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History of UK Devolution and Local Governance

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Abstract

The United Kingdom, which is a constitutional monarchy governed by parliamentary democracy, has a unitary structure, but places great emphasis on regional governance and decentralisation. Central government holds the powers of legislative, executive and judicial powers; transfers some of its executive powers to local government units. In the post-1980 period, transformations in the administrative field were instigated with the reform efforts towards local governments. The introduction of elected mayors, inspired by the European and American experience, into the English local political landscape has brought an additional dimension to political representation and new electoral opportunities for the voters to make judgements on their local political leaders. The purpose of this study is to reveal the ongoing development of local authorities in England to the present day, through the lens of the historical perspective. In this context, this paper discusses the emergence of local governments in the development process, how the structural situation was handled and where it is located and dealt with the variability and examined in the academic literature.

Key Words: United Kingdom, England, Local Governments, Mayoral Government, Local leadership

Introduction

In England, which is accepted as the cradle of local governments, local governments have a structure whose roots go deep into history. The UK-made structure is run by the same Parliament and national government and has a strong central structure due to the doctrine of Parliament's rule. Central government holds the powers of legislative, executive and judicial powers; it transfers only a part of its executive powers to local government units. Executing in England it consists of the Royal, Special Council, Council of Ministers, Prime Minister, Cabinet and Public administration units. Although there is no written "Constitution", the constitutional legal system is valid. The election system, on the other hand, has been established on a simple majority basis and allows regional representation. Local governments are a form of organisation in which the people are directly represented. For local services, there are specialised units in a specific area at the regional level and many special-purpose management units.

Historical Development of Local Governments

Two main struggles dominate even the briefest histories of UK local government. The first is that of localities seeking freedom from the centre to raise their own revenues to govern themselves. The second is that of towns, seeing their interest as being significantly different from those of more rural surrounding areas, and again seeking freedom to govern themselves in their own preferred ways.

Historically, the country was composed of counties, parishes, boroughs, and towns. Local councils expanded as industrialisation and population pressures forced the creation of

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urban and rural administrations.² In England, the first law to appoint local governments was made in 1601. In this law made by Queen Elizabeth I, there were articles regarding the duties and powers of local governments in the fight against poverty.³ Rapid industrialisation, urbanisation and population growth in the 18th century led to changes in the economic and social structure, and local governments assumed more responsibility in solving the emerging problems. They ensured that basic services such as healthcare, workhouses, housing, waste management and education services were performed within the public health protection functions.⁴ The state provided the production and distribution of services with its institutions, personnel and other opportunities in England during this period. Central government had administrative and courts' judicial controls over local governments. In this respect, the autonomy of local governments was limited to setting rules and doing business in the area reserved for them.⁵

The structure of the UK local government system was only possible in the 19th century as it began to take on its current form as county, non-county borough, and parish administrations. The provinces, as an administrative unit, were the units carried out by "sheriffs" whose management went back far into history and were appointed by the king. This responsibility passed to the magistrates over time. Municipalities were cities whose status was specified by the king with an edict. The cities were run by a group called the "aldermen" with the mayor chosen by a limited group. Villages were small units originally gathered around the church and administered by the church minister.⁶ These local administrations became untenable from the 18th century onwards. With the Industrial Revolution, the structure of cities changed, and the existing administrative systems were insufficient in the face of the rapid migration from the countryside and villages to cities. There was a need for new structures given the emerging problems in health, education, housing, transportation, infrastructure and the environment. The central government aimed to solve existing problems with new organisations and laws. They attempted to answer these needs through many legislative amendments. The most significant laws of structural evolution in local governments in the United Kingdom can be listed as follows:⁷

1835 Municipal Corporations Act - An initial 178 directly-elected municipal boroughs in England and Wales replaced self-electing and frequently corrupt medieval corporations. In Scotland, the 1833 Burgh Reform Act had introduced similar reforms. 1888 Local Government Act - Established 62 elected county councils and 61 all-purpose county borough councils in England and Wales. This was followed by the Local Government (Scotland) Act

² David Wilson and C. Chris Game, *Local Government in the United Kingdom*, Fifth Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 53.

³ Maurice Bruce, *The Rise of the Welfare State: English Social Policy, 1601-1971*, London: Cox- Wyman, 1973, p. 5.

