books, Loughborough InnerWheel Club, 21st January 1963.

Seemingly the celebration of important events was a universal tradition for all clubs and societies. Even Council Affiliated Organisations that focused less on social interaction, celebrated anniversary events with vigour, exemplified in 1986 when the *Loughborough Echo* announced the 20th anniversary of the CVS in 1986.[82] Formally connected to the town's community centre, John Storer House, the organisation marked the occasion with 'services of thanks giving'.[83] Again, the local press were used to relay the event to the public, with substantial articles appearing in the *Loughborough Echo.* As Harris suggests, newspapers held the possibility of regular communication with their readership and provided an opportunity for organisations to showcase their worth and connection to the urban core.[84] Ten years later articles in the *Loughborough Echo* celebrated the organisation's 30th anniversary as the CVS officially received Princess Anne at John Storer House to mark the occasion.[85]

Clearly such events promoted the identity of the organisation to the public, highlighting their importance within the town as the association publicly attached itself to the agents of the state. As Rodger suggests in his research of Victorian Edinburgh, royal receptions such as these helped raise the commercial and cultural profile of an area.[86] Additionally, whilst a royal visit legitimated an organisation and its mission, it also provided the opportunity for the monarchy to establish contact with citizens, however limited and temporary that might be. It has been suggested that historically ritualistic events provided an element of theatre for the urban environment,[87] yet ritualised events, such as anniversary celebration, were often 'far more than drapery' and played an altogether different and substantial role in political affairs.[88] Thus, whilst associational traditions of the mid to late twentieth century may not have involved the same degree of pageantry as the Victorian era, anniversary events did provide specific occasions for organisations - through

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[82] *Loughborough Echo (LE)*, 20th April 1986.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Harris, B, 'Praising the middling sort? Social identity in eighteenth century British newspapers' in Kidd and Nicolls, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class,* 10. Whilst Harris's research on the British press relates specifically to the eighteenth century, his observations on the power of the newspaper remain relevant when considering the impact of the press on local communities between the years 1950-2005. For a further account of the role of the media during the mid twentieth century see Hayes, N and Hill, J, eds., *Millions Like Us? British Culture in the Second World War* (Liverpool, 1999). Additionally, Anderson provides a fascinating insight into the role of the media in creating 'imagined communities.' See Anderson, B, *Imagined Communities* (London, 1991).

[85] *LE*, 7th May 1996.

[86] Rodger, 'The "common good and civic promotion"', 150.

[87] Thompson, E.P, 'Patrician society, plebeian culture', *Journal of Social History,* 7, 1974, 390.

[88] Rodger, 'The "common good and civic promotion"', 156.

the power of the local media - to assert a relationship with the urban environment and emphasise their social significance. In this respect, associational identity and the maintenance of public image remained an important aspect of organisational culture. Rubinstein and Trainor have both suggested that contrary to popular belief, the middle-classes of the twentieth century maintained a strong cultural unity that was encouraged through voluntary activity. [89] Seemingly this was the experience in Leicester and Loughborough. As Chapter Two revealed, suburban, middle-class membership remained high in the associations analysed and, central to the retention of the link between specific organisations and the urban core was the preservation of an associational identity. Whilst academics have claimed middle-class disinterest and declining participation during the latter years of the twentieth century, analysis into the behaviour of associational activity in Leicester and Loughborough thus far, highlights the longevity of an active associational culture that owed much to the traditional practices of the British 'subscriber democracy.'[90]

In Chapter Three an understanding of the nature of voluntary organisations in Leicester and Loughborough during the period 1950 to 2005 has been developed. The categorisation of *Hobby*, *Community Interest, Philanthropic and Council Affiliated Organisations* has shown the breadth of voluntary activity available for the modern, active citizen and the potential for each grouping to contribute to civil society. The ability of the contemporary associational sphere to adapt with the growing social, cultural and political changes of the twentieth century urban place has also been acknowledged. However, this section has highlighted the aspects of a contemporary associational culture that parallels the experience of previous generations; for example the retention of a formalised structure and the importance of public image and identity. Whilst variation in the dynamics of voluntary organisations existed, the evidence of suburban participation rates (as seen in Chapter Two) in conjunction with the preservation of ritualised practices and the dedication of organisations to the concept of the 'subscriber democracy', alludes to the longevity of an active associational culture in Leicester and Loughborough. The extent to which this activity

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[89] Rubinstein, W.D, 'Britain's elites in the inter-war period 1918-39' in Kidd and Nicholls, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class?* And Trainor, 'Neither metropolitan nor provincial. The inter-war middle class' in Kidd and Nicholls, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class?*, 205. For additional accounts see Jackson, A.A, *The Middle Classes 1900-1950* (Nairn, 1991); Jackson, A.A, *Semi-detached London. Suburban Development, Life and Transport* (Oxon, 1991); McKibbin, R, *Classes and Cultures. England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 1998).

[90] Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 412.

can be seen to contribute to civil society must now be considered. Whilst Chapter Three has shown the ability of voluntary organisations to preserve a place within the urban dynamic, the thesis will explore how important these roles were and whether rapid social change between the years of 1950 to 2005 altered the construction of an active civil society. As Harris, Colls and Rodger have suggested, many organisations of the twentieth century were 'single issue' and performed to their own agendas.[91] Would this be an element of associational activity that had the potential to deconstruct civil society? Or did an active associational sphere continue to construct the types of social and cultural networks that encouraged power and influenced the wider urban environment? By examining social interaction, philanthropic duty, and the importance of cultural contributions, Chapter Four will demonstrate how associational activity, and thus the middle-class 'suburbans', performed acts of civic engagement and the extent to which this influenced civil society in both Leicester and Loughborough.

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[91]   Harris, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain, 1945-2001', 100, and Colls and Rodger, 'Civil society and British cities', 19.

Chapter Four

Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust?

> Organisations, clubs and societies (are) an increasingly important part of modern life. They act as bridges within and between communities, behaving as expressions of identity across a range of areas and interests.[1]

The vision of a homogeneous, disinterested middle-class in the years preceding the First World War has been used to exemplify the stereotypical depiction of the 'suburbans.'[2] For scholars like Masterman and Hutber, the middle-classes of the twentieth century were devoid of interest and participation in city life, and for the most part wished to be left alone.[3] Such negative connotations have become synonymous with the process of suburbanisation and, beyond the physical disdain, academics have also raised concerns with regard to social cohesion in suburban settings, arguing that 'suburbanites are becoming more and more atomised and therefore endangering the stability of the whole society.'[4] However, initial connections between suburbia and civil society within both Leicester and Loughborough, as exemplified by the residential distribution of membership in local voluntary organisations, have begun to contradict stereotypical depictions, indicating unequivocally to suburban participation in the contemporary urban environment. Such findings support conclusions in America that for many decades suburbs, and in particular middle-class suburbs, have been associated with inaccurate but powerful myths and stereotypes.[5] Yet, can membership alone provide evidence of social interaction? To what extent were organisations contributing to the urban core in terms of civic engagement? As Nash and Reeder have suggested, were associations providing the bonds of trust that allowed voluntary organisations to act as a bridge within and between communities?[6] Evidence of participation has highlighted

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[1]   Nash, D, and Reeder, D, *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* (Leicester, 1993), 158.

[2]   Masterman, C.F.G, *The Condition of England* (London, 1960) and Hutber P, *The Decline and Fall of the Middle Class and How it Can Fight Back* (London, 1976).

[3]   Ibid, 56.

[4]   Lupi, T and Musterd S, 'The suburban community question', *Urban Studies*, 43, 2004, 801.

[5]   Harris, R, 'Introduction', *Journal of Urban History*, 27, 2001, 259.

[6]   Nash and Reeder, *Leicester in the Twentieth Century*, 158.

suburban involvement in an associational sphere, but in what ways did this involvement contribute to the stock of social capital in both locations?

In this chapter the extent to which associations, and in turn their suburban membership, were engaged civically in Leicester and Loughborough during the years 1950 to 2005 is examined. It has been argued that British towns and cities were substantially the creation of their middle-class, providing the theatre within which they sought, expressed and defended their power.[7] Additionally, Gunn suggests that in the same period, examples of public self–presentation through charitable organisations were a reminder that the idea of a middle-class way of life was not restricted to the suburbs but incorporated the town or city as a whole.[8] By the mid-twentieth century, had their position changed so drastically? Were the middle-classes no longer contributing to the cultural life of the city as previous generations had? Were they no longer involved in the philanthropic activities that had so defined their character in the Victorian era? And, perhaps most importantly, did their relocation to suburbia truly represent a desire to withdraw from community living? By considering the various ways in which organisations were engaged in social and community

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[7] For examples of the influence of the urban middle classes, in particular during the nineteenth century, see Colls, R and Rodger, R, eds., *Cities of Ideas. Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain* (Aldershot, 2004); Fraser, D and Sutcliffe, A, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983); Gunn, S, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual, Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000); Morris, R.J, 'The middle class and British towns and cities of the industrial revolution', in Fraser and Sutcliffe, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History*, 286-305; Morris, R.J, 'Clubs, societies and associations' in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 1990), 405-17; Morris, R.J, *Class, Sect and Party. The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990); Morris, R.J and Rodger, R, eds., *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914* (London, 1983); Morris, R.J and Trainor, R, eds., *Urban Governance, Britain and Beyond since 1750* (London, 2000); Smith, J, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, 27, 2000, 255-75; Trainor, R, 'The Middle Classes' in Daunton, M, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain 1840-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 2001), 673-713.

[8] Gunn, S, 'Class, identity and the urban: the middle class in England, c.1790-1950', *Urban History*, 31, 2004, 39. For a historiography of middle-class associational participation during the nineteenth century please see Clark, P, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800. The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000); Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class;* Gunn, S, 'The public sphere, modernity and consumption: new perspectives on the history of the English middle class' in Kidd, A and Nicholls, D, eds., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1999), 12-30; Greenfield, J, O'Connell, S and Reid, C, 'Gender, consumer culture and the middle-class male, 1918-39' in Kidd and Nicholls, eds., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle Class Identity*, 183-97; Kidd, A and Nicholls, D, 'Introduction: history, culture and the middle classes' in Kidd and Nicholls, eds., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle Class Identity in Britain*, 1-11; Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 405-17; Morris, R.J, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns' in Daunton, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III*, 395-426; Rodger, R, 'The "common good" and civic promotion: Edinburgh' in Colls and Rodger, eds., *Cities of Ideas. Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain*, 144-77.

interactions, cultural connections and charitable aid, this chapter will explore such issues, identifying how specific associations and locations were connected to the urban core through civic engagement, acting as seed beds of trust in twentieth century society.[9]

Social Interaction

Social interaction was highlighted in Chapter Three as a means of interpreting continuity in the practices of the associational sphere. However, it must also be understood as a vital aspect of an active civil society, since it encourages the formation of bonds of trust without which 'society would disintegrate.'[10] Bruni and Sugden argue that it is through organisational activity that the density of civic engagement and trust are measured, as through 'each association of which she is a member, a person gains benefits by having a reputation of trustworthiness.'[11] Yet, it has often been suggested that one of the chief characteristics of twentieth century leisure has been the extent of its reorganisation around the home. The popularity of the motor car, the increasing space and comfort afforded in homes and technological innovation - for example, televisions and computers – have all contributed to the amount of leisure time spent in the home.[12] To what extent did this affect the associational sphere and community cohesion through social interaction?

During the period 1950 to 2005, social interaction outside the home remained a fundamental aspect of associational life. Despite the growing attraction of home based leisure entertainment, social engagements retained their importance for the suburban middle-classes. In particular, dinner dances, garden parties and cheese and wine nights were the types of social events used to stimulate social cohesion and promote collegiality in the modern associational sphere. Whilst attendance at events was often variable, depending on the period of time or the specific group, social evenings remained a regular feature of associational life. For St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee in Leicester, social

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[9]   The term 'seedbeds of trust' refers to Bruni and Sugden' s conception of the transference of information through dense networks of associations. In this way 'networks of civic engagement might then be the seedbeds of trust.' Bruni, L and Sugden, R, 'Moral canals: trust and social capital in the work of Hume, Smith and Genovesi', *Economic and Philosophy,* 16, 2000, 6.

[10]   Mollering, G, 'The nature of trust: from Georg Simmel to a theory of expectation, Interpretation and suspension', *Sociology,* 35, 2001, 405.

[11]   Bruni and Sugden, 'Moral canals', 4.

[12]   Cunningham, H, 'Leisure and culture', in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Volume II* (Cambridge, 1990), 317.

evenings and dinners were a permanent fixture on the associational calendar, with a special committee established to deal with the organisation of occasions such as the 'February social evening … when the choir and dramatic society will entertain us.'[13] Similarly the Leicester Asian Business Association exemplified an organisation committed to stimulating sociability in associational life. Founding member Jaffer Kapasee revealed that:

> Socially what happens is that, whenever we have an event, we either have a dance programme or Indian Bangra, northern Indian folk dancing, or we have had western music, some groups that play after our annual dinner so we have some dancing and so on…we have maximum attendance… the last gathering we had had 600 people, from various walks of life, a big event.[14]

From the 1980s until 2005, social events were important to the identity of the organisation. For the Leicester Asian Business Association, social occasions provided the ideal opportunity for different areas of the community to interact beyond the organisation itself. Not all social events however, attracted 600 attendees. Often social gatherings recorded in the associational activities of organisations in Leicester were of a smaller and private nature. Leicester Society of Artists held social evenings throughout the period 1950 to 2005 and whilst some of these events were larger in scale, including 'soirees' held during art exhibitions at Leicester Museum and were attended by the Mayor,[15] others were of a more private nature and for members only, including midsummer parties and buffet suppers held at individual member's homes.[16] As Figure 4.1 shows, the organisation had a high concentration of members residing at the urban fringe and beyond, with the average member living nearly ten miles from the city centre. This was one of the longest distances recorded within the study and exemplifies how important social interaction was for the 'suburbans'; many members were prepared to travel considerable distances to participate in social events. Figure 4.1 represents the residential dispersal of organisation members:

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[13] Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR), DE 1564/685, St Martin's Parish Council Social Committee minutes, 12th January 1959.

[14] Interview with Jaffer Kapasee, founding member of the Leicester Asian Business Association, June 2007.

[15] Private collection of minute books, Leicester Society of Artists, 6th October 1962.

[16] These types of events are recorded throughout the minute books of the Leicester Society of Artists, specific examples can be found in the 1978 annual report and 6th June 1982.

Figure 4.1– Residential distribution of members of the Leicester Society of Artists,
cumulative membership 1950-2000
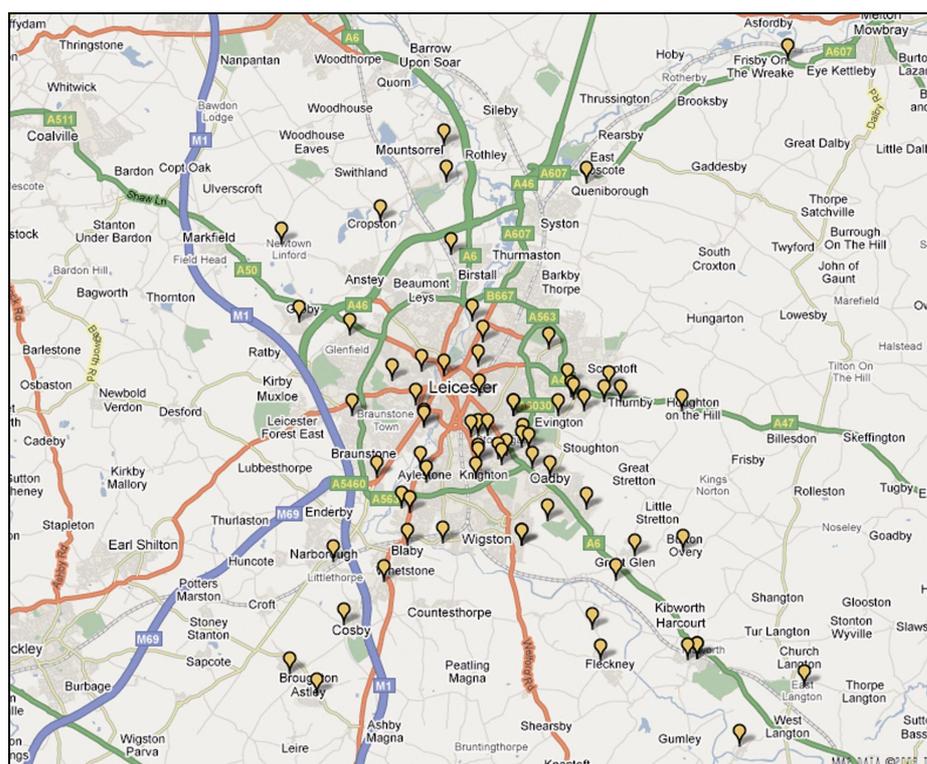
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Leicester Society of Artists.

For many historians the migration of the middle-classes to the suburbs ended not only their engagement with the formal political management of the city but also their contribution to social cohesion.[17] McKibbin's allusion, however, to a society whose very patterns of life tended to conceal sociability, is perhaps more realistic in relation to the 'suburbans' of Leicester and Loughborough.[18] Previous generations had generally provided public displays of sociability, yet by the post-war era, social activities were evidently played out in a more private domain. Mostly organisations met behind closed doors with the 'suburbans' socialising in the comfort of their own homes.[19] Where the media once reported on the behaviour and development of particular societies and organisations, interest after the 1950s had become more light-hearted, lacking real involvement in specific issues. In this respect, organisations and their suburban members forged exclusive communities within Leicester, through private, social interaction. Baer suggests that:

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[17] See Masterman, *The Condition of England* and Thompson, F.M.L, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982).

[18] McKibbin, R, *Classes and Cultures. England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 1998), 85.

[19] Gunn, S and Bell, R, *Middle Classes, their Rise and Sprawl* (London, 1996), 67.

The free association of individual citizens in such organisations reinforces participatory norms and encourages cooperative interaction, and promotes interpersonal trust, all of which are believed to be crucial for achieving effective solutions to important problems facing the wider community.[20]

In terms of the social interaction exemplified by organisations in Leicester during the twentieth century, it is clear that, far from withdrawing from urban life and rejecting sociability, the middle-classes were encouraging cooperative interaction through associational activity. At times social interaction may have been more private and behind closed doors – in line with the increasing trend for home based leisure entertainment - but the 'suburbans' had not completely withdrawn; instead they remained resolutely involved in the networks of civic engagement that promoted the emergence of social trust and maintained civil society, encouraging interaction at functions both within and outside the home.[21]

In Loughborough, similar patterns of social engagement were apparent. Organised events like dinner dances, cheese and wine evenings and more traditional occasions such as Christmas and Easter parties were a staple part of associational life. Clubs and societies, like the Loughborough InnerWheel Club, delighted in such events, featuring heavily in their minute book accounts of club life. Social engagements of a more formal nature included garden fetes, fashion shows and VE day celebrations, whilst informal occasions held at a member's home included coffee mornings, sherry parties, and Christmas lunches.[22] Engagement such as this can also be seen in the social behaviour of other associations within Loughborough, including the Boat Club, the Naturalists Club and the Emmanuel Women's Guild, all of which contributed to the stock of social capital within the town through social interaction. It is important to recognise however, that in both Leicester and Loughborough social events were not always well-attended. Indeed, for certain organisations the social

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[20] Curtis, J.E, Baer, D.E and Grabb, E.G, 'Nation of joiners: explaining voluntary association membership in democratic societies', *American Sociological Review*, 66, 2001, 783.

[21] Putnam, R, 'Bowling alone: American's declining social capital', *Journal of Democracy*, 6, 1995, 67. For further examples of Putnam's work see Putnam, R, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Tradition in Modern Italy* (Princeton, 1993) and Putnam, R, 'Tuning in, tuning out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America', *Political Science and Politics*, 28, 1995, 664-83.

[22] The sample of events, taken from the private collection of minute books for the Loughborough InnerWheel Club, were chosen to reflect both the variety of social engagement occurring within this organisation and the extent of its continuity over the period 1950 to 2005. Many of these social occasions appear in the minute books on more than one occasion but as a point of reference the summer garden fete April 4th 1954, coffee morning 18th May 1960, sherry party 5th October 1960, Christmas fair October 4th 1965, fashion show 14th October 1970 and a VE party 9th May 1995.

dimension of associational life wavered over the years; for others it receded altogether. As early as the late 1950s attendance at gatherings for St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee in Leicester were referred to as 'very poor'[23] and Dr. Alan McWhirr of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society observed a declining interest in social engagements in more recent decades:

> In the past…there were dinners that people used to attend, but they have fallen by the way side and are not particularly popular anymore. If you do try and put on an event it doesn't attract much attention or support really.[24]

Similar accounts can be found in the minute books of the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society. For Society secretary Cedric Granger, decline in interest can be summarised easily:

> In the '60s and right into the '70s our annual dinner was a big affair, you'd get 100 to 120. You'd have the Mayor come and all that, held at the town hall…but of course that was in the days when we only went out for one meal a year, I mean now everyone eats out all the time and nobody wants to get dressed up, I mean that was a black tie affair and all that, with an orchestra and all that basically is gone…it's not the kind of thing that people want anymore, the youngsters don't want it. If we have a social occasion, then basically I want to sit down and have a conversation with people, but what do the young ones want? They want a disco that's so loud you can't talk.[25]

These comments reflect the fluctuating interest attached to social interaction depending on the specific organisation. The variable nature of associational activity in the context of participation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was considered in Chapter Two. It was noted that wavering attendance was not just a contemporary phenomenon but comparable with the problems that faced associations in previous eras.[26] In earlier centuries, civic engagement through social interaction varied from organisation to organisation and this was equally true of associational life in the twentieth century.

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[23] ROLLR, DE 1564/685, St Martin's Parish Council Social Committee, 12th January 1959.

[24] Interview with Dr. Alan McWhirr, secretary of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, July 2007.

[25] Interview with Cedric Granger, secretary of the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society, October 2006.

[26] In Chapter Two, Location, Location, Location: Geographical Mapping of Membership, Clark was referenced suggesting that during the eighteenth century 'conflict, secession, poor attendance and financial difficulties imposed great strain on many societies and contributed to their limited life span.' For a further insight into his argument see Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800.* In addition Morris makes similar assertions in his paper, 'The voluntary societies and British urban elites, 1780-1850: an analysis', *The Historical Journal,* 26, 1983, 95-118.

For some organisations lack of social engagement did not undermine a sense of community. For the modern association, identity was not confined to the close proximity of neighbourhood or workplace and community was accordingly constructed beyond the immediate physical limits of home and work. Cedric Granger explained the connectivity associated with the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society:

> We are a community…oh yes. Our lives, our friends, all our friends more or less have been met through the society. One couple in particular who have three children round about the same age as ours and for years and years we went on holiday together...that was through the amateurs and nearly all the people I know are through the amateurs. We don't know anybody (where we live). (We) don't speak to them. I think I know their name (next door), but two doors down from here I have never been in the house, nothing. We are on nodding acquaintance with people, over the garden wall type of thing, you wave at people as they go by in the car but I mean they get in the car and they go out, nobody really meets...There is no community spirit around here.[27]

The issue of community within the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society is even more significant when we examine the geographical dispersal of membership. The average member resided approximately 3.5 miles from the town centre, with residential locations dispersed throughout the county, as Figure 4.2 reflects:

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[27] Interview with Cedric Granger, secretary of the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society, October 2006.

Figure 4.2– Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society, cumulative membership 1950-2000
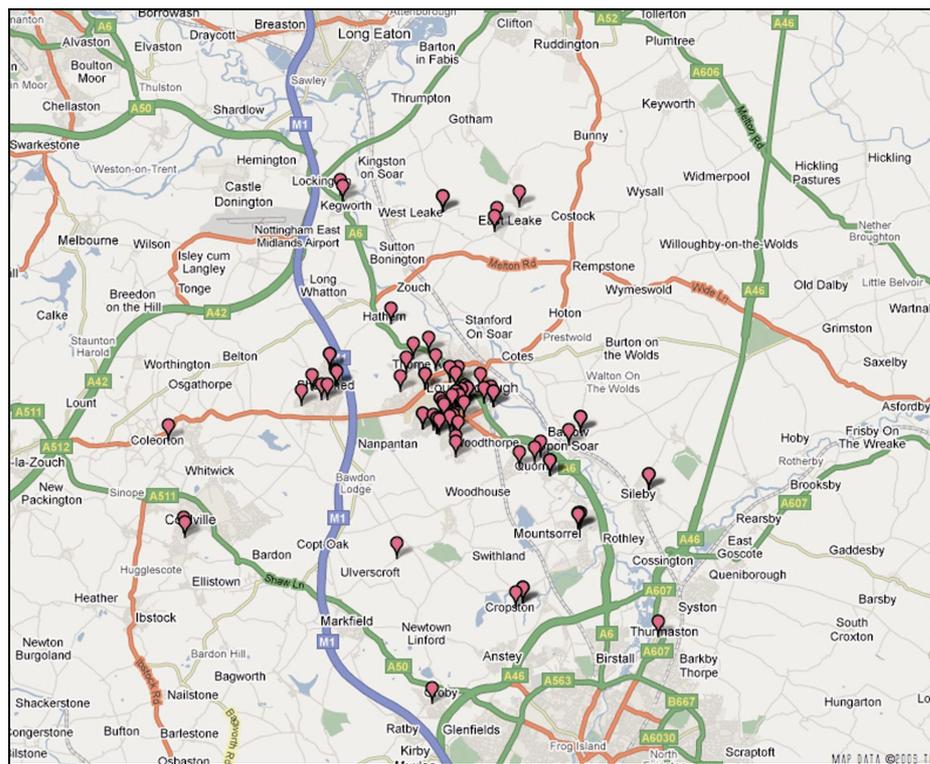
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society.

For Cedric Granger, the collective interest of the organisation, not the social interaction, was fundamental to his conception of community. Barnett and Crowther note:

> One of the classic presuppositions of any definition of community is that the group of people comprising that community share commonality of interest and it has been common to see this applying to a group of people sharing a locality as a place of habitation. Community, however, can be defined as a commonality of interest among a group of people but the presumption that this can be defined by the geographical concept of locality needs to be questioned.[28]

In this respect community is a more fluid concept than is often recognised; boundaries are not always easily recognisable.[29] These types of communities are equally as important to the concept of civil society as communities formed around location. Scherer has argued that modern social relationships 'involve overlapping and complex association; community was

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28 Barnett, N.J and Crowther, D.E.A, 'Community identity in the twenty-first century. A postmodernist evaluation of local government structure', *International Journal of Public Sector Management,* 11, 1998, 429.

29 Ibid.

not anchored by place or lifestyle…the emphasis not being on social balance, cohesion and homogeneity, but upon social exchange.'[30] Seemingly within Leicester and Loughborough during the years 1950 to 2005, organisational activity helped to construct the types of communities identified by Scherer.[31] Similarly Clapson suggests in his analysis of post-war working-class suburbia that an alternative form of 'community' developed around associational life, no longer depended upon the geographical ties of place. For many historians 'community' has been understood as identification with a particular neighbourhood or street, yet Clapson concludes that this was just 'one context which brought people together… groups and associations made social connections around interests which had little to do with local identification.'[32] Such associations created 'communities of interest' and supplied an alternative to neighbourhood as an organisational basis for identity and interaction. These conclusions can be adapted to embrace the behaviour of the Leicester and Loughborough suburbans. The addresses of the members of each society demonstrated widely divergent geographical locations; developing their sense of community through interaction based on shared interests rather than proximate relationships provided by work and home, with neighbourhoods receding as an organising principle.

Cultural Engagement

Whilst organisations such as The Leicestershire Asian Business Association and the Loughborough Boat Club placed emphasis on the social commitments that encourage community spirit and social networking, other organisations focused time and energy on cultural contributions that affected both the physical and social fabric of society. Civic culture remains synonymous with the construction of the urban and, for Kumar, civil society is the sphere of culture in the broadest sense.[33] According to Lees, Leicester in particular had a strong cultural history that helped promote a regional identity through its many

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[30] Ibid, 430.

[31] Scherer's argument relating to community and the importance of social exchange as a unifying agent is taken from in Barnett and Crowther, 'Community identity in the twenty-first century. A postmodernist evaluation of local government structure', 425-30.

[32] Clapson, M, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Post War England* (Manchester, 1998), 156.

[33] Kumar, K, 'Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term', *British Journal of Sociology*, 44, 1993, 375-95.

activities.[34] The majority of organisations analysed within this study were founded upon hobbies and intellectual interests and thus the issue of culture is essential to the understanding of the 'single issue' association of the twentieth century,[35] and their connections with the 'suburbans.' Nash and Reeder concluded in their own study of Leicester, that whilst the function of associations within the city may have changed during the post-war period, their participation did not. Organisations within the city became active in new areas of cultural and associational life, based around interests and hobbies,[36] conclusions which support the findings of this study.

Traditional elements of associational life were acknowledged in Chapter Three as a corner stone of the associational sphere, an element that highlighted the continuity in the practices of voluntary organisations. Whilst pageantry was acknowledged as a less popular form of urban ritual, it existed nonetheless and continued to contribute to the cultural identity of the urban environment. For Cannadine, in his study of the Colchester Oyster Festival, a sense of involvement and inclusion was often created through the process of celebration and pageantry, with a common sense of unity achieved through civic pride.[37] With regards to Leicester's twentieth century 'subscriber democracy',[38] specific events and important occasions acted as a catalyst for community cohesion in both the associational sphere and the city as a whole. Such occasions also provided the opportunity for voluntary organisations to contribute culturally to the urban environment. This was exemplified during the Queen's coronation year of 1953. The occasion became a symbol of national pride, transcending into acts of civic engagement throughout the country, including the city of Leicester. The Leicestershire Motor Car Club was one organisation actively involved in the preparations of the coronation celebrations, uniting with the City Council in their formation of a sub-committee to deal with coronation arrangements.[39] As part of the 'sports gala and displays subcommittee' the organisation obtained a significant amount of the city's

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[34]   Lees, L. H, 'Urban Networks', in Daunton, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III*, 76.

[35]   Harris, J, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain, 1945-2001' in Burke, K, ed., *The British Isles since 1945* (Oxford, 2003), 100.

[36]   Nash and Reeder, *Leicester in the Twentieth Century*, 158.

[37]   Cannadine, D, 'The transformation of civic ritual in modern Britain: the Colchester oyster feast' *Past and Present*, 94, 107-30.

[38]   Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 412.

[39]   ROLLR, DE 2172/31 Leicestershire Motor Car Club Committee minutes, 4th October, 1952.

coronation budget of £16,110,[40] and the Motor Car Club's involvement in such plans reflected the importance attached to local associations by the City Council. In December of 1952, the Club concluded that after attending a meeting of the delegation the organisation would be 'staging a rally and other such items.'[41]

Pageantry and celebration provided the city with an opportunity to display its civic individuality, unifying urban communities under a common identity. Similarly, the involvement of the Motor Car Club in a procession through the city, not only displayed the Club's physical identity to the citizens of Leicester, but also emphasised its connection to and importance within the community. Gunn has suggested that during the Victorian era, civic events acted not only as a contrivance for unity, but also as an expression of governance, with the most influential paraded in front of the city's residents.[42] In a similar, Begley, in her study of Leicester during the period 1870 to 1939, revealed the importance still attached to ritualised tradition and pageantry by the outbreak of the Second World War.[43] By 1952 such notions were still prevalent in the associational sphere. For the Motor Car Club, the coronation festivities allowed the association to be seen publicly as part of the city's identity, whilst also uniting and involving its members in a celebration for the community of Leicester. This associational participation contrasted with the view that the 'suburbans' were devoid of interest, with the average member of the Motor Car Club residing 3.7 miles from the city centre.[44] Members were connected to an association serving a civic end,[45] proud of their contribution to proceedings.

Such events were not confined to Leicester or the early years of the post-war period. In 1982 Charnwood Racial Equality Council were actively involved in the 'Festival of Bangladesh', an event organised for the community of Loughborough:

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[40]   Ibid.

[41]   Ibid, 4th December, 1952.

[42]   Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class,* 172.

[43]   Begley, S, 'Voluntary associations and the civic ideal in Leicester, 1870-1939', unpublished Leicester PhD 2009.

[44]   Masterman. *The Condition of England*, 62.

[45]   Putnam, 'Bowling alone: America's declining social capital', 67.

In order to highlight the needs of the Loughborough Bangladeshi community and to bring the cultural background of the people of Bangladesh to the attention of the town…the Community Relations Council, jointly with the Leicestershire and Information services, organised a week of events….The festival commenced with a reception at County Hall given by the Chairman of Leicestershire County Council.[46]

Similarly in 1988 the minutes of the Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society recorded the involvement of the organisation in the planning of the Borough's Centenary Celebrations: 'A letter dated 12th April from the Borough Chief Executive thanking us for our involvement in the Centenary Celebrations.'[47] Events such as these continued to play a significant role in the cultural identify of individual locations. For local organisations, and thus their suburban membership, they remained an important way of connecting associational activity to the urban core and the cultural heritage of the town and city.

Contributions to civic culture however, were not only seen through pageantry and celebration. Cultural engagement took various forms in both Leicester and Loughborough, examples of which included intellectual and educational interests, the medium of art, and the role of religious participation. As a member of Leicester's middle-classes in the 1930s, Betsy Leon stressed the ongoing importance of both cultural and social interests by the urban elites. According to Mrs Leon, middle-class associations, such as the Belmont House Society, organised regular lectures for the reading of 'high brow papers'; similarly interests in amateur dramatics, music and art also catered for informed and educated tastes. For her, the Society formed 'an intellectual set' delighting in all types of cultural activities.[48] Evidence drawn from the records of the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee, the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, and the Literary and Philosophical Society reinforced the importance of middle-class culture in underpinning civic identity and social interaction as the twentieth century progressed. Whilst such organisations may have remained active in matters directly related to the interest of the city, such as philanthropic considerations and preservation issues, associations also sought to bring a cultural influence to the city of

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[46]   Private collection of reports for the Charnwood Racial Equality Council, taken from the year 1st April 1982 – 31st March 1983.

[47]   Private collection of minute books, Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society, May 1988.

[48]   East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA), 01480/PM/EM/086, 'Betsy Leon, Memories of Leicester.'

Leicester. From its foundation in 1835, the Literary and Philosophical Society focused on the formation of an intellectual 'taste' in the city of Leicester, which its founder felt lacking.[49] Meetings revolved around discussions on both literary and scientific issues, themes continued within the Society's agenda in the 1950s and beyond. An interview with Mr and Mrs Goddard, members of a leading middle-class family of the 1900s, suggested that the 'Lit and Phil' remained a very important and interesting group in the mid twentieth century, maintaining its magnetic attraction as a meeting place for those members of the middle-classes with an intellectual interest.[50] The annual meeting of the group included inaugural lectures by Presidents of the Society, and the Association prided itself on its intellectual contribution to the city:

> The Society is perhaps best known to the general public on account of its lectures, given each year during the winter months, by people of eminence in the realm of science, literature, art and music. Special work is also carried out by the sections covering botany, biology, philanthropy, economics and geology.[51]

In Leicester, lecture programmes in particular remained a popular way of interacting both socially and culturally throughout the years 1950 to 2005. Numerous associations, including organisations like the Women's Luncheon Committee, the National Women's Register and the Archaeological and Historical Society actively organised lecture programmes that became an integral part of the social and cultural calendar.[52] According to the Archaeological and Historical Society Secretary, Dr. Alan McWhirr, they were often the main occasion for the congregation of members:

> (There are) 10, 11, 12 lectures, I can't remember the precise number as it varies from one year to the next….basically they are lectures on local (issues) lately, I think (there was) a period when our lecture secretaries were trying to get in national speakers because they knew them and it was a favour to come and speak to the Society, an honour I suppose, but some people felt the local interest was not always obvious….. The main social event is coffee after the lectures.[53]

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[49]   Lott, F.B, *The Centenary book of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society* (Leicester, 1935), 3.

[50]   EMOHA, 01822/EM/108/AB, 'Mr and Mrs Goddard'.

[51]   *Transaction Papers of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society* (TLLPS), 1950-1951.

[52]   ROLLR, DE 2509/1. Examples of guest speakers include Sir Ronald Stoss on the issue of Palestine, 24th January 1951 and also local businessman Harold Gee, 13th November 1956 in The Women's Luncheon Committee minutes.

[53]   Interview with Dr. Alan McWhirr, secretary of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, July 2007.

In smaller groups, such as the National Women's Register, lectures were less official taking the shape of informal discussions on varied topics including 'Old age comes to us all' and 'Women's Refuges'.[54] In this respect lectures and discussion groups provided members with the opportunity to engage culturally, disseminating knowledge through associational activity. Their contribution to civil society was two fold: events reinforced networks of sociability, whilst also contributing to the cultural heritage of the city. Despite the increasing popularity of home based leisure entertainment during the mid to late twentieth century,[55] the middle-classes remained dedicated to the type of cultural interests that continued to enrich urban life.

Lectures, however, were only one aspect of the intellectual involvement of organisations within the municipality. The Literary and Philosophical Society, for example, worked tirelessly on projects to enrich the culture of the city. In October 1962 the Society created an exhibition in the gallery of the city museum entitled 'Nature in Leicestershire' in honour of National Nature Week.[56] The Association was also involved in the funding of a 'national historic survey, designed to record the history of every county of England', alongside both the City and County Council and the Archaeological and Historical Society.[57] In this respect, organisations contributed to the stock of the city's social capital through a shared historical sense and identity which fed in to a cultural and intellectual influence with a civic purpose. In Leicester, the Archaeological and Historical Society shared similar interests with the Literary and Philosophical Society in relation to their cultural ambitions for the city. In 1951, *The Leicester Mercury* reported on the importance of the work of the Society, as well the significance of its intellectual contribution:

> The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society is 100 years old. The debt which we owe to it through the publication of its transactions, which first appeared in 1866 and have been continued unbroken until today is quite beyond measure. Nearly all we know about most of our treasured ruins and the social way of life in centuries past has been recorded through the work of the Society.[58]

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[54] Taken from the part of a private collection of the Leicester faction of the National Women's Register, programme December 2000.

[55] Cunningham, 'Leisure and culture', 317.

[56] *TLLPS*, 1961-1962.

[57] Leicester City Council Minutes, 27th January 1953.

[58] *Leicester Mercury (LM)*, 24th January 1951.

The Society was clearly eager to participate in the restoration and preservation of the city's history, and it is significant that the local press should acknowledge their valuable contribution. Thus the Association, heavily reliant on a suburban membership, was active in the cultural facet of city life and their work and position was consequently recognised in the public sphere. It is worth noting however, that cultural contributions consistently conformed to Harris' terminology of the 'single issue' organisation of the twentieth century.[59] In terms of engagement, associations rarely interacted on issues that did not support their own interest or agenda, a concern that has led academics to question the future of civil society within contemporary Britain.[60]

A similar conclusion emerges when the cultural involvement of associations within Loughborough is considered. As in Leicester, organisations made significant cultural contributions to the public sphere. For associations like the Loughborough Naturalists Club and the Charnwood Racial Equality Council, practical projects undertaken were mutually beneficial, promoting both the organisations themselves and the cultural capital of the borough. Throughout the period under review both organisations held exhibitions of their work within the community, including projects on the Charnwood Forest Survey for the Naturalist Club and 'The Garden' for Charnwood Racial Equality Council, described as follows in their annual reports :

> The exhibition area at The Garden has been well used by mainly local artists. Many people have dropped in to view the works and parties of school children have been brought by their teachers to see some of the exhibitions which included "In the Garden", "Living Sculpture", "Housing Exhibition", and "Urban studies of South India".[61]

Elsewhere, the Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society and Loughborough Civic Trust demonstrated their commitment to the civic culture of the town through an interest in the built environment. The British trend towards modernity was evident in many areas of urban life during the mid twentieth century, particularly in urban planning and the remodelling of British towns and cities.[62] In the 1950s and 60s, urban planners focused on slum clearance, new estates and the provision of improved road transport, with more of the fabric of British cities being destroyed than by all the bombings

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[59]   Harris, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain', 100.

[60]   Colls, R and Rodger, R, 'Civil society and British cities' in Colls and Rodger, eds., *Cities of Ideas,* 19.

[61]   Private collection of annual reports, Charnwood Racial Equality Council, 1st-31st January 1987.

[62]   Cocks, H, 'Modernity and modernism' in Carnevali, F and Strange, J.M, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (London, 2007), 39.

of the Second World War.[63] As old landmarks began to disappear, an increasing number of voluntary organisations turned their attention to the protection and conservation of the urban place.[64] The preservation of the Old Rectory Church in Loughborough exemplified the interest of the Archaeological and Historical Society in conservation issues within their town. First appearing in the minute books of the organisation in 1959 it was noted that 'A special meeting was called to discuss the possibility of preserving the All Saints Rectory.'[65] Much like the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, the Loughborough branch devoted time and energy to the preservation of important buildings within the community and the Old Rectory achieved iconic status as one of the Society's most publicised achievements. By 1960 the organisation was embroiled with the local council over the issue of the maintenance of the site:

> Over the past twelve months the main work of the Society has been the effort to save the Parish Church Rectory from demolition and to record its features. A letter protesting at the proposed demolition was sent to the town council and as a result representatives of the Society met the Borough Council surveyor and escorted him over the building.[66]

From the minutes it is clear that the organisation valued its preservationist role as a defender of the physical environment, openly acknowledging aspirations to connect the Association with the cultural aspects of urban life. Clearly, the chairman remarked, 'the Society was beginning to play its part in the cultural activities of the town.'[67] By the mid 1960s, the Society had won its battle and the Rectory became a regular feature in the minute books of the organisation, taking over the maintenance of the site as a tourist attraction. In 1988 the Society recorded 'a very successful season, after only 18 weeks (13 to go) there had been 435 visitors to the Old Rectory.'[68] Undoubtedly the organisation was civically engaged through its ability to serve an identifiable civic purpose, working outside the sphere of the state to

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[63] Meller, H, *Towns, Plans and Society in Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1997), 82. For additional references on urban planning in the post-war period see Lawless, P and Brown, F, *Urban Growth and Change in Britian: An Introduction* (London, 1987) and Ravetz, A, *Remaking Cities* (London, 1980).

[64] Ibid, 83.

[65] Private collection of minute books, Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society, 14th May 1959.

[66] Ibid, 30th April 1960.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid, 30th July 1988.

accomplish their objectives.[69] As an organisation it was committed to the preservation of the Old Rectory, demonstrating the extent to which associational activity, and the dedication of its members, could impact on the cultural heritage of the urban environment.

In a similar way, the Loughborough Civic Trust bestowed much of its time and energy to the issue of conservation in the town, campaigning against the demolition of specific buildings, encouraging pedestrianisation of the town centre, and working as consultants for Charnwood Borough Council on planning applications. In addition to these interventions in the public sphere, the Trust was actively involved in various other aspects of town life between the years 1950 and 2005. For example, it encouraged young people to involve themselves in local issues, such as the anti-litter campaign of 1982, when they offered awards to the local school most involved with the campaign.[70] Furthermore, the Civic Trust founded the Loughborough Civic Award, also in 1982, as an annual prize giving to acknowledge projects judged to have advanced community interests.[71] Not only was the Civic Trust contributing to civil society by serving civic ends and making important cultural contributions, but they were also encouraging those within the community to strive for the same ideals. Such aims and objectives clearly emphasise that organisations like the Civic Trust, and by association their suburban membership, were in direct contradiction to the perception of middle-class detachment, disinterest and decline.

Overall, many similarities are evident when we evaluate the cultural contributions of associations in both Leicester and Loughborough. However, upon consideration of the importance of the universities in both locations, marked differences are apparent. In Leicester, the cultural nature of the city was, and remains to the present day, enriched by the presence of the University of Leicester. Culture and education are close relations, and thus the influence of the University on culturally ambitious associations, specifically the Literary and Philosophical Society and the Archaeological and Historical Society in Leicester, was considerable. In return, the communication between such associations and the University reflected another facet of the city's cultural identity upon which these associations were influential. Guest speakers from the University regularly delivered lectures to Society

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[69]   Flyvberg argues that a strong civil society will have a core group of voluntary organisations that are able to work outside the sphere of the state. See Flyvbjerg, B, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?' *The British Journal of Sociology*, 49, 210-33

[70]   Private collection of minute books, Loughborough Civic Trust, 8th July 1982.

[71]   Ibid, 4th March 1982.

members, and many professors, including W.G. Hoskins and Jack Simmons enjoyed membership and significant places on the executive committees of the associations.[72] In return, members of the Literary and Philosophical Society arranged lecture programmes attended by the University of Leicester Geophysical Society, a tradition still upheld today according to student Vice President, Samuel Cheyney.[73] Furthermore, in 1951, the general meeting of the Archaeological and Historical Society took place at the University College, whilst university lecturers, such as Professor Millward, conducted excursions for members of the Literary and Philosophical Society. Grants for the Botany section of the Society were also provided by the University, emphasising their commitment and appreciation to the contribution being made by the Society.[74]

Consequently, in Leicester the relationship between intellectual associations and the University were important to the organisations themselves, and also to the cultural foundations of the city. Organisations constructed important networks with the University, in order to broaden their intellectual scope and align themselves with an important civic institution. Equally, the University developed projects in conjunction with various associations within Leicester, supplying both funds and support for projects that brought society closer to itself, consistent with Kumar's understanding of a civil society.[75] Thus, the town and gown relationship was mutually beneficial, and for the 'suburbans' who underpinned organisations with a significant percentage of their membership, such links reflected a continuing influence on the civic identity of a city from which they were far from detached.

The same type of relationship however, was not always as prevalent in the smaller urban area of Loughborough. A recognised University since 1966, Loughborough University dates back to 1909 when the College existed as a Technical Institute, focusing on skills and knowledge directly applicable in the wider industrial and commercial world.[76] Steadily developing as a dominant feature in the town, the student population tripled from 4,000 to

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[72] References to Society lectures can be found throughout the *Transaction papers of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* (TLAHS), 1950-65 and their private archive collection 1950-2005.

[73] Private Conversation with Vice President of the University of Leicester Geophysical Society, Samuel Cheyney.

[74] *TLLPS*, 1950-51.

[75] Kumar, 'Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term', 282.

[76] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loughborough_University.

12,000 during the period 1974 to 1999.[77] Yet, despite the increasing size of the University, the same density of engagement with local organisations was less apparent than in the city of Leicester. Despite a significant number of organisations recording interaction with the University, the extent of cooperation was only modest when compared with the experiences of organisations like the Literary and Philosophical Society in Leicester. For example, on occasions knowledge-based organisations in Loughborough such as the Probus Club, the Archaeological and Historical Society, and the Civic Trust were invited to the University campus to attend lectures, but these were not as frequently recorded as for the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society.[78] Limited connections appeared to exist beyond this. Unlike Leicester, the University did not appear to provide grants for any of the organisations anaylsed within this study and, furthermore, organisations seemed less inclined to align themselves with the institution, contrasting significantly with the experience of associations in Leicester.

Putnam and Gamm have argued that civic engagement in America was often more apparent in smaller locations,[79] yet in terms of the networks of communication constructed with their respective universities, this was not the case when comparing the experiences of Loughborough and Leicester.[80] In a smaller location like Loughborough, the existence of an important institution like the University might be presumed to play a disproportionately greater role in the local community and contribute significantly to the stock of social capital. Yet, whilst the University had an important role to play within the town in terms of its contribution to the local economy,[81] the types of cultural networks that allowed the transference of knowledge between the institution and local organisations, were far less evident when compared with the flourishing connections of Leicester. Here the cultural allignment of the University and the associational sphere often deeply effected the city,

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[77] Wix D and Keil, I, *Charnwood's Silver Jubilee. How Technical, Social and Environmental Changes Have Influenced the Borough of Charnwood's Development from 1974 -1999* (Loughborough, 2002).

[78] These invitations appear sporadically in the private collection of minute books for the Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society, Loughborough Civic Trust and Loughborough Probus Club between the years 1960-2005.

[79] Gamm, G and Putnam R, 'The growth of voluntary associations in America, 1840-1940', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 24, 1999, 511-57. Rotolo T and Wilson, J, 'What happened to the "Long Civic Generation"? Explaining cohort differences in volunteerism' *Social Forces,* 82, 2004, 1091-1121 also provides an interesting account of alternate possibilities for the perception of declining voluntary activity.

[80] This view is taken from numerous private conversations about town life and the impact of the university with members of several of the organisations under analysis.

[81] Wix and Keil, *Charnwood Silver Jubilee, 89.*

helping to shape the cultural landscape of the urban core. It is worth noting however, that the University of Loughborough was noted nationally as a sporting institution. This is an issue that may well have affected its influence on cultural associations within the town and should be acknowledged when provding a comparative analysis of Leicester and Loughborough.

Religion

In addition to intellectual culture and local civic engagement, church organisations provided a further dimension to the formation and character of civic culture. Often seen as a stable factor in the urban environment, prior to the twentieth century church and chapel provided important infrastructural contributions and social investment in towns and cities. Wolffe argues, however, that 'Christianity as a social and cultural reality remained in control of British life until around the 1960s' but goes on to identify the 1960s as a decade of 'abrupt and catastrophic change.'[82] By the mid twentieth century Britain was becoming an increasingly secular society.[83] The decline of church attendance was interpreted as a product of structural shifts in the nature of British society but to what extent did this shift affect the ability of religious organisations to contribute to the stock of social capital? In relation to the cathedral church of St. Martin's in central Leicester, it is evident that during the post-war years the congregation declined significantly, with religious worship playing a less significant role in the lives of citizens after the 1950s. However, this did not prevent St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee from actively seeking to involve itself in the cultural identity of the city. The resuscitation of a lecture series by the Provost in 1954 highlighted a desire to contribute to the intellectual interest of the city, as outlined in the Parish Council Social Committee minutes:

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[82] Wolffe, J, 'Religion and "secularisation", in Carnevali and Strange, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, 334.

[83] For examples see Brierly, P, 'Religion' in Halsey, A.H, ed., *British Social Trends: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain* (London, 1988), 518-60 and Wolffe, J, 'Religion and "secularisation"', 323-38. For an insight into the controversial argument that the secularisation of Britain was not a gradual occurrence but a product of the cultural changes of the 1960s see Brown, C.G , *The Death of Christian Britain* (London, 2001).

> The provost expressed his intentions of revising the lectures which were so great a feature of the Cathedral's activities … it might be possible to run two series of four, possibly five "evening lectures" and his desire was to use the Cathedral in its true function as a "power house" and a teaching centre.[84]

It is conceivable that such actions should be interpreted as an attempt to re-establish the church to its once pivotal role within society, as the reference to the church as a 'power house' implies. Yet it is also plausible that the Cathedral, already a focal point of the city's physical identity, was keen to contribute to the cultural foundations of civic life and through its urban mission, to the store of social capital. Furthermore, the work of the Parish Council Social Committee in highlighting the achievements of the city through events such as the Christian youth conference and the BBC 'Songs of Praise' recording in 1964, exemplified a dedication to the enrichment of the city and to civic engagement.[85] By working alongside local government to prepare for the BBC's 'Songs of Praise' programme, the Parish Council Social Committee recognised the importance of using the event as a catalyst to unite the communities of Leicester through the ministry. The Committee asked 'that all the eighty members of the Leicester Council of Churches be in attendance' and the theme of the service would be 'unity.'[86] It is important to consider that in the preceding years the Committee had raised concerns over church attendance and the size of the Cathedral congregation, suggesting that in the post-war era the age of 'welfarism' had lessened both the importance and power of the church. St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee retained little of the influence it had once possessed. Yet it recognised the importance of involving itself in public initiatives, embracing activities that would again draw the community to worship. Interestingly when examining the geographical distribution of members, it is clear that in comparison to other organisations within Leicester, members of St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee resided considerably closer to the urban core. On average a member of the organisation lived only 2 miles from the city centre as Figure 4.3 reflects. Whilst this was still a significant distance it was one mile less than the 'suburban' definition for Leicester:

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84   ROLLR, DE 1564/685, St Martin's Parish Council Social Committee minutes, 8th July, 1954.

85   Ibid, 8th December 1962 and 12th September 1964.

86   Ibid, 30th June 1964.

Figure 4.3– Residential distribution of members of the St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee, cumulative membership 1950-70

Source: Data obtained from St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee minutes, ROLLR, DE 1564/685.

In this respect the organisation promoted a close knit community, with members more inclined to reside closer to their chapel and congregation, and thus the urban core. Religious associations in general appeared to maintain communities that were based on location, with proximity to chapel a fundamental aspect of their associational commitment.

At a different urban scale, religious organisations in Loughborough were also actively engaged in the post-war years, and indeed their contributions to social capital continued throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. These findings are supported by the records of the Knights of St. Columba in Loughborough. Affiliated to the Catholic Church, the organisation was deeply committed to preserving and encouraging the Catholic faith in the community of Loughborough through the combination of both social events and specific religious occasions. These included lectures, dinner dances, and children's Christmas parties, alongside discussion groups aimed to show 'how the layman could often do as

much as a priest.'[87] Furthermore, the Knights of St. Columba strove to better contemporary society in terms of their Catholic beliefs, exemplified by their constant commitment during the years 1950 to 2005 to issues such as the abolition of obscene literature and campaigns against the legalisation of abortions.[88] The absence of a coherent municipal structure during the early years of the nineteenth century, as discussed in Chapter Three, led to the growth of middle-class, urban leadership.[89] Philanthropic associations often represented an important element of organisational control, with associational activity used to exemplify a middle-class way of life, upholding the moral balance of urban society. Religion in particular was often used as a medium for disseminating an elitist ideology. As Gunn suggests, in the chapel community a sense of discipline was encouraged by the presence of particular organisations.[90] In much the same way philanthropic organisations of the twentieth century, particularly those closely affiliated with organised religion, often expressed a social conscience and a determination to influence the urban environment on specific issues.

The Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild (EWG) is a further example of such an organisation in Loughborough. Its constitution recorded:

> The Women's Guild…is a church group but membership is open to all women. Its purpose is to promote Christian friendship and fellowship amongst its members, and to show a care and concern for those who are lonely or in need in the parish.[91]

As an organisation the EWG successfully combined a commitment to the Christian faith and social interaction, and the EWG's records reveal an active social calendar that included

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[87] Private collection of minute books, Loughborough branch of the Knights of St.Columba. Examples of lectures, dinner dances and Christmas parties for children run throughout the years 1950-2005. The discussion group example is taken from December 1967.

[88] Ibid. Examples of the organisation's campaigns against obscene literature and the legalisation of abortion are evident throughout the club minute books. As to be expected in the context of the period, these campaigns are at their height during the 1960s and 1970s, but references to the issue continue into the 1990s. The club maintains its involvement with campaigns to protect the rights of unborn children by inviting visiting speakers to the club to discuss the issue, 9th October 1990.

[89] For an insight into nineteenth century urban governance see *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III* which provides an excellent collection of essays, including Davis J, 'Central government and the towns', 261-86; Doyle, B, 'The changing functions of urban government: councillors, officials and pressure groups', 287-314; Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British Towns', 395-426.

[90] Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 125.

[91] Private collection of minute books, the constitution of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild.

various events from 'World Prayer Day' in 1970 to annual dinners and coffee mornings.[92] Socialising and charitable aid were an important part of the EWG's role and identity. So, too, were Christian beliefs, as noted in the minutes in 1970: 'The prayers were led by Mrs Haigh and Mrs Bosworth gave the bible reading.'[93] As the documentary records show, a fundamental part of the organisation was the ability of their members to practice their Christian beliefs, something that did not falter during the period analysed. Like the membership records of St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee, association members were more inclined to live close to their chapel and congregation, maintaining a religious community that was based upon location. On average a member of the EWG lived only half a mile from the centre of town, a distance that only increased by a fraction between 1970 and 2000. Figure 4.4 shows the residential distribution of members in the organisation between 1970 and 2000:

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[92]   Ibid. World Prayer Day, March 1970. Examples of coffee mornings and annual dinners were recorded throughout the club's minute books between the years 1962 – 2005.

[93]   Ibid, 9th November 1970.

Figure 4.4– Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild, cumulative membership 1970-2000
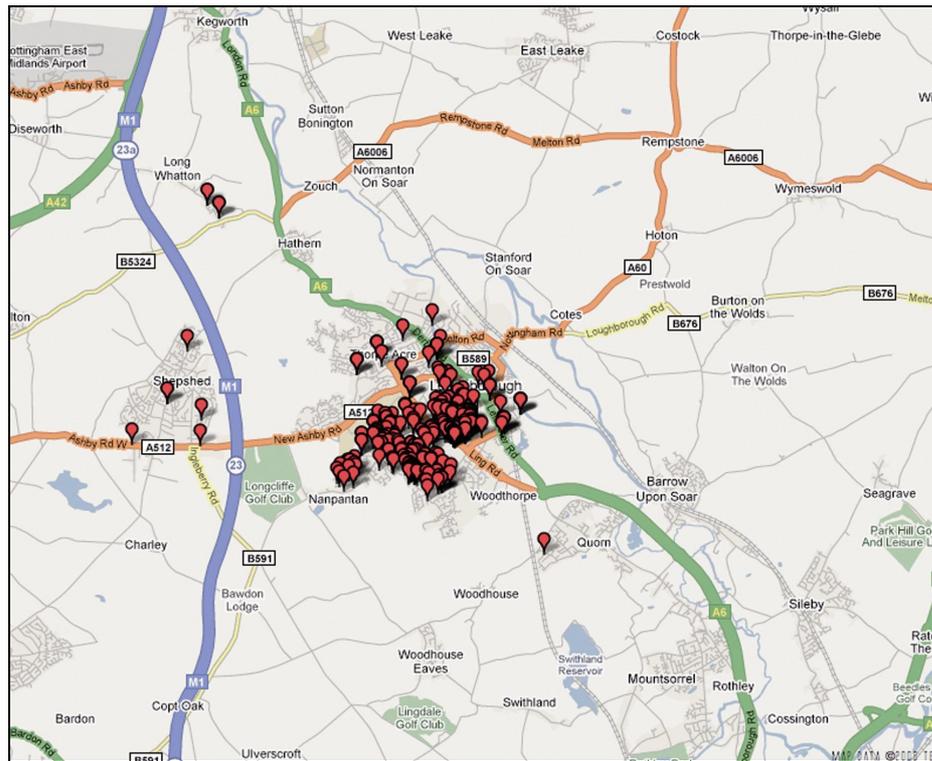
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild.

Clearly religious based organisations, whether in a larger or smaller urban location were more inclined to produce a residential membership that lived within close proximity to the urban core. It is also fair to conclude that membership numbers in local, religious organisations were in decline by the latter years of the twentieth century. Such conclusions reflect a wide spread, national decline in religious affiliation since the 1950s. However, despite faltering numbers, it is also important to note that the dedication of existing participants remained constant. Overall, associations such as these continued to contribute to the associational culture of the town, dedicated to the improvement of society in the widest sense. In this respect local clubs and societies like the EWG, the Knights of St.Columba and the InnerWheel club all showed the extent to which religious organisations still had a role to play within contemporary Britain in the second half of the twentieth century. Though membership faltered at times, the commitment of the middle-classes to the urban environment, and the moral well being of society, continued to be expressed through voluntary activity in the associational sphere.

The Importance of Philanthropy

The cultural engagement connected with associational activity in Leicester and Loughborough during the years 1950 to 2005 does much to support Harris' observation that the British people did not abandon their long standing habits of joining together in voluntary organisations.[94] Such findings clearly contradict notions of decline and disinterest in middle-class participation, as argued by historians like Thompson whose belief that the suburbs and the middle-classes were 'without any society, social gatherings or institutions'[95] have been shown to be inaccurate within these two East Midland locations. Here the importance of civic engagement has been emphasised in the creation of networks of social trust and inclusion. Within these organisations, the continued importance of charity further exemplifies the commitment of 'the suburbans' to civil society. In terms of civic engagement, acts of charity are particularly significant, emphasising the ways in which associational activity works for the good of others 'developing the "I" into the "we".'[96] These connections foster a sense of community and consequently a stable civil society.

Through the analysis of charitable aid within both Leicester and Loughborough, it is evident that various organisations took part in charitable giving, both through financial aid and the commitment of time and energy to those in need. Recurrent and significant examples of financial contributions came through the distribution of funds from the Lord Mayor's appeal in Leicester. The Women's Luncheon Committee and the Leicestershire Motor Car Club regularly contributed to relief funds organised directly by the Lord Mayor. In 1952 *The Leicester Mercury* reported on flood damaged areas in Lynmouth, Hampshire. Aid was desperately needed and consequently an appeal fund was established by the Mayor to which 'Leicester people contributed more than £10,000.'[97] This included a contribution from the Motor Car Club as their records show: 'It was suggested and agreed that the club should contribute £5-5-0 to the Lord Mayor's Lynmouth relief fund.'[98] Similarly in 1956 the Mayor asked directly for the city's compassion with regards to an appeal for Hungarian refugees: "I appeal directly to all citizens to afford their fullest financial contribution and thus demonstrate their practical concern for the suffering of those overtaken by the tides of

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[94]   Harris, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain', 100.

[95]   Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia*, 3.

[96]   Putnam, 'Bowling alone: America's declining social capital', 67.

[97]   *LM*, 2nd September 1952.

[98]   ROLLR, DE 2172/31, Leicestershire Motor Car Club Committee minutes, 4th September 1952.

adversity which has so suddenly overwhelmed them."[99] The Women's Luncheon Committee made a considerable donation, showing again their receptiveness to the civic appeal and social responsibility.[100] Even in periods of economic hardship – for example, during the 1970s the country faced severe economic downturns resulting in the 'winter of discontent'- the minutes reflect the continued commitment of financial aid to the Lord Mayor's appeals in Leicester. [101] Historically, contributions to appeals made by the Lord Mayor were a traditional aspect of associational activity. In his study of Edinburgh, Rodger concludes that civic sensitivity extended into areas of social welfare. To the victims of fire, floods and famines around the world, Edinburgh town council 'showed its increased international credentials by making contributions towards charitable relief.' [102] Thus, far from a declining influence in the public sphere, ongoing financial contributions in response to the Lord Mayor's appeals exemplify both the longevity of associational practices in the late twentieth century, as well as the importance of voluntary activity in the construction of the public sphere.

Research into the types of charitable contributions made by organisations also reveals the extent to which associations of the twentieth century can be understood as 'single issue'.[103] For instance, the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society took considerable pride in providing grants for communities in the form of finance for the restoration of buildings, such as Staunton Harold Church, and a monument in the church yard of Burton Lazars.[104] The Loughborough Naturalists Club, and other organisations with specific interests, continued to make charitable donations throughout the period under analysis along lines directly related to the nature of the organisation itself. For associations such as the Loughborough InnerWheel Club and the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee, their philanthropic objectives were more diffuse. Each meeting was dominated by the accounts and the division of donations to individual charities. Financial aid disbursed

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[99]   *LM*, 12th November 1956.

[100]   ROLLR, DE 2509/1, The Women's Luncheon Committee minutes, 26th September 1956.

[101]   For examples see Brooke, S, 'Class and Gender' in Carnevali and Strange, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, 42-57: Rubinstein, W, *Twentieth Century Britain. A Political History* (Basingstoke, 2003); Tomlinson, J, 'Managing the economy, managing the people' in Carnevali and Strange, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, 233-46.

[102]   Rodger, 'The "common good" and civic promotion', 166.

[103]   Harris, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain', 100.

[104]   *TLAHS*, 1953-1954. Reference is made to a sum of £56 collected for Staunton Harold church. In 1955-1956, grants are also distributed to the squire monument of Burton Lazars.

across several categories, and on a regular basis, demonstrated a longstanding interest in and concern for the less fortunate members of society. Such concern confirms the importance of philanthropic engagement in the construction of a civil society. With the arms of the Welfare State increasingly responsible for direct care of the sick, aged and infirm, philanthropic organisations still sought a role in the 1950s, albeit in a more strictly defined form of financial assistance in the case of the Luncheon Committee's charity involvement. Elsewhere, in Loughborough the InnerWheel Club and the Knights of St.Columba continued to work directly and tirelessly on projects for the elderly in their community.[105] To determine that middle-class organisations were no longer interested in charitable issues and lacked the inclination to care for those less fortunate was to misrepresent the range and depth of a considerable number of organisations.[106] The relationship between associations and charitable giving had evolved into a new form of civic engagement in the developing context of the Welfare State. Even after the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979 and the adoption of a more laissez-faire attitude toward social welfare, philanthropic organisations continued in much the same way they had before. In this respect the impact of different state policies on social welfare did not diminish the commitment of the associational sphere to philanthropic practices. If, as Whitely argues 'trust promotes norms which abjure self-interest and reinforce the idea that individuals should act in the interest of the group in order to solve collective action problems',[107] then it is evident from the analysis of the charitable actions recorded within organisations in Leicester and Loughborough that associational activity continued to create bonds of trust as part of an attempt to bolster the weak and provide a measure of stability in civil society.

Overall, it is evident that the notion of suburbanisation as a form of detachment is a stereotypical account of suburban life that misrepresents the experience of Loughborough and Leicester. In terms of the social interaction demonstrated by organisations in both locations during the twentieth century, it is clear that, far from withdrawing from urban life and rejecting sociability, the middle-classes were encouraging cooperative interaction through associational activity and creating seedbeds of trust.

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[105] Private collection of minute books for the Loughborough InnerWheel Club and the Knights of St.Columba record the commitment of time and energy as well as financial donations to local charities throughout 1950 to 2005.

[106] Masterman, *The Condition of England*, 57.

[107] Whitely, P.F, 'Economic growth and social capital', *Political Studies*, 48, 2002, 448.

Such interaction was undoubtedly exemplified by the acts of social engagement conducted through an array of events and occasions co-ordinated by local associations, clubs and societies. Interest in sociability had not declined but at times had evolved into a more private experience that, whilst contrasting with the public behaviour of previous generations, did not equal detachment or disinterest. For the twentieth century suburban, patterns of life tended to conceal sociability as organisational activities were played out in a more private domain, with associations meeting behind closed doors and often socialising in the comfort of members' homes.[108] A degree of home based leisure entertainment was not a rejection of sociability but rather a move in line with the national trend. It did not signify that the 'suburbans' were socially detached, nor had they rejected the roles of responsibility that had defined their character in the Victorian era. For Morris, the nineteenth century reflected a golden era of middle-class urban dominance, with leading urban figures uniting together to manage the urban environment through an elaborate array of networks of power and influence, with voluntary organisations often used as a means of 'cultural and ideological production and dissemination.'[109] Yet, as this chapter has shown, by the mid twentieth century voluntary organisations continued to exact influence and control in urban areas, particularly in relation to the cultural facet of city and town life. In both Leicester and Loughborough the cultural interests of organisations such as the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society and the Loughborough Civic Trust - both of which were heavily reliant on a suburban membership - helped preserve aspects of the urban landscape and contributed to its future form. Organisations valued their role as 'preservationists' and defender of the physical environment, openly acknowledging aspirations to connect their organisations with the cultural aspects of urban life. Furthermore, intellectual interests exemplified in lecture programmes and art exhibitions reinforced the importance of middle-class culture in underpinning urban identities, whilst their philanthropic interests both served a civic purpose and exemplified the commitment of associations, and thus their suburban membership, to civil society.

Therefore, the connections between suburbia and the vigorous associational communities within Loughborough and Leicester do much to dispel stereotypical depictions of detached, disinterested middle-class suburbia by the mid to late twentieth century.[110]

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[108]   See McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, 85 and Gunn and Bell, *Middle Classes, their Rise and Sprawl*, 67.

[109]   Morris, *Class, Sect and Party*, 323.

[110]   Masterman, *The Condition of England*, 56-76.

Social capital created through associational activity has been exemplified through social interaction, cultural contributions and charitable aid, encouraging the bonds of trust that are vital to the maintenance of community and an active civil society. Yet to what extent did this engagement influence urban policy? To what degree did associational networks maintain power over the urban community in the latter years of the twentieth century? By examining the role of the associational sphere in relation to control of the municipality, Chapter Five seeks to address these issues. Analysing the relationship between voluntary activity and local government, alongside inter-associational activity and their connections with leading civic institutions, the chapter considers the power of collaborative action and its importance in the construction of a contemporary civil society.

Chapter Five

Networks: The Power of Collaborative Action

> The moral authority of the majority is partly based on the notion that
> there is more intelligence and more wisdom in a great number of men
> collated together than in a single individual.[1]

In previous chapters the connections between associational activity and suburban membership have emphasised the various ways in which citizens residing outside the urban core participated in town and city affairs. In particular, the engagement of the middle-classes in social and community life was highlighted in Chapter Four, identifying how associations and locations could act as 'seedbeds of trust' in twentieth century society.[2] Far from abandoning their responsibilities and interest in the urban community, voluntary organisations became the means through which the 'suburbans' formed social and cultural connections in local towns and cities. Much like Sennett's perception of the American suburban citizen, the so-called 'hunger for human contact' stimulated the type of associational activity that allowed individuals to engage in a common task or pursue a single experience, overcoming 'the wounds of geography imposed by the planners of their community'.[3]

Whilst social and cultural connections have been considered in the context of engagement and the creation of social capital, Chapter Five develops the analysis through an examination of the intricate networks of power created through collaborative action. Whether through inter-associational activity, connections with the municipality or communication with leading civic institutions, the associational sphere in Leicester and Loughborough continued to provide connections between the citizen and the state,

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[1]   Tocqueville, A, *Democracy in America, Volume II* (London, 1835) 145.

[2]   The term 'seedbeds of trust' refers to Bruni and Sugden's conception of the transference of information through dense networks of associations. In this way 'networks of civic engagement might then be the seedbeds of trust.' Bruni, L and Sugden, R, 'Moral canals: trust and social capital in the work of Hume, Smith and Genovesi', *Economic and Philosophy,* 16, 2000, 6.

[3]   Sennett, R, *The Fall of Public Man* (Cambridge, 1976), 298.

emphasising the importance of collaborative action in the maintenance of an active civil society.

Council Affiliated Organisations

Properly understood, civil society is a concept that encompasses all organisations and associations that exist outside of the state, including 'a gamut of organisations that political scientists traditionally label interest groups' or non governmental organisations which have increased exponentially in recent years.[4] Such organisations can be understood or labelled as 'pressure groups'. These groups can include local branches of national organisations, professional bodies like the R.S.P.C.A, spontaneous groups which are formed in response to an event or a felt need, Trade Unions and associations dealing with the local authority on behalf of council employees and community groups which exist to defend an interest.[5] In Chapter Three, the division of organisations analysed within this study categorised such groups as 'Council Affiliated Organisations', definable as associations with clear objectives to improve the lives of inhabitants in towns and cities.

Such organisations are key to the examination of networks of cooperation within the associational sphere; their very foundations rest on an ability to unify organisational activity and collaborate with the municipality. They remained fully independent of local and central government yet received funding from and worked in conjunction with the municipality on projects and community related issues.[6] Organisations such as these provide intriguing case study examples of the types of networks that existed between associational activity and municipal control. As stated in Chapter Three, Colls and Rodger have questioned the extent to which organisations of the twentieth century were able to think beyond their own agendas in order to engage in a successful civil society.[7] In this respect Council Affiliated Organisations can be used to exemplify the ways in which associational activity continued to unify various facets of the urban community, effectively coordinating a 'mid level' of society that linked the citizen and the state.

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[4]   Carothers, T and Barndt, W, 'Civil Society', *Foreign Policy*, 117, 2000, 19.

[5]   Kavanagh, D, *British Politics – Continuities and Change, Local Government and Decentralisation* (Oxford, 2000), 279.

[6]   For a clearer definition of Council Affiliated Organisations see Chapter Three, Active Citizenship: Defining Associational Culture, 1950-2005.

[7]   Colls, R and Rodger, R, 'Civil society and British cities' in Colls, R and Rodger, R, eds., *Cities of Ideas. Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain* (Aldershot, 2004), 19.

In Loughborough, Charnwood Community Council (now known as Voluntary Action Charnwood) is an example of such an organisation. First founded as the Council of Social Service in March 1962, the organisation became known as Charnwood Community Council (CCC) in 1967. The organisation was predominantly managed by a select, executive committee of influential members of the community, largely middle-class participants with transferable knowledge of the urban environment. Members often resided in the suburban fringe and beyond, exemplifying the continued engagement of the 'suburbans' in the maintenance of civil society in the latter years of the twentieth century.

Central to the engagement of the CCC in urban affairs was their relationship with local government, often encouraged through their interaction on local administrative committees. A level of engagement generally occurred on the executive committees of the organisations themselves. Doyle suggests that in the early years of the twentieth century relations between council members and association officials were often remarkably close.[8] This was partly achieved through the election of local councillors on to the executive committee of organisations, as was the case with the CCC and Loughborough Borough Council. Interaction on their committee strengthened the ties between local government and voluntary activity, as the organisation cultivated private relationships with members of the municipality, bringing specific benefits to the organisation itself. In 1986 the *Loughborough Echo* reported:

> Councillor Mike Jones told the Policy and Finance committee (of Loughborough Borough Council) that as an executive member of the CCC he knew of the very real financing worries that had been experienced recently.[9]

In Loughborough, Mike Jones was able to express the opinion of the organisation to a wide and influential audience in his dual role as executive committee member of the CCC and local councillor. In this respect councillors provided direct access to the municipality for local voluntary organisations, establishing private networks of communication. On administrative committees associations were able to express their concerns and emphasise their requirements to local government, with local councillors then supplying a more public voice for the associational sphere, exerting their influence when required. Chief Executive of

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8   Doyle, B, 'The changing functions of urban government: councillors, officials and pressure groups', in Daunton, M, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain 1840-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 2001), 296.

9   *Loughborough Echo* (LE), 5th December 1986.

the CCC, Gerry Jacobs, revealed the important benefits of the presence of council members on managerial committees:

> We have a local councillor who actually chairs the Boards of Trustees, which some people think is very good because she is on the Borough Council and it is a means of exerting influence with the Borough Council.[10]

Interaction on local administrative committees cultivated communicative networks between local government and the associational sphere, whilst also engaging citizens in the decision making process. Carothers and Barndt have described NGOs as shaping policy by exerting pressure on governments, furnishing technical expertise to policy makers, fostering citizen participation and civic education.[11] In much the same way Council Affiliated Organisations strove to maintain an active civil society by conversing with the municipality on local committees, tackling important urban problems. Engagement on committees allowed citizens to influence urban policy through a 'subscriber democracy',[12] ultimately contributing to many aspects of urban life. According to Gerry Jacobs, networks of collaboration were an important part of the CCC's agenda. For example, several members worked closely with the municipality as representatives on a local equal opportunity committee. Similarly a crime and disorder partnership allowed the organisation to offer a 'different kind of expertise' to local government, including first hand accounts of the problems and concerns within the community.[13] As a result the CCC maintained a long tradition of cultivating relations on local committees, whilst disseminating knowledge and engaging citizens in contemporary urban affairs

Such connections were, therefore, important to local organisations, providing a degree of legitimacy to voluntary activity. However, the relationship between the associational sphere and local government was mutually beneficial. In June 1976 the newly appointed minister for social services, David Ennals, referred to the voluntary movement as his conscience, believing the job of voluntary bodies was to remind ministers of their responsibilities in the field in which they were operating. Clearly the state valued voluntary organisations in an advisory capacity, and this was a role the CCC, and other Council

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[10] Interview with the Gerry Jacobs, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Charnwood (previously Charnwood Community Council), May 2007.

[11] Carothers and Barndt, 'Civil society', 20.