⁴ Graeme Betts, *Local Government and Inequalities in Health*; Aldershot: Avebury, 1993, p. 38.

⁵ Anthony Harold Birch, *The British System of Government*, 1. Edition, London: Routledge, 1998, p. 6.

⁶ *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 4, p. 638. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i311087>

⁷ Wilson and Game, p. 57.



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1889.1894 Local Government Act - Established within county council areas a network of 1,270 urban and rural district and non-county borough councils. Town Councils (Scotland) Act 1900 established equivalent Scottish structure.1899 London Government Act - 28 Metropolitan borough councils complete the modern structure of local government.1929 Local Government and Local Government (Scotland) Acts - Abolished Boards of Poor Law Guardians and transferred their responsibilities to local authorities.1963 London Government Act – Replaced the London County Council (LCC), establishing in 1965 London’s two-tier Greater London Council (GLC) of 33 boroughs, plus Inner London Education Authority (ILEA).1972 Local Government Act – Abolished county boroughs and established from 1974, a two-tier structure in England and Wales: 47 counties incorporating 33 non—metropolitan districts, plus, in 6 metropolitan areas, 6 counties and 36 districts. 1972 Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act – Replaced 73 local authorities with 26 single-tier district councils, elected by proportional representation. 1973 Local Government (Scotland) Act – Established, from May 1975, a largely two-tier structure: 9 regional and 53 district councils, plus three unitary island councils, to replace over 400 authorities that had existed since 1929.1985 Local Government Act – Abolished the GLC and the 6 English metropolitan county councils. The LLEA was abolished in April 1990. 1994 Local Government (Scotland) and (Wales) Acts - From 1996, replaced Scottish and Welsh two-tier systems with, 32 and 22 unitary councils respectively. In parallel, 46 new English unitary councils were created by Statutory Orders, in place of five county and 58 district councils. 1999 Greater London Authority Act and Local Government Act 2000 - Created the UK’s first directly-elected executive mayor and a 25 member Assembly, both first elected in May 2000.

2009 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act - Created a further 9 English unitary councils, in place of seven county and 37 district councils.2010–Present - The Coalition Government’s Localism Act, introduced in 2010, aimed to give councils more freedom from Westminster control. The aim of the Localism Act 2011 is to ‘reverse years of creeping state control’ and shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils - allowing local people the freedom to run their lives and neighbourhoods in their own way. The Act was a major piece of legislation affecting a wide range of existing housing, planning and local government legislation. This was followed by the adoption of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, Care Act 2014, Infrastructure Act 2015, Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016. After 2015, the Cameron government designed more robust governance structures over major urban centres. As of 2020, ten combined authorities exist, including Greater Manchester and West Midlands. The Act abolished the nine regional government offices and regional development agencies which had been in place in England. It favoured the creation of local enterprise partnerships, which placed communities and businesses at the centre of decision-making, and directly elected



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mayors, which would bring "direct accountability" and "increase the confidence of central government to give powers away".⁸

Structure of Local Governments in the UK

In the UK, local governments are organisations that operate according to the powers and duties assigned to them by Parliament and are managed by elected local bodies in matters related to the residents of a particular residential area, a specific region or district. They are created entirely by Parliament and have the power to change and eliminate parliamentary borders. Each ministry has organised its service area at regional or sub-levels. The most important feature is that they have the right to exercise a certain level of jurisdiction. The current structure of local governments was largely created by the Local Governments Act of 1972, enacted in April 1974, and the arrangements made in 1986. A three-class system was created by reducing the number of existing local government units. According to this classification, the first tier is the county, metropolitan and non-metropolitan; the second tier is the district; and the third tier is the parish. The Greater London Council was also regulated.⁹

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each have a unitary, single-tier system of devolved government, including nominated First Ministers and departmental ministers for the region. England has a mixed system of either single-tier local government in the form of unitary authorities, London boroughs and metropolitan district councils; or two-tier local government with county councils as the upper tier and district or borough councils as the lower tier. In England, Wales and Scotland there are also smaller units of local representation, known as parishes in England and community councils in Wales and Scotland. However, these are not uniform and do not cover the whole population.

In the 1980s, local and regional governments were transformed and reorganised in England, as in all European countries. Within the framework of the Neo-Liberal policies implemented, the Thatcher government in Britain declared local governments inefficient, and legislated the privatisation or centralisation of its powers and duties. The intervention of the central government and the increasing tendencies towards centralisation resulted in the narrowing of local governments and areas of activity.¹⁰ After these years; the state's role in providing services transitioned from the production of services to becoming the primary buyer of services. In the financing method, the state delegated some of its powers directly to the users.¹¹

⁸ *Communities and Local Government Committee, Localism: Third Report of Session, 2010-12, Volume I: Report, together with formal minutes, oral and written evidence, House of Commons (9 May 2011), London: The Stationary Office Limited.*

⁹ Wilson and Game, p. 57.

¹⁰ Frieder Nashold, *New Frontier in Public Sector Management: Trends and Issues in State and Local Government in Europe*; (Translated by Andrew Watt): Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1996, p. 136.

¹¹ Julian Le Grand, "Paying for or Providing Welfare", *The Cost of Welfare*; Ed. Nicholas Deakin- Robert Page; Aldershot: Avebury, 1993, p. 87.



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The 1990s saw globalisation and integration processes rapidly increasing in the world. Important regulations that will lead to changes in the institutional structure of the European Union also coincide with this period. In the conferences organised by the European Parliament in 1992 Maastrich Treaty, 1994 and 1996, the importance of local governments and their contribution to a more democratic European Union was emphasised. By transferring more resources to local and regional administrations, "Subsidiarity", which envisages the increase of their autonomy, will be able to protect the rights and freedoms of people living in local communities.¹² A White Paper was prepared in order to provide a framework for the growing European Union structure and to support the Principle of Displacement at the European Union scale. It consists of the Public Servants White Paper published in 1994 on continuity and change, and the Books Continuity and Change Forward published in 1995.¹³

In the process of the European Convention that started in 2002; With the European Constitution and the Lisbon Treaty, on the one hand the powers of the European Union institutions were strengthened, and local governments were strengthened on the other. By defining the European Union central government, regional and local government levels, it is emphasised that there is no hierarchy between them by limiting central government, union organisations, local administrations, and regional administrations.

The text of the European Union Constitution signed in Rome in 2004 and the regulations in the attached protocols included regulations that would enable more active participation of local and regional governments.¹⁴ In the Lisbon Agreement signed in 2007, new regulations were made in this direction by emphasising the principle of "subsidiarity" with local and regional government.¹⁵

The concept of "local governance" is used to express the authority of local governments shared with private and public sectors and voluntary organisations in the provision of local services. External effects also forced local governments to structural changes in the ongoing process.¹⁶ Within the EU development line, it gives more importance to local and regional governments and makes new regulations.¹⁷ Under the Charter of European Local Governments Autonomy; The expression "public responsibilities will be used generally and preferably by the units closest to the citizen" emphasises the principle of displacement.

¹² Christian Kirchner, "Competence Catalogues and the Principle of Subsidiarity in A European Constitution", *Constitutional Political Economy*, C. 8, S. 1, March, 1997, p. 73.

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/governance/white_paper/index_en.htm

¹⁴ Muhammet Kösecik, "Yerel ve Bölgesel Yönetimler Açısından Avrupa Birliği Bütünleşme Süreci ve Anayasası", *Avrupa Perspektifinde Yerel Yönetimler*, Ed. Hüseyin Özgür ve Bekir Parlak, Alfa Aktüel, Bursa, 2006, s. 31.

¹⁵ www.eu-newgov.org/database/docs/p19ad13_regional_subsidarity_begg.pdf

¹⁶ Michael Goldsmith, "The Europeanisation of Local Government", *Urban Studies*, Edinburgh, Scotland, C. 30, 4/5, 1993, p. 68.

¹⁷ A. G. Toth, "The Principle of Subsidiarity in The Maastricht Treaty", *Common Market Law Review*, Volume: 29, Issue: 6, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Netherlands, 1992, p. 1079.



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Within the framework of the regulatory rules brought by the Union, nine regional administrations were established in 1994. Their main function is to support the government's effective policy development towards the needs of local communities. Eight regional development agencies and regional boards were created in 1998. With the Law on Regional Development Agencies, these agencies are given the task of determining regional strategies for areas such as transportation, waste disposal, housing, culture and tourism. The effectiveness of the private sector has been enhanced through institutional arrangements in contracts, franchises and voluntary services.