[12] Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 1990), 412.

[13] Interview with the Gerry Jacobs, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Charnwood (previously Charnwood Community Council), May 2007.

Affiliated Organisations, were eager to fulfil. In 1976 the Mayor of Charnwood, Councillor John Hawks, became the first councillor to obtain a copy of a booklet outlining the support structure required by voluntary organisations. The booklet offered a guide to local councils on the voluntary service and the voluntary bureau, which in Loughborough was the CCC.

It is important to note, however, that relations between organisations and the municipality were not always harmonious, and this was equally true of the relationship between the CCC and local government. On issues of particular significance, the organisation was not averse to using the local press to express their discontent. In previous chapters the role of the local press has been considered in the context of encouraging the relationship between the associational sphere and the state,[14] yet it was also a useful tool for expressing opinions and concerns to a wider, public readership. On two occasions in 1986 the organisation confronted the local council on specific issues, firstly calling for a more 'positive health care initiative' in the town,[15] and later the same year highlighting their concerns over grant aid for voluntary organisations in the *Loughborough Echo*:

> Mr Bernard Smith, general secretary of the CCC, has told why he walked out of a County Council meeting last week. Mr Smith, who represents Loughborough Urban Forum in a non voting capacity on the Urban Policies Sub-Committee, told the *Echo* that the committee were causing 'confusion and division' to voluntary organisations. 'I'm not criticising the concept of the committee and the fact that they have invited representatives of voluntary organisations to be present is an example of their good intentions. The problem is that, possibly through a shortage of resources, they are finding it very difficult to function...the committee challenged every application for grant aid from voluntary organisations either as a point of detail or through an adhoc change in their criticism.[16]

These objections directly exemplify the role of Council Affiliated Organisations in the maintenance of civil society. Organisations constructed communicative networks with local government, spreading and transferring knowledge and experience. Yet their independence from the municipality also allowed them to exert pressure on the council when they felt it was needed. According to Harris, civil society was originally understood as a societal counterweight to excessive state power and an important way of balancing the authority of the state. Voluntary organisations were thus the voice of the people on important local and

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[14]   For additional references to the local press and their involvement with associational activity, please see Chapter Three, Active Citizenship: Defining Associational Culture, 1950-2005.

[15]   *LE,* 24th October 1986.

[16]   Ibid, 21st November 1986.

national issues.[17] In this respect the associational sphere of the twentieth century continued the traditional role of mediator between the citizen and the state.

Whilst the CCC had the ability to influence local policy making through direct contact with local government, their independent status also allowed the organisation to move freely between issues relating to the municipality and issues relating to the community. This was achieved through inter-associational activity in both the town and county. The CCC mediated between many clubs and societies, bringing different aspects of the community together on issues ranging from the organisation of festivals to the care of the elderly. It has been argued that civil society involves 'autonomous social and economic institutions outside the sphere of government,'[18] and organisations like the CCC helped construct this sphere by unifying organisations, members of the community and the municipality on issues of local importance. In this respect the CCC regarded itself as an 'enabling body' as they enabled community action and activities to take place.[19] They were a tool through which networks of communication were created and information, experience and knowledge disseminated. According to Gerry Jacobs, this can be exemplified in their work on a 'racial incidence review panel':

> The outside committees that I'm on...the racial incidence review group, convened by the police...we meet quarterly and what we do is select racial incidents that the police have had to deal with and examine them to see how they have dealt with them and comment, sort of marking them out of 10 really...It is not quite as simple as that....The Racial Equality Council for example have a member on that. Some of the schools and colleges have members on it, some of the local community associations have, so that is just one example but all through the years there are various committees or groups meeting that are convened by outside bodies, statutory bodies that different representatives from community groups and associations have a place on.[20]

Here a common issue of racial intolerance united various facets of the community within the town. Innovative practices were developed as members of local schools and colleges sat side by side with local councillors and associational participants on committees designed to

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[17] See Harris, J, 'Introduction: civil society in British history: paradigm or peculiarity', 1-12 and Harris, J, 'From Richard Hooker to Harold Laski: changing perceptions of civil society in British political thought, late sixteenth to early twentieth centuries' in Harris, J, ed., *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford, 2005), 13-38.

[18] Harris, 'Introduction: civil society in British history: paradigm or peculiarity', 1.

[19] Interview with the Gerry Jacobs, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Charnwood (previously Charnwood Community Council), May 2007.

[20] Ibid.

engage the urban citizen in the decision making process. Organisations like the CCC and the Racial Equality Council (to be examined in Chapter Six) enabled meetings to take place by forming and coordinating committees relating to the specific issue. It has been argued that associations of the nineteenth century, predominantly dominated by middle-class participants, 'showed a power to innovate and experiment in the face of failure, difficulty and change'.[21] Despite the suggestion that the influence of voluntary activity was in decline by the mid twentieth century, it is clear that through organisations like the CCC, members continued to exert power and influence through networks of cooperation developed by dominant organisations. Central to these associations were Council Affiliated Organisations, like the CCC, who operated at 'the mid level of society', working as 'enablers' or mediators.[22] Furthermore, they connected the citizen and the state with members of the community acting as representatives for organisations on important local committees, influencing local policy and decision making. Newton suggests:

> Organisations give citizens a sense of security that comes from community and belonging. They form the organisational basis of a democratic culture and its social networks of communication. In short voluntary associations create the bonds of social solidarity that are the basis for civil society and democracy.[23]

This was true for the CCC and, as an organisation with numerous middle-class, suburban participants, contradicts the suppositions of middle-class disinterest and decline.

The CCC was not the only organisation working to create a 'mid-level' within society. In the larger geographical location of Leicester the same types of organisations could be found. The Leicestershire Rural Community Council (LRCC) is an example of the type of organisation working specifically to improve relations between the county and the city. Like the CCC, the LRCC was an organisation administered by an executive committee of prominent local middle-class men and women, managed alongside a small full-time staff and a collection of volunteers. In particular, the president of the organisation was often found to be a leading member of the Leicestershire elite, most visible at important meetings and gatherings, exemplified in a function recorded in 1956:

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[21] Morris, R.J, *Class, Sect and Party. The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1850* (Manchester, 1990), 197.

[22] Durkheim's understanding of a 'mid level of society' is taken from Hall, J and Trentman, F, eds., *Civil Society. A Reader in History, Theory and Global Politics* (Basingstoke, 2005), 16.

[23] Newton, K, 'Trust, social capital, civil society and democracy', *International Political Science Review,* 22, 2001, 206.

Our President, the Rt Hon Lord Cromwell and Lady Cromwell attended a luncheon at the Savoy Hotel London at which HRH Prince Philip The Duke of Edinburgh, President of the National Playing Field Association presided.[24]

Like the CCC the organisation was also partly funded by the local council but managed to retain its full independence. In 1975 the organisation referred to their funding in the following terms:

Community Councils are probably the only voluntary body at County level to receive direct central government grant aid and it could be claimed, modestly, that they are part of the integrated rural policy being slowly worked out by the comparatively new department of the environment...they work in close co-operation with their own local authorities, both at County and District level and look to the National Council of Social Service for specialist advice and the development commission for guidance and support.[25]

Here the organisation clearly outlines its relationship with the municipality, emphasising its position in the policy making process. Central to the success of the LRCC were cordial relations with local councils. Much like the community councils in Loughborough, the organisation encouraged council members on to their administrative committee; in 1964 the association recorded the president to be the 'present chairman of the County Council.'[26]Additionally, during the year 1974 to 1975, the organisation welcomed representatives on to the executive committee from 5 out of the 7 district councils, alongside the chairman of the Charnwood Community Council and the Deputy Director of Social Services.[27]

Kavanagh suggests that local government provides the opportunity for citizens to participate in politics, developing a sense of citizenship and political responsibility that heightens their sense of community.[28] Through their work with local government, and the language expressed in their annual reports, it is clear that the LRCC recognised the importance of engaging and maintaining networks of interaction with the municipality. This was particularly true during periods of economic hardship, like the rampant inflation, high

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[24]   Private collection of annual reports, Leicestershire Rural Community Council (LRCC), 1955-56.

[25]   Ibid, 1975-76.

[26]   Ibid, 1964.

[27]   Ibid, 1974-75.

[28]   Kavannagh, *British Politics – Continuities and Change, Local Government and Decentralisation*, 266.

costs and increasing overheads of the 1970s.[29] The organisation believed the municipality could 'not lose' by turning to voluntary agencies for their guidance and support in such troublesome times.[30] In 1970 the organisation outlined its objectives in relation to municipal interaction:

> The right relationship between the statutory bodies and voluntary organisations lies at the heart of the problem of a healthy community whether urban or rural. The LRCC exists as an independent, non-specialist, informal body, able and willing to try to ensure that suitable joint action is taken by statutory and voluntary bodies or appropriately by one or other of them. To a local authority its values lies in its disinterestedness, its informality and independence, its need and ability to win confidence, its capacity to experiment and its success in mobilising voluntary action.[31]

The organisation clearly understood the value of the transference of expertise, recognising the potential in creating the types of networks with local government that allowed knowledge to flow between organisations. The types of projects on which the organisation liaised with the local authorities and other voluntary organisations, can be exemplified by their work on old people's welfare.[32] During the year 1957-58, the organisation provided a comprehensive survey of the work undertaken by approximately seventy of the local old people's welfare organisations in the city and county. The survey examined amenities and services available to old people, distributing their findings to all local clubs and associations in the county.

In the same year a conference of 'outstanding importance' was held at the request of the association between representatives of the County Council housing authorities and the organisation. The end result was the initiation of a planned housing scheme for old people, with the County Council offering grants of up to £30 per unit of accommodation provided.[33] Here the LRCC can be seen to be engaging in civil society in several key ways; for example, the organisation successfully interacts with local clubs and societies, encouraging them to engage on the issue of welfare. Also the results of their work can be seen to directly

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[29] See Tomlinson, J, 'Managing the economy, managing the people' in Carnevali, F and Strange, J.M, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (London, 2007), 233-46.

[30] Private collection of annual reports, LRCC, 1974-75.

[31] Ibid, 1970.

[32] Concern over old people's welfare is a reoccurring issue in both Leicester and Loughborough during the period under review. For additional references to the issue see Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust? and Chapter Six, Civil Society: The World of the White, Middle-Class Male?

[33] Private collection of annual reports, LRCC, 1957-58.

influence government policy with the initiation of a housing scheme for old people. Fukyama has argued that 'if a group's social capital produces positive externalities, the radius of trust can be larger than the group itself',[34] and through the LRCC we see an organisation producing social capital that undoubtedly had positive externalities within the community. Like the CCC in Loughborough, the managerial committee of the organisation was dominated by middle-class participants, who were engaging in civil society, spreading the radius of trust beyond their own immediate sphere.

Clearly, involving other organisations in the decision making process was an important aspect of the work of the LRCC and a means through which they developed important networks of influence and power. Like the CCC in Loughborough, the organisation often worked as a tool for unifying local voluntary activity. They created networks with both local government and associational groups in the city and county, working to bring the two factions together in order to achieve their goal of community cohesion. The organisation worked alongside, and was affiliated to, many different associations, clubs and societies within the city and county, extending its reach as far as possible, developing knowledge and experience through its involvement in differing aspects of rural and urban life. In 1957 the organisation summarised its relationship with other local voluntary organisations:

> Regular liaison takes place between ourselves and all tiers of local government and also within the orbit of our constituent voluntary organisations and this can be illustrated by the fact that we were called upon to speak during the year to such groups as the National Assistance Board, the Rotary Club, the local education authority and a number of women's institutes about our work and organisation.[35]

Connections and projects were numerous and varied; they collated information in co-operation with the Leicestershire and Rutland Federation of Women's Institutes[36]; kept all councils informed of current trends and events in parish government affairs in an effort to help towards more clear, efficient and effective local government[37]; and provided representation for the organisation on several of the Leicestershire County Council cultural

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[34] Fukyama, F 'Social capital, civil society and development', *Third World Quarterly*, 22, 2001, 8.

[35] Private collection of annual reports, LRCC, 1957-58.

[36] Ibid, 1954-55.

[37] Ibid, 1956-57.

committees including those for music, drama, youth clubs and local libraries.[38] Work often included distribution of information, dealing with individual enquiries and the organisation of meetings at conferences and on local committees. The association involved itself in many aspects of city and county life, even village cricket was considered 'a microcosm of the wider team work and followings which all rural communities hope to create and which the LRCC seeks to do its bit to help them create.'[39]

In many ways the contemporary debate surrounding the declining involvement of middle-class, voluntary organisations in twentieth century society has been shown to be inaccurate when evaluating the experience of associational activity in both Loughborough and Leicester. The records of both the CCC and the LRCC show that networks of co-operation and interaction existed between voluntary associations and local government throughout the period of 1950 to 2005. Even during periods of economic hardship, organisations like the LRCC provided the municipality with support and advice where it was needed and required. Furthermore they worked to unify local organisations, to consolidate knowledge and experience, and transfer information through dense networks of associational activity. For Kumar civil society is a process of mediation and in the work of these organisations such engagement is apparent.[40] Council Affiliated Organisations were able to think beyond their own agendas, working for the good of local communities and uniting voluntary activity. They highlighted important issues, using connections created through associational activity to disseminate knowledge and unify rural and urban communities. It has been argued that voluntary activity creates 'conditions for social integration, public awareness and action,'[41] and Council Affiliated Organisations like the LRCC and the CCC provided participants, and through their membership the 'suburbans', the type of opportunity and ability to consolidate citizen engagement and maintain civil society in the twentieth century urban environment. Doyle suggests that right through to the Second World War the effective provision of local services depended on tripartite partnerships between public, private and voluntary bodies, overall ensuring community

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[38] Ibid, 1960-61.

[39] Ibid, 1980-81.

[40] Kumar, K, 'Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term', *British Journal of Sociology*, 44, 1993, 378.

[41] Newton, 'Trust, social capital, civil society and democracy', 201.

interest in the sphere of urban governance.[42] As the examples of the CCC and LRCC have shown, this continued to be the case by the turn of the twenty-first century. Despite changes in social policy as the twentieth century progressed – first the introduction of the welfare state in the immediate years of the post-war period, followed by Thatcher's return to laissez-faire attitudes in the 1970s and 80s – voluntary activity remained constant, working to bridge the gap between the citizen and the state.

Municipal Interaction

Municipal engagement and power over urban policy were not limited to Council Affiliated Organisations. Upon consideration of associational activity in both Leicester and Loughborough, a mutually beneficial relationship between organisations and local government was overwhelmingly evident in numerous aspects of associational life. However, when examining the influence of Hobby, Philanthropic and Community Interest Organisations, it becomes increasingly clear that the majority of associations post 1950 remained 'single issue' and, unlike Council Affiliated Organisations, were less inclined to engage in issues outside of their own agendas.

Interaction between organisations and local government occurred in many areas of urban life and to varying degrees. For example, networks of cooperation ranged from the employment of local organisations in Civil Defence plans in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War,[43] to cooperation on local committees to preserve physical and cultural aspects of urban life by the end of the twentieth century. One of the most significant aspects

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[42] Doyle, B, 'The changing functions of urban government: councillors, officials and pressure groups', 307.

[43] This point refers to the engagement of the Leicestershire Motor Car Club in the city's civil defence plans during the 1950s. In the immediate years after the Second World War, Leicester City Council encouraged local clubs and societies to work alongside the municipality in the protection of the city. *The Leicester Mercury* referenced various civil defence meetings and groups set up throughout both the city and the county, pleading in March 1950 that 'many more men and women are needed in all districts to act as volunteers. In January 1950 the Motor Car Club instructed its members that volunteers from the club would be taking on duties at the civil defence headquarters. Correspondence between the Club and the city's Civil Defence Department also highlighted the degree of interaction when the department agreed 'in principle to the club taking over the communication section of headquarters.' Here a reciprocal relationship existed where the local government relied on the support and man power provided by the associational sphere and, in return, the Leicestershire Motor Car Club remained civically engaged with the city whilst cultivating a relationship of trust with the municipality. Information obtained from Record Office of Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR), DE 2172/31, Leicestershire Motor Car Club, 1950.

of this interaction was the advisory role adopted by local organisations. During the 1990s the Leicestershire Bat Group regularly worked alongside the City Council, providing bat surveys of particular areas when guidance was needed and also working collaboratively in the planning of 'bat walks' around the city.[44] This type of advisory role was a particular feature of associational activity in terms of municipal affairs in the second half of the twentieth century and is comparable with the type of engagement exemplified by the Council Affiliated Organisations. It remained an important way in which organisations engaged with the urban core and influenced urban policy. However, it can also be used to exemplify Harris's terminology of the 'single issue' association of the modern era.[45] Unlike Council Affiliated Organisations that worked on different aspects of community life, these associations only contributed to issues directly related to the nature of the organisation itself and beneficial to their own agendas.

The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (LAHS) provide the best example of this type of 'single issue' interaction. Whilst defining the nature of contemporary associational activity in Chapter Three, reference was made to the work of the LAHS on conservation and preservation issues affecting the city of Leicester. As previously noted, the slum clearance plans of the 1950s and 60s did much to change the physical landscape of British towns and cities; Wood suggests that by the late 1950s the rate of demolition was reaching approximately 50,000 buildings a year.[46] Whilst urban planners often paid little attention to issues of conservation during this period, local organisations began to take a keen role in the preservation of important buildings and areas within their immediate communities.[47] Following on from Leicester's slum clearance plan in the 1950s, the LAHS became active in the issue of historical conservation, developing a strong relationship with the City and County Council with regards preservation of specific buildings. In 1961 evidence of the interaction between the Society and local authorities was recorded following a heated debate over conservation in the town of Asbhy De La Zouch: 'On matters of conservation the Society has been active…during the debate in the local council chamber,

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[44] Private collection of minute books, Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group, 6th April 1998.

[45] Harris, J, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain, 1945-2001' in Burke, K, ed., *The British Isles since 1945* (Oxford, 2003), 100.

[46] Wood, B, 'Urbanisation and local government' in Halsey, A.H, ed., *British Social Trends: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain* (London, 1988), 322-56.

[47] Meller, H, *Towns, Plans and Society in Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1997), 82.

one councillor commented that no building in this town was worth preserving.'[48] The Society undoubtedly recognised the need in post-war Britain - particularly during a period of intense housing regeneration - for vigilance regarding conservation. This was an important area in which the organisation could not only engage with local authorities but also directly contribute to the shaping of urban policy and thus the physical nature of the city. In her study of voluntary activity in Banbury in 1967, Stacey similarly examined local history organisations, concluding that 'their involvement was an interesting example of the way in which any organised group may get involved in politics, however reluctantly, when their chosen interests are threatened.[49] Clearly her findings mirrored the experience of the LAHS in Leicester. Whilst their role in urban conservation was significant and important to the cultural heritage of the city, it dominated the Society's agenda and emphasised their standing as a 'single issue' association of the twentieth century.

Their dedication to the urban environment however, remained unquestionable. In 1964, whilst referring to their role in conservation issues in the city, the organisation concluded: 'these problems, which can be paralleled in any other county in England, illustrate how the Society can act as guardian'.[50] The use of the term 'guardian' is significant as it shows a deep rooted interest and connection to the urban environment. It is also important when we consider that the average member of the Society resided nearly 7 miles from the city centre during the 1960s, with 61.5 percent of members living in a suburban area, satellite village or town, as Figure 5.1 shows:

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[48]   *Transaction Papers of the Leicestershire and Archaeological Historical Society* (TLAHS), 1962-63.

[49]   Stacey, M, Batstone, E and Bell, C, *Power, Persistence and Change. A Social Study of Banbury* (London, 1975), 68.

[50]   *TLAHS*, 1963-64.

Figure 5.1– Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 1963
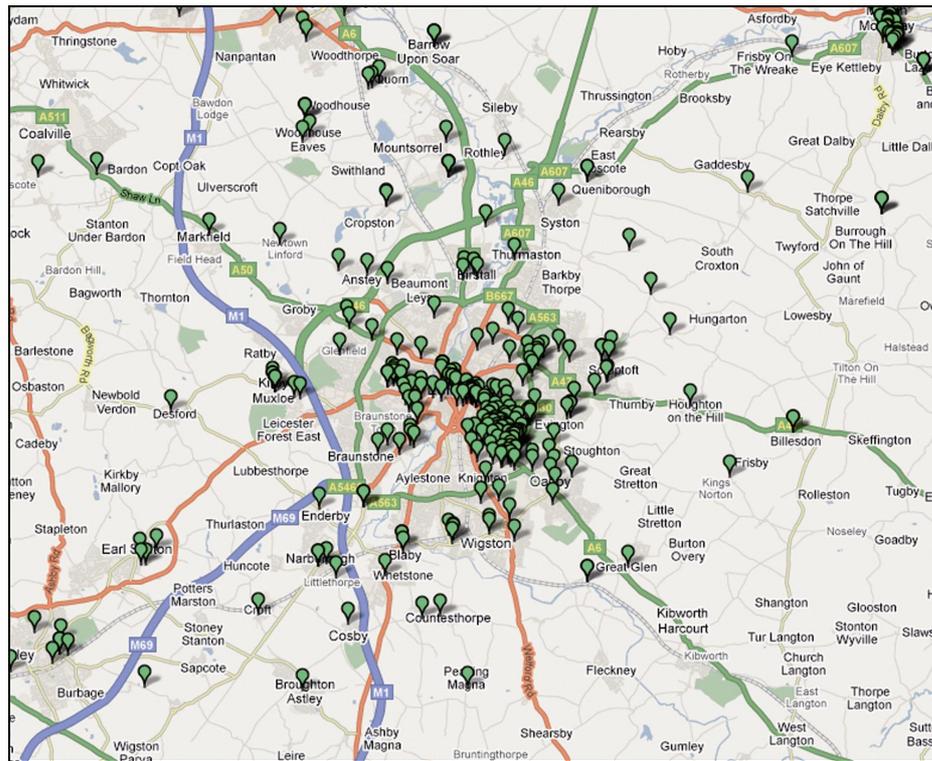
Source: Data obtained from the transaction papers of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (ROLLR).

The commitment of the Society to conservation issues in the city during the mid twentieth century culminated in their cooperation with Leicestershire County Council in the inauguration of a innovative land mark scheme:

> By the Historic Buildings Act of 1962, local authorities were empowered to make grants to assist the preservation of buildings of historical and archaeological importance. Responsibility for making recommendation lies with the County Records Committee and the City Museums, Libraries and Public Committees…It was felt that the time had come to utilise to the full all the resources of the society for this important work…In March it was decided that a Historic Buildings Panel (HBP) should be set up.'[51]

In the first year of its foundation, the LAHS provided the Council with a recommendation list of 170 buildings and sites for conservation or preservation. By the 1970s the Society emphasised the success of the HBP declaring it to be 'one of the most important aspects of the Society's activities', with the organisation assessing planning applications and providing

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[51]   Ibid, 1964-65.

comprehensive reports for the City, County and Urban District Councils.[52] During the year 1978-79 the Society considered 258 applications for local councils and by 1999 this had increased to 300 applications in one year.[53] For the Society, associational activity was the means through which middle-class participants embraced their urban responsibilities and contributed to the formation of the urban environment. Central to these actions was the relationship constructed between the HBP panel and the local municipality: 'The Society's representative on the city's conservation area sub committee…should ensure even closer liaison between the reorganised panel and the city areas'.[54] By 2005, this relationship was still evident and vital to the identity of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, as Dr. McWhirr (Society Secretary) explained:

> We do act as consultees for County Councils and District Councils on planning applications for listed buildings…the big expansion in Leicester and the archaeological work going on in the city. (We) comment on that, giving views on what has been found about buildings that are being threatened in the city.[55]

Furthermore, Dr. McWhirr suggests that such activities led to regular press interest in the Society's work and a perception that the organisation was a voice for the city on archaeological and conservation issues.[56] In this respect, not only did organisations contribute to the stock of the city's social capital through a shared sense of historical identity, feeding in to a cultural and intellectual influence, but they also constructed networks of communication with local government, allowing them to engage with the municipality and influence local decision making. Thus, despite their 'single issue' focus, the Association and their suburban membership of 71.8 percent by 2004, was active in urban affairs and their role was consequently recognised by local government.

In Loughborough, similar patterns of engagement between the municipality and voluntary organisations centred on issues of conservation and preservation in the town, the most prominent association being the Loughborough Civic Trust. The roles and responsibilities of the organisation mirrored the commitment of the LAHS to urban affairs, despite residing in a much smaller urban location. It has previously been suggested that

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[52] Ibid, 1978-79.

[53] Ibid, 1970-71; 1978-9; 1999-2000.

[54] Ibid, 1982-83.

[55] Interview with Dr. Alan McWhirr, secretary of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, July 2007.

[56] Ibid.

during the twentieth century, local government increasingly provided opportunities for people to participate in politics. This in turn helped to develop a sense of citizenship and political responsibility that had the potential to encourage community cohesion in urban areas.[57] Certainly the relationship between the Civic Trust and Charnwood Borough Council exemplified citizen engagement and a sense of political responsibility on the part of the local associational sphere. As early as its inauguration in 1965, the list of committee members reflected the extent to which local councillors and members of the public worked alongside one another in the maintenance of the organisation:

Table 5.1 - Committee members of the Loughborough Civic Trust, 1965

Committee Post	Name
Chairman	Councillor J Rodgers
Vice Chairman	Councillor J Hammond
Secretary	Mrs J Bates
Secretary	Mr B C J Williams
Treasurer	Dr F Fooks
Committee	Mr A D Jacobs

Source: Data obtained from private archive collection Loughborough Civic Trust,
15th March 1965.

The organisation itself worked tirelessly on numerous projects over the years, often providing consultations for both the County and Borough Council on local issues, including the residential development of the area, as the minute books of 1971 show: 'Mr Gillis reported on talks with the County planning office. Most of the points put forward by us are contained in the County Council's brief for developers.'[58]

The formation of committees and sub-groups were yet another way in which the Civic Trust regularly interacted with the municipality on key issues. As was the case in the analysis of Council Affiliated Organisations, committees worked as a mechanism for the unification of associational activity, creating an arena for the transference of knowledge and expertise. In 1972 the foundation of the Leicestershire Federation of Amenities Societies was prompted by an official visit to Leicestershire by the Parliamentary under Secretary of State, Lord Sandford. During the meeting Lord Sandford drew together both official bodies and

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[57]   Kavanagh, D, *British Politics – Continuities and Change, Local Government and Decentralisation,* 266.

[58]   Private collection of minute books, Loughborough Civic Trust, 19th January 1971.

voluntary organisations – including Loughborough Civic Trust - to discuss local issues and the possible collaboration of groups on an official amenities committee.[59] Six months later the newly formed 'Amenities Society' met for the first time. The Civic Trust believed it was the responsibility of the collaborative society to co-ordinate local activities and tackle urban problems.[60] It is argued that the free association of citizens in organisations often reinforces participatory norms and encourages cooperative interaction, elements that are crucial for achieving solutions to the problems facing contemporary urban communities.[61] Through the accounts of the Civic Trust, and organisations of similar interests, it is clear that co-operative interaction was highly regarded by local and state government. The municipality united organisations behind local government through their involvement on local committees, working collectively on the problems facing the wider community.

Collaborative interaction on local committees was not confined to one single organisation in Loughborough. During the 1960s and 1970s the Loughborough InnerWheel Club and the Knights of St. Columba both served on the Old Peoples' Welfare Committee in the town, administered predominantly by the local council with voluntary organisations providing support and expertise through their involvement on the Committee.[62] According to Clarke, in the years after 1945, the number of dependent children and old people in the population was ever increasing. By 1951, in terms of the elderly, 14 percent of the population were eligible for state pensions; over the next 30 years the proportion had increased to 18 percent and was still rising.[63] The interest and participation of the Innerwheel Club and the Knights of St. Columba on such committees reflected their engagement with the council on important national issues; furthermore, the invitation from the council to participate exemplified the reliance of local government on the expertise of local associations. In 1951 the minute books of Charnwood Council recorded the aims of the joint committee:

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[59]   Ibid, 16th February 1972.

[60]   Ibid, 23rd August 1972.

[61]   Curtis, J.E, Baer, D.E and Grabb, E.G, 'Nation of joiners: explaining voluntary association membership in democratic societies', *American Sociological Review*, 66, 2001, 783.

[62]   The minute books of both the Loughborough InnerWheel Club and the Knights of St. Columba make passing references to their involvement in the Old Peoples Welfare Committee between the years 1950-1970.

[63]   Clarke, P, *Hope and Glory. Britain 1900 – 1990* (London, 1996), 304.

It has been suggested that local authorities should appoint committees to co-ordinate all schemes for the welfare of old people in their areas…the representatives of each local association gave a short report on the constitution and activities of each association. [64]

In later accounts the Council documented the successful implementation of services for the elderly by the committee, including increased chiropody procedures and easily accessible meals.[65] Again we are able to see the ways in which voluntary organisations, and their suburban membership, influenced urban policy. The average member of InnerWheel Club and the Knights of St. Columba lived approximately 1.6 and 1.9 miles from the urban core respectively (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

Figure 5.2 - Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough InnerWheel Club, cumulative membership, 1955-86
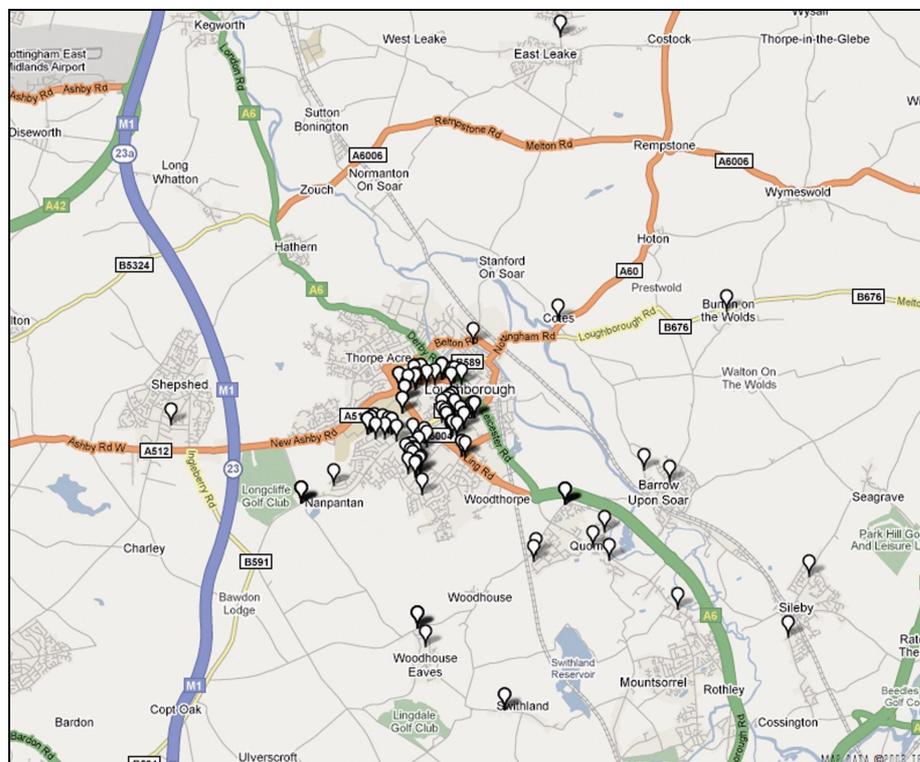
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of Loughborough InnerWheel Club.

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[64]   Charnwood Borough Council minutes, 1ST January 1951.

[65]   Ibid, 2nd December 1968.

Figure 5.3 - Residential distribution of members of the Knights of St. Columba (Loughborough branch), 1952 and 1982
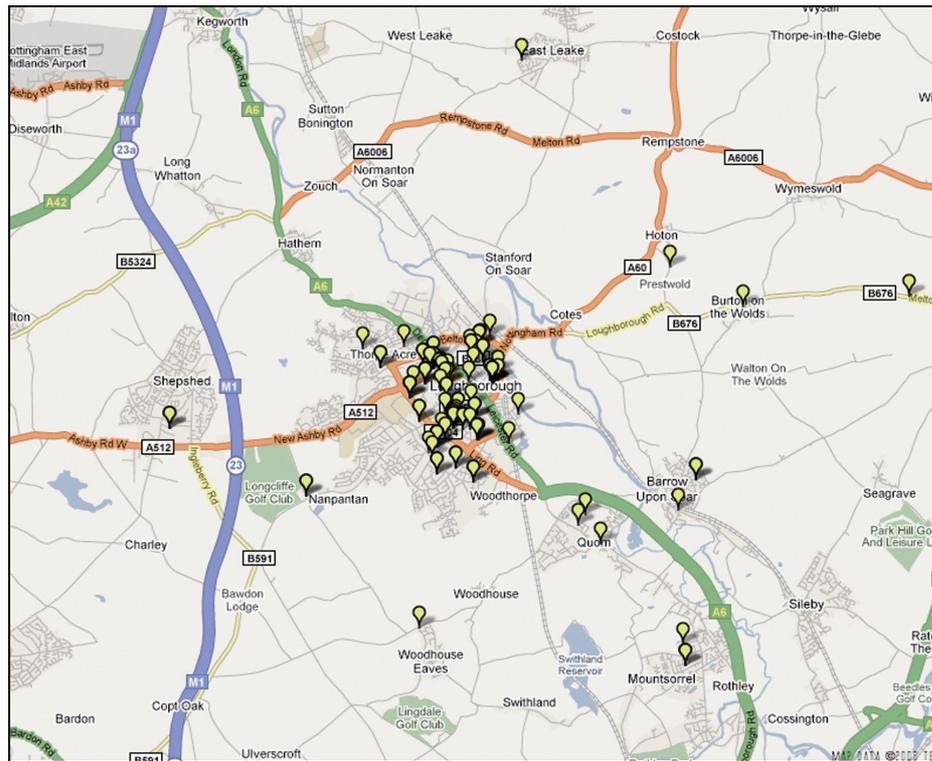
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of Knights of St. Columba.

This geo-coded data allows the contemporary urban historian to conclude that the suburban middle-classes retained significant influence at the urban core, disseminating knowledge and expertise through their involvement in the associational sphere.

The extent of municipal interaction, and the varied ways in which networks were created, differed for many organisations. For associations like the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society, relations and interaction revolved less around joint committees and more on the functional use of municipal buildings. These connections however, were also of importance and mutually beneficial to both the organisation and the municipality. Productions staged at the town hall added prestige to a local club or society and, in return, Charnwood Council were connected to the general public, as noted in correspondence with the Operatic Society in the 1980s:

It is not just the physical structure of the building which is being altered, we are in the process of undergoing a major change in organisational culture…We see the amateur theatre groups who use our facilities as major parties in what we do…Some people only ever experience the town hall through attending one of your shows, so what you do has a considerable impact on whether they will return to us. We need to work together to improve the quality we offer.[66]

The association, heavily reliant on a suburban membership, was active in the cultural dimension of town life, an input clearly recognised by the municipality.[67] Thus, mutually beneficial networks existed that affected various aspects of urban life. In this respect, local associations can be seen to contribute to the density of civil society in two key ways; firstly through the provision of different interests that allowed local citizens to engage in numerous areas of urban life; and, secondly, by providing the link between the citizen and the state, working as intermediaries, stabilising the urban community, and allowing civil society to flourish.

However, whilst organisations often worked in conjunction with the council on issues such as preservation, their formal detachment from the municipality also allowed them to act as pressure groups regarding urban policy. Charnwood Council minute books reveal how local organisations in Loughborough successfully applied pressure to local government on numerous issues associated with town life. In 1950 the Loughborough Rotary Club wrote to the Council regarding the Festival of Britain. The Festival was a nationally organised event, designed to celebrity the modernity of Britain, with a particular focus on the built environment.[68] The council minutes recorded the following:

The town clerk submitted a letter dated 17th May from the honorary secretary of the Loughborough Rotary Club, stating that he was asked by his council to express a keen sense of disappointment that the Borough Council had decided so far to take no action in this matter and that they hoped the local authority would reconsider its decision and give support to the Festival…
Resolved: That the Mayor and the town clerk convene a meeting of interested organisations and other bodies with a view to forming a small working committee…to organise activities in connection with the festival.[69]

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[66]   Private collection of minutes books, Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society, private letter 1980.

[67]   For an interesting overview of the influence of Amateur Operatic Societies in the twentieth century see Lowerson, J, 'An outbreak of allodoxia? Operatic amateurs and middle-class musical taste between the wars' in Kidd, A and Nicholls, D, eds., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1999), 198-213.

[68]   Meller, *Town, Plans and Society in Modern Britain*, 77.

[69]   Charnwood Borough Council minutes, 26th June 1950.

Here the opinion of the associational sphere can be seen to directly influence the decision of the municipality. Not only did the local council agree to reconsider their position on the Festival but they also relied upon the formation of a working committee, comprised of local organisations, to push the event forward. Thus local citizens, through the medium of associational activity, were able to engage civically on an issue of national significance. They worked collaboratively on a project to culturally enrich the town, and the nation, ultimately contributing to an active civil society. Despite the increasing interest of local government in urban affairs, the associational sphere evolved, adopting new practices and finding innovative ways to influence contemporary policy, particularly on local committees where a dual administration took place

Yet, to regard all relationships between voluntary organisations and the local government as harmonious would be misleading. For certain associations, the structure and aims of the organisation were simply too far removed from local government to achieve anything substantial through collaboration. Even societies such as the Civic Trust, who generally had a successful working relationship with local government, at times found themselves alienated from the local decision making process. Whilst referring in 1981 to their relationship and co-operation with Charnwood Borough Council in the past as 'good', the Trust also commented that, on the issue of the pedestrianisation of the market place, the lack of consultation on the issue had been so serious that the Trust 'brought this to the attention of local press and media'.[70] Whilst the issue was resolved and relations quickly restored, the comments reflected the extent to which the Civic Trust believed the transference of knowledge and expertise to be vital to local governance and the decision making process. The transference of information was to be achieved thorough intricate networks of communication, unifying the associational sphere and local government. However, these relations were often complex, as the issue of pedestrianisation showed. Policy makers at times rebuked local citizens who attempted to participate in civil society through associational activity. This was exemplified in 1960 following the suggestions of the Rotary Club to implement housing accommodation for refugee families. The Council's response was clear: 'The committee has sympathetically considered the request but feels it would be preferable for refugee families to be accommodated in a privately owned residence.'[71]

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[70] Private collection of minute books, Loughborough Civic Trust, 15th May 1981.

[71] Charnwood Borough Council Minutes, 25th May 1960.

Clearly local organisations and the municipality did not always work harmoniously; channels of interaction did not guarantee local associations municipal support. Nowhere was this more evident than in the 1970s when local government reorganisation was characterised by the foundation of metropolitan areas and enlarged administrative boundaries which distanced public administration from the citizenry.[72] However, as Kavanagh suggests, more recently the trend towards decentralisation and devolution reflects the 'small is beautiful' value with both local and central government increasingly seeking to engage the opinion of the citizen in a variety of innovative ways.[73] For these reasons and by these means, local organisations have resumed an active role in local policy making by developing the link between the citizen and the state. Much like Morris' perception of middle-class participation during the nineteenth century, engagement with the municipality remained an important aspect of associational activity during the twentieth century.[74] Voluntary organisations emphasised accountability and transparency in their operations, a vital aspect of civil society according to Innes.[75] For participants residing in suburban areas, such engagement maintained the linkages with civil society. Whilst the 'suburbans' no longer controlled the towns and city centres to the same extent as the middle-class elite of the nineteenth century, many still exerted their influence on the urban environment through a secure middle-class identity expressed through social interaction.[76]

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[72] Kavanagh, *British Politics – Continuities and Change, Local Government and Decentralisation*, 267.

[73] Ibid.

[74] For examples of Morris' work see Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 405-17; Morris, *Class, Sect and Part*; Morris, R.J, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns' in Daunton, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III*, 395-426; Morris, R.J, 'The middle class and British towns and cities of the industrial revolution', in Fraser, D and Sutcliffe, A, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983); Morris, R.J and Rodger, R, eds., *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914* (London, 1983). For additional references on middle-class associational engagement see Clark, P, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800. The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000); Gunn, S, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual, Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000); Gunn, S, 'The public sphere, modernity and consumption: new perspectives on the history of the English middle class' in Kidd and Nicholls, ed., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle Class Identity*, 12-30; Waller, P, 'Altercation over civil society. The bitter cry of the Edwardian middle classes' in Harris, ed., *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions*, 115-134.

[75] Innes, J, 'Central government 'interference': changing conceptions, practices, and concerns, c.1700—1850' in Harris, ed., *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions*, 44.

[76] Trainor, R, 'Neither metropolitan nor provincial. The inter-war middle class' in Kidd, A and Nicholls, D, eds., *The Making of the British Middle Class? Studies of Regional and Cultural Diversity since the Eighteenth Century* (Stroud, 1998), 25.

Civic Institutions

The type of networks that were constructed in urban centres, disseminating information and consolidating power, were not confined to the relationship between voluntary organisations and the municipality. Morris has argued that for the middle-classes of the nineteenth century, voluntary societies acted as a conduit for cultural and ideological dissemination.[77] Civic institutions, such as libraries and museums often provided a focal point for the cultural aspirations of organisations and their middle-class participants. In Morris' analysis of Leeds, the library in particular afforded 'materials for general conversation',[78] fostering important networks between middle-class individuals and organisations as they met and conversed on a variety of topics. Similarly, in twentieth century Loughborough, the local museum provided an arena for associational and municipal discourse, as well as a high level of inter-associaional activity.

The foundation of a local museum in Loughborough itself does much to challenge the interpretation of middle-class disinterest.[79] First recorded in the minute books of the Civic Trust in 1966, the original idea for a museum belonged to the Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society:

> The Loughborough Society are very much in favour of the suggestion (of a local museum), which originally came from the Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society, that a museum should be established in Loughborough, local in character and with a contemporary section. It was suggested that an action group should be formed by Mr. Williams to forward the project, although it was realised that it would require a long period of pressure on the council before results could be expected.[80]

Both organisations boasted suburban membership (as Figure 5.4 shows) directly connecting the middle-classes to cultural and collaborative action in the town:

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[77]   Morris, *Class Party and Sect*, 373.

[78]   Ibid, 171.

[79]   For examples see Morris, 'Structure and culture', 395-426; Savage, M, *Social Change and the Middle-classes* (London, 1995); Smith, J, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History,* 27, 2000, 255-75; Thompson, F.M.L, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982).

[80]   Private collection of minute books, Loughborough Archaeological and historical Society, 1st April 1966.

Figure 5.4 - Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Civic Trust and the Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society, cumulative membership 1955-83

Source: Data obtained from the private archive collections of the Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society and the Loughborough Civic Trust. Pink markers represent members of the Civic Trust and blue markers represent members of the Archaeological and Historical Society.

The two organisations worked closely on the project, initially supporting the notion that the Old Rectory would become the museum for the town.[81] In this respect, associations not only worked alongside the local government in order to achieve their cultural ambitions for the town, but also recognised the importance of building strong networks of communication and solidarity amongst one another.

In the 1970s the Old Rectory was officially opened as a modest town museum but ambitions for a larger Charnwood Museum remained. Meetings were regularly held for interested parties during the 1980s, using connections at Leicester Museum to discuss the curatorial development of a collection borrowed in part from Leicester.[82] By the 1990s 'The

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[81]   For additional information on the preservation of the Old Rectory, see Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust?

[82]   Private collection of minute books, Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society, 8th September 1984.

Friends of Charnwood Museum' was founded, a separate organisation uniting representatives from different associations within the community. This included members from the Archaeological and Historical Society, the Civic Trust and the Naturalists Club. The organisation claimed:

> To support the museum through research, promotion and fund-raising. Many members are very knowledgeable about local history and have assisted the museum with many research projects and exhibitions. Friends also volunteer at events.[83]

It was previously noted that during the nineteenth century civic institutions provided a common reference point for the middle-classes and this was undoubtedly the case in the late twentieth century, once Charnwood Museum had been established. This was evident in two ways: first, through the collaborative action of association members to establish the Museum; and secondly, the cultural life of the town and the vigour of civil society demonstrated by the popularity of the collection itself - in 1999 the museum had attracted a total of 15,000 visitors since its foundation and had become an integral part of town life.

In Leicester, relations between the museum and local organisations were equally as important to the identity and cultural aspirations of associations as the networks of interaction developed within Loughborough. Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society continued their traditional role as a monitor for conservation and preservation in the city with regular evening meetings held at the museum.[84] For the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society the extent of collaboration was much more significant with regular joint ventures recorded throughout their transaction papers. For example, in 1970 the Leicester Museum Association and the Literary and Philosophical Society jointly co-ordinated and hosted a meeting of the National Association of Museums. Additionally, members of the Museum Association and curators of the museum enjoyed corresponding membership and affiliation with the Literary and Philosophical Society. In 1999 the organisation recorded their delight in the continued relationship:

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[83]   http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/museums/charnwoodmuseum/friends_charnwood _museum.htm.

[84]   These types of events were recorded intermittently in the *TLAHS*, an example of which is taken from the annual report, 1974-75.

> That the presidency should reside again this year with an officer of the City Council's museum service, is, for me, a much appreciated mark of recognition of the happy coincidence of restoration of the symbiosis of society and museum with the 150th anniversary of the start of the relationship.[85]

The Society clearly valued these connections and recognised the importance of aligning itself with a prestigious civic institution. As with the University, networks of this type allowed the Literary and Philosophical Society to integrate itself into the cultural life of the city; its activities and membership enriched local engagement while simultaneously providing organisations with different conduits by which to connect with members and new initiatives. However, as with the municipality, relationships were not always harmonious and cordial. Ultimately, whilst it benefited organisations to align themselves with powerful civic institutions, they were separate bodies with plural agendas. In this respect a symbiotic relationship often existed. This was exemplified by the relationship between the Museum and the Leicester Society of Artists (LSA). For both the Museum and the Society connections provided opportunities for self-promotion, support and the transference of knowledge. The Society supplied representatives on the Museum and Libraries Committee, at times giving artistic advice and support on important issues, whilst the Museum provided the Society with space for exhibits and collections.[86] This, however, was often a contentious matter leading to documented arguments between members of the Society and the Museum Committee, reaching a crescendo by the late 1960s.[87] Ultimately relations between the two bodies were considered too important to risk a rift and efforts ensued to heal wounds by consciously organising events to include influential members of the city, including the Museum Service:

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[85] *Transaction Papers of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society* (TPLPS), 1998-99.

[86] Private collection of minute books, Leicester Society of Artists. Regular meetings are recorded between the Society and the Museum of Leicester, particularly regarding exhibition space. The Society also recommended potential purchases for the museum including a Henry Moore sculpture in 1961. These types of examples can be found in the private collection of minute books of the Leicester Society of Artists.

[87] Private collection of minute books, Leicester Society of Artists. In February 1964 the organisation recorded a 'heated' argument with members of the Museum regarding exhibition space. During this period the Society considered dissolving the relationship between the two, although this was eventually considered to be too drastic an action and relations were eventually restored.

> On the previous Friday evening the president had received some 164 paying guests who attended the soiree, now a firmly established annual event. The chairman of the museum and libraries service committee, Alderman Mrs M Trotter and the museums director's wife, Mrs Ann Waldon were both the guests of the Society on this occasion.[88]

By 1975 the Society referred to relations as 'more cordially established...with the new administration it seems that we are more welcome as a practising Leicester group of artists.'[89] The Society highly valued such connections and worked hard to maintain them, believing networks of interaction 'gave the Society considerable prestige and enhanced its public image.'[90] In return, the Museum required the increasing commitment of the Society in the planning and organisation of events and exhibitions, beyond those directly benefiting the Society. Furthermore, the opinion of the organisation was sought on different areas of Museum life, including, in 1984, the draft plans for the development of Museum space forwarded directly to the Society:

> Draft forward plan – The secretary read a few extracts from this document, which has just come to hand. The president then distributed his preliminary observations and urged council members to obtain their own copies of the plan, so that we can give our response...Doyle's described the plan as more of a 'wish list' than a business plan and suggested that we should be actively involved in the plans and interested in any future developments that could affect the art collection and the availability of gallery space. [91]

Overall, connections with civic institutions remained an important part of associational life during the twentieth century. The relationship was symbiotic, with associations and institutions working towards a common goal despite differing agendas. The strength and extent of these connections however, varied from association to association. For organisations like the Leicester Society of Artists, connections with a museum were integral to the validation of the organisation; without their public endorsement exhibits would have less authority. These types of networks perfectly exemplify Harris' 'single issue' society of the twentieth century, and support Colls' and Rodger's concern over an associational life working to its own agenda.[92] However, their engagement with the urban core was important nonetheless, ultimately enriching the cultural life of the town and city. Organisations may

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[88]   Ibid, 9th October 1971.

[89]   Ibid, 4th October 1975

[90]   Ibid, 14th May 1976.

[91]   Ibid, 28th March 1984.

[92]   Colls and Rodger, 'Civil society and British cities', 19.

not have maintained the breadth of interest that previous generations had, but in the areas of urban life they were concerned with, associational activity continued to develop strong networks of cooperative action with leading civic institutions that enriched the lives of urban inhabitants. Without the dedication and commitment of the associational sphere in Loughborough, the town would be without a museum that now attracts thousands of visitors. Central to these achievements were the 'suburbans'. Through their networks of association, middle-class residents of both Loughborough and Leicester returned to the urban centre, engaging in civil society and contributing to the stock of social capital.

Inter-Associational Activity

Thus far networks of interaction and cooperation have been determined in relation to the connections between voluntary activity, the municipality and civic institutions. However, a degree of inter-associational activity has also been revealed. Seemingly, in the twentieth century town and city, the type of associational connections that were often most powerful were the intricate networks developed within the associational sphere itself. Working on differing schemes and projects, as well as maintaining important social connections, contemporary middle-class organisations continued to maintain networks of cooperation that exerted influence through collaborative action. Durkheim has argued that civil society is dependent upon the creation of a 'mid level within society', a balance between the citizen and the state, and it is through the analysis of this interaction that a more unified form of associational activity in twentieth century society becomes apparent. [93]

For certain organisations, the concept of networking and cooperation simply represented the ability of associational activity to create internal networks of friendship and support. According to Liz Lewis, the National Women's Register in Leicester was founded for the very purpose of creating networks of sociability that enhance members' position in the urban community through social contact.[94] For this Society, networking existed internally with only limited interaction recorded with local organisations beyond their immediate association. This, however, was not representative of the experience of the majority of

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[93] The reference to Durkheim is taken from Hall and Trentman, eds., *Civil Society: A Reader in History, Theory and Global Politics*, 16.

[94] Interview with Liz Lewis, member of the Leicester faction of the National Women's Register, July 2007. For additional information on networks of sociability see Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seed Beds of Trust?.

organisations analysed. In Leicester, for associations such as the Women's Luncheon Committee, the Bradgate Twinning Association, and the Leicestershire Motor Car Club, regular contact and interaction with other local organisations was a fundamental part of associational life. Socially, extended networks allowed interaction with a wider circle of acquaintances and with organisations whose participants were often drawn from across the county. Such interaction enlarged events; inaugural celebrations, public ceremonies and charitable events drew larger numbers as a result, and added to the sense of occasion or display.

For the Women's Luncheon Committee, entertaining ladies from the Charnwood InnerWheel, Soroptimists' and Luncheon Club' was an important part of the social calendar and regarded as a 'friendly gesture' in the maintenance of local links.[95] For the Leicestershire Motor Car Club, regular correspondence and meetings with local clubs ensured popularity and well-attended events such as local rallies and lectures about automobiles.[96] Furthermore, a proposal to unite local car clubs in the area in a specially formulated 'areas committee' emphasised their understanding of the importance of unifying organisations under a federal structure that conveyed greater power and influence.[97] A unified structure also created stronger networks of support, allowing the transference of knowledge and expertise on particular issues. For example, when membership numbers began to decline in the late-1960s, the Club recorded a new system of 'co-promotion' formulated with the collaborative assistance of six other Leicestershire Motor Car Clubs.[98] Clearly local organisations entered into a dialogue that encouraged generalised reciprocity. They created intricate networks of support and thus social solidarity, working together on joint committees that allowed the transference of expertise and negotiation on important issues. In the context of a society with an increasing focus on the individual, such collaboration emphasised a degree of collectivism that continued to exist in middle-class social interaction. This interaction was

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[95]   ROLLR, DE 2509/1, The Women's Luncheon Committee minute books, 1951-1983. This type of engagement is regularly recorded in the minutes of the club. The quote 'friendly gesture' is taken from a particular example, March 17th 1966.

[96]   ROLLR, DE 2172/31 Leicestershire Motor Club, 1950-1980. Examples are evident throughout the minute books of the organisation. The first car rally is recorded on 1st August 1950 and the first 'car lecture' on February 6th 1951. Other combined events also included New Year's Eve parties at Kirby Muxloe, festivals at Market Harborough and Sunday Socials in Leicester.

[97]   Ibid, March 4th 1950.

[98]   Ibid, 28th January 1968.

particularly interesting when we consider the geographical distribution of membership for Leicestershire Motor Car Club:

Figure 5.5 – Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Motor Car Club, cumulative membership, 1950-80
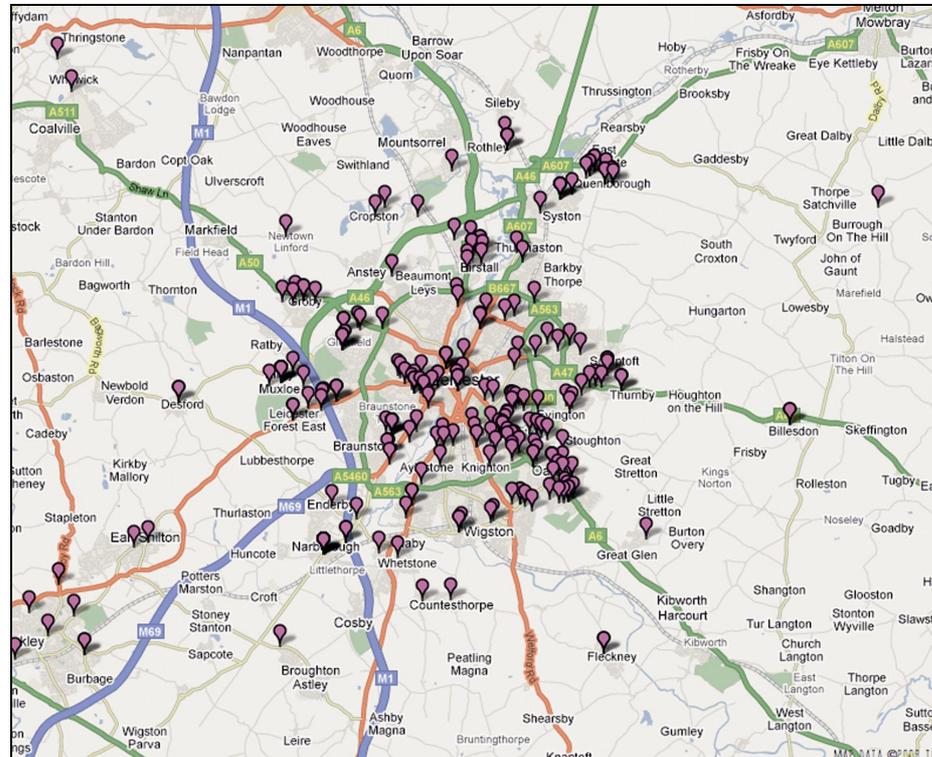
Source: Data obtained from Leicestershire Motor Car Club address book, ROLLR, DE 2172/31.

From the image provided, a clear suburban membership is evident. In total 55.1 percent of members resided in a suburban location or in a satellite village or town, with the average member living nearly 4 miles from the city centre. Thus a high concentration of members can be deemed suburban. These middle-class participants interacted not only within their own organisation, but as minute books have shown, provided support for fellow motoring enthusiasts throughout the county.

Such support was not unique to the Motor Club. In general, despite the constant need to increase their own memberships, organisations in Leicester resisted poaching members and were particularly supportive of other local associations. Upon the news of a new luncheon club starting in Leicester, to be named the 'Pandora Club', the Women's Luncheon Committee gave officials 'all the help they could' in formulating their

organisation.[99] Tocqueville stated that private associations were essential for sustaining 'the morals and intelligence of a democratic people…feelings and ideas are renewed, the heart enlarged, and understandably developed only by the reciprocal action of men one upon another.'[100] In the case of associational activity in Leicester, and the networks constructed through it, such organisations exemplified Tocqueville's understanding of the 'renewal of ideas'. They strove to maintain networks of interaction within both the city and county, recognising the importance of collaborative action and the strength to be found in the unification of ideas and effort.

Such interaction was also evident in various elements of cultural life within the city. In 1959 a cross national survey of 'Civic Culture' in Britain identified the country as one of the homelands of 'civic culture',[101] and much of the collaborative interaction in Leicester during the mid twentieth century exemplified this, with a primary focus on the development of cultural life at the urban core. Examples of collaborative projects existed particularly between cultural organisations such as the Literary and Philosophical Society and the Archaeological and Historical Society. In the 1950s and 1960s the organisations, in conjunction with Leicester City Council, worked together on the publication of 'The National Historic Survey', designed to record the history of every county in England.[102] Beyond the survey, the two organisations continued to record their joint involvement in projects of cultural significance, as exemplified by the Literary and Philosophical Society in 1966:

> In collaboration with the Archaeological and Historical Society, an aerial survey of the whole of Leicestershire, covering the sites in the city and county that are of Archaeological, scientific and geographical interest.[103]

As cooperative relationship also existed between the Leicester Civic Trust and the Archaeological and Historical Society, with the latter involved in the formation of the Trust in 1970:

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[99] ROLLR, DE 2509/1, The Women's Luncheon Committee, 1951-1983.

[100] Tocqueville quote is taken from De Vries, B, Morris, R.J and Morton, G, eds., *Civil Society, Associations and Urban Places* (Aldershot, 2006), 33.

[101] Harris J, 'Society and the state in twentieth century Britain', in Thompson, ed., *Cambridge Social History of Britain, Volume III*, 103.

[102] Leicester City Council Minutes, 27th January 1953.

[103] *TLLPS*, 1965-1966.

It is encouraging that the proposed re-development of the Loseby Lane area, which the Society has opposed, has spread to a sufficiently large number of members of the public to have brought a 'Civic Society' once more into being. The more bodies of this kind there are to raise their voices, along with the voice of this Society, is for the good of preservation.[104]

By 1972 the Literary and Philosophical Society also recorded their affiliation to the newly formed Civic Trust.[105]

This type of interaction continued throughout the period under review and was undoubtedly an important aspect of associational activity. Networks of cooperation and support showed the extent to which associations of the twentieth century continued to work together at the urban core. Collaborative ventures were important not only to the sociability of associational life but also in providing connections and networks of influence across both the town and county. For the 'suburbans', who continued to constitute a substantial percentage of organisational membership, networks of support showed the extent of their engagement with both the associational sphere and also the urban environment, as networks of communication created bonds of trust, a vital component in the maintenance of civil society. According to Curtis, Baer and Grabb memberships of organisations are made up entirely of individuals who engage in a set of co-operative activities to achieve mutual goals,[106] and the experiences of participants in Leicester suggest that during the twentieth century 'cooperative activities' extended beyond the immediate sphere of individual organisations to include a density of networks that stretched across both city and county lines.

Such networks of collaboration were also apparent in Loughborough. The experience of organisational activity and the networks maintained through it were perfectly exemplified by the Loughborough InnerWheel Club. Correspondence showed a complex system of connected associations within both the town and county. In particular, a strong network of support existed amongst other Innerwheel Clubs within the area. Links with local clubs demonstrated the extent to which organisations supported each other at Charter

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[104] *TLAHS*, 1970-71.

[105] TLLPS, 1971-72.

[106] Curtis, Baer and Grabb, 'Nation of joiners: explaining voluntary association membership in democratic societies', 783.

Anniversary events, the inauguration of new presidents, and special Inter Club meetings.[107] In 1955, whilst organising an 'International evening', the organisation called upon local clubs to help with the task of inviting as many 'foreign women students, wives of foreign students, nurses and maids' as possible.[108] However, connections were not confined to the InnerWheel circle itself. Local Soroptomist organisations and youth clubs were amongst the many associations the Loughborough InnerWheel Club interacted with during the planning of local charity and social events. This was nowhere more significant than with the Loughborough Rotary Club. Charity events were often joint ventures organised collaboratively, sharing in both effort and results.[109]

Within Loughborough it is apparent that clubs and societies not only used collaborative action to benefit their immediate membership circle, but combined networks of association to exert power and influence locally. Academics have argued that voluntary activity inculcates the 'habit of the heart …social behaviour, trust, reciprocity, solidarity and cooperation'.[110] The foundation of John Storer House (JSH) in Loughborough is an example of organisations using their relationships of trust and solidarity to achieve a common goal. JSH was originally envisaged as a base in the town for associational meetings and activities at the urban core. The process of its establishment was itself an example of the power of unified associational activity as the Trustees of the John Storer Charity, along with the President of the Rotary Club, worked together in staging public gatherings. The events were organised in order to canvas public opinion in the town on the best use of funds recently acquired by the Charity from the sale of land to the Council. Additionally the Rotary Club, alongside the local branch of the Boy Scouts Association, organised a week of events in April 1965 to obtain additional funds, which included an auction sale, bingo sessions, floral exhibitions, fashion shows, a night of variety and dance; each event organised by a different organisation in the town.[111] The project exemplified the achievements made possible by the

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[107] These types of events are recorded throughout the private collection of minute books of the Loughborough InnerWheel Club, 1950-2005.

[108] Ibid, July 4th 1955.

[109] Ibid. Collaborative charity events ranged from rummage sales (example, 20th February 1950) to fund raising barbeques (9th May 2000).

[110] Newton, 'Trust, social capital, civil society and democracy', 202. Reference to 'habit of the heart' is actually taken from Bellah, R, Madsen, R, Sullivan W.M, Swindler A and Tipton, S.M, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkley, 1985).

[111] An overview of the brochure provided by Gerry Jacobs of the CVS, entitled *John Storer House: A Short History* written by former Rotary President Owen Brown. From this study the Loughborough InnerWheel Club, the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society, the

collective action of a group of local organisations. JSH was eventually opened on 29 April 1966 by Princess Margaret and remains a focal point for community activity in the town today.[112]

Further examples of co-operative action can be identified in the minute books of numerous organisations in Loughborough. Previously the working relationship between the Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society and the Civic Trust was noted in relation to the foundation of Charnwood Museum, an ambitious project pioneered by the two organisations, resulting in the opening of the cultural landmark. However, associational interaction within the town moved beyond these two organisations. For Loughborough Civic Trust the formation of new committees and societies - such as the Federation of the Leicestershire Amenities Society and the Action Areas Co-ordinating Committee – required the use of specific networking skills. Their ability to communicate with a wide range of clubs and societies facilitated liaison between local organisations and fellow Civic Trust groups within the county. The eventual formation of such committees strongly influenced civil society, by encouraging local bodies to work more effectively through unification, ultimately influencing urban policy. Organisations, like the Civic Trust created intricate networks of power, bringing local organisations together on important committees, recognising that specific objectives could be more effectively achieved through collaborative action.[113] An active civil society should retain an institutional core of voluntary organisations that exist outside the sphere of local and state government,[114] and during the latter years of the twentieth century this was undoubtedly the experience of voluntary activity in Loughborough.

When considered alongside the connections developed with the municipality, civic institutions and associations themselves, it is clear that networks of collaboration were a

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Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society, and the Loughborough Naturalists Club all contributed to in some way to the foundation of JSH.

[112] Interview with the Gerry Jacobs, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Charnwood (previously Charnwood Community Council), May 2007. During this interview Mr Jacobs referred to JSH as an important meeting point for local organisations who regularly hold their monthly meetings and charity events at the centre. Additionally the centre houses the local citizens advice bureau, tea rooms, child care facilities and runs exercise/dance classes and local youth clubs. Having visited the centre on centre on several occasions it was evident that JSH was a popular location for citizen engagement.

[113] Private collection of minute books, Loughborough Civic Trust, 21st September 1970.

[114] Flyvbjerg, B, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?' *The British Journal of Sociology,* 49, 210-33.

prominent feature of associational life. In both Leicester and Loughborough an array of networks allowed associational activity to flourish at the urban core, contributing culturally to the urban form and influencing local government where possible. Furthermore, they emphasised a degree of collectivism that was still prevalent in the latter years of the twentieth century. Whilst 'single issue' societies may have worked towards a specific agenda and interest, voluntary organisations in general balanced the relationship between the citizen and the state, 'enabling' active citizenship through various forms of civic engagement that can be understood as a crucial aspect of contemporary associational culture. Working collaboratively with local councils on numerous projects they influenced urban policy through the distribution of expertise on various committees. Their primary objectives were to bridge the gap between the citizen and the state and as such provide clear examples of associational activity contributing to civil society in modern Britain. Relationships differed from organisation to organisation; for some networks existed only internally and for social interaction, whilst others developed connections at the urban core to benefit the wider community. However, the majority of organisations were in some way or another collaborating with external bodies. For the 'suburbans' who contributed so significantly to the total percentage of members, networks of interaction were the mechanism by which they retained influence at the urban core and exerted power through collaborative action. Once again associational networks showed resilience in the context of a rapidly changing urban environment, adopting innovative practices and cultivating new relationships to benefit the social, cultural and political needs of the twentieth century city.

Yet, when considering suburban participants, who exactly are we referring to? Traditionally the arena of voluntary activity has dictated that participants are white, middle-class males, but as the twentieth century progressed, to what extent did the nature of the associational sphere evolve to include various facets of the urban environment? As the post-war era witnessed the influx of ethnic minority communities and the rise of feminism and gender equality, in what ways did the changing demographic profile of the country affect voluntary organisations? Chapter Six progresses the analysis by considering the impact of ethnic minority groups and the changing role of women on associational activity. Examining gender and racial assimilation in both Leicester and Loughborough, the chapter evaluates the impact of cultural change in post-war Britain in the context of inclusion and engagement within civil society.

Chapter Six

Civil Society: The World of the White, Middle-Class Male?

> …membership has certain, special characteristics: it is predominantly
> male, middle-aged and above average occupation.[1]

The thesis thus far has considered the elements that bring associational communities together and the direct impact their engagement has on the construction of civil society, such as the importance of philanthropic activities, the cultural interests that shape the identity of the urban landscape and the municipal networks that often influence government policy. Yet civil society is a concept that works on the premise of inclusion, raising questions regarding those who participate. In an era of increasing demographic diversity: does contemporary civil society incorporate all facets of the urban community? Or are associational communities dominated by the white, middle-class male? Such questions become particularly prevalent when considering the era of British history under review. Arguably a turbulent period, the post-war years witnessed intense cultural and social change. In 1950 Britain was in search of a 'New Jerusalem', an idealistic notion reflecting the country's desire for a nation that befitted the sacrifices made during the War.[2] In the decades that followed, the influence of the experimental young and the intellectual-middle appeared to impact upon society in areas ranging from the explosion of modern music to ground breaking social legislation, including the expansion of the welfare state and the foundation of the NHS.[3]

Amidst the growing intensity of cultural change, the issues of gender and ethnic diversity were often at the forefront of the contemporary agenda. For women, urban space was historically defined in terms of the separate spheres concept, the public role of the male and the domestic role of the female, yet increasingly the twentieth century offered the

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[1] This quote refers to Margaret Stacey's examination of Banbury and the 71 organisations analysed within the study. See Stacey, M, *Tradition and Change – A Study of Banbury* (Oxford, 1960), 78.

[2] Porter, D, '"Never-never land": Britain under the conservatives 1951-1964' in Tiratsoo, N, ed., *From Blitz to Blair, A New History of Britain Since 1939* (London, 1997), 102.

[3] Childs, D, *Britain since 1939. Progress and Decline* (London, 1995), 132.

opportunity for female empowerment.[4] Access to the public arena through employment opportunities, and emerging strands of radical feminism and government reform such as the Abortion Act of 1967 and the Divorce Reform Act in 1969, each signified a move towards a more gender balanced society.[5] Ethnicity was also an issue shaping the cultural landscape of modern Britain between the years 1950 and 2005. As the immigrant population rose from 60,000 in 1951 to 336,000 by 1961, increasing social problems emerged. Municipal leaders failed to adequately prepare for the urban influx with immigrants settling in ghetto areas of inner cities in unplanned ways.[6] Despite initial reform from consecutive governments during the 1960s and 1970s racial tensions grew, famously identified by Enoch Powell in his disturbing 'Rivers of blood speech' in 1968. Demographically the arrival of immigrants after 1950 helped to create the multicultural society of contemporary Britain but lack of social planning and foresight into the problems connected with integration ultimately led to violent outbursts, intense race riots and clear racial divisions in many modern towns and cities.

This chapter explores the impact these issues had on the ability of minority populations to engage in civil society. Did ethnic minority groups have a place in stereotypical white, middle-class organisations? Or did separate spheres of civil society exist, working independently for the welfare of individual communities? Furthermore, did the social inclusion of women post 1950 lead to a more active role in the male dominated world of associational activity? Or was civil society still dominated by the urban male with the division of associational culture upholding stereotypical notions of gender division? Addressing these issues through the analysis of the roles and experiences of women and

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[4]   Davidoff, L and Hall, C, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London, 2002); Davidoff, L and Hall, C, 'The architecture of public life and private life: English middle-class society 1780-1850' in Fraser, D and Sutcliffe, A, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983), 327-45; Davidoff, L, 'Mastered for life: servant and wife in Victorian and Edwardian England', *Journal of Social History,* 8, 1974, 404-28; Kerber, L.K, 'Separate spheres, female worlds, woman's place: the rhetoric of women's history,' *Journal of American History*, 75, 1988, 9-39; Vickery, A, 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history', *The Historical Journal,* 36, 1993, 383-414.

[5]   Childs, *Britain since 1939. Progress and Decline*; Christopher, D, *British Culture* (London, 1999); Glynn, S and Booth, A, *Modern Britain – An Economic and Social History* (London, 1996); Halsey, A.H, *British Social Trends since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain* (London, 1988); Lewis, J, *Women in Britain since 1945: Women, Family, Work and the State in Post-War Years* (Oxford, 1992); Marwick, A, 'Social trends, structures, values and behaviour' in Hollowell, J, ed., *Britain since 1945* (Oxford, 2003); O'Morgan, K, *The Peoples Peace. British History 1945-1990* (Oxford, 1990) are an example of texts providing good over views of the cultural changes experienced by Britain after 1950.

[6]   O'Morgan, K, 'The Wilson years: 1964-1970' in Tiratsoo, ed., *From Blitz to Blair,* 152.

ethnic minority members in associational communities, the chapter aims to evaluate whether gender and ethnicity affect a citizen's ability to engage in associational life in the period 1950 to 2005.

Gender

Jackson argues in his research on the twentieth century middle-classes, that women were fundamentally trapped in their suburban lives, suffering from a 'total absence of community and social organisation.'[7] Their function as women within society focused predominantly on their role as wife and mother. Whilst men worked for money, in both public and private spheres, women it was claimed worked out of love and duty.[8] Thompson has also argued that: 'The creation of an environment in which this division of middle-class male lives, between a public world of work contracts, and a private world of family life, was what the rise of suburbia was all about.'[9] The suburban home was expected to fit the Victorian and Edwardian model of family life, emphasising the distinction between parental roles; the father represented 'patriarchal authority' and the mother was concerned with the management of the home and the upbringing of children.[10] It has also been argued that the process of suburbanisation accelerated the retraction of middle-class leisure to the seclusion of the urban fringes.[11] For women this had seemingly always been the case; the isolation of suburbia provided the opportunity for a degree of autonomy in leisure pursuits, whilst for the opposite sex the retreat to the suburbs by the twentieth century also encouraged them towards social exclusivity. Historical discourse suggests that for the middle-classes work was urban and leisure suburban.[12]

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[7]   Jackson, A. A, *The Middle Classes 1900-1950* (Nairn, 1991), 123.

[8]   Holden, K, 'Family, caring and unpaid work' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, I, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain* (Essex, 2001), 143.

[9]   Thompson, F.M.L, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982), 8.

[10] Gunn, S and Bell, R, *Middle Classes, Their Rise and Sprawl* (London, 1996), 63.

[11] For examples see Morris, R.J, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns' in Daunton, M, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain 1840-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 2001), 395-426; Butler, T and Savage, M, *Social Change and the Middle Classes* (London, 1995); Smith, J, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, 27, 2000, 255-75; Thompson, F.M.L, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982).

[12] Cunningham, H, 'Leisure and culture', in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Volume II* (Cambridge, 1990), 297.

So far the evidence presented has shown the extent to which these beliefs are inaccurate. Geographical relocation to suburbia did not equal detachment from leisure pursuits and cultural networks at the urban core, with suburban participation constituting a significant percentage of membership rates. In the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society alone, 71.8 percent of members lived in 'suburban areas' or satellite villages by 2004. However, to what extent did gender affect this participation? Were organisations dominated by the middle-class male? Did the gender division of space continue to dictate in the mid to late twentieth century that women remain in the suburban home whilst men participate and control the sphere of associational culture? And to what to extent, if at all, did this change?

Throughout the nineteenth century social clubs for men remained at the heart of an expanding public sphere dedicated to associational activity. Institutions were select and private, unequivocally excluding the participation of women.[13] Davidoff suggests that formal association became a new expression of manliness for the middle-class male, creating new arenas of social power that had little or no space for women. Limited research exists into participatory rates of women in associational activity after 1950 but quantitative analysis of the number of male, female and mixed gender organisations in Leicester and Charnwood shows the extent to which gender specific organisations were becoming obsolete by the end of the twentieth century. Overwhelmingly, the majority of organisations in both locations were mixed sex associations by 2007 (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 –Organisations categorised by sex in Charnwood and Leicester, 1950-2005

Sex of Organisation	Charnwood (%)	Leicester (%)
Male only organisations	6.6	1.4
Female only organisations	12.4	6.8
Mixed sex organisations	76.7	80.9

Source: Data obtained from questionnaires distributed in Leicester and Charnwood. NB In Leicester 9.5 percent did not respond to this question, in Charnwood this number was 4.6 percent.

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[13]   Gunn, S, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual, Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000), 84. Flyvbjerg has also suggested that historically 'civil society is established after the image of the civilised male individual.' See Flyvbjerg, B, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 49, 211.

High incidences of mixed gender associations show the extent to which assimilation in terms of gender had been achieved in associational life. Rather than a collection of male and female only organisations, by the twenty-first century the dominance of mixed gender associations reflected the ability of both men and women to work collaboratively in associational communities.

In terms of female participation rates in mixed gender organisations, membership records within Leicester and Loughborough show the steady involvement of women in numerous aspects of associational culture during the period 1950 to 2005. The overall percentages of female participants in various organisations in Leicester are shown in Table 6.2 in areas as diverse as natural history, automobiles and community work:

Table 6.2 – Number of female participants for various organisations in Leicester, 1950-2005

Organisation	Number of female members (%)
Leicestershire Motor Car Club	12.1
Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group	30.6
Oadby Community Association	60
St. Martins Parish Council Social Committee	56.3

Source: Data obtained from private archive collections, including address books and transaction papers for each organisation.

Clearly variation existed in relation to the style of organisation. For example, the lowest female membership rate belonged to the male dominated arena of sport, with the Motor Car Club totalling 12.1 percent,[14] still a healthy percentage but significantly lower when compared with the Community Association in Oadby (60 percent) and St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee (56.3 percent). In organisations associated with community and religion, women appeared to have a significantly higher share of the membership and, in the case of the Community Association, the dominant share. Such findings support the notion that women were more inclined to involve themselves in philanthropic or religious associations, those stereotypically deemed by society to be gender appropriate.[15] Equally the

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[14] Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR) DE 2172/50, The Leicestershire Motor Car Club Committee minutes 1960-1982.