Until 1990, local governments were narrow in their duties, and local governments started to share their powers and responsibilities with "Quango" organisations and agencies defined as semi-official community organisations or semi-independent non-governmental organisations organised at local and regional levels.¹⁸ NGOs; As organisations that work independently from the government, they work in cooperation with central government and local governments, and great importance is attached to many organisations and voluntary communities, making a significant contribution to the economy, environment and human health. According to the figures of "UK Civil Society Almanac" (NCVO, 2010); "Civil Society" in the UK generated a total of £ 157 billion pounds in 2008, with 900,000 Organisations and a 1.6 billion workforce. 171,000 Volunteers and Community Groups generated £ 35.5 billion in revenue. Of the 668,000 employees, 68% are women and 63% are working full time.¹⁹

The other part of revenues came from individuals £ 13.1 billion, £ 12.8 billion (36%) came from government sources. Almost half of government funds belong to local governments. More than half of the Volunteer and Community Organisations (VCGs) are small organisations called "micro-organizations" and their annual income is less than £ 10,000. 438 large organisations have 44% of the sector income.²⁰

There are 343 local authorities in England. The structure of government varies between them. They cover: Two-tier areas, where authorities share local government functions. These areas are covered by county councils and district councils. There are 26 county councils, which provide social care and some aspects of transport and education. The counties are subdivided into 192 district councils, which manage neighbourhood services like waste collection. Single-tier areas, where one authority carries out all local government functions. These areas comprise of 32 London boroughs, 36 metropolitan districts (including in areas

¹⁸ Chris Skeltcher, Stuart Weir, Lynne Wilson, *Advance of the Quango State*, LGIU, London, 2000, p. 1.

¹⁹ Jenny Clark, David Kane, Karl Wilding, Jenny Wilton, UK Civil Society Almanac" (NCVO, 2010); "Civil Society" in the UK.,

<http://ncvo-app-wagtail-mediaa721a567-uwkfinin077j.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/ncvo-uk-civil-society-almanac-2010-small.pdf>

²⁰ David Cane, James Allen, *Counting the Cuts, The Impact of Spending Cuts on the UK Voluntary and Community Sector*,

http://www.ncvo.org.uk/images/documents/policy_and_research/funding/counting_the_cuts.pdf



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like Greater Manchester and the West Midlands), and 55 unitary authorities such as Bristol and North East Lincolnshire.²¹

Local Administrative Units

In England today, the number of the main elected local authorities is 354. There are 22 major local governments in Wales and 32 in Scotland.²² The first level and the largest of the local government units is not to express a county, a city, but a settlement; It refers to a large region with many cities. The provinces to take the form of a local administration were provided by the Local Administrations Law of 1888.²³

With the 1972 Act of Parliament, enacted in 1974, their number was reduced to 47 (39 provinces in England and 8 provinces in Wales). With the regulation of 1974, 6 metropolitan cities with special status were established in the main cities. However, with the 1986 regulation, the total number of provinces was again reduced to 47.²⁴ Today, the provinces exist only in non-metropolitan areas. There are regions and municipalities that are second-tier units in metropolitan areas and London. Provincial councils are formed in the provincial local administration, and local services are managed by these councils.

The counties are sub-divided into 192 district councils, which manage neighbourhood services like waste collection. Single-tier areas, where one authority carries out all local government function. These areas comprise of 32 London boroughs, 36 metropolitan districts (including in areas like Greater Manchester and the West Midlands), and 55 unitary authorities such as Bristol and East Lincolnshire.²⁵

Regions (District) are sub-level local government units within provinces that are formed by dividing according to certain measures. Existing municipalities (non-county boroughs), urban districts and rural districts (rural districts) were abolished before the arrangement in 1972 and replaced by regional assemblies.

The powers and duties of the metropolitan provincial councils were distributed to 36 regional councils with the regulation made in 1986. The duties of the regional councils are the close environmental services directly related to the daily life of the people. Regional councils; It is structured as units directly responsible for single-level local services in metropolitan areas and as the second stage of the provincial system in non-metropolitan areas.²⁶

²¹ <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/local-government>

²² Wilson and Game, p. 86.