[15] For a general overview of the history of middle-class women in society see Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class;* Davidoff, 'Mastered for life: servant

percentage of women affiliated to the Community Association showed the degree to which suburban women were active in their own communities (see Chapter Seven for a case study analysis of Oadby Community Association).[16] Whilst historians have previously described female leisure pursuits as autonomous, participation in the Oadby Community Association suggests that women were not socially isolated once geographically relocated away from the urban centre.[17]

Between the years 1961 and 1984 both employed women and housewives saw their leisure time increase by half an hour a day or more, providing the opportunity for increased social interaction. Such changes appeared to have a substantial impact on associational activity. As this study shows, women were heavily represented in the majority of organisations examined. In Loughborough organisations like the Naturalists Club recorded female membership to be 31.9 percent in 1970, whilst the Loughborough Civic Trust had 42.1 percent female membership in 1983. For Jones, whilst the importance of community is often portrayed as a typically working-class value, in the early post-war year's middle-class women also bonded together within a class, gender and spatial identity. As was the case in Leicester and Loughborough, women who joined organisations found their public roles increasingly interlocking with their leisure ones as they forged important social networks in contemporary associational communities.[18]

In terms of administrative control, women steadily increased their roles on the executive committees of local organisations, as the experience of Loughborough Civic Trust between 1965 and 2006 shows:

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and wife in Victorian and Edwardian England', 404-28; Kerber, 'Separate spheres, female worlds, woman's place: the rhetoric of women's history', 9-39. For a review into the changing role of women during the twentieth century see Francis, M, 'Leisure and popular culture' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, 229-47; Halsey, ed., *British Social Trends Since*; Holden, 'Family, caring and unpaid work', 134-48; Jones, H, *Women in British Public Life, 1914 -1950* (London, 2000); Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945*; Sharpe, 'Continuity and change: women's history and economic history in Britain,' *The Economic History Review,* 48, 1995, 353-69; Smith, H.L, 'The women's movement – politics and citizenship, 1969-2000' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain,* 278-91; Stacey, M and Price, M, *Women Politics and Power* (London, 1981); Zweiniger-Bargielowska, I, 'Housewifery' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, 149-64.

16   See Chapter Seven, Oadby: Neighbourliness and Associational Participation. The chapter examines the suburb of Oadby and the Oadby Community Association, using the location to consider associational culture at the suburban boundary.

17   Cunningham, 'Leisure and culture,'297.

18   Jones, *Women in British Public Life, 1914 -1950*, 229.

Table 6.3 - Female committee members of the Loughborough Civic Trust, 1965-2006

Year	Number of female committee members (%)
1965	16.6
1970	16.6
1981	46.1
2006	30

Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Civic Trust.

The increase of female participants on the committee occurred specifically after 1970, with a 46.1 percent share being controlled by women in 1981. Similar patterns occurred in most of the organisations analysed, and reflected a move towards a more gender balanced associational culture. Such findings support Stacey's analysis of voluntary organisations in Banbury during the 1970s. Whilst her initial study in 1950 concluded that the saying 'a woman's place is in the home' was customary,[19] her second examination in 1975 alluded to a more balanced associational sphere with 'more all women committees and more mixed sex committees and more women on the mixed sex committees.'[20]

Clearly the position of women in the post-war period was changing. In particular, the active involvement of women in the associational sphere reflected a positive move away from female exclusion. The analysis of committee participation highlights the persistent involvement of women after 1950, although the rate at which this was achieved must also be considered. For the Loughborough Boat Club, despite the introduction of women in the late 1960s, it was several years before they were entrusted with positions on the executive committee. Initially female members were elected on to a 'ladies committee' whose role, unsurprisingly, focused on organising social events and raising funds for the Club. By 1975 the success of female members eventually resulted in the decision to co-opt members of the ladies section on to the committee due to their 'startling efforts in recent club activities.'[21] Similarly, in the Loughborough Civic Trust example, the increase in female committee members did not occur until after 1970. In other cases, the female roles in specific communities affected their ability to engage on executive committees. This is specifically

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[19] Stacey, M, *Tradition and Change – A Study of Banbury*, 79.

[20] Stacey, M, Batstone, E and Bell, C, *Power, Persistence and Change. A Social Study of Banbury* (London, 1975), 50.

[21] Private collection of minute book, Loughborough Boat Club, 29th July 1975.

true when considering localities with a high ethnic minority population, as the Director of the Asian Business Association explained:

> Committee members…we find we need women and we are struggling to get them. I think the women in the Asian community, because they play so many roles, I mean sometimes they are bread winners, sometimes they are looking after children, they are also able to cook at home and so on, many of them do not participate…. It is a struggle to get them on board… we had about four women I think, but one woman moved to America, the other one actually left, again for family reasons and so on but you know it is the pressure of life on women, particularly within the Asian community, it is quite high, because they have so many other commitments as well.[22]

Thus, the inclusion of women on committees was a complex issue. This is also the case when we consider the election of women into the executive posts of president or chairman. Interestingly, whilst women increased their roles on committees during the period under review, the prominent positions of president and chairman remained elusive to female members. In the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society, St. Martin's Parish Council Social Committee and the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, females maintained a significant proportion of both total membership and participation on committee boards, engaging in important roles such as treasurer or secretary. Very few however, enjoyed the elevated post of president. This was in stark contrast to the appointment of Leicester's first female Lord Mayor in 1960 or the election of the country's first female Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, in 1979.

Therefore, in many ways the integration of women into the associational sphere mirrored the national trends towards a more gender balanced society. Women undoubtedly made important gains in terms of universal membership in local voluntary organisations and election on to their executive committees. However, it is also important to note that the process of integration was not immediate and occurred over several decades. Furthermore, a degree of inequality still existed; in certain communities an imbalance between home and public life still existed, whilst for those that did participate, the prominent positions of president and chairman still remained elusive as the twenty-first century began.

Quantitative data relating to female participation is an important way of understanding the increasing number of women engaging in associational activity after 1950. Yet to determine the relationship between gender and organisational life, an

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[22] Interview with Jaffar Kapasee, founding member and Director of the Leicester Asian Business Association, June 2007.

examination of the behaviour and interests of participants is required. Did the roles and interests of women change in organisations between the years 1950 to 2005? And did their new found positions on executive committees affect their social standing in contemporary, urban communities? The National Women's Register in Leicester provides an intriguing example of the ideological shift of certain female associations during the period 1950 to 2005, particularly in organisations founded after the post-war years. Club member, Liz Lewis, explains the history of the organisation:

> The National group started sometime in the early 60s with a letter written by a lady called Maureen Nicoll to *The Guardian*, and I think she had recently moved house because of her husband's job, and was bored with being in the house with small children and wanted some mental stimulation really. As a result of that letter she was inundated with letters from people in the same position and that was how the National Housewives Register, it was called in those days, started and it has become a national network so most major towns, cities, have got a National Women's Register, as it is now called to be more PC. If, for example, I moved to Dundee I could get in touch with the National Office, ask if there is a group in Dundee and start going there and you tend to meet likeminded people…We're also not allowed to do any charity work.[23]

Whilst older organisations such as the InnerWheel Club - dating back to the 1930s - appeared to change very little in terms of structure, ethos and general practices, more modern associations focused on contemporary issues. Interestingly Lewis emphasises the decision of the organisations to move away from domestic matters:

> The rules are that you don't discuss anything domestic so that you have mental stimulation and that ethos really continues today because we are not supposed to have too many outside speakers, we are supposed to generate our own discussions.[24]

In this respect the Women's Register is distinctly comparable with male organisations like the Loughborough Probus Club, also formed for social interaction and intellectual stimulation, choosing not to engage in philanthropic activities. Whilst other organisations, like the InnerWheel Club, maintained intellectual programmes, the Women's Register is significant as intellectual stimulation was a primary objective. Therefore, the Women's Register is a clear example of the female interest in associational activity evolving as the twentieth century progressed. Members were not adopting the traditional female roles

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[23] Interview with Liz Lewis, member of the Leicester Faction of the National Women's Register, July 2007.

[24] Ibid.

in relation to associational culture but were attempting to move away from gendered stereotypes by rejecting the discussion of domestic matters.

In contrast with the progressive interests of the Women's Register however, were the philanthropic duties adopted by female organisations like the Loughborough InnerWheel Club and the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee. Historically the philanthropic role of the female was an important aspect of associational activity. In relation to the separate sphere ideology of the nineteenth century, any variation from the rhetoric came from the understanding that 'a woman's mission was to work with the poor',[25] which they often did through local organisations. If women were to enter the world of associational culture it would not be to engage in leisure activities but to nurture those less fortunate. Analysis of female only organisations show the extent to which this notion still had relevance post 1950. In Leicester the primary objective of the Women's Luncheon Committee was to encourage charitable donations. Minute books show each meeting to be dominated by the division of contributions to each charity, evident below in an extract taken from January 1958:

Table 6.4 – Donations distributed by the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee's, January 1958

Distribution of funds	£
Xmas dinner fund	2.70
Lord Mayor's fund	5.50
The distressed gentleman's fund	5.50
The family service unit	5.50
Save the children fund	5.50
Cripples guild holiday fund	10.10

Source: Data obtained from archive collection of the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee, ROLLR, DE 2509/1.

The distribution of financial aid was an issue repeated throughout the Luncheon Committee minute books, and represented a genuine concern and interest for less fortunate citizens. Such concern emphasises the importance of philanthropy in the construction of civil society; charity helps to connect communities by developing an ethos that rebukes individualism in

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[25]   Holden, 'Family, caring and unpaid work', 143.

favour of collective action.[26] It also exemplifies the changing contribution of women to civil society through the distribution of financial assistance. Academics have suggested that the 'age of welfarism' increased the role of the municipality whilst denying philanthropic organisations, and more specifically women, the ability to engage in their local communities.[27] In the case of the Women's Luncheon Committee however, their connections to the urban core did not diminish. Instead the organisation evolved with the needs of twentieth century society as financial contributions became a more accepted form of engagement.

The changing nature of associational activity however, varied from organisation to organisation. In previous chapters the Loughborough InnerWheel Club was shown to work collaboratively with the local government after 1950 on issues such as the welfare of old people and young children.[28] In addition, like the Women's Luncheon Committee, the organisation also devoted time and energy to fundraising activities and the division of financial aid. In this respect the roles of women developed as the needs of society changed. They learnt not only how to work in collaboration with a more 'involved' state but also to develop a role as 'fund raiser' maintaining their interest and engagement with the community. For these types of organisations philanthropic roles remained a vital part of their identity.

Whilst organisations like the InnerWheel Club and the Women's Luncheon Committee evolved with the needs of contemporary society, such engagement can also be understood as an example of continuity in the gendered roles expected of women in society. Records from the Loughborough InnerWheel Club reveal the extent to which stereotypically gendered roles were upheld through a relationship with male organisations in the town. On several occasions the Loughborough Rotary Club requested that the InnerWheel provide

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[26]   In Putnam, R, 'Bowling alone: Americas declining social capital', *Journal of Democracy*, 6, 1995, 67, the author discusses the ability of citizens to transform the 'I into the we.'

[27]   Harris, J, 'Society and the state in twentieth century Britain' in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1980, Volume III* (Cambridge, 1990), 63. This argument has been considered in previous Chapters, for examples please see Chapter Three, Active Citizenship: Defining Associational Culture 1950-2005 and Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust? For references relating to women and philanthropic work during the twentieth century see Holden, 'Family, caring and unpaid work', 134-48.

[28]   See Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust?

catering or refreshments for charity events.[29] These types of roles were not specific to the requests of the Rotary Club; often the activities of the InnerWheel themselves exemplified the stereotypical roles of women as the Club organised fashion shows, book clubs, and Devonshire tea parties.[30]

Morris has suggested that women used organisations to 'create a double role of domesticity and citizenship', and for the early part of the 1900s had only been assigned limited roles in the network of associational activity.[31] In the immediate years after 1950, this continued to be the case. For the Leicestershire Motor Car Club, the females' primary function was as social organiser. A specific 'ladies sub-committee' was mentioned in the earlier years of the 1950s whose main contribution to the club was the organisation of activities specifically for women, such as 'ladies afternoons' and an 'annual ladies day run!'[32] Gender divisions were apparent, and it is clear that such events were orchestrated in order to keep women occupied. Motoring, particularly in the pre- feminist era of the 1950s, was not considered a womanly activity. By the mid 1960s only 13 percent of women held driving licences in comparison with 56 percent of all men.[33] Greenfield argues that the car was immersed in a 'technological language and culture' that was familiar to men but very few women.[34] Therefore, whilst women may have accompanied their husbands, they were not necessarily involved in the sport itself. Instead, such meetings and events acted as a form of sociability and an opportunity to participate in an associational community that was more viable than the relationships developed within the suburbs. Nevertheless, Holden suggests that whilst organised sport was a highly masculine environment, this 'did not necessarily imply absolute exclusion.'[35] The suggested inclusion of 'a special ladies award in competitive events' for the Motor Car Club in May 1955,[36] implies that the gender division within

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[29] In the private collection of minute books for the Loughborough InnerWheel Club, 1950-2005, several references are made to the provision of refreshments for the Loughborough Rotary Club.

[30] Ibid. Throughout the archive collection of the organisation references are made to these types of activities.

[31] Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', in Thompson, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, Volume III*, 435 and 430.

[32] ROLLR, DE 2172/31, Leicestershire Motor Car Club Committee minutes 7th March 1954.

[33] O'Connell, S, 'Motoring and modernity' in Carnevali, F and Strange, J.M, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (London, 2007), 117.

[34] Greenfield, J, O'Connell, S and Reid, C, 'Gender, consumer culture and the middle-class male, 1918-39' in Kidd, A and Nicholls, D, eds., *Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism. Middle-Class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940* (Manchester, 1999), 191.

[35] Holden, 'Family, caring and unpaid work', 236.

[36] ROLLR, DE 2172/31, Leicestershire Motor Car Club Committee minutes, 5th May 1955.

middle-class organisations were not as rigid as often depicted. Furthermore, whilst the Rotary Club often asked for the help of the InnerWheel on domestic issues like catering, they also worked collaboratively with the organisation on welfare projects, including the foundation of John Storer House in the town in 1965, signifying the extent to which the male organisation respected the views and contributions to be made by women.[37] Thus, whilst stereotypes were still evident, increasingly women were adopting a more engaged role in associational life

In the Loughborough Boat Club similar conclusions can be drawn, with patterns of gender demarcation still apparent by the 1950s and 1960s. In May 1960 the Club retained a male only policy yet when they required catering assistance were happy to 'enlist the services of ladies acquainted with members.'[38] Much like the InnerWheel Club and the Rotary Club, women were still associated with distinctly domesticated roles. By the end of the decade however, the Club recorded the desire of women to join the organisation:

> The Captain said that a few ladies had expressed a desire to row, all being wives and girlfriends of members. General approval to the idea was expressed and it was agreed to try and experiment….the Captain said that control would have to be exercised.[39]

The inclusion of women by 1969 shows a genuine move towards gender balance in associational activity. The Boat Club had been in existence since 1881 and the involvement of women was a genuine development in terms of equality. It is interesting to note however, that initial entry to women was only permitted to the wives and girlfriends of existing members, a recurring element in the analysis of gender relations in associational communities. Davidoff and Hall have argued that during the nineteenth century women were defined by their relationships with others, particularly men.[40] In the immediate post-war years it appears the same ethos remained, with women being admitted or taken seriously in organisations if they were connected to a male member of the organisation. Yet, from a more positive perspective, it can also be argued that rather than enjoying 'autonomous' leisure pursuits in suburbia, detached not only from the urban core but from one another, middle-class men and women in Leicester and Loughborough enjoyed participating in associational communities together. In the Leicestershire Motor Car Club, of

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[37]   Private collection of minutes books, the Loughborough InnerWheel Club, April 1965.

[38]   Private collection of minute books, Loughborough Boat Club, 12th May 1960.

[39]   Ibid, 14th August 1969.

[40]   Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class*, xxvi.

the 32 female members, 15 were suburban wives of fellow subscribers.[41] These findings support the experience of other females in the city of Leicester. Using the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society as an example of participatory rates over several decades, Table 6.5 shows the percentage of female members during the years 1947 to 1990. The table also shows the percentage of female members recorded either as 'Miss' or 'Mrs':

Table 6.5 – Female membership of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society, 1947-90 (%)

Year	Female members (%)	Members recorded as 'Mrs' (%)	Members recorded as 'Miss' (%)
1947	35.9	32.5	67.5
1954	33.2	31.5	68.5
1962	32.6	36	64
1970	33.4	47.8	52.2
1990	38.2	90.4	9.6

Source: Data obtained from the transaction papers of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society (ROLLR).

Interestingly, the number of female members changed very little between the years 1947 and 1990, increasing by only 2.3 percent over the whole period. Whilst the mid to late twentieth century is often regarded as a watershed period for women in terms of an increasing public role, analysis of the Literary and Philosophical Society shows that, in certain organisations, women already experienced a healthy share of the membership in 1947 and their interest in associational activity remained steady. Participation significantly increased, however, amongst married women. Between the years 1947 and 1990 their membership numbers grew by 57.9 percent. Evidently the ability of twentieth century women to combine the role of wife and mother with a more public role can be exemplified through an increasing connection with associational life. This is emphasised further through an analysis of gender specific organisations like the Loughborough InnerWheel Club where only 4.8 percent of members were unmarried women in 1955. Similarly the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee had only 13.7 percent of unmarried members between the years 1950 to 1980. In each case, the

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[41]   ROLLR, DE 2172/50, The Leicestershire Motor Car Club Committee minutes 1960-1982.

empirical evidence supports the findings of historians like Gunn and Bell who define organisations as 'formal association to which men and women belonged.'[42]

The percentage of married women also explains connections between male only and female only organisations. Whilst associations like the Rotary Club refused female entry, a close relationship existed between the Rotary and the InnerWheel. In the case of these two organisations, connections stemmed from the refusal of the Rotary Club to permit female membership. In response to their exclusion local InnerWheel Clubs were founded, providing a female only alternative to Rotary. Despite gender divisions however, relations between the two clubs were close. In Loughborough the Rotary Club often wrote to the InnerWheel asking the organisation to induct the wives of new Rotary members. This was also the case for the Loughborough Probus Club as Philip Wilson explains:

> My wife belongs to another club (The Phoenix Club) and they had a very enterprising lady who was their treasurer who I got on with extremely well and I used to have a word with her and say we are going to do this, do you want to ask your members and so we did quite a number of those sorts of things, to theatres and that sort, together….the summer (outing) was very much for the Probus members their wives and partners.[43]

McKibbin has suggested that by the twentieth century, involvement with associations and organisations were shared by middle-class husband and wives, contrasting the suburban 'separate spheres' ideology.[44] In 1962, *The Leicester Mercury* reported on a husband and wife team elected as associational leaders for the Motor Car Club:

> A husband and wife team are at the head of Leicester and district motor club following their annual meeting at the weekend. Mr J.T Voss…who has been a member since its inauguration was elected president and his wife Mrs. Gladys Voss was chosen to be vice-president.[45]

Such articles clearly support McKibbin's analysis, reflecting not only a public interest in gender relations but the extent to which organisations and clubs were embracing the role and contribution of women.

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[42] Gunn and Bell, *Middle Class their Rise and Sprawl*, 68. References can also be found in McKibbin, R, *Classes and Cultures. England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 1998). In addition, for a review of the changing nature of marriage during the twentieth century see Lewis, J, 'Marriage' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, 69-85.

[43] Interview with Philip Wilson, member of the Loughborough Probus Club, 26th March 2007.

[44] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures,* 87.

[45] ROLLR, DE 2172/31, Leicestershire Motor Car Club Committee minutes, 7th March 1962.

Analysis into the residential distribution of gender specific organisations provides a final insight into gender dynamics within the associational sphere. In Chapter Two geo-coded data revealed that only three of the thirty organisations under examination had average distances that fell below the suburban definition in both Leicester and Loughborough. Whilst the distances were only marginally shy of the 3 mile definition in Leicester and 1.5 miles in Loughborough, it is interesting to note that two of the three organisations were female only associations; the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee and the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 reveal the distribution of members:

Figure 6.1 -Residential distribution of members of the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee, cumulative membership 1950-80
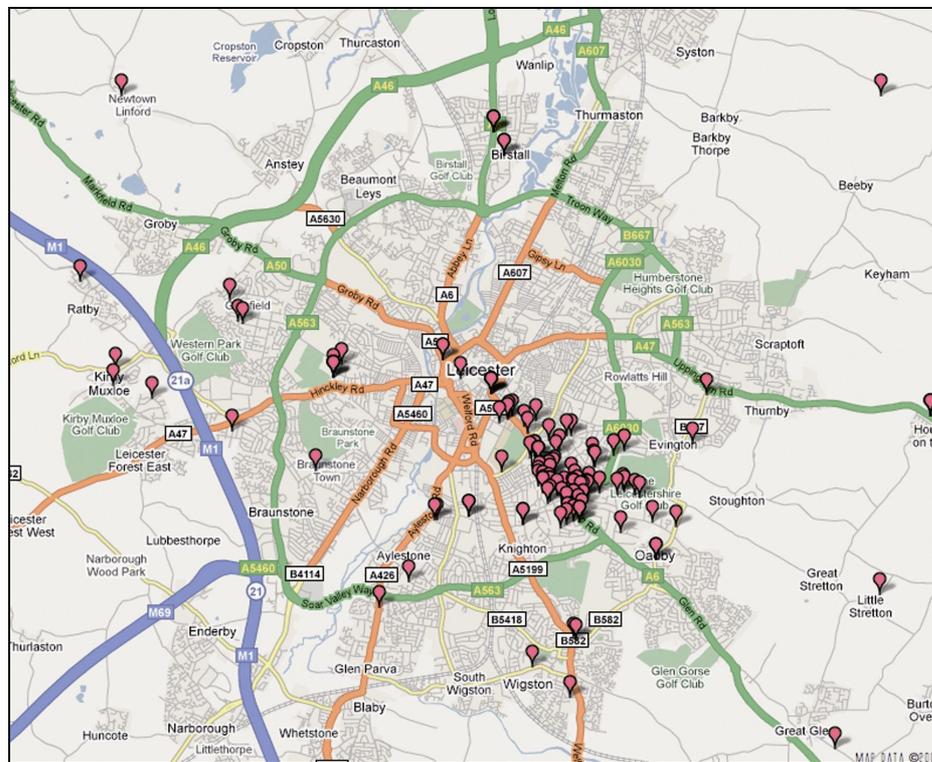
Source: Data obtained from archive collection of the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee, ROLLR, DE 2509/1.

Figure 6.2 - Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild, cumulative membership 1970- 2000
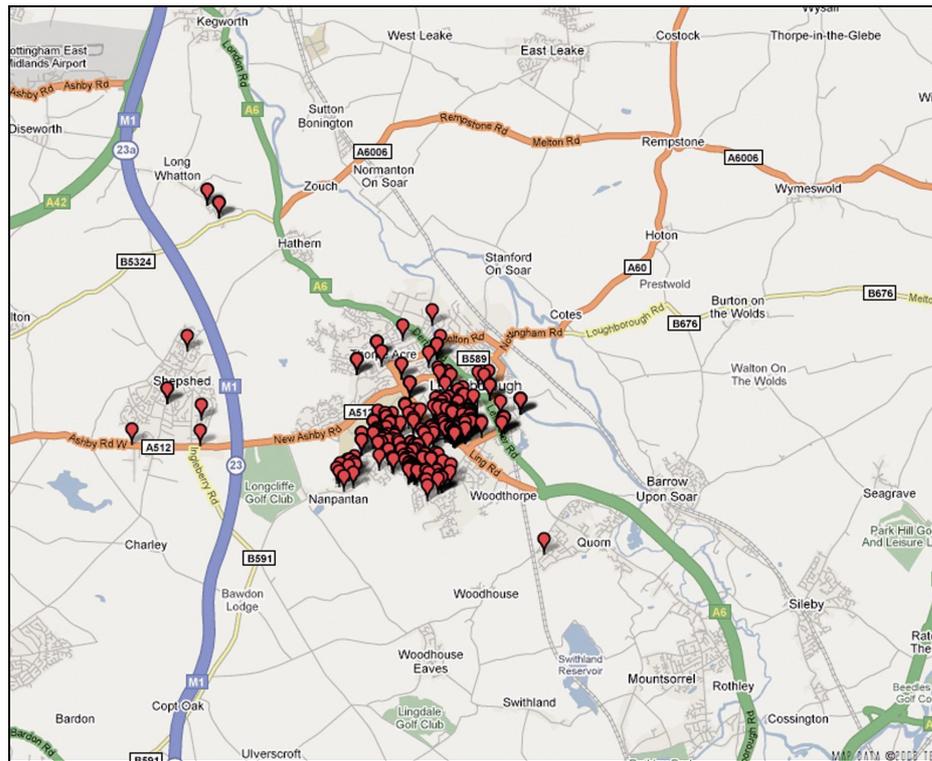
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild.

On average a member of the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee resided 2.7 miles from the urban core, whilst for the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild this distance was 1.1 miles. Both of these distances were considerable in the context of the individual location, yet they also suggest that women were more inclined to reside closer to the urban core than their male counter parts. In Loughborough, such a conclusion is supported by the analysis of the Probus Club, a male only organisation. On average a member of the Club resided 2.1 miles from the town centre, twice the distance of the Women's Guild. However, it is important not to stereotype the residential patterns of gender specific organisations. For example, an average member of the Loughborough InnerWheel Club – a female only organisation – resided nearly 2 miles from the urban core as Figure 6.3 shows:

Figure 6.3 - Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough InnerWheel Club, cumulative membership 1955 and 1964
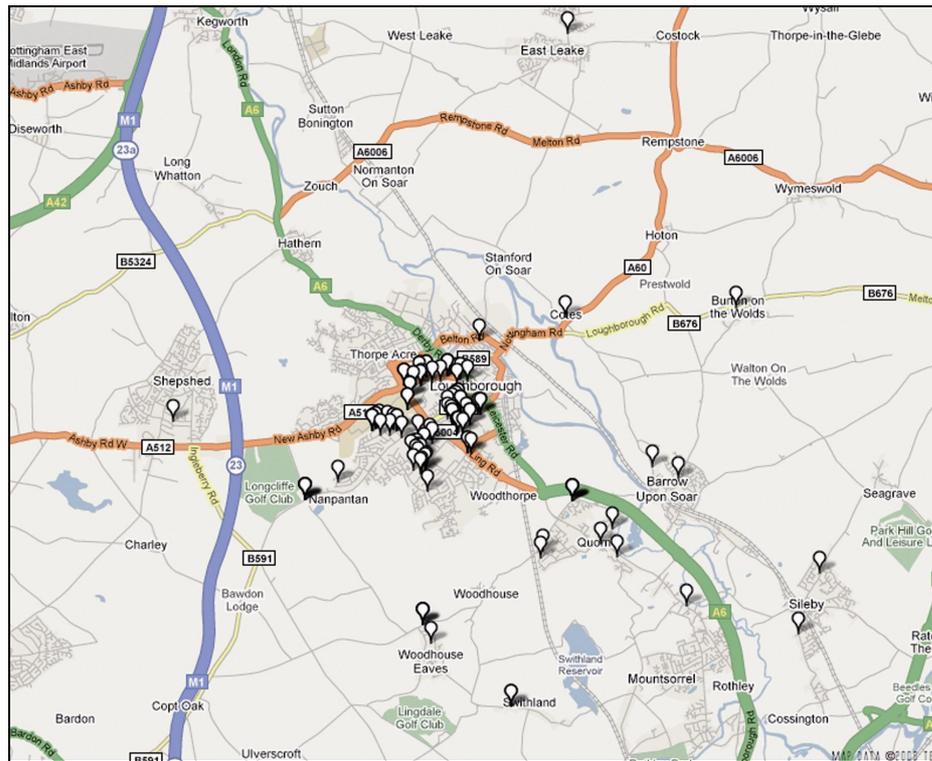
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Loughborough InnerWheel Club.

This distance was comparable with the Loughborough Probus Club, emphasising that whilst some female organisations had memberships located closer to the urban core, this was by no means universal. Such findings raise interesting questions regarding the gendered distribution of membership and would benefit from wider regional analysis.

Thus, whilst the role of women in outer-fringe suburbs was often portrayed as isolated and detached from society, it is evident that middle-class women in Leicester and Loughborough played an active role in organisations, developing their function within both associational activity and the wider community. Whilst in previous generations the separate sphere ideology dictated the female role in relation to the division of public and domestic space, by the 1950s women were actively using associational activity to engage in public life. In many ways associational engagement was often representative of the stereotypical roles adopted by women; for example, they focused on philanthropic activities and held tea parties and fashion shows, yet they also worked as a mechanism for engaging with the wider community and creating connections within local government, perfectly exemplified by the InnerWheel Club's role on the Old Peoples Welfare Committee in Loughborough.

These connections demonstrated the extent to which the twentieth century woman was engaged in civil society, creating social capital through local and municipal networks. Furthermore, organisations like the National Women's Register also exemplified the ways in which the interest and position of women developed as the twentieth century progressed, with female participants rejecting domestic stereotypes and seeking both mental stimulation and social networks through associational activity. Clearly variation existed relating to the type of organisation but, overall, the quantitative data from both Leicester and Loughborough shows women were no longer minority members or participants in local organisations and consequently civil society. In mixed gender organisations their numbers grew, as did their positions on executive committees. Whilst the highest executive posts may have eluded them as the century drew to a close, their place in the construction and maintenance of an active civil society in Leicester and Loughborough was assured. After the Second World War women were no longer too absorbed in domesticity and consumerism to take an active part in public activities.[46] Educational opportunities increased, allowing women to progress socially and economically. Furthermore, increased mobility connected the suburb to the city to a much greater extent, preventing female isolation at the urban periphery. By 1981 over 16,000,000 motor cars were on British roads,[47] helping to connect women to urban centres and create extended networks of support and interaction that went beyond their immediate residential sphere. For them a separate civil society did not exist. No longer living and socialising in a separate sphere, they worked collaboratively with their male counterparts on acts of civic engagement. In terms of gender, urban space was no longer demarcated and women enjoyed a public role often expressed through associational activity.

Ethnicity

The same, however, could not be concluded from the experience of ethnic minority residents in both Leicester and Loughborough. Whilst women successfully infiltrated the public world of associational culture, ethnic minorities increasingly found themselves separated from the

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[46] Jones, *Women in British Public Life, 1914 -1950,* 229; McCloskey, D, 'Paid work' in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain*, 165-82.

[47] Wood, B, 'Urbanisation and local government' in Halsey, ed., *British Social Trends since 1900,* 335.

conventional middle-class 'subscriber democracy.'[48]During the post-war period Britain received over one million New Commonwealth citizens from the West Indies, South Asia and East Africa. In addition to the influx of migrants, the trends of ethnic and white populations moved in opposite directions creating the dissimilation that is often recorded by social scientists.[49] Industrially Britain's decline caused the urban cores of large British cities to collapse, leaving derelict profiles in terms of population densities and buildings in inner cities. Into these areas moved the post-war immigrants from the West Indies and South Asia whilst the populations from the declining conurbations redistributed themselves into suburban areas or smaller, rapidly growing urban centres.[50]

In this respect both Leicester and Loughborough provide interesting case studies for the increasing complexities of the twentieth century urban environment; Leicester in particular is widely regarded as one of the most culturally diverse cities in Britain. In the decades after the Second World War the city gained a large population of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent, and from Kenya and Uganda in the early 1970s. These immigrant groups constitute around 40 percent of Leicester's population, making Leicester one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the United Kingdom. The 2001 census revealed the white population of the city to be just over 60 percent as opposed to the national average of nearly 87.5 percent.[51] The division of Loughborough into separate electoral wards makes the 2001 census harder to interpret. However, samples from Loughborough Ashby and Loughborough Southfields wards show the white population to be approximately 91 percent and 85 percent respectively, confirming that the town has a significant ethnic population, although closer to the national average than the city of Leicester.[52]

In terms of geographically plotted membership, ethnic minority participants were overwhelming missing from local clubs and societies in Leicester and Loughborough, with no clear explanation for their absence. Whilst it is difficult to produce a convincing number of ethnic minority members for the organisations considered here, by comparing the results of the 2001 census in Leicester and Loughborough with the plotted membership data used in

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[48]   Morris, 'Clubs, societies and associations', 412.

[49]   Peach, C, Robinson, V, Maxted, J and Chance, J, 'Immigration and ethnicity' in Halsey, *British Social Trends since 1900*, 592.

[50]   Ibid.

[51]   http://www.leicester.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=1009#Eth

[52]   Ibid.

Chapter Two,[53] it is clear that of the 20 organisations geographically referenced, very few show members residing in areas of increased ethnic minority inhabitants. According to the census in both locations the two largest ethnic groupings in the city were White British, and Asian or Asian British. By 1991, the population of Indian origin formed the largest single ethnic community group in the city of Leicester, with 22.3 percent of the total population. By 2001, this figure had grown to 25.7 percent. This figure ranks Leicester as having the largest Indian population of any local authority area in England and Wales.[54] The residential dispersal of the Indian population is presented in Figure 6.4 and the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh populations are presented comparatively in Figure 6.5:

Figure 6.4 – The 2001 Census, residential dispersal of Indian population in the city of Leicester

Source:www.lsr-online.org/
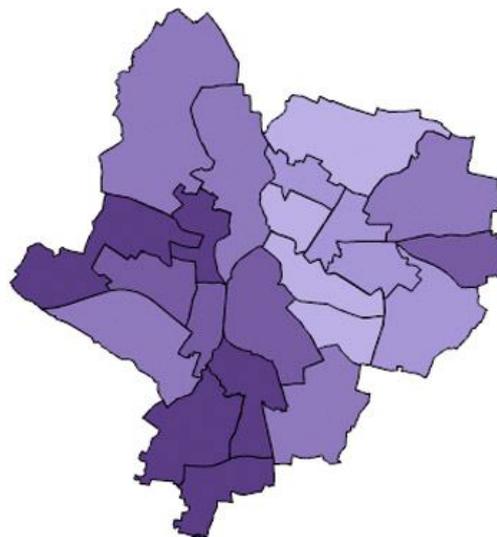
Colour					
Quantity	182.00-988.00	988.01-1,286.00	1,286.01-2,536.00	2,536.01-6,504.00	6,504.01-12,680.00

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53   See Chapter Two, Location Location Location: Geographical Mapping of Membership.

54   http://www.leicester.gov.uk/index.asp?pgid=1009#Eth

Figure 6.5 – The 2001 Census, residential dispersal of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh populations in the city of Leicester

Source:www.lsr-online.org/

Hindu
- 92.00 - 594.00
- 594.01 - 733.00
- 733.01 - 1,269.00
- 1,269.01 - 3,127.00
- 3,127.01 - 7,642.00

Muslim
- 105.00 - 205.00
- 205.01 - 325.00
- 325.01 - 838.00
- 838.01 - 1,004.00
- 1,004.01 - 11,886.00

Sikh
- 35.00 - 193.00
- 193.01 - 337.00
- 337.01 - 434.00
- 434.01 - 941.00
- 941.01 - 1,598.00

The images clearly show the lighter shaded areas towards the centre of the city, pushing out to the east, to be the locations predominantly inhabited by the Indian population in Leicester, and their subsequent religious denominations. When compared with the plotted membership of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society in 2004 (Figure 6.5) and the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society in 2000 (Figure 6.6), it becomes apparent that both societies lack membership from these areas, particularly locations towards the north-east of the city.

Figure 6.6 – Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 2004
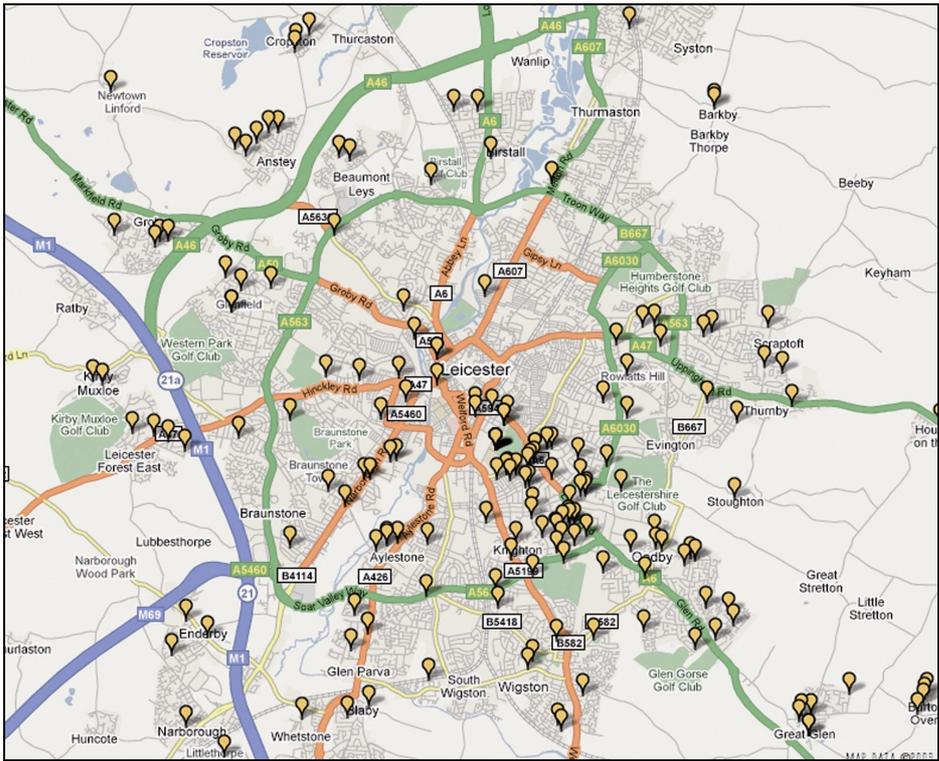
Source: Data obtained from private archive collection of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical.

Figure 6.7 – Residential distribution of members of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society, 2000
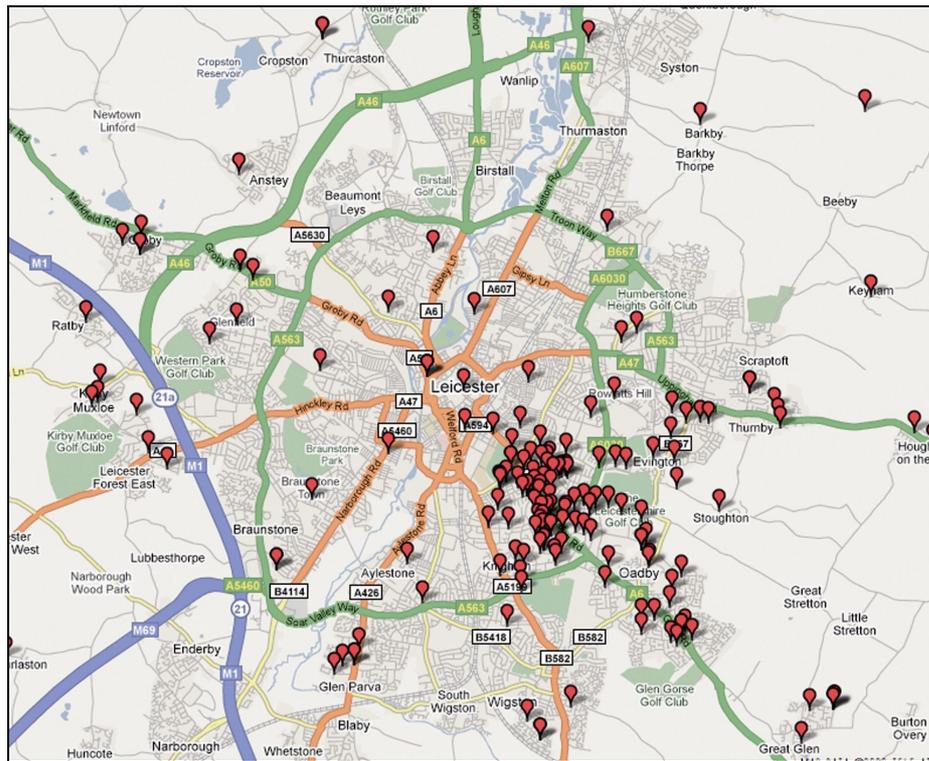
Source: Data obtained from the transaction papers of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society (ROLLR).

In contrast Figure 6.7, also taken from the 2001 census, shows the residential location of the White British population to be predominantly in the same localities as the dispersal of members in both organisations. Here the lighter shaded areas represent the locations with the highest residential distribution of the White British population in Leicester. The lightest areas exist predominantly towards the periphery of the city, in places like Oadby in the south-east. These locations are also the areas most popularly inhabited by the white, middle-class participants of the associational sphere.

Figure 6.8 – The 2001 Census, residential dispersal of White population in the city of Leicester

Source:www.lsr-online.org/
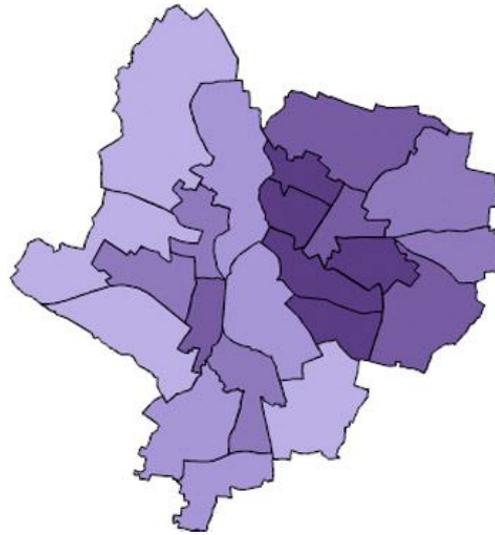
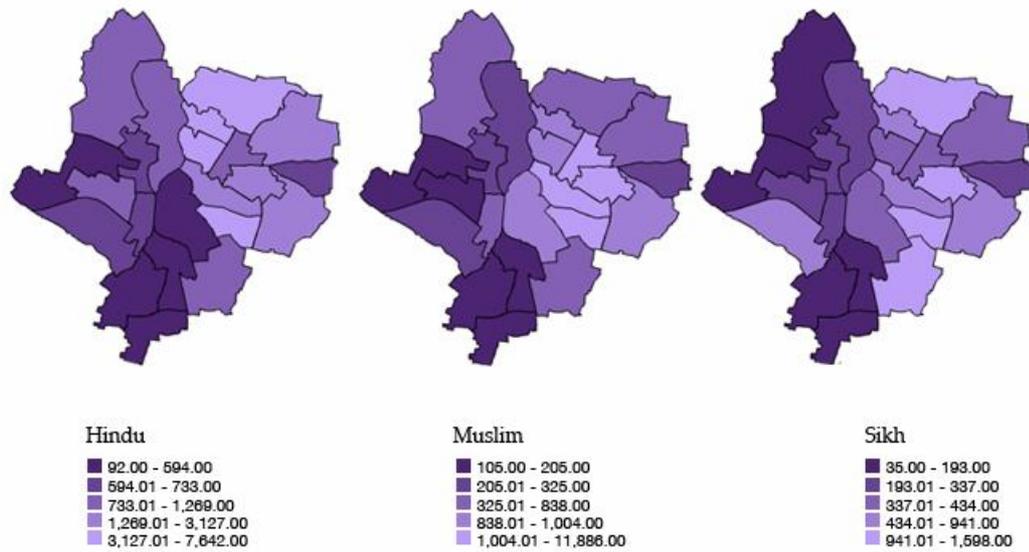| Colour					
Quantity	1,881.00-5,040.00	5,040.01-5,905.00	5,905.01-8,699.00	8,699.01-10,302.00	10,302.01-14,198.00

Comparatively the same patterns occur when we consider residential distribution by ethnicity in Loughborough.[55] Figure 6.8 and Table 6.6 show the town divided by electoral ward and the percentage of minority groupings in each area:

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[55] As exemplified in Chapter Two, due to the boundary division and governance of Loughborough as part of the borough of Charnwood, no specific results are available for Loughborough in the 2001 census; results are only provided by electoral ward. However, by visualising the town divided into their electoral wards, as exemplified in Figure 6.8, it is possible to analyse the parts of the electoral ward constituting Loughborough and therefore extract the results from the 2001 census (Table 6.6).

Figure 6.9 – Division of Loughborough by electoral ward
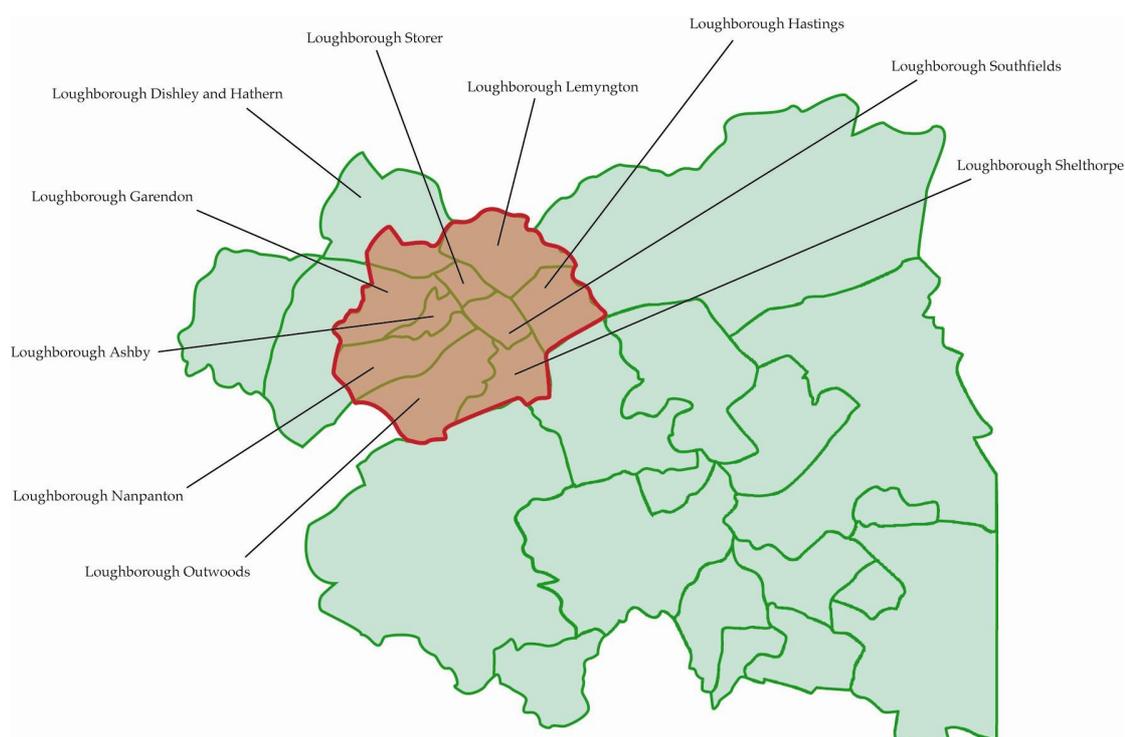
Source: This map originates from two separate images. The green area represents the borough of Charnwood and its electoral wards and was taken from www.leics.gov.uk/charnwood.pdf. The red shaded area outlines the town of Loughborough and was obtained from Charnwood Borough Council directly.

Table 6.6 –White and Indian populations in Loughborough by electoral ward (%)

Loughborough Ward	White Population (%)	Asian Population (%)
Ashby	91.42	3.35
Dishley/Hathern	86.2	10.1
Garendon	87.4	9.0
Hastings	73.8	22.7
Lemyngton	72.7	23.4
Nanpanton	86.79	7.46
Outwoods	89.47	4.21
Shelthorpe	90.87	3.26
Southfields	85.23	3.59
Storer	90.17	6.20

Source:www.leics.gov.uk/index/your_council/about_leicestershire/research_info_ population/research

Areas to the north of the town, particularly the wards of Garendon, Hastings and Lemyngton, were the locations in Loughborough most populated by the Indian community (Figure 6.8). When compared with the residential dispersal of the Loughborough Probus Club and the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Club, these areas were also the least populated by club members. Examination of the wards to the south of the town, including Nanpanton, Outwoods and Shelthorpe were the locations predominantly inhabited by the White British population. As in Leicester, the White British areas were also the locations from which the associational sphere drew the majority of its members, as the cumulative results in Figure 6.9 show:

Figure 6.10 – Residential distribution of members of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild and the Loughborough Probus Club, cumulative membership, 1950-2000
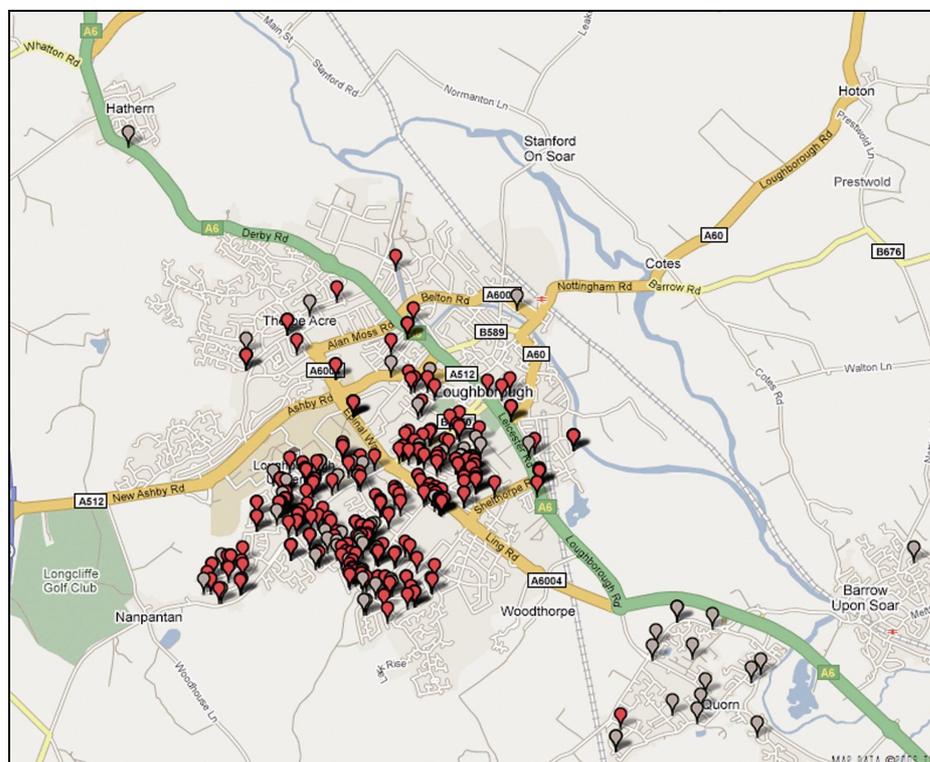
Source: Data obtained from the private archive collections of the Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild and the Loughborough Probus Club.

Such quantitative data supports the findings from a collection of oral interviews. Association members continually emphasised the absence of a minority membership, often attributing

dissimilation to the inability of ethnic minority groups to culturally integrate themselves.[56] History teaches us that minority groups are more inclined to settle in close knit urban communities, evident in the past from the settlement patterns of Jewish, Irish and Italian immigrants.[57] However, this did not prevent minority groups from constructing their own social and cultural networks. Thus, whilst ethnic minority communities in Leicester and Loughborough did not engage with the stereotypical white, middle-class associations of the town and city, did this mean they were completely devoid of interest in the associational sphere and the acts of civic engagement that encourage civil society?

Peach has argued that sections of the Asian population are gaining relatively rapid upward social mobility through hard work, entrepreneurial flare and an increasing emphasis on education.[58] In this respect a rising number of ethnic minority groups are gaining middle-class status in terms of income, career and home despite the continued referral of analysts to the ethnic minorities as solely working-class.[59] It has also been suggested that Asian communities remain tightly clustered in residential pockets, in cities such as Bradford, Blackburn and Leicester. Where systematic diachronic analysis has been undertaken:

> Results indicate rising levels of segregation in the early and mid-1970s, and only slightly reduced levels since. Clustering serves not only as a defensive function against racial harassment, but also provides a market for community services...ethnic food stores and other specialist retailers. It also allows the recreation of dense traditional social networks with all the implications this has for quality of life and transmission of culture. [60]

Do these arguments suggest that middle-class ethnic minority groupings are less inclined to culturally assimilate themselves, favouring instead an associational world that is developed around their own social and cultural needs? And if so, was this the experience in Leicester and Loughborough? Organisations such as the Charnwood Racial Equality Council (CREC) and the Leicester Race Equality Council (LREC) provide interesting data in relation

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[56] Private comments taken from a number of conversations with association members in both Leicester and Loughborough.

[57] Farrar, M, draws upon the residential distribution of the Jewish community in Leeds in his article 'The zone of the other: imposing and resisting alien identities in Chapel town, Leeds during the twentieth century' in Gunn, S and Morris, R.J, eds., *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850* (London, 2001), 124.

[58] Peach, Robinson, Maxted, and Chance, 'Immigration and ethnicity', 593.

[59] Butler and Savage, *Social Changes and the Middle-Classes*, 76.

[60] Peach, Robinson, Maxted and Chance, 'Immigration and ethnicity', 592.

to the complexity of twentieth century civil society. The Racial Equality Councils founded in both Leicester and Loughborough are Council Affiliated Organisations, working specifically to provide support for minority groups and to encourage assimilation in both localities. Records and interviews from these organisations allow a review of the influence of associational activity on areas of urban concern, such as the complexities of race relations. Furthermore, and more specifically for this study, they also allow the examination of patrons and association members, participants who controlled organisations and exerted their influence through oligarchic committees, primarily made up of a middle-class membership residing outside the urban core.[61]

Nationally, Race Equality Councils have a long and complex history dating from the 1970s. Not until 1976 was previously weak anti-racist legislation replaced with the new Race Relations Act and the foundation of a coherent Commission for Racial Equality. The new act outlawed both direct and indirect discrimination and allowed for the implementation of Race Equality Councils across the UK. Today the 1976 Act remains one of the most powerful legislations of its type in Europe.[62] A member of the Leicester Racial Equality Council explains the impetus for a relations council in Leicester:

> In Leicester the City Council had a number of city councillors who were keen on addressing race relations. They were aware at that time of the tension surrounding new arrivals from East Africa and the existing population, they were aware of long term tensions between an African Caribbean population that had been here in significantly measurable numbers since the 1950s and the existing population, so they felt those issues needed to be addressed. They were also aware, even back then, that there was a degree of support for far right wing political organisations within Leicester and there was concern that (that support) was based on misinformation and lack of knowledge about racial minority groups…People involved (in the LREC) were trade unionists, local councillors and community leaders in various communities across the city.[63]

These types of organisations, defined as Council Affiliated Organisations in previous chapters,[64] directly contribute to civil society through their ability to unite different factions of society, often working in a role as mediator between the citizen and the state. Voluntary

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[61] This was confirmed during a private conversation with a member of the LREC, October 2007.

[62] Peach, Robinson, Maxted and Chance, 'Immigration and ethnicity', 592.

[63] Interview with LREC, October 2007. Name kept private to protect the discretion of the interviewee.

[64] In Chapter Three, Active Citizenship: Defining Associational Culture, 1950-2005, the nature of Council Affiliated Organisations was defined. Subsequently in Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust? and Chapter Five, Networks: The Power of Collaborative Action, these types of organisations were examined in order to determine the extent of their civic engagement in Leicester and Loughborough during the years 1950-2005.

organisations such as these engage not only in more direct contact with citizens than central or even local government, but also allow for the combined efforts of the municipality and the individual on their committees, providing the impetus for cooperative action.[65] It has previously been suggested that local government provides the opportunity for people to participate in politics at a grass root level. In doing so they develop a sense of citizenship and political responsibility that encourages community cohesion.[66] As emphasised in Chapter Five, it is often voluntary organisations working between local government and the citizen that play the vital role in our society, providing the setting for engagement in specific activities and working as agencies to support the normative order.[67] As Putnam argues; 'for various reasons, life is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital…..networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust.'[68] Organisations such as the LREC and the CREC stabilised civil society throughout the latter years of the twentieth century, contributing to the stock of social capital and engaging citizens in important issues. Far from organisations deteriorating after the 1950s, increasingly pressurised urban conditions initiated the expansion of community based groups. Despite the extensive powers over social and economic affairs by public authorities in the wake of the new welfare state, growing racial tensions required specialist advice. In practice Racial Equality Councils worked to bring communities together through associational activity, as the LREC explains:

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[65] See Chapter Five, Networks : The Power of Collaborative Action.

[66] Kavanagh, D, *British Politics – Continuities and Change, Local Government and Decentralisation*, (Oxford, 2000), 266.

[67] Babachuk, N and Booth, A, 'Voluntary association membership: a longitudinal analysis', *American Sociological Review*, 34, 1969, 31.

[68] Putnam, 'Bowling alone: America's declining social capital', 67.

We exist to help bring about a fair, just and equitable society where people of all racial back grounds are free to associate without interference on grounds of their race… we have an individual service provision approach where people are concerned about the unfair treatment they feel they have experienced, they are concerned about the harassment they feel they may have experienced and so we'll work to help those individuals gain access to justice procedures…In terms of harassment, it is about encouraging those with the responsibility for dealing with harassment to use that responsibility and that includes schools and other education establishments, social housing landlords and the police....Bridging those is a kind of community development role, because again it would be foolish for this organisation to claim to speak on behalf of any group or any community, so part of what we do, particularly in the strategic role is to try to ensure that racial minority groups and communities know what those strategic decisions are and are able to articulate what their concerns are about those strategic decisions…The other thing we try to do is gather intelligence so we have contacts with a number of other infrastructure type voluntary sector organisations, contact and involvement with a number of community groups in the area.[69]

In Loughborough, the Charnwood Race Equality Council (previously the Charnwood Community Relations Council) retained similar objectives.[70] A break down of case work analysis undertaken by the organisation between January and December of 1988 revealed that 36 percent of all cases related to welfare rights; 28 percent focused on immigration and nationality issues; 20 percent on housing problems; and a further 13 percent and 3 percent on 'other' causes and education respectively.[71]

Like many other local organisations Race Equality Councils are greatly influenced by the national perspectives on current issues:

We also look at things that are happening nationally and try to get people to think 'what does that mean for us locally?' The whole community cohesion debates and what the council proposed in terms of community cohesion - we have been part of on going and continuous debates with and on behalf of local communities about either interrogating the meaning of community cohesion or providing evidence to demonstrate that it may or may not actually fit what we are experiencing locally.[72]

The contemporary debate regarding community cohesion and the practice of engaging local associations to encourage civic engagement has become an increasingly

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[69]   Interview with member of the LREC, October 2007.

[70]   Private collection of annual reports, the Charnwood Racial Equality Council (formally the Charnwood Community Relations Council).

[71]   Ibid.

[72]   Interview with member of the LREC, October 2007.

common strategy for both central and local government,[73] highlighting the emphasis placed on both the concept of civil society and the role of associational life in the twenty-first century. In relation to ethnic minority groups, community based organisations such as the LREC and the CREC act as examples of associational activity used to include minority groups in the process of civil society, bringing different facets of the community together to tackle urban problems. The CREC alone interacts with over 65 separate organisations. These range from local sports groups to local high schools and include various ethnic backgrounds and faiths, such as the local Methodist Church and the Islamic Cultural Association.[74]

In terms of management, a core group of individuals remain connected to the organisation. As a voluntary sector association the LREC is managed by a council of self-nominated volunteers. From that council an elected executive committee acts as trustee for the organisation and employs members of staff.[75] The organisation confirms that a high percentage of executive committee members are middle-class professionals, residing in either suburban areas or satellite villages outside of Leicester, returning to the city to engage with the organisation and the urban community.[76] Therefore, control and power within the organisation ultimately resides in the small oligarchic committees that are present in many of the associations analysed. With regards to the issue of race in the city of Leicester, it is clear that a group of privately elected members regularly work alongside local government, helping to make decisions and shape urban policy through the medium of associational activity. A member of the LREC also confirmed the extent to which unofficial bodies, dominated by the 'suburbans', influence local decision making, developing networks of power and influence that operate outside the public domain:

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[73] For a contemporary example see http://www.info4local.gov.uk/documents/publications/1113119.

[74] Taken from private collection of annual reports, the Charnwood Racial Equality Council (formally the Charnwood Community Relations Council).

[75] Interview with member of the LREC, October 2007.

[76] Private conversation with member of the LREC, October 2007.

There is also an unofficial group that meets in Leicester called the Multi-Cultural Advisory group which is made up of leading councillors of all parties; the Chief Executive of the Council, the Chief Executive of Leicester Partnership, the editor of Leicester Mercury, the Chief Officer of Radio Leicester and a number of other influential party's and this group meets to identify what are the up and coming issues within the city and to identify how, together, we are going to manage those issues. A completely unelected, unaccountable body but it emerged initially when the BNP wanted to march through Leicester at one point…the police wanted some rationale to be able to say we can not allow this to happen. If they could find that reason then they could ask the Home Secretary to ban the march. So that group came together to find that rationale and then we thought 'hey this works' and we carried on. If the general public knew about it then it would be 'just who exactly is running our city.' When we are at those meeting it is a very close relationship.[77]

Organisations such as the LREC and CREC indicate to historians the type of associational activity that continues to contribute to civil society. Organisations and subcommittees are shaping the contemporary urban environment, civically engaging the middle-class 'suburbans' who return to the urban core to participate on unofficially elected committees, seemingly controlling various facets of the urban community.

The opinion of qualified members of the organisation, provide illuminating accounts of race relations when used comparatively with the records of other clubs and societies in both localities. Furthermore, they emphasise the issues affecting civil society and, in terms of race relations, the extent to which the process of assimilation has been achieved in local towns and cities. According to Peach:

If one defines assimilation as the process by which, through entropy, the minority group becomes dispersed throughout society so that its distribution becomes indistinguishable from that of the rest of the population, then, for many of the groups...there is a considerable gap still present.[78]

Such arguments are supported by the findings of this study, if we consider associational participation an indicator of cultural assimilation. Significantly, of the associations that were contacted and their members interviewed, none recorded long term membership of ethnic minority residents.[79] In Leicester for example, the National Women's Register reported the

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[77] Ibid.

[78] Peach, Robinson, Maxted, and Chance, 'Immigration and ethnicity', 609.

[79] Taken from a collection of ten oral interviews where interviewees were asked if they had ethnic minority members. Whilst a couple referred to the odd member by name, the majority revealed that ethnic minority groups played no part in the membership of their organisations.

membership of a small number of women from ethnic minority groups although none retained membership.[80] Organisations continually felt they encouraged minority participation but it was not forthcoming. Was this in fact the case? Did associations really encourage the participation of minority groups? And was there ever a role for ethnic minorities in traditionally white, middle-class organisations?

In many cases it was suggested that minority groups were engaged civically but only within their own communities. This is a view supported by the LREC, who also suggested that whilst organisations may seem keen to encourage participation their lack of understanding often held them back:

> If I am driving a bus and I say I am going to let passengers on and don't stop, just how keen am I to let passengers on?...It's not necessarily the opportunity to join a group that creates the barrier but it's actually having to stop what you are doing to live that creates the barrier. Some of the community based groups within Leicester, it is possible to be part of that group if you have reached a particular point in your life and have a particular lifestyle, but if your day to day life is almost a hand to mouth existence then stopping to think about things like the Philosophical Society or the Literary Society don't come into your realms of thought. Secondly there is the possibility that people will think if they do go to that group the sort of things that group will discuss are not in line with what they actually experience in terms of life...one of the things particularly with interest groups, where people are coming together because they are interested in a similar topic, is that they will often have met as a group for many many years and, if they were honest with themselves, it is not just the difficulty of recruiting from different racial backgrounds but difficulty in recruiting anybody who isn't already part of that group...So the other aspect may be, particularly for racial minority groups, the kind of community activities they feel they need to get engaged in...that is what brings them together. [81]

In this respect the LREC highlights class and cultural barriers as the predominant factors in the division between associational cultures. Organisations may seem open to all but cultural differences and lack of understanding dissuades potential participants who feel more comfortable in an environment that recognises an individual's background, needs and ability to contribute. This, however, does not prevent ethnic minority groups from creating their own associational networks. Writing in 1956, a respected Leeds journalist described a Jewish area of the city as a 'little Israel in full working order,' its separation from the rest of Leeds further emphasised by the social relationships embedded in representative

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[80] Interview with Liz Lewis, member of the Leicester faction of the National Women's Register, July 2007.

[81] Interview with member of the LREC, October 2007.

organisations and clubs.[82] A similar situation appears evident in both Leicester and Loughborough as late as 2005. Whilst ethnic minority communities failed to subscribe to traditionally 'white, middle-class' organisations, a healthy associational culture did exist that was specific to the cultural needs of their own communities. In Loughborough, a member of the Charnwood Community Council (CCC) explains this in relation to the use of the local community centre:

> There is one Asian group that meets here regularly once a week, a social group and lunch group. Every so often we panic and we think 'why are there no minority communities? Why are there no black groups meeting here?' and we get very panicky and we think we need to do something about it but the simple answer is that there are lots of community centres in Loughborough for minority communities and they get much more out of going to, I don't want to call them their community centres but those community centres. For example there is the Shree Ram Krishna centre, the Hindu community centre, there is a Sikh community centre, a Bangladeshi social association, there is a Polish club an Italian society...I suppose its like immigrants coming over to the country, they tend to congregate where they feel safest, where they can get the most for themselves. So while we are open to somebody, to everybody rather, it would be truthful to say that this is mainly for, well its not mainly for but mainly white people come in and use this organisation.[83]

In Leicester the Asian Business Association (LABA) is an organisation unifying various Asian communities within the city. Founded in 1984, the association brought business minded people together from many different ethnic minority backgrounds including East Africa, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The organisation provides a common platform that unites different communities and networks of faith in Leicester. Founding member and Director, Jaffar Kapasee, believes LABA to be the only organisation in the city that successfully incorporates men and women, multiple faiths, nationalities, caste and social groups, attributing the community integration to the neutral motive of business.[84] However, when attempting to work in collaboration with the Leicester Chamber of Commerce in the 1990s, even the motive of business could not unite the two factions as Mr Kapasee explains:

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[82] Farrar, 'The zone of the other: imposing and resisting alien identities in Chapel town', 124.

[83] Interview with Jaffar Kapasee, Director and founding member of Leicester Asian Business Association, July 2007.

[84] Ibid.

…we attempted in the early 90s to integrate with the Chamber of Commerce and it took us two years negotiation to do that, because, for example, my son will not join LABA because he was born here and he says 'why should I join a Leicestershire Asian Business Association, I should be joining Leicester Chamber of Commerce', and I do believe him, but when it comes to reality things are very different. So we joined Leicester City Chamber of Commerce in the early 90s but I think we had to make an exit after a couple of years because things weren't working well, even though I think it was a personality clash that actually caused us to make a quick exit from there, but we were based for at least two or three years, based at Chamber…Early 90s, I think it was Baroness Hooper who launched this initiative, I think she was one of the Ministers for Trade and she obviously expected total integration but it didn't work out somehow. You see one of the ironies, even today, is that even though Chamber holds their functions irregularly because they have a good surplus and a lot of members, very few members of our community attend, even though they are second, third generation Asians whose ethos and the way they trade is very different to mine, but you find that if we organise an event the business community will all attend rather than going to Chamber, we hold the same event but our own community attend our seminars and get togethers rather than the Chambers but I don't know why? [85]

Mr Kapasee reveals the extent to which relations and the attempts to assimilate White and Asian communities have broken down in Leicester. Whilst LABA successfully merges different Asian communities under the neutral motive of business, similar results could not be achieved when attempting to merge existing, white organisations with ethnic minority associations. In this respect different spheres of associational activity have formed, engaging in a distinctly separate civil society that benefits individual communities. The division of urban space in many respects is still apparent. Where it may once have been referred to in terms of gender, the twentieth century city has seemingly created separate spheres based around ethnicity. Such conclusions are heavily supported by the work undertaken in both Leicester and Loughborough by their respective Racial Equality Councils where the division of society and lack of integration is taken as a given: 'Not just in terms of race but society as a whole is divided and there are bridges that don't exist over those divisions.'[86] Furthermore, a survey undertaken by the Commission for Racial Equality in 2004 claimed that 94 percent of 'white people' had 'few or no ethnic minority friends.'[87]

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[85] Ibid.

[86] Interview with member of the LREC, October 2007.

[87] Panayi, P, 'Immigration, multiculturalism and racism' in Carnevali and Strange, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, 249.

Thus, the cultural changes that affected the country post 1950 had undoubtedly reshaped the demographic nature of associational activity as the century drew to a close. Whilst women advanced their positions in relation to their inclusion and participation on executive committees, ethnic minority communities successfully shaped their own associational world, separate from the established white, middle-class organisations that had previously dominated the urban environment. Essentially civil society can no longer be defined in terms of the white, middle-class male. Equally, civil society in Leicester and Loughborough was no longer a single sphere of associational activity, with individual minority communities engaging in separate activities, to a separate agenda. If assimilation in the urban environment is to be achieved, undoubtedly the collaboration and unification of voluntary activity would only benefit the wider urban community. Yet the separation of civic engagement was not unique to the issue of race relations. As Chapter Seven will now examine, suburban communities themselves often used associational activity to create a civil society at the periphery of the city, which regarded itself as a separate entity from the urban core. Whilst academics like Masterman declared all 'suburbans' to be devoid of interest in social interaction, the proceeding chapter explores the complexities associated with the suburban/city dichotomy.[88] In the case study example provided, community life is shown to be alive and well at the urban fringe, yet it is a community that both embraces and rejects it connections with civil society at the urban core.

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[88] Bourne, L.S, 'Reinventing the suburb: old myths and new realities', *Progress and Planning,* 46, 1996, 163.

Chapter Seven

Oadby: Neighbourliness and Associational Participation

> Interest-based communities thus undermined the neighbourhood unit and community association as a neighbourhood formation. They could and did co-exist with neighbourliness in many areas, but the important point is that they demonstrated that "community" was alive at other points of social connection. [1]

The analysis of associational networks and the seedbeds of trust constructed through civic engagement have done much to highlight the resilience of civil society in the contemporary urban environment. Important elements connecting the suburban middle-classes to the urban core, whether through social interaction, philanthropic aid, or the networks of inter-associational activity that directly influenced urban policy have emphasised the importance of suburban participation. With concern about the non-existent social life of the suburbs central to the anti-suburban critique, such active engagement in various aspects of urban life has dispelled stereotypical depictions of a detached and disinterested middle-class in the second half of the twentieth century. [2] Associational activity helped sustain civil society, strengthening social capital and the bonds of trust that were vital to the vibrancy of local communities.

The fluidity of the concept of community during the twentieth century has also been noted. [3] Increasingly community cohesion was associated with patterns of social interaction

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[1]   Clapson, M, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Post War England* (Manchester, 1998), 168.

[2]   Clapson, M, *Suburban Century, Social Change and Urban Growth in England and the U.S.A* (Oxford, 2003), 143. For examples of the anti-suburban critique see Hutber, P, *The Decline and Fall of the Middle Classes and How it Can Fight Back* (London, 1976); Masterman, C.F.G, *The Condition of England* (London, 1960), 56-76; Morris, R.J, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns' in Daunton, M, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain 1840-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 2001), 395-426; Savage, M, *Social Change and the Middle Classes* (London, 1995); Smith, J, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History*, 27, 2000, 255-75; Thompson, F.M.L, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982).

[3]   Please see Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust? In particular the section re-evaluating the concept of community in the twentieth century. Barnett and Crowther's article, 'Community identity in the twenty-first century. A postmodernist evaluation of local government

as opposed to connections with a specific place.[4] Such interaction created communities of interest, supplying an alternative to neighbourhood as a basis for identity and cohesion. In Clapson's understanding of community, identification with a particular neighbourhood or street is just one context in which people are brought together, with clubs and societies making social connections around interests that have little to do with local identification.[5] This was clearly the case for the middle-classes in Leicester and Loughborough during the years 1950 to 2005, with the associational sphere helping to construct a sense of community that was no longer dependant upon the geographical ties of place. Additionally the analysis of residential distribution in Chapter Two demonstrated the widely divergent locations inhabited by members. Increasingly suburban participants were creating communities based on shared interests rather than the proximate connections provided by work and home.

In short, interest based communities demonstrated that community as a concept, was alive and at other points of social connection.[6] But to what extent did this activity undermine 'neighbourliness' in the suburbs themselves? Associational relationships may challenge our perception of community, but was it possible for both associational communities and the neighbourhood unit to co-exist in suburban locations? Or was the stereotypical understanding of declining suburban social networks accurate in relation to the concept of neighbourhood? Using Oadby, a south-east suburb of Leicester, as a case study, and in particular the formation of the Oadby Community Association (OCA) in the 1960s, such issues will be addressed.[7] Through an analysis of the actions and agenda of the Association during the peak of its prevalence, the importance of both associational communities and the concept of neighbourhood will be determined in the context of middle-class suburbanisaton. As previously noted, Corbin Sies suggests that in order to gain a wider understanding of suburban living, urbanists need to move beyond the stereotypical accounts of middle-class suburbia by examining areas in a cultural context: 'we need to understand not only who lived in a given urban or suburban neighbourhood, how it developed, and

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structure', *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 11, 1998, 425-39, provides an interesting insight into this issue.

[4]   Barnett and Crowther, 'Community identity in the twenty-first century', 430.

[5]   Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns*, 168.

[6]   Ibid.

[7]   Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (ROLLR), DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association minutes, 1961-1968.

why it developed but also how constituents experienced life on the ground there.'[8] By considering the experience of Oadby residents, this chapter will emphasise the need to develop a wider interpretation of the urban-suburban dichotomy, uncovering the complexities of the relationship between the city and suburban locations.

Oadby

In his study of working-class suburbia, Clapson concluded that the very concept and planning of suburban development produced neighbourhoods lacking community facilities, a universal problem for both working and middle-class suburban locations.[9] In order to combat the problem dating from the inter-war period, community associations were formed to provide a focal point for community interaction, with specific facilities designed to strengthen the role of the neighbourhood unit. In the suburb of Oadby, such considerations were the primary objectives of the OCA as noted in their constitution in 1960:

> To promote the well being and foster the community spirit of Oadby by associating all interested individuals and organisations in a common effort to advance health and education, to promote facilities for physical, intellectual and social recreation, and to pursue such charitable objectives in the interest of all age groups as may from time to time be appropriate.[10]

The suburban area of Oadby provides an intriguing example of a suburb residing at the periphery of the city. Located approximately three miles from Leicester city centre, Oadby is 'characterized by low density housing, wider roads and pavements and a general tranquil ambience.'[11] The distance from the city centre perfectly demonstrates the definition of a 'surburb' in the context of the thesis. Such a distance reinforced the middle-class nature of urban peripheries as ownership of private transportation enabled those wealthy enough to travel to work by car.[12] In Chapter Two, data from the 2001 census revealed the suburban location of Oadby to be predominantly inhabited by white, middle-class residents. Using the

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[8] Sies, M.C, 'North American suburbs 1880-1950, cultural and social reconciliations', *Journal of Urban History,* 27, 2001, 319.

[9] Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns,* 168.

[10] ROLLR, DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association minutes, March 1960.

[11] Boynton, H, *A Prospect of Oadby, the Story of its Northern Development from 1902-1992* (Leicester, 1993), 53.