²³ Ziya Çoker, *Türk Mahalli İdarelerinin Sorunları Açısından İngiliz Mahalli İdareleri*, T.C. İçişleri Bakanlığı Tetkik Kurulu Yayınları: 6, Ankara, 1970, p. 26.

²⁴ M. Ali Yıldırım, "Tarihi Gelişim içinde İngiliz Mahalli İdareleri", *Türk İdare Dergisi*, Yıl: 62, Sayı: 389, Aralık, Ankara, 1990, p. 175.

²⁵ <http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/local-government>

²⁶ Hikmet Kavruk, *Anakent'e Bakış, Türkiye'de Anakent Belediyeciliği ve Kent Hizmetlerinin Yönetimi*, Hizmet-İş Sendikası Yayınları, Ankara, 2002, p. 112.



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Parishes are the smallest administrative unit of the local government in small residential areas within the regions, with more than 200 voters. According to the 1972 regulation, it is compulsory to create a Parish council in places with 200 voters, whereas places with fewer voters are free to form a Parish council if the parish population so resolve. In these places, the people gather in Parish Meetings at least once a year to make decisions, and it consists of all voters. Although the upper limit of a council is not specified, it has at minimum five members and has to meet at least four times a year.²⁷

Greater London Authority

In the early 1960s; In general, all UK local governments showed some inadequacies according to changing conditions. The main ones are; The cumbersome bureaucratic structure caused by the presence of a large number of hierarchical local governments, the strife and resource waste caused by rural and urban administrations, the need for a different structure for each size, the confusion of authority in big city areas, the limits of some large urban local administrations were inadequate and aging. For example, the old London City administration, called the London County Council (LCC), did not include the rural area, and the city borders were insufficient. Considering the size of the metropolitan area, the diversity of its functions and being an international center, the Greater London Council was established in the 1963 arrangement. The establishment of GLC was completed in 1965. The reorganisation of the British local governments outside London was accomplished by the work carried out by the Redcliffe - Maud Commission, referred to as the president, in 1970 and came into force in 1972.²⁸

The Greater London Administration (GLA) was abolished by the Conservative Party under Margaret Thatcher, with a law passed in 1985, effective from 1986. As a reflection of its aim to cut local government spending, the government also dissolved other metropolitan local governments established in 1974, such as Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Liverpool and Sheffield. As a reason; they argued that the spending of local governments tended to increase significantly, that the services provided by these local governments could be provided more effectively and efficiently by sub-local governments in metropolitan areas, and the law was put into effect despite intense criticism and the opposition campaign.²⁹ The Conservative Party government, which prioritised liberal economic policies, tried to reduce the total expenditures of local governments and started to implement radical policies such as tight control over local governments' revenues and expenses, and the privatisation of some local services.

The Labour Party came to power in the general elections held on May 1, 1998. The London Metropolitan Municipality Act (Greater London Authority Act) was approved by the

²⁷ Colin Frank Padfield, Tony Byrne, *Social Services, Made Simple Books*, Oxford, 1990, p. 339.

²⁸ Redcliffe Maud, Bruce Wood, *English Local Government Reformed*, Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 12.

²⁹ Norman Flynn, Steve Leach, Carol A. Vielba, *Abolition or Reform: The GLA and the Metropolitan County Councils*, Macmillan, London, 1985, p. 11



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referendum held in 1999, as they had promised in the election declarations, and a London Metropolitan Municipality was established again. With this arrangement, the London Metropolitan City Council consists of a directly elected mayor and 25 members.³⁰

According to the founding law, the main task outlines of the Greater London Council (GLC) are; Comprehensive planning for London's development and determination of strategic policies, establishment of an effective communication, transportation and traffic system, providing or assisting in the provision of good quality housing for the entire population living in London, performing health and safety services, rest in London and increasing the opportunity to have fun and offering them to the public in the most convenient way.³¹

Services and Duties of Local Governments

In England, local governments can fulfill and use the powers and duties given to them by law. There is no strict rule to ensure that public services are shared objectively between central and local governments. However, in practice it permits or requests the implementation by the administrations and no local government unit is allowed to exceed their legal powers.