[12] Royle, S, A, 'The development of small town Britain' in Daunton, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III,* 143.

indicators of education, unemployment and job classification, Oadby recorded one of the lowest levels of unemployment by area; the greatest number of senior officials and managers by area; and one of the locations with the highest concentration of educated citizens in the city, a useful indicator of middle-class status. Figure 7.1 provides an image of Oadby and its proximity to the urban core of Leicester, whilst Figure 7.2 shows the geographical distribution of members of the OCA:

Figure 7.1 – The suburban area of Oadby
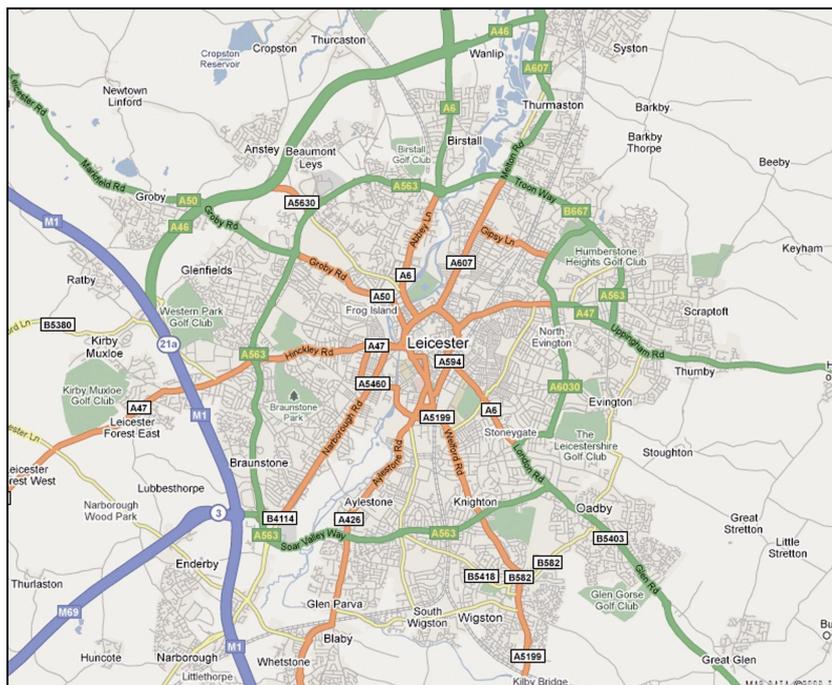
Figure 7.2 – Residential distribution of members of Oadby Community Association, 1961
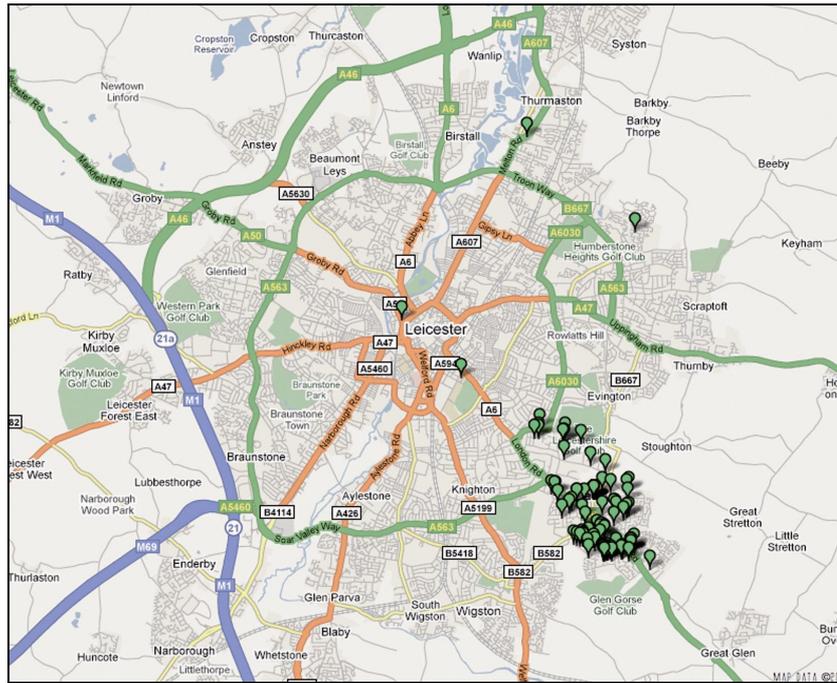
Source: Data obtained from Oadby Community Association minute books ROLLR, DE 5115/11.

The OCA itself was an organisation that encouraged universal membership, irrespective of age and gender. Interestingly, however, the OCA boasted one of the highest percentage rates of female membership in all of the mixed gender organisations analysed. In total 60 percent of participants were women. As noted in Chapter Six, the percentage of women affiliated to the Community Association emphasised the extent to which suburban women were active in their own communities. Founded in 1960, the OCA was managed by a small, gender balanced committee of local residents. The organisation was prominent in local affairs until its dissolution in 1968 (to be examined later in the chapter). Subsequently the case study analysis will focus on the period 1960 to 1968, particularly the years between 1960 and 1965 when the organisation was at its most powerful in terms of community interaction.

Governance of Oadby

Positioned just beyond the city boundary line, the suburb of Oadby falls under the administrative capacity of Oadby and Wigston District Council yet is contiguous with Leicester city. The administrative boundary is not immediately apparent; most 'Leicestrians' would not necessarily be aware of it and be unable to place it on a map. However, its

detachment from the governance of the city in terms of location provides an intriguing case study in the examination of the relationship between suburb and city. Did residents still concern themselves with the issues of the city of Leicester, or did they consider themselves a separate entity? Were they aligned with the City Council or the District Council, and what was the extent of their relations with either? In a project where social networks and relations between the residents of outer fringe suburbs and the municipality are under examination, such a location provides interesting deviations from the standard suburb and city centre connection.

Following the inauguration of the organisation in 1960, the early years of the OCA's history played host to a turbulent phase in the relationship between Oadby, the District Council, and Leicester City Council. During the period 1960 to 1965 a contentious boundary issue resulted in strained relations between the county districts and the city of Leicester. Such tension provides an interesting insight into the connection between suburb and city, as Oadby residents objected strongly to plans to alter boundary lines and return particular outer fringe areas to city control. The City Council's determination to annex prosperous suburbs was undoubtedly related to the potential for additional financial contributions to the city in the form of local taxation. With wealthy, middle-class localities such as Oadby excluded from the administrative boundary in 1960, the City Council was unable to extract tax revenues from residents who used Leicester amenities in much the same way as inhabitants within the city boundaries. In this respect the City Council sought parity with fringe suburbs, which were generally resistant to annexation.

For the OCA and the District Council absorption was unacceptable. The Association provided a voice for the community and a focal point for engagement, allowing citizens to work alongside one another, lobbying over political and administrative issues. Such collaborative action also extended to the municipality where the Association could be seen to work directly for and against local government. In Chapter Five municipal interaction was emphasised as an important feature of civil society as it linked the citizen to the state. However, the boundary issue provides an interesting contrast as we see civic engagement used specifically to separate the 'suburbans' from the urban core. In a functioning civil society the associational sphere should allow the urban citizen to challenge local and central

government whilst also promoting cohesion and encouraging the emergence of social trust.[13] In the case of Oadby, the OCA can be seen to contribute to the store of social capital through the emergence of trust within their immediate community, although it did not promote affiliation with the city centre.

In a statement to The *Leicester Mercury* in January 1959, the Lord Mayor of Leicester suggested that neither the City nor the County Council would allow the preceding boundary debate to destroy the relationship between urban periphery and county areas, which had in the last few years 'improved beyond measure and was now better than ever.'[14] Yet reports and plans filed by the County Council objecting to the City Commission reports on the boundary extension, suggest that relations between the city and the county were tense.[15] For the OCA support undoubtedly fell with the County and District Councils. Whilst the County Council was keen to retain prosperous areas like Oadby within its jurisdiction, for the OCA, lying outside the boundary gave the suburban periphery a degree of independence. In a letter to Oadby Urban District Council, the OCA voiced its support for the county: 'The Oadby Community Association fully supports both the Urban District Council and the County Council in their objections to the proposals put forward by the city of Leicester and the Boundary Commission.'[16] The OCA and the District Council were in close contact over the issue, discussing letters of protest and planned proposals.[17] The OCA was committed to its objections, forming 'a sub-committee' to organise the management of their protests. Reports in *The Leicester Mercury* in 1962 also reflected the attention the issue was receiving, with particular focus on the actions of the OCA, emphasising their position as a voice for the community of Oadby:

> Oadby Community Association last night expressed strong opposition to the proposals to extend the boundary into Oadby and decided to take a plebiscite of its members on the issue…the chairman said discussions had taken place with Oadby Urban Council and the Association had come to the conclusion that it had a case entirely of its own without overlapping the Council's case against the boundary extension plan. It was recommended that a drafting committee be appointed to formulate the association's arguments.[18]

13   According to Kumar, 'In a strong civil society…criticism of authoritative action (is) omnipresent.' See Kumar, K, 'Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term', *British Journal of Sociology*, 44, 1993, 229.

14   *Leicester Mercury (LM)*, 26th January 1959.

15   ROLLR, DE 6335/293, Oadby Urban District Council minutes, 23rd October 1961.

16   ROLLR, DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association minutes, February 1962.

17   ROLLR, DE 6335/293, Oadby Urban District Council minutes, 23rd October 1961.

18   *LM,* 13th April 1962.

Such articles highlighted the growing importance of the Association during the early years of the 1960s, as it became a focal point for the expression of concern within the community. For Association members, retaining their position outside the city boundary was crucial, emphasising not only a sense of pride in their detachment from the city centre but also an established identity separate from the urban core. Residents perceived themselves as a self-contained and independent unit and were determined to remain so. In this respect the participation of the 'suburbans' both supports and contradicts notions of a detached middle-class.[19] Whilst they clearly relished separation from the urban centre, they also worked as a neighbourhood community to voice concerns over the boundary proposals. Citizen engagement was therefore apparent, with residence interacting at the urban periphery. Despite the social and cultural changes of the twentieth century supposedly altering social interaction – academics have argued that the increasing popularity of home based leisure entertainment promoted a sense of individualism - the inhabitants of Oadby exemplified the resilience of community engagement, creating networks of power and influence that functioned within the county as opposed to the city.[20] In support of this was the cooperative interaction developed with the District Council, with networks of communication definable as social capital in Putnam's terms.[21] Much like the networks of interaction formed within ethnic minority communities (see Chapter Six), civil society was often used to create strong communities that were known to separate themselves from the majority at the urban core. Seemingly Oadby residents were not isolated within their suburban neighbourhood, but instead formed networks of solidarity, interacting in a community that was based around location.

The relationship between the District Council and the OCA organisation was solidified by the controversy surrounding the boundary debate, at its height during the years 1961 to 1963. Connections however, went beyond correspondence on boundary issues. The Association and the Council often engaged in expressive activities, developing bonds of

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[19]   Masterman, *The Condition of England*, 56-76.

[20]   Cunningham, H, 'Leisure and culture', in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Volume II* (Cambridge, 1990), 317.

[21]   Putnam, R, 'Tuning in and out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America', *Political Science and Politics,* 28, 1995, 665. For additional references on twentieth century civil society see Flyvbjerg, B, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?' *The British Journal of Sociology*, 49, 210-33; Harris, J, ed., *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford, 2005); Kumar, 'Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term', 375-95.

trust that were fundamental to an active civil society.[22] For example, the Council were regularly informed of events organised by the Association, including autumn fairs and photographic exhibitions, to which they pledged 'every support.'[23] Communication was also evident in the requests for a Council representative to attend Community Association meetings in 1962:

> The chairman read two letters received by him from the above association (Oadby Community Association). One letter from the honorary secretary on behalf of the Association invites this authority to appoint a representative to attend meetings of the general committee.[24]

Consequently a 'Councillor Smith' regularly attended meetings, ultimately forging a strong bond between the two organisations. These types of connections support the findings in Chapter Five, where voluntary organisations often invited councillors on to their administrative committees in order to promote private relationships that were mutually beneficial.[25] For the Council, such links consolidated their power base at the suburban fringe, whilst the OCA found validity and support through such networks. Furthermore, the OCA was able to request participation in local issues via the Council. The extent of their collaborative action was exemplified in a discussion of a second letter forwarded to the Council by the Association:

> The second letter referred to the various functions and service which the association suggested should be inaugurated…The chairman referred to an interview which had taken place with County Council representatives regarding a building to be used for a child welfare clinic and other county welfare services. He stated that following such an interview, the clerk had sent a letter to the Leicestershire County Council and that a reply had been received that will be placed before the next meeting of the appropriate County Committee and he had therefore forwarded a copy of the letter received from the Community Association to the county medical officers of health so that they could be considered in conjunction with the letter sent by the clerk.[26]

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[22] Babchuk and Booth emphasise the importance of voluntary organisations in providing settings for the types of engagement that build bonds of trust and thus maintain civil society. See Babachuk N and Booth, A, 'Voluntary association membership: a longitudinal analysis', *American Sociological Review*, 34, 1969, 31.

[23] In the council minutes references are made to a photographic exhibition in 1961 and an autumn fair in 1965. ROLLR, DE 6335/293, Oadby Urban District Council minutes.

[24] ROLLR, DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association minutes, 22nd February 1962.

[25] See Chapter Five, Networks: The Power of Collaborative Action.

[26] ROLLR, DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association minutes, 22nd February 1962.

The correspondence reveals the OCA's interest in extending their 'functions and services' within the community of Oadby. In addition, the Council's decision to work alongside the organisation on important issues is significant, specifically their personal recommendation of the Association to the highest offices of the County Council. Despite the increasing interest of government in various areas of urban life since the foundation of the Welfare State – by 1968 approximately 3,000 different types of means testing were in operation, guiding the allocation of funds in local towns and cities – organisations like the OCA emphasised the role the associational sphere continued to play during the 1960s.[27] Clearly the Council respected the work of the Association and embraced their support, whilst the OCA found validity through their connection.

This was further exemplified by the inclusion of the OCA in the planning of Oadby District Council's bicentenary anniversary in 1963. The OCA participated on a select jubilee committee, established for the purpose of organising local events. Its inclusion emphasised the OCA as a focal point for the neighbourhood unit and a voice for residents in the local decision making process. Such engagement was comparable with the experience of associational activity at the urban core. In Chapters Three and Four civic engagement expressed through the ritual of anniversary celebration was used to highlight the importance of tradition in the contemporary associational sphere.[28] Whilst celebratory events were not as lavish as the pageantry provided by organisations in the nineteenth century, they did allude to the longevity of associational practices in modern voluntary organisations..[29] Seemingly such events were as important to suburban organisations like the OCA. In this respect engagement at the urban periphery mirrored associational activity at the urban core. The OCA placed great importance in the planning of events, providing several ideas to commemorate the occasion including 'a holiday for all children, a drama society review and a more permanent memorial - additional welfare services.'[30] By establishing themselves as

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[27] Oliver, M, 'The retreat of the state in the 1980s and 1990s' in Carnevali, F and Strange, J.M, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (London, 2007), 312.

[28] For examples please see Chapter Three, Active Citizenship: Defining Associational Activity, 1950-2005 and Chapter Four, Associational Communities: Seedbeds of Trust?

[29] For an example of the use of pageantry in the expression of middle-class identity see Gunn, S, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual, Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000). For a recent revision of civic engagement in Leicester see Begley, S, 'Voluntary associations and the civic ideal in Leicester, 1870-1939', unpublished Leicester PhD 2009 and Balderstone, L, 'Semi-Detached Leicester' in Rodger, R., ed., *Leicester: A Modern History* (chapter forthcoming 2010).

[30] ROLLR, DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association Minutes, 13th September 1963.

part of the festivities, the Association both facilitated citizen engagement whilst publicly aligning themselves with the County authorities. Furthermore, the planning of the celebrations confirmed the organisations status within the suburb as they interacted in different facets of community life. In many respects the OCA was a multiple issue organisation, a neighbourhood association that dealt with various elements of suburban life. Yet the OCA still conformed to Harris' definition of the 'typical' voluntary organisation of the twentieth century,[31] with a single objective, and specific agenda, to enhance the position of Oadby residents within the county.

Community Engagement

In her second study of Banbury, Stacey revealed that after the first 18 months of foundation, the energies of local associations were often focused less on pressure group activity and more on social activities.[32] This was also the case for the OCA. Once the boundary issue had abated by the end of 1962, the OCA began to focus increasingly on the provision of community services and the encouragement of social interaction. The organisation primarily worked as a coordinator of associational activity, most apparent when examining the types of clubs and societies formed and supported through the OCA itself. Many sub-groups existed within the organisation, including dance, drama and bridge clubs. Each emphasised social interaction through mutual interests and hobbies, confirming Nash and Reeder's understanding of the evolutionary nature of twentieth century organisations and their importance in urban communities.[33] Much like the inter-associational activity analysed in Chapter Five, the OCA strengthened social networks by encouraging the interlocking nature of associational activity. General meetings were held for representatives from various organisations within the suburb such as adult education groups, garden and allotment societies, the parish council, and the Ladies Luncheon Club to mention but a few.[34] These

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[31] Harris, J, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain, 1945-2001' in Burke, K, ed., *The British Isles since 1945* (Oxford, 2003), 100, refers to the typical association of the mid to late twentieth century as 'single issue'.

[32] Stacey, M, Batstone, E and Bell, C, *Power, Persistence and Change. A Social Study of Banbury* (London, 1975), 68.

[33] Nash and Reeder argue that voluntary organisations within the city during the twentieth century did not necessarily decline but became active in new areas of cultural and associational life, based around interests and hobbies. See Nash, D and Reeder, D, *Leicester in the Twentieth Century* (Leicester, 1993), 158.

[34] ROLLR, DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association Minutes, 7th March 1962.

joint meetings strengthened the fibres of civil society through networks of collaborative action.[35] Throughout the years 1960 to 1965 the OCA worked as a focal point for all these organisations, whilst also bringing specific groups together for social enjoyment, such as dramatic performances at the Oadby Evening Institute.[36] This interaction, however, only occurred with organisations in the suburb itself, emphasising a clear separation between the organisation and associational activity at the urban core. These findings suggest that to some extent the rapid increase in suburbanisation during the twentieth century did create a degree of disengagement. The increasing spatial separation of suburb and city often allowed suburban communities to adopt distinct identities, disconnected from the urban core, as was the case in Oadby. Communities became more inward looking, rejecting cohesion with the urban centre.

Despite this separation, associational activity was undoubtedly beneficial to the suburban community in Oadby. As early as 1961 the OCA used the collaborative power of their own associational sphere to encourage an annual 'community fortnight' which promoted both the community and the Association, raising funds for the neighbourhood and increasing membership.[37] Traditional occasions, fundamental to both the maintenance of a community and the preservation of its identity, were also celebrated with parties and dinner dances, comparable with the traditions identified in several other organisations analysed.[38] In this respect the Association worked like many other organisations analysed within the study: it fostered community relationships, creating networks of communication and bonds of trust, fundamental to the reinforcement of civil society.

However, their relationship with the urban core was complex; communities and acts of civic engagement were created at the periphery of the city which created bonds of trust and promoted cohesion, yet the OCA genuinely relished a sense of detachment from the urban core that could be seen as detrimental to an active civil society. Oadby residents clearly contradicted perceptions of a middle class withdrawn and disinterested in social

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[35]   In Chapter Five, Networks: The Power of Collaborative Action, the importance of strength through cooperation was emphasised as a vital aspect of associational activity. Whilst organisations often wielded a degree of influence individually, it was generally through collaborative action that the associational sphere was at its most powerful.

[36]   ROLLR, DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association Minutes, 6th June 1961.

[37]   Ibid, 5th July 1961.

[38]   Ibid, references to Christmas and New Years Eves parties are apparent throughout the minutes of the association. These types of traditions were evident in the majority of organisations analysed as previously discussed in Chapter Three, Active Citizenship: Defining Associational Culture, 1950-2005.

interaction, although the views of the OCA also suggest they were a group of 'suburbans' physically and socially detached from the urban centre. In 1962 the Association declared: 'The sense of community, of living together, is much stronger in smaller communities and tends to be weakened, often to the point of non-existence, in larger urban areas like the city of Leicester.' [39] Thus, the Association advocated the importance of neighbourhood, supporting notions of detachment from the urban centre. Evidently, and contrasting with the stereotypical depiction of suburban disinterest, organisations and 'neighbourliness' existed at the urban fringe. Participation remained important to the suburban middle classes and relocation to semi-rural locations did not quell their interest. Yet, in Chapter Two clear connections were made between suburban areas and the organisations analysed. Did these areas include Oadby? Throughout the years 1950 to 2005 suburban locations contributed considerably to fringe membership levels in Leicester and one of the most popular areas inhabited by participants was the suburban location of Oadby, as Figures 7.3 and 7.4 show:

Figure 7.3 – Residential distribution of members of Leicestershire Motor Car Club, cumulative membership 1950-80
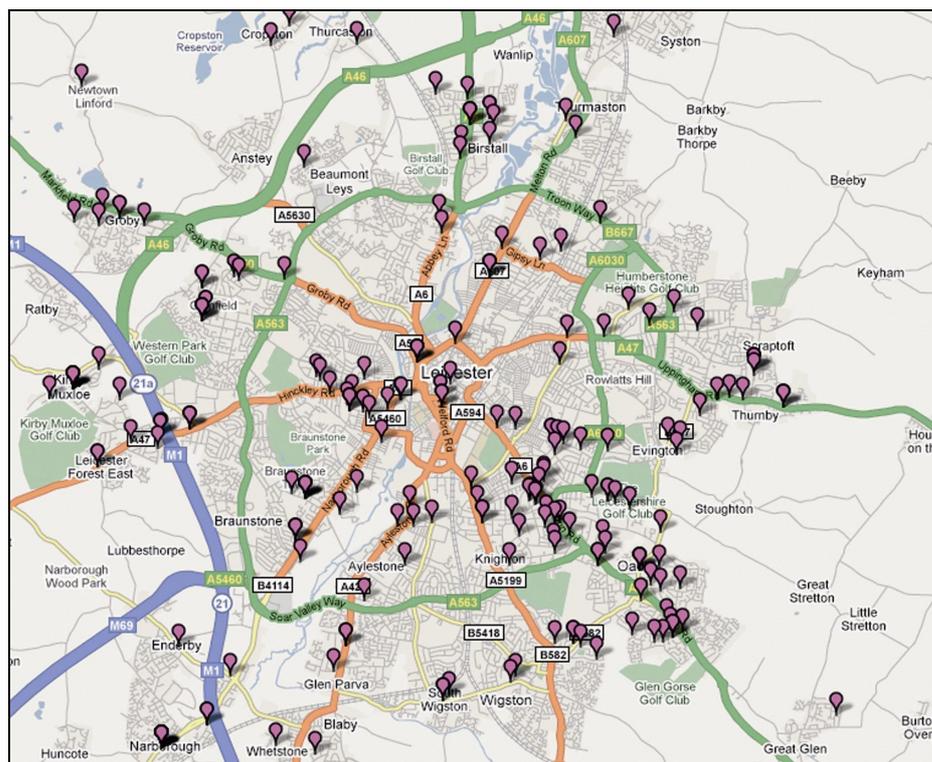
Source: Data obtained from Leicestershire Motor Car Club address book, ROLLR, DE 2172/31.

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[39]   ROLLR, DE 6335/293, Oadby Urban District Council Minutes, February 1962.

Figure 7.4 – Residential distribution of members of Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society, cumulative membership 1947-2004
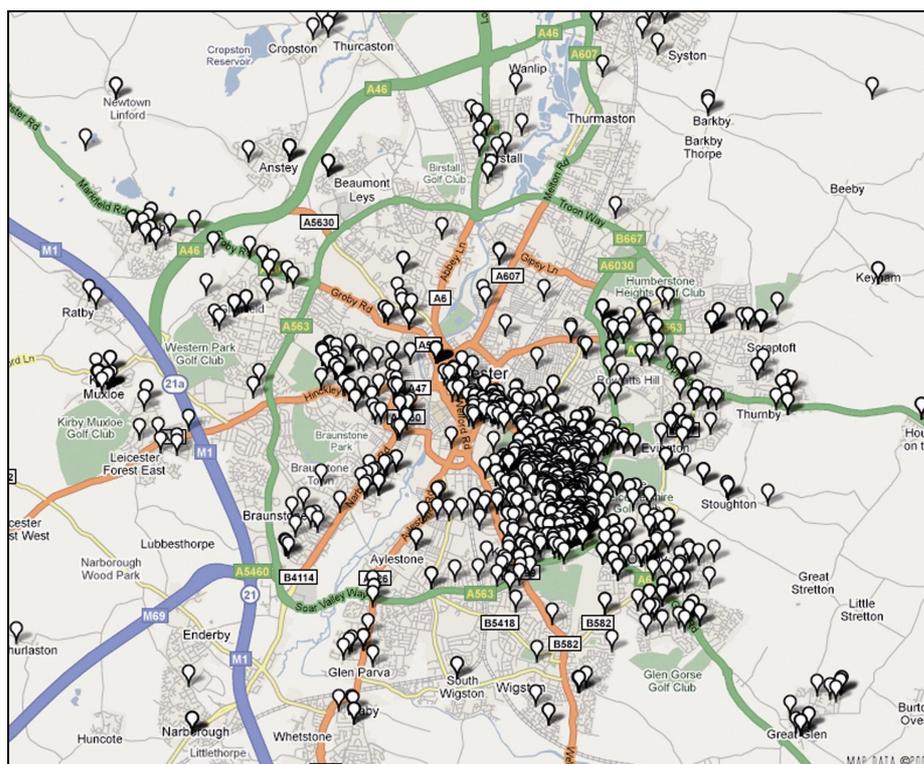
Source: Data obtained from the transaction papers of the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society (ROLLR).

For the Leicestershire Motor Club and Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society, levels of participation from Oadby residents were 14.7 percent and 17.2 percent respectively. Such data suggests that whilst the OCA advocated the importance of the neighbourhood unit, numerous suburban residents still connected themselves to the urban core through the social networks constructed by associational activity. As contemporary academics have suggested, the relationship between suburban areas and the urban core is complex.[40] A number of residents relished a detachment from the city centre, constructing an individual suburban identity, whilst others engaged in an associational sphere based at the urban core. Clearly areas like Oadby highlight the resilience of the neighbourhood unit in suburban locations during the twentieth century, disproving notions of middle class disinterest. However, they can also be used to exemplify the creation of communities that were no longer related to location, but rather an associational sphere that continued to thrive

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[40] Bourne, L.S, 'Reinventing the suburb: old myths and new realities', *Progress and Planning,* 46, 1996, 163.

post 1950. [41] Arguably these residents were 'semi-detached,' cultivating strong social networks with the urban core. Even the 'suburbans' that considered themselves fully detached from the city centre but committed to associational activity within their own neighbourhood, fostered the types of relationships that had wider social implication. For example, Freeden argues that conduct in civil society offers models of behaviour that can be used in various aspects of urban life. [42]

Ultimately the actions of the OCA, and their suburban membership, exemplify the various facets that exist within contemporary civil society. Like the experiences of ethnic minority organisations in Chapter Six, different spheres of associational activity were evident. The case study example of Oadby emphasises that divisions not only related to race and class but at times residential location. For a more harmonious society it is undoubtedly the case that greater interaction between the spheres of civil society is needed. As Rodger and Colls argue, the commitment of organisations to their own immediate agenda remains one of the biggest threats to contemporary civil society, with voluntary organisation failing to interact on important social issues. [43] Yet it is also important to acknowledge the wider benefits of citizen engagement, such as the spread of trust, even if cohesion remains allusive for the time being.

A final aspect to consider in the analysis of the OCA was its dissolution by the end of the 1960s. During the years 1960 to 1965 the organisation played a vital part in the community dynamic and the promotion of Oadby itself. However, by 1968, despite its continued involvement in local issues and the organisation of regular social events, [44] the

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[41] For examples see Barnett and Crowther, 'Community identity in the twenty-first century' and Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns.*

[42] Freeden, M, 'Civil society and the good citizen: competing conceptions of citizenship in twentieth century Britain' in Harris, ed., *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions*, 275-92. Fukyama draws a similar conclusion when discussing associational activity and 'radius of trust' created. See Fukyama, F, 'Social capital, civil society and development', *Third World Quarterly*, 22, 2001, 8.

[43] Colls, R and Rodger, R, 'Civil society and British cities' in Colls, R and Rodger, R, eds., *Cities of Ideas. Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain* (Aldershot, 2004), 19.

[44] The association was involved in discussions with the District Council in 1964 on tax related issues and again on the contentious boundary problems in 1965, ROLLR, DE /5115, Oadby Community Association Minutes. The organisation of social events are also regularly mentioned in the minute books of the association, for example, funds raised at a charity Christmas dance mentioned in January 14th 1966, arrangements for a civic ball 14th march 1966 and a cheese and wine party 25th February 1967.

Association concluded 'The OCA should dissolve.' [45] One of the most significant achievements of the Association had been the foundation of Oadby Community College (OCC). However, with its implementation came a management committee and a desire for an amalgamation with the OCA. As early as 1965 committee members questioned their future role:

> Many questions were asked and doubt expressed at the wisdom of considering dissolution…..several speakers feared loss of freedom once the college takes over and the need for a free body was expressed…Mr Sheppe, however, pleaded in favour (of dissolution) because there are too few people to effectively run two organisations.[46]

Despite a resolution to continue on this occasion, the issue was constantly in the forefront of committee discussions:

> The meeting considered that the Community College can fully continue and develop the function of the OCA (however) Mr Griffiths recommends that the continued existence of the OCA is needed within the college as a balancing factor to the educational and cultural aspects of the existing framework.[47]

By 1968 the decision to dissolve in order to allow the expansion of the OCC was taken, with the Association concluding: 'The main aim of the Association, the creation of a Community College in Oadby has been achieved.' Throughout its existence the organisation had retained a strong social standing within the community and their influence was to be passed on to the new committee of the OCC.

Overall, the case study of Oadby confirms the interpretation that interest-based communities and the neighbourhood unit 'could and did co-exist'.[48] Far from notions of detachment and disinterest, the suburb of Oadby shows the contemporary historian that suburban areas were not only connected to the urban core to participate in associational activity but, in certain locations, constructed a flourishing civil society at the urban periphery. Yet the relationship between Oadby and the city centre was complex. Indeed, whilst many residents returned to the urban core to partake in the associational sphere, organisations like the OCA promoted separation from the city centre and the importance of neighbourhood in smaller locations.

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[45]   ROLLR, DE 5115/11, Oadby Community Association Minutes, 2nd February 1968.

[46]   Ibid, 25th January 1965.

[47]   Ibid, 5th March 1965 and 30th June 1965.

[48]   Clapson, *Invincible Green Suburbs'*, 168.

American scholars have asked historians and social scientists to question standardised depictions of detached suburban communities.[49] Through the study of Oadby and its Community Association, it is clear that stereotypical accounts of middle-class disinterest are over-stated. However, more research needs to be undertaken if we are truly to understand the nature of associational activity at the urban fringe. Did many suburban areas have thriving community associations like the OCA or was Oadby unique? Were all community associations successful in achieving their primary goals and objectives? How many of these associations disbanded as the immediate post-war years came to an end? And to what extent did the increasing ideology of individualism over collectivism - particularly under the Thatcher administration of the 1970s and again under Blair's Labour government in the 1990s - affect the popularity of local community organisations?[50] Many of the answers are to be found in the private archive collections of clubs and societies in local areas, providing an insight into the behaviour of the middle-classes and the degree of engagement in individual locations. Additionally the use of longitudinal analysis has the potential to supply academics with a greater understanding of associational activity in suburban areas, the attachment to their respective urban centres and the changing nature of this relationship over the passage of time. Clapson suggests that thousands of suburban areas in planned, post-war communities chose to become neighbours if they wanted, and undoubtedly the experience of Oadby provides support for such conclusions and the need for further analysis.[51]

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[49]   Corbin Sies, 'North American suburbs 1880-1950, cultural and social reconciliations', 313-42.

[50]   The argument for the increasing popularity of individualism over collectivism during the latter years of the twentieth century is taken from Brooke, S, 'Class and gender' in Carnevali and Strange, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, 47.

[51]   Clapson, *Suburban Century*, 162.

Chapter Eight

Semi-Detached Britain? A Conclusion

Service before self is the number one rule.[1]

In his account of associational life in the small town of Loughborough, Philip Wilson, of the Loughborough Rotary Club, exemplified the level of commitment that the associational sphere of the twenty first century has been shown to exude. As a retired businessman residing in a distinctly middle-class, satellite village at the periphery of the town, his involvement in numerous voluntary organisations - ranging from philanthropic to social interaction - typified the longevity and diversity of the contemporary associational sphere. Far from living a detached, disinterested lifestyle at the urban fringe, middle-class participants, like Mr Wilson, contradicted stereotypical depictions of withdrawal, offering an insight into an associational world that continued to contribute to civil society, providing links between the citizen and the state. Much like Gellner's perception of an active civil society, the findings of the thesis have demonstrated a degree of citizen engagement that, whilst allowing the state to fulfil its role as keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests, also provided a counter balance that prevented the municipality from dominating the rest of society.[2]

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[1]   Philip Wilson, member of the Loughborough Rotary Club, referring to the commitment of members of the organisation in Loughborough. Interviewed March 2007.

[2]   Gellner, E, *Conditions of Liberty* (Middlesex, 1994). In Chapter Two, it was explained that the thesis takes more recent interpretations of 'civil society' as a general reference point, whilst recognising their variety and acknowledging the historiography of the concept. For a selection of examples see Flyvbjerg, B, 'Habermas and Foucault: thinkers for civil society?', *The British Journal of Sociology,* 49, 210-33; Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty*; Kumar, K, 'Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term', *British Journal of Sociology*, 44, 1993, 375-95; Putnam, R, *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (London, 2000); Putnam, R, 'Tuning in, tuning out: the strange disappearance of social capital in America', *Political Science and Politics,* 28, 1995, 664-83. For an overview of the historiography of the concept, Morris, R.J, 'Introduction: civil society, association and urban places: class, nation and culture in nineteenth century Europe' in De Vries, B, Morris, R.J and Morton, G, eds., *Civil Society, Association and Urban Places: Class, Nation and Culture in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Aldershot, 2006), 1-16 and Harris, J, 'From Richard Hooker to Harold Laski: changing perceptions of civil society in British political thought, late sixteenth to early

Civil society, and middle class engagement, was therefore alive in late twentieth century Loughborough and the larger urban environment of Leicester. Yet the social and cultural changes of the twentieth century had undoubtedly reshaped citizen participation. Much like the urban environment itself, the middle classes adapted to the changing requirements of modern life, finding new ways to engage in cities that were evolving socially, culturally and demographically. Far from removing themselves from the urban core, the middle-classes remained 'semi-detached', contributing to the needs and concerns of their towns and cities through associational activity, despite geographical relocation to suburbia.

Associational Participation

The early years of the twentieth century are often recognised as a turning point in Britain's transition to modernity. The decline of organised religion, the growth of mass leisure pursuits and ground breaking technological innovation, all contributed to the social, cultural and economic reinvention of Britain. Yet this transitional period is often regarded as initiating a cultural crisis by the mid twentieth century. Critics of the time have alluded to the degeneration of society as women threw off the traditional 'shackles' of gender and family, the empire began to dissolve and the nation's staple industries deteriorated.[3] Furthermore, symbolic British institutions, particularly those built around deferential attitudes, experienced a growing sense of adversity.[4] Britain appeared to reject the middle-class sensibilities that were once the cornerstone of its national identity, embracing a growing sense of working-class culture, exemplified in areas ranging from politics and the spread of Labour and Trade Unionism, to the popularity of rock and roll music and mass spectator sports like football. The country was arguably experiencing a social world turned upside down.[5]

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twentieth centuries' in Harris, J, ed., *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford, 2005), 13-38 provide excellent introductions.

[3] Cocks, H, 'Modernity and modernism' in Carnevali, F and Strange, J.M, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain. Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (London, 2007), 30. In particular Cocks draws on the work of Daunton and Reiger in his evaluation of British modernity at the turn of the twentieth century. See Daunton, M and Reiger, B, eds., *Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II* (Oxford, 2001).

[4] Childs, D, *Britain since 1939. Progress and Decline* (London, 1995), 127.

[5] O'Morgan, K, 'The Wilson years: 1964-1970' in Tiratsoo, N, ed., *From Blitz to Blair, A New History of Britain since 1939* (London, 1997), 133.

Central to the perception of change was the declining influence of the middle classes. No longer regarded as a dominant force in local towns and cities, their urban leadership and cultural contributions were often brought into question by contemporary historians. Many regarded the middle classes of the twentieth century as detached and disinterested, living socially exclusive lives at urban periphery.[6] Yet the experience of middle-class 'suburbans' in Leicester and Loughborough during the period 1950 to 2005 has provided variation in the stereotypical account of middle-class disengagement. In particular, geo-coded data from local voluntary organisations revealed the continued participation of middle-class, suburban residents in the contemporary associational sphere. Despite the notion that the distinction between the commercial centre and the residential suburb was part of the rational organisation of urban life,[7] residential relocation to suburban areas did not always equal detachment. Whilst the increase in public transport and motor car ownership allowed the middle-classes to live ever increasing distances from the urban core, participation in local clubs and societies based in town and city centres, exemplified the continued commitment of the middle classes to urban life.