Although local governments lost their responsibilities in some important services over time, they gained new and more responsibilities closely related to the lives of citizens such as personal social services, education, housing and city planning.³² As a matter of fact, while local governments have lost functions in providing public services with some economic content such as gas, water, electricity, they have started to work in important social services such as unemployment, poverty, aid, education, housing, health.³³ As a result of the arrangements made, local governments have been reshaped as institutions that supervise and cooperate with employers and businesses.

Education includes nursery provision, primary, youth, community education and adult education, and covers both compulsory and vocational education. Educational services, the legal basis of which was laid in 1944-1945, also include subjects such as food in schools, milk, scholarship provision and education for special educational needs. The central-local balance has changed fundamentally since 1980. Until the 1988 Education Reform Act, a different law was enacted each year, which was delegated to local government. With the 2006 Education and Supervision Act, higher standards have been adopted and inspired by the Swedish school system, the 2010 Academy Law made it necessary to seek the approval of local governments in order for primary and secondary schools to become academies. The role of families at secondary level has been extended with legal changes in recent years. In the

³⁰ Muhammet Kösecik, "4 Mayıs 2000 Büyükşehir Belediyesi Seçimlerinin Getirdikleri: Londra'da Yeni Dönem", *Çağdaş Yerel Yönetimler Dergisi*, Cilt. 9, Sayı. 3, Temmuz, 2000, p. 73.

³¹ Asuman Çezik, *İngiliz Mahalli İdareleri İçinde Büyük Londra İdaresi GLC (Greater London Council) ve Çalışmaları*, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, Yayın No: 1710-SPD:319, 1980, p. 9.

³² G. W. Jones, "Local Government in Great Britain, 1988-89", *Local Government and Urban Affairs in International Perspective*. Ed. Joachim Jens Hesse, Baden, 1991, p. 167.

³³ Allan Cochrane, *Whatever Happened to Local Government?* Buckingham Open University Press, 1993, p. 11.



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management of the schools, this role was given to the school boards, and parents were given more voice. The 2004 Law, which covers issues such as the vocational education of young people, the disabled, and the provision for children in care, repealed the 1970 Local Authority Social Services Act. With this law, the existing authority was redesigned, the local authority budget was redirected, and in 2010/2011, this budget was increased to £ 240 million pounds with the Social Care Reform.

As cultural, entertainment and sports services; Services such as the construction and maintenance of theaters, museums, libraries, sports facilities, parks and gardens are among the common duties of the provincial and regional councils.³⁴

In England, which does not have a central police force, with the law of 1946, the organisations in small units were removed and included within the borders of the region. Until 1990, police services were in local government services. In London Metropolitan Administration (GLA), while the police agency was directly affiliated to the interior ministry, it was assigned to GLA in 2000. In England, the responsibility of the police service belongs to the city councils. Services are carried out by police committees, two thirds of which are members of the assembly and one third of which are judges, similar to other councils.³⁵

Services such as highways, transportation and traffic management are among the most shared services among central government, provincial and regional councils. Topics such as food safety standards, household waste collection and disposal, air pollution, and workplace inspections are under the responsibility of the regional and metropolitan regional councils and other public space cleaning jobs are shared by the regions and provinces. While the relevant ministry is undertaking the main roads, provincial councils, unitary councils (unitary), metropolitan districts and districts in London and GLA take responsibility for other primary and secondary roads. Other highway construction, maintenance repairs, traffic management, and street cleaning services are the responsibility of the regional councils.³⁶

Health care; It is guided by the National Health Service (NHS), affiliated to the British Ministry of Health. NHS continues its many services in the healthcare sector without charge to patients. The biggest allowance (£ 126 billion pounds) in the 2011 budget, after social security, was allocated to the health sector.³⁷

The Public Health Act, which covers the issues of clean water, sanitary housing, food control, and treating infectious diseases, came into force in the 1870s. In 1940, National Public Health services came into force. However, they lost some of their functions in 1948 and 1974 as local governments undertook important duties in environmental health. Regional water authorities were established to provide water-related services, and then these services were privatised. The framework of these services has been expanded with the health programs

³⁴ Wilson and Game, p. 128.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 137.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 142.