Analysis of residential patterns in Chapter Two confirmed strong connections between voluntary activity and the suburban middle classes in Leicester and Loughborough. Whilst the impact of increasing modes of private transportation may have accelerated the process of suburbanisation and a sense of social segregation (by 1981 approximately 16,500,000 motor cars were recorded on British roads),[8] it also made possible a sizeable commute for the urban middle-classes. The findings of the thesis have emphasised the considerable distances members of the associational sphere were prepared to travel in order to engage in urban life. For example, in Leicester the average distance a member of the Society of Artists travelled to attend meetings and functions was 9.7 miles. The weighted average distance for all geo-coded participants (omitting distances over 50 miles) being just

6   See Hutber, P, *The Decline and Fall of the Middle Classes and How it Can Fight Back* (London, 1976); Masterman, C.F.G, *The Condition of England*, (London, 1960), 56-76; Morris, R.J, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns' in Daunton, M, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain 1840-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 2001), 395-426; Savage, M, *Social Change and the Middle Classes* (London, 1995); Smith, J, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', *Urban History,* 27, 2000, 255-75; Thompson, F.M.L, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester, 1982).

7   Gunn, S, 'Class identity and the urban: the middle class in England 1800-1950', *Urban History,* 31, 2004, 37.

8   The data relating to motor vehicles is taken from Wood, B, 'Urbanisation and local government' in Halsey, A.H, ed., *British Social Trends since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain* (London, 1988), 335. For an example of the middle class, social segregation arguments see Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia*, 155.

under 5 miles, a considerable distance. In Loughborough similar conclusions emerged, with a weighted average of just less than 3 miles.

The chronological analysis of data also confirmed that over the period 1950 to 2005, members of local organisations were residing in suburban areas or satellite villages constructed further and further away from the urban core. The analysis of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society over four separate time periods revealed that whilst membership rates fluctuated at times, overall participation remained steady. Furthermore, the number of members residing in suburban areas or satellite villages between the years 1947 to 2004 increased by over 25 percent, as Table 8.1 shows:

Table 8.1 – Membership rates and distance data relating to the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 1947-2004

Category	1947	1954	1963	2004
Number of members	221	242	400	336
Average Distance of members	2.3	2.5	2.8	3.4
Number of members residing in suburbia, satellite village or local town (%)	45	56.4	61.5	71.8

Source: Data obtained from both the transaction papers of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (ROLLR) and their private archive collection.

In short, these results emphasise the links between the middle-classes and civil society in Leicester and Loughborough. An increasing number of members relocated to suburban areas but remained connected to the associational sphere. Furthermore, despite Putnam and Gamm's assertion that in America 'associationalism' was strongest in smaller locations,[9] both areas provided connections between the middle-classes and voluntary activity, with neither town nor city showing more of an inclination to participate. Variation emerged however, when comparing chronological residential dispersal. As exemplified in Table 8.1, organisations like the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society in Leicester produced a dispersal of membership that increased in terms of distance between the years 1950 to 2005. Yet, in Loughborough, limited change occurred in relation to the geographical distribution of members. For example, whilst on average the distance a

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[9]   Putnam, P and Gamm, G, 'The growth of voluntary associations in America, 1840-1940', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* 29, 1999, 511-57.

member of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society resided from the urban core increased by 1.8 miles between 1947 and 2004, in Loughborough the average threshold distance of a member of the Emmanuel Women's Guild increased by just 0.4 miles. For the Probus Club the distance was just 0.2 miles. Additionally, in the Emmanuel Women's Guild only 2 percent of members resided at the fringe of Loughborough or beyond by 1970, in 2000 this number had increased by only 3 percent. Comparatively, the overall percentage increase for the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical and Society between the years 1947 and 2004 was 26.8 percent.

From the geo-coded data it was therefore concluded that whilst the middle-classes of Loughborough were linked to associational activity in the town, local clubs and societies were generally smaller in nature, producing a more confined, homogeneous spread of membership. Overall a larger number of organisations with sizeable memberships existed in Leicester, creating a wider dispersal of members. Thus, the nature of the urban environment undoubtedly affected the geographical dispersal of membership. In Chapter Two questions were raised with regards to the influence of a city like Leicester on voluntary organisations in a neighbouring town. Would the larger city overshadow the smaller town, preventing the construction of an active civil society? Or would civil society flourish despite its close proximity? Ultimately it was not the city of Leicester that influenced participation in Loughborough but the size of the town itself. Geographical locations like Loughborough were more likely to produce organisations on a smaller scale, whilst larger cities created more sizeable clubs and societies. In turn these associations produced memberships with a wide geographical dispersal, contrasting significantly with the residentially confined associational communities in smaller urban areas.

Therefore, despite the acceleration of suburbanisation during the twentieth century, it is important to note that, for the middle-classes, relocation did not imply detachment. Connections with the associational sphere in both the town and city allowed the 'suburbans' to remain 'semi-detached', linked to the urban core through a continued commitment to a contemporary 'subscriber democracy.'[10] In a comparative context, residential patterns of membership in Leicester and Loughborough revealed the types of variation that existed from location to location, particularly the creation of more confined, homogeneous associational communities in smaller urban areas. Were these findings unique to the experience of suburban residents in Leicester and Loughborough? Or were residential

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[10] Morris, 'Structure, culture and society in British towns', 412.

distributions representative of associational participants across the country? In America Gardner has suggested that suburbanisation was a more complex process than the simple migration of middle-class city dwellers to the urban periphery, concluding that to understand these complexities, researchers need to examine large and smaller metropolitan areas in a comparative context.[11] In a similar way, the findings of this thesis support the conclusion that a greater understanding of suburbanisation in Britain would emerge from wider regional analysis and comparative studies.

Associational Communities

The geo-coded data therefore confirmed suburban participation in voluntary activity. However, middle-class involvement in local clubs and societies during the twentieth century not only emphasised connections with the urban core but also a degree of social interaction that challenged the contemporary definition of community. Despite suggestions that the middle-classes had removed themselves to the urban periphery in order to become socially detached, the experience of the 'suburbans' in Leicester and Loughborough exemplified how the middle-classes had adapted to contemporary urban living, creating associational communities that no longer relied on the proximity of place as a unifying factor.

Academics have argued that the social changes of the twentieth century marked a decline in social commitment, with citizens in general withdrawing to more privatised lifestyles. Leisure activities for example, became increasingly home orientated with the popularity and availability of radio and television. By 1983, approximately 81 percent of all homes possessed a colour television.[12] McGuigan argues that the trend towards home-based leisure consumption was not just a British phenomenon but rather an international one. Its impact had wide reaching social implications, as the move away from community engagement became increasingly apparent by the latter years of the twentieth century.[13]

The continued popularity of voluntary associations in Leicester and Loughborough, however, suggests that the nature of community engagement changed rather than declined during the twentieth century. The concept of community itself became more fluid.

[11]   Gardner, T, 'The slow wave. The changing residential status of cities and suburbs in the United States', *Journal of Urban History,* 27, 2001, 311.

[12]   Burnett, J, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1985* (London, 1986), 283.

[13]   McGuigan, J, 'Cultural change' in Hollowell, J, ed., *Britain since 1945* (Oxford, 2003), 2. Also see Cunningham, H, 'Culture: leisure and culture', in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950, Volume II* (Cambridge, 1990), 317.

Contemporary academic discourse questions the importance of locality as a unifying agent in the construction of community, arguing that a more relevant definition would include a commonality of interest among a group of people.[14] In this respect associational activity brought people together through a common pursuit, encouraging social interaction during the mid to late years of the twentieth century. Bruni and Sugden argue that it is through associational activity that an individual cultivates a reputation of trustworthiness.[15] This engagement has wider social implications as it promotes cooperative interaction, crucial in achieving effective solutions to the problems facing urban communities.[16] Furthermore, social interaction through associational activity allows the urban citizen to feel more connected to the urban place, creating communities that prevent feelings of isolation. This was particularly significant during the twentieth century when people were less inclined to reside in the towns and cities of their birth. For example, the increasing availability of a university education following the Robbins Review in 1963 encouraged students, and graduates, to be more geographically mobile.[17] Associational communities had the potential to provide new migrants with established social networks. In Chapter Six the example of the National Women's Register in Leicester showed how associational links allowed women newly located to the area 'to meet likeminded people',[18] immediately connecting themselves to the urban environment. Their activities provided stability for participants and networks of communication through engagement, an important aspect of a functioning civil society.

The popularity of social interaction in Leicester and Loughborough also supported Clapson's interpretation of the changing nature of community during the twentieth century, in particular the popularity of 'associational communities'.[19] As Cedric Granger of the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society revealed in Chapter Four, voluntary organisations often provided the contemporary urban citizen with a new form of community: 'We are a

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[14] For an example see Barnett, N.J and Crowther, D.E.A, 'Community identity in the twenty-first century. A postmodernist evaluation of local government structure', *International Journal of Public Sector Management,* 11, 1998, 429.

[15] Bruni, L and Sugden, R, 'Moral canals: trust and social capital in the work of Hume, Smith and Genovesi', *Economic and Philosophy,* 16, 2000, 4-6.

[16] Curtis, J.E, Baer, D.E and Grabb, E.G, 'Nation of joiners: explaining voluntary association membership in democratic societies', *American Sociological Review,* 66, 2001, 783.

[17] Halsey, A.H, 'Higher education' in Halsey, ed., *British Social Trends since 1900: A Guide to the Changing Social Structure of Britain,* 271.

[18] Interview with Liz Lewis, member of the Leicester Faction of the National Women's Register, July 2007.

[19] Clapson, M, *Invincible Green Suburbs, Brave New Towns: Social Change and Urban Dispersal in Post War England* (Manchester, 1998), 156.

community…oh yes. Our lives, our friends, all our friends more or less have been met through the Society.'[20] Such findings were important to the analysis of middle-class interaction, as the average member of the Society resided approximately 3.5 miles from the town centre, with residential locations dispersed throughout the county. This type of social engagement and sense of community through participation was highlighted in both locations. These results not only emphasised connections between fringe locations and the urban core but also the durability of middle-class sociability.

The engagement of the 'suburbans' in Leicester and Loughborough therefore supports interpretations that, for the middle classes, the concept of community was increasingly connected to a commonality of interest amongst a group of people.[21] Far from being detached, the 'suburbans' adapted to twentieth century social changes. As the advancements of motor cars and rapid suburban expansion allowed for increasing spatial separation from the urban core, the middle-classes created alternative forms of community that revolved around associational participation, no longer dependant upon the geographical ties of place. Furthermore, such results also supported McKibbin's argument that suburbia created a society that tended to conceal sociability.[22] Whilst previous generations had provided more public displays of social cohesion, by the post-war era associational communities tended to interact in the comfort of a suburban home, with organisations meeting in a more private domain.[23] This however, did not justify depictions of detachment and disinterest. Instead, the 'suburbans' showed an ability to adapt with the changes of post-war society, embracing the popularity of home based leisure entertainment and incorporating such activities into the associational calendar.

These conclusions were supported by the case study example of Oadby in Chapter Seven. Through the analysis of a specific suburban location in Leicester, connections between suburbia and the urban core became even more assured, with a high percentage of associational participants residing in the suburb, providing links between contemporary associational communities and the suburban fringe. Equally important to the findings of the study was the confirmation of the co-existence of neighbourliness and associational participation in a specific suburban location. According to Thompson, after the Second

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[20] Interview with Cedric Granger, member of the Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society, October 2006.

[21] For an example see Barnett and Crowther, 'Community identity in the twenty-first century', 429.

[22] McKibbin, R, *Classes and Cultures. England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 1998), 85.

[23] Gunn, S and Bell, R, *Middle Classes, their Rise and Sprawl* (London, 1996), 67.

World War state programmes of regeneration, alongside improvements in technology and transportation, fuelled suburban development, creating distinct dormitory towns and urbanised villages that lacked social cohesion.[24] Yet an examination of Oadby Community Association during the years 1960 to 1968 emphasised a clear sense of neighbourliness between Oadby residents, encouraging a community identity through associational engagement. In 1962 the Association wrote: 'The sense of community, of living together, is much stronger in smaller communities…'[25] Clearly the organisation provided community cohesion in a smaller urban setting, promoting social interaction through associational participation.

Ultimately the case study of Oadby highlighted the engagement of the middle-classes in local communities on two different levels; not only did local voluntary organisations draw a significant percentage of their membership from the suburb, but the locality itself encouraged engagement and a sense of community for inhabitants. In this respect Oadby contested the stereotypical depiction of a dormant suburb, devoid of interest and community interaction. Instead, middle-class residents were aware of the need for cohesion, encouraging cooperative interaction through associational activity. Social engagement was not always played out publicly but it did not justify the suburban definition of isolation and detachment that has stereotyped the middle-class lifestyle. Instead the 'suburbans' continued to encourage cooperative interaction whether it was at the urban periphery or through the associational sphere. As technical innovation encouraged the spread of suburbanisation, associational communities allowed the 'suburbans' to remain 'semi-detached', physically relocating further into the countryside whilst socially and culturally engaging with one another through associational participation.

Civic Engagement

Geographical connections between suburbia and voluntary organisations in Leicester and Loughborough provided an initial insight into middle-class participation and community interaction. However, the longevity and diversity of the contemporary associational sphere, and its role in the maintenance of civil society, were demonstrated more clearly in the analysis of civic engagement in both locations. Each association under examination, without

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[24]   Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia*, 2.

[25]   ROLLR, DE 6335/293, Oadby Urban District Council Minutes, February 1962.

exception, engaged with the urban core and contributed to civil society, whether through social interaction, philanthropic aid, cultural influence or direct municipal control. The many elements of civic engagement demonstrated by voluntary organisations exemplified the depth and quality of contemporary associational activity and an unquestionable commitment to the public sphere in both Leicester and Loughborough. Once again neither town nor city showed any greater inclination than the other. Engagement directly influenced the stock of social and civic capital in both locations, shaping the contemporary urban landscape and maintaining civil society in numerous ways.

The cultural contributions of the associational sphere, and thus the 'suburbans', during the period 1950 to 2005 both emphasised the longevity of associational practices and the ability of the middle classes to adapt to the needs of the modern urban environment. The popularity of ritualised tradition, examined in Chapter Three, provided a specific example of voluntary societies engaging in the creation of a set of social relationships that were intended to provide stability and legitimacy.[26] During the nineteenth century the associational sphere often used symbolic practices, specifically pageantry, to construct public images that displayed social distinction, authority and the assertion of power. As Gunn argued, the relationship between the middle-class and the urban place was openly and powerfully exerted on occasions of particular civic pride. By participating in parades, social groups and institutions shared a collective identity that was visible to the urban public, solidifying their claim to a place within the social fabric of the town.[27] Between 1950 and 2005 civic celebrations were also used by the middle-classes to present a hierarchical image of local organisations to the public. In particular anniversary celebrations contributed to the cultural heritage of the town and city, whilst also promoting the identity of the organisation, asserting a relationship with the urban environment that emphasised their social significance. Connections with civic institutions, in particular local museums and their respective universities, also upheld associational traditions by developing networks that encouraged collaborative action. Despite the rapid changes of the twentieth century, middle-class culture continued to underpin urban identities, highlighting the commitment of associations, and thus their suburban membership, to civil society.

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[26] Morris, R.J, 'Voluntary societies and British urban elites 1780-1850: an analysis', *Historical Journal*, 26, 1983, 95, 115.

[27] See Gunn, S, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual, Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000).

However, the progression of associational activity in the context of social change was also evident during the period 1950 to 2005. The growing importance of financial aid as a form of civic engagement highlighted the ways in which local organisations, such as the Loughborough InnerWheel Club and the Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee, developed their philanthropic contributions to suit the needs of the twentieth century town and city, particularly in the context of the introduction of the Welfare State. The analysis of charitable actions recorded in clubs and societies in both locations emphasised the ways in which middle-class engagement continued to create bonds of trust that provided a measure of stability in civil society. Conservation and preservation also became an important aspect of contemporary civic engagement, with the Loughborough Civic Trust and Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society exemplifying how the dedication of its members impacted on the cultural heritage of the urban core.

Such findings clearly contradicted the argument that citizens withdrew from municipal culture during the twentieth century, despite the argument that shopping centres and cinemas replaced the importance of civic halls, gardens and theatres.[28] The engagement of the middles-classes in urban life, through the medium of associational activity, challenged academic assumptions that class based forms of social and political consciousness gave way to values of individualism and the search for social and personal satisfaction.[29] The modernisation of Britain did not prevent the middle classes from engaging in the urban environment; instead they evolved and adapted. Despite increasing residential mobility, middle-class organisations continued to thrive. Participants remained culturally connected to twentieth century society, vigorously committed to associational activity and the maintenance of civil society.

The changing nature of British society however, not only affected social and cultural facets of urban life but also modern municipal leadership. Deferential attitudes that had been so significant to the success of nineteenth century urban leadership were in decline, rejected by the new leaders of contemporary Britain. Seeking to return power to central government, authorities hoped to replace the Victorian, middle-class ethos of charity,

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[28]   McGuigan, J, 'Cultural change' in Hollowell, ed., *Britain since 1945,* 2.

[29]   Ibid.

dependency and moralism with a new ethic of social citizenship.[30] As local and state government took a more assertive role in urban governance, did the middle-classes completely relinquish control of the urban centres they had effectively created? The experience of the middle-classes in Leicester and Loughborough during the years 1950 to 2005 suggests that such notions are inaccurate. Through an analysis of the associational sphere and urban governance in Chapter Five, a continued sense of middle-class, municipal influence was revealed, expressed in the networks of interaction with local government that were created through voluntary activity. In this respect the middle classes remained civically engaged. Whilst their roles in urban governance may not have been as prolific as in previous generation, their civic influence remained apparent. The 'suburbans' continued to develop important municipal networks that influenced the urban landscape and helped to shape contemporary civic policy.

Council Affiliated Organisations in particular, heavily supported by a suburban membership, emphasised the types of networks of communication created between local organisations and the state. Such relationships were shown to be mutually beneficial; organisations found validity in their capacity as municipal advisors, whilst local government used the knowledge and expertise of local residents to engage citizens in the decision making process. Examples were provided of engagement in areas ranging from positive health care initiatives,[31] racial review panels,[32] and the provision of care for the elderly.[33] In addition relationships were also cultivated on local committees, whether through the election of local councillors on to the executive committee of voluntary organisations, or the cooperation of voluntary organisations on municipal committees. Ultimately such engagement connected the citizen to the state, creating networks of communication that

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[30]   Harris, J, 'Contract and citizenship', in Marquand, D and Seldon, A, eds., *The Ideas that Shaped Post War Britain* (London, 1998), 122.

[31]   The example was taken from the *Loughborough Echo* (*LE*), 24th October 1986 and referred to the collaborative work of Charnwood Community Council and the local council with regards the provision of health care.

[32]   In an interview with Gerry Jacobs, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Charnwood (previously Charnwood Community Council) Mr Jacobs referred to the role of the organisation on local racial review committees. Interviewed May 2007.

[33]   The example refers to the period 1957-58 when the Leicestershire Rural Community Council provided a comprehensive survey of the work undertaken by old people's welfare organisations in the city and county. The survey examined amenities and services available to old people, distributing their findings to the municipality and numerous local clubs and associations in the county. Taken from the private collection of annual reports of the Leicestershire Rural Community Council, 1957-58.

disseminated information and experience between organisations and local government. In this respect local organisations effectively created a 'mid level within society,'[34] a fundamental aspect of civil society.[35]

Council Affiliated Organisations provided particularly interesting examples of voluntary activity, showing an ability to think beyond their own agendas in order to engage in civil society.[36] Organisations often worked as 'enabling bodies', encouraging associational activity and promoting community cohesion.[37] Furthermore, they worked collaboratively on various types of projects, contradicting Harris' notion of the 'single issue' society of the twentieth century.[38] Such organisations played an important role in local communities, publicly engaging with the municipality and a wide range of local associations. They enabled the provision of tripartite relationships between public, private and voluntary bodies, overall ensuring community interest in the sphere of urban governance.[39]

The relationships between voluntary organisations themselves provided a further dimension to the analysis of middle-class participation and urban governance. Often local associations were at their most powerful when united in a common endeavour. In many ways inter-associational activity helped develop networks of collaborative action that provided a significant counter weight to the state. Academics have argued that civil society should supply an alternative to excessive state power, balancing the authority of government.[40] Thus networks of collaboration consolidated the power base of voluntary activity, whether attempting to tackle local government on issues such as the foundation of a

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[34] The quote refers to Durkheim's conception of civil society and the role to be played by voluntary organisations. The reference is taken from Hall, J and Trentman, F, eds., *Civil Society. A Reader in History, Theory and Global Politics* (Basingstoke, 2005).

[35] See Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty*; Putnam, *Bowling Alone. The Collapse and Revival of American Community*; Toqueville, A, *Democracy in America* (London, 1835-40).

[36] Colls and Rodger have raised concerns regarding the ability of contemporary organisations to engage in society beyond their own immediate interests. See Colls, R and Rodger, R, 'Civil society and British cities' in Colls, R and Rodger, R, eds., *Cities of Ideas. Civil Society and Urban Governance in Britain* (Aldershot, 2004), 19.

[37] Interview with Gerry Jacobs, Chief Executive of Voluntary Action Charnwood (previously Charnwood Community Council), May 2007.

[38] Harris, J, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain, 1945-2001' in Burke, K, ed., *The British Isles since 1945* (Oxford, 2003), 100.

[39] Doyle, B, 'The changing functions of urban government: councillors, officials and pressure groups', in Daunton, ed., *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume III*, 307.

[40] See Kumar, 'Civil society: an inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term', 229.

local museum,[41] or working together on cultural projects like the local historical surveys exemplified in Chapter Five.[42] Ultimately voluntary organisations of the twentieth century recognised the importance of collaborative action and the strength to be found in the unification of ideas and effort.

Thus, a steady commitment to urban governance remained an important part of middle-class engagement in urban life post 1950. Despite a move towards a more state controlled society and a central position adopted by the Labour movement as the twentieth century progressed, the middle-classes were still able to influence urban policy, developing intricate networks of communication that were at their most powerful through the dissemination of knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, as the ideology of individualism over collectivism emerged under the political administrations of both Thatcher and Blair during the 1970s and 1990s respectively,[43] middle-class associational activity remained committed to the public sphere. In their role as 'enabler', local organisations stimulated engagement that encouraged community interaction, whilst their position as mediator between the citizen and the state solidified their importance in the maintenance of civil society. Overall, the various aspects of civic engagement exemplified in the activities of voluntary organisations in Leicester and Loughborough emphasised the continued commitment of the middle-classes to the associational sphere. Contradicting notions of withdrawal, the thesis revealed an engaged middle class in both locations. At times their positions were less visible than in previous decades, yet their continued influence was undeniable. Far from detaching themselves socially and culturally, the 'suburbans' of Leicester and Loughborough actively contributed to the stock of social and civic capital, continuing to shape the urban landscape as the twentieth century progressed.

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[41] Referring to the interaction between Loughborough Civic Trust and Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society over the foundation of Charnwood Museum. It was suggested by the Civic Trust that 'it would require a long period of pressure on the council before results could be expected.' Taken from private collection of minute books, Loughborough Civic Trust, 1st April 1966.

[42] The local history surveys involved the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society and the Leicestershire Literary Philosophical Survey in conjunction with the City Council. Taken from Leicester City Council Minutes, 27th January 1953.

[43] Brooke, S, 'Class and gender' in Carnevali and Strange, eds., *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, 47.

The Changing Nature of Associational Participation

Whilst middle-class engagement in civil society continued throughout the period under review, the changing nature of the post-war period itself undoubtedly influenced citizen participation and levels of engagement. When considering Britain since 1950, it is clear that the cultural changes of the period produced both positive and negative effects with regards to voluntary activity and civic engagement. From a positive perspective the shifting nature of gender relations, appeared to result in a more balanced and inclusive associational sphere. In contrast, social and cultural changes produced a less communicative form of associational activity that typified Harris' 'single issue' terminology. Furthermore, the expanding demographic profile of the country often resulted in a separation of civic engagement, highlighting a lack of social integration in modern Britain. Therefore, whilst the middle-classes showed a deep rooted commitment to civil society between the years 1950 to 2005, analysis of citizen engagement also revealed the fragility of contemporary civil society and the need for greater social cohesion.

In terms of gender relations, the analysis of the changing role and influence of women during the period 1950 to 2005 encapsulated the extent to which the modern associational world was no longer dominated by the white, middle-class male. One of the first indicators of change related to the number of mixed gender organisations in both Leicester and Loughborough by 2005. In total only 1.4 percent of male only organisations in Leicester were recorded and for female only associations this figure was 6.8 percent. In contrast 80.9 percent of local clubs and societies were mixed gender organisations. Such findings supported Stacey's second analysis of voluntary organisation in Banbury, when she concluded that mixed gender organisations had become a predominant force in voluntary activity by 1975. Furthermore, her examination also alluded to a non-gendered associational sphere in Banbury by the 1970s, with an increasing number of women voted on to executive committees.[44] These findings were supported by the analysis of Loughborough and Leicester organisations, with an increasing number of women taking on administrative roles by the 1960s, contrasting with previous, stereotypical appointments that often included the provision of refreshments or the organisation of social events. The higher positions of office, however, continued to elude the majority of female subscribers, suggesting that despite the

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[44] Stacey, M, Batstone, E and Bell, C, *Power, Persistence and Change. A Social Study of Banbury* (London, 1975), 50.

advancement of women during this period, certain barriers to participation still remained apparent.

Additionally, the participations rates of married women after 1950 provided particularly interesting results. Defined by their domestic roles in the home and confined within the boundaries of the separate sphere ideology, middle-class women led a limited role in terms of public engagement prior to the twentieth century.[45] By the post-war era, however, a substantial number of women contributed to the total membership numbers of local organisations in both Leicester and Loughborough. Whilst these figures remained steady, the number of married women participating in associational life changed dramatically. In Chapter Six quantitative data relating to the Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society revealed that the number of married women had increased by 57.9 percent between the years 1947 to 1990.

Evidently the removal of gendered barriers, for example, broadening career opportunities and a modern ethos that no longer required women to give up their careers once married, allowed the contemporary woman to combine her duties as wife and mother with a more publicly engaged role.[46] This role was often expressed through associational activity, a leisure pursuit that provided married women with a public voice and the opportunity to engage directly in civil society. Such findings suggest the end of the associational sphere as a male dominated arena, with separate spheres of engagement no longer justifiable in terms of gender relations. Historians such as Gunn and Bell have defined voluntary organisations of the twentieth century as 'formal associations, to which men and women belonged,'[47] and this was clearly the case in Leicester and Loughborough.

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[45] For a general overview of the history of middle-class women and the concept of 'separate spheres' see Davidoff, L and Hall, C, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London, 2002); Davidoff, L and Hall, C 'The architecture of public life and private life: English middle-class society 1780-1850' in Fraser, D and Sutcliffe, A, eds., *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983) 327-48; Davidoff, L 'Mastered for life: servant and wife in Victorian and Edwardian England', *Journal of Social History*, 8, 1974, 404-28; Kerber, L.K, 'Separate spheres, female worlds, woman's place: the rhetoric of women's history', *Journal of American History,* 75, 1988, 9-39; Vickery, A, 'Golden age to separate spheres? A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history', *The Historical Journal*, 36, 1993, 383-414.

[46] For a review into the changing role of women during the twentieth century see in Zweiniger-Bargielowska, I, ed., *Women in Twentieth Century Britain* (Essex, 2001) which provides an excellent collection of essays. For additional references see Jones, H, *Women in British Public Life, 1914 -1950* (London, 2000) and Lewis, J, *Women in Britain since 1945: Women, Family, work and the State in Post-War Years* (Oxford, 1992).

[47] Gunn and Bell, *Middle Classes. Their Rise and Sprawl,* 68. References can also be found in McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures.*

Women were no longer confined to the sphere of domesticity,[48] but instead worked collaboratively with their male counterparts in local voluntary organisations. Whilst the highest committee positions continued to elude them as the century drew to a close, their place in the construction and maintenance of an active civil society was assured. In terms of gender, urban space was no longer demarcated. Middle-class, suburban women appeared to enjoy a more prolific public role, engaging in various aspects of associational activity that continued to influence the social and cultural heritage of local towns and cities.

As Chapter Six revealed, however, separation was apparent in relation to ethnicity. The contemporary associational sphere could no longer be described as the world of the middle-class male, yet barriers to entry appeared to exist with regards to racial integration. Whilst all 30 organisations examined within the study were keen to embrace new members and encourage the participation of ethnic minority groups, cultural and religious distinctions existed, separating organisations and preventing membership. According to the Leicester Racial Equality Council such distinctions included a lack of cultural understanding and financial differentiation that tended to lead minority groups to engage within their own communities.[49] Perhaps such findings are unsurprising. As the experience of Jewish and Irish communities have shown in the past, minority groups are more inclined to settle in close knit urban communities, embracing their own cultural heritage and support networks.[50] Important traditions and practices could be upheld through the foundation of their own organisations, a conclusion supported by the analysis of ethnic minority groups in Leicester and Loughborough. In Chapter Six, Gerry Jacobs of the Charnwood Community Council suggested that the local community centre in Loughborough was rarely used by minority groups due to the foundation of centres more in line with their own cultural

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[48]   Jones, *Women in British Public Life, 1914 -1950*, 229.

[49]   Interview with member of the LREC, October 2007. Whilst discussing the participation of ethnic minority groups in traditional, white middle-class organisations, the interviewee commented that '…there is the possibility that people will think if they do go to that group the sort of things that group will discuss are not in line with what they actually experience in terms of life.'

[50]   Farrar, M, draws upon the residential distribution of the Jewish community in Leeds in his article 'The zone of the other: imposing and resisting alien identities in Chapeltown, Leeds during the twentieth century' in Gunn, S and Morris, R.J, eds., *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850* (London, 2001), 124. In addition Peach *et al* argue that 'clustering serves not only as a defensive function against racial harassment, but also provides a market for community services...ethnic food stores and other specialist retailers. It also allows the recreation of dense traditional social networks with all the implications this has for quality of life and transmission of culture.' See Peach, C, Robinson, V, Maxted, J and Chance, J, 'Immigration and ethnicity' in Halsey, ed., *British Social Trends since 1900*, 592.

backgrounds. In the small town of Loughborough alone these included a Shree Ram Krishna centre, a Hindu community centre, a Sikh community centre, a Bangladeshi social association, a Polish club and an Italian society. Mr Jacobs suggested that participants 'tend to congregate where they feel safest, where they can get the most for themselves.'[51]

Thus, whilst ethnic minority communities in both locations did not engage with the stereotypical white, middle-class associations of the town and city, they did construct their own social and cultural networks. Separation exemplifies the fragility of contemporary civil society, in particular the lack of communication that often existed between voluntary organisations. In Leicester, founding member of the Leicestershire Asian Business Association, Jaffar Kapsee, revealed that the Association united multiple faiths, nationalities, caste and social groups in the city under the neutral motive of business.[52] This however, did not include the white community. Significantly, a move to unite the Chamber of Commerce and Leicestershire Asian Business Association during the 1990s broke down when 'things weren't working well.'[53] In this respect the analysis of associational interaction reveals the deep rooted problems facing urban environments with regards to racial integration.

In general, minority groups were civically engaged with local clubs and societies but often only those specific to their ethnic background. In towns and cities like Leicester and Loughborough the problem of racial integration is emphasised by the existence of separate spheres of engagement. Previously within this chapter Council Affiliated Organisations were highlighted as a progressive group of organisations with the ability to think beyond their own agendas, therefore contradicting Harris' terminology of the 'single issue' association of the twentieth century.[54] However, the inability of local organisations to encourage interaction between different racial groups exemplifies a lack of communication that was inherent in many of the associations considered within the study. A wide range of inter-associational activity and symbiosis was exemplified in Chapter Five, yet this rarely deviated beyond organisations that promoted the same interests. As Stacey concluded in her study of Banbury in 1975, 'any organised group may get involved in politics, however

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[51] Interview with Jaffar Kapasee, Director and founding member of Leicester Asian Business Association, June 2007.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Harris, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain', 100.

reluctantly, when their chosen interests are threatened.'[55] Whilst organisations like the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society and the Loughborough Civic Trust actively engaged with the local government on the issue of conservation, their participation revolved around their own specific interests. In this respect the 'single issue' society was common place, refusing to engage on issues that were not directly related to the specific agenda of the organisation.[56] Whilst Council Affiliated Organisations, like the Leicester Racial Equality Council and the Charnwood Racial Equality Council, worked to improve racial assimilation in order to encourage community cohesion, organisations like the Chamber of Commerce and Leicester Asian Business Association were unable to work collaboratively even under the neutral motive of business. In many ways these findings confirm concerns over the fragility of twentieth-century civil society. In previous eras clubs and societies often combined associational activity with philanthropic roles or a wider interest in issues connected with the urban core. In the associational spheres of Leicester and Loughborough this was not the case. The 'single issue' society of the twentieth century supported Colls and Rodger's anxieties that whilst modern Britain may contain a wealth of associational activity, a lack of communication and interaction beyond their own immediate agendas remains one of the biggest threats to contemporary civil society.[57]

As a final point however, it is worth noting that civic engagement of any kind is ultimately beneficial to the urban place as it promotes a sense of belonging and responsibility. As Fukyama suggests, 'if a group's social capital produces positive externalities, the radius of trust can be larger than the group itself.'[58] Therefore, whilst the contemporary urban environment would clearly benefit from the amalgamation of separate areas of voluntary activity in order to create a more cohesive civil society, for the time being the depth and quality of associational activity does much to produce 'positive externalities'. As this study has shown, associational communities create bonds of trust that stimulate social interaction, developing strong networks of cooperative action that enrich the lives of urban inhabitants by establishing important models of behaviour.[59]

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[55] Stacey, Batstone and Bell, *Power, Persistence and Change*, 68.

[56] Harris, 'Tradition and transformation: society and civil society in Britain', 100.

[57] Colls and Rodger, 'Civil society and British Cities' in Colls and Rodger, ed., *Cities of Ideas*, 19.

[58] Fukyama, F, 'Social capital, civil society and development', *Third World Quarterly*, 22, 2001, 8.

[59] Reference to models of behaviour is taken from Freeden, M, 'Civil society and the good citizen: competing conceptions of citizenship in twentieth century Britain' in Harris, ed., *Civil Society in British History. Ideas, Identities, Institutions*, 275-92.

The thesis 'Semi-detached Britain? Social networks in the suburban fringe of Leicester and Loughborough, 1950 to 2005' has therefore emphasised the need for a revision of the stereotypical account of middle-class, suburban withdrawal in Britain. Despite generalised depictions of disinterest and disengagement, the study of Leicester and Loughborough has highlighted an active associational sphere in both locations, contributing significantly to civil society during the period under review. Central to the success of associational activity were the middle classes, who maintained their affiliation with a contemporary 'subscriber democracy.'[60] Unified under the umbrella of associational participation, the 'suburbans' of the twentieth century enhanced the stock of social capital in both town and city in areas ranging from municipal control to cultural engagement. The middle classes continued to contribute to the social and cultural fabric of the urban landscape, living a 'semi-detached' lifestyle that saw them geographically removed from the urban core but maintaining important municipal relationships. Through an array of social and cultural connections, they created networks of power and influence, transferring knowledge and expertise whilst cultivating a role as mediator between the citizen and the state. By creating important associational communities that challenged the traditional conception of community, associational activity provided the ideal medium for the middle classes to remain affiliated to the urban centre whilst simultaneously enjoying the semi-rural locations that geographically separated them from the pressures of city life.

Much like the revision of suburbanisation in America,[61] the experience of the 'suburbans' in Leicester and Loughborough challenges stereotypical portrayals of suburban life in the twentieth century. Yet there is much scope for further analysis. In order to truly understand the suburban experience in Britain and the connections between residents and the urban core, more regional analysis is required. Whilst the findings of this study have emphasised important connections between suburbia, the middle-classes and the process of civil society, wider research would provide a more coherent picture of suburban life post 1950. As Smith argues in his research of the middle-classes during the twentieth century 'it is necessary that there should be much more detailed inter-actional study on a range of towns

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[60]   Morris, R.J, 'Clubs, societies and associations' in Thompson, F.M.L, ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750-1950, Volume III* (Cambridge, 1990), 412.

[61]   See the special edition of the *Journal of Urban History,* 27, 2001, 259-377. Essays include Harris, R, and Lewis, R, 'The geography of North American cities and suburbs 1900-1950: a new synthesis', 262-92; Gardner, 'The slow wave. The changing residential status of cities and suburbs in the United States', 293-312; Corbin Sies, 'North American suburbs 1880-1950, cultural and social reconciliations,' 313-46.

and cities which represent as wide a diversity of urban categories as possible.'[62] In this respect a thorough revision of suburban locations throughout the country would allow the contemporary historian to determine the extent of middle-class influence on the physical, spatial and cultural landscape of modern Britain as the twenty-first century begins.

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[62]   Smith, 'Urban elites c.1830-1930 and urban history', 275.

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Theses

Begley, S, 'Voluntary associations and the civic ideal in Leicester, 1870-1939', unpublished Leicester PhD 2009.

Appendix

Organisations Analysed

Leicester Amateur Operatic Society

Leicester Asian Business Association

Leicester Lawn Tennis Club

Leicester faction of the National Women's Register

Leicester Philatelic Society

Leicester Photographic Society

Leicester Racial Equality Council

Leicester Society of Artists

Leicester Women's Luncheon Committee

Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society

Leicestershire Literary and Philosophical Society

Leicestershire Motor Car Club

Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group

Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council

Leicestershire/Bradgate Twinning Association

Oadby Community Association

St Martin's Parish Council Social Committee

Charnwood Council for Voluntary Service (previously Charnwood Community Council)

Charnwood Racial Equality Council

Friends of Charnwood Museum

Loughborough Amateur Operatic Society

Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society

Loughborough Boat Club

Loughborough Civic Trust

Loughborough Emmanuel Women's Guild

Loughborough InnerWheel Club

Loughborough branch of the Knights of St. Columba

Loughborough Ladies Bowls Club

Loughborough Naturalists Club

Loughborough Probus Club

This is to certify that the thesis 'Semi-Detached Britain? Social networks in the suburban fringe of Leicester and Loughborough, 1950-2005' has been researched and written in its entirety by Laura Balderstone. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.