³⁷ Public Sector Finans Bulletin, National Statistics, www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-treasury/



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that came into effect in 2004, 2005, 2007 and 2010. Within the scope of NHS plan targets, patients were sent abroad to France, Germany and Belgium by evaluating the treatment options of the patients in order to reduce the waiting times of the hospital and taking a maximum 3-hour flight distance. Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), the local commission of the NHS, is empowered to sign bilateral agreements with overseas healthcare providers, to approve treatment outside the European Economic Area (EEA).³⁸

Health services were carried out by local councils until 1974 and transferred to private health institutions after this date. Thatcher's Conservative government introduced an open tender system for services at the central government level, with two separate laws in 1980 and 1988. Until 1986, 68% of all health services were put out to tender and 20% were won by the private sector.³⁹ In 2016/17, the sector's net assets continued to grow beyond pre-crisis levels and reached a new peak of £131.2bn.⁴⁰

Housing construction is a task given to local governments in the UK. Local governments establish independent companies for large residential areas. These companies have representatives in the executive boards of the local government, central government and private sector. Financial supervision is carried out by the local government and is responsible to Parliament. The construction of residential areas is done using the resources of the local administrations, additional assistance of the central administration, and private sector facilities. In urban areas, the duties of the land, distribution of the new-build housing, determining the rental and sale conditions, collecting the rents, annual maintenance, renting the vacant houses belong to the local administrations. Generally, the public sector serves the low income groups and the private sector for the middle and upper income groups. In 1979, with a law enacted, GLC handed over a significant portion of its housing business to local governments, but retains the management of residences in central London. With the same law, it was stipulated that 1/3 of the local authority houses built were for sale.

The Housing Revenue Account cap that controls local authority borrowing for house building will be abolished from 29 October 2018 in England, enabling councils to increase house building to around 10,000 homes per year. The Welsh Government is taking immediate steps to lift the cap in Wales. The Housing Infrastructure Fund, funded by the NPIF, will increase by £500 million to a total £5.5 billion, unlocking up to 650,000 new homes.⁴¹

Privatisation of the services of local governments was realised for the first time with the Housing Law in 1980.⁴² The law gave tenants the right to purchase their houses at a discount.

³⁸ <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/gps/gp-online-services/departments>

³⁹ Kieron Walsh, *Public Services and Market Mechanism: Competition, Contracting and new Public Management*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1995, p. 134.

⁴⁰ <http://almanac.fc.production.ncvocloud.net/sector-finances/> UK Civil Society Almanac 2020, Data/Trends/Insights-almanac

⁴¹ <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/budget-2018-documents/budget-2018>

⁴² H. Howard Davis, "The Fragmentation of Community Government: Enabling or Disabling Local Government"; *Chocies fort he Future*, Ed. Steve Leach-Howard Davis, Buchingam, Open University Press., 1996, p. 11.



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Thus, although it was aimed to transfer the powers of local administrations to the public and reduce bureaucracy, only 10% of the housing stock could be sold until 1987.⁴³ Apart from the few successful examples, the localisation of housing services policy was not successful enough.⁴⁴ In 2004, more than 500,000 sales were made, so the stock could only drop below 3 million.⁴⁵

Local governments in the UK have been providing library services for 150 years. A significant amount of allocation was not allocated until 1919. Comprehensive and effective public library services were approved by the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Law. Since 1990; although the number of libraries has gradually decreased, open hours, book stocks, electronics and other stock have increased.⁴⁶

Services such as arts, entertainment and leisure activities are available at the request of the councils; it is provided in different ways and according to different priorities and in different standards. Services such as museums, art galleries, concert halls, sports facilities, tourism development are evaluated within this scope. GLC; It manages and maintains venues such as theaters, concert halls, art galleries, exhibition halls, museums, parks and gardens, sports facilities. All touristic facilities are under GLC control.⁴⁷

The private sector was included in the provision of services such as education, health, and housing, and the public private sector competition was enabled. However, it is seen that the responsibility of financing and fulfilling services such as education and health remains predominantly the domain of public administration units. Only 7% of students go to private sector schools, and 15% of the population have private health insurance. Most health services are provided by the National Health Department at the national level.⁴⁸

Local governments; They have to apply via the tender method for the provision of certain services such as maintenance of public spaces, road maintenance, cleaning of buildings, garbage collection, maintenance of vehicles, canteen and catering services. 58% of local government employees work in education and training services, 14% work in social services and 8% work in other service areas.⁴⁹

Local government remains the largest component of public sector employment and has responsibility for a wide range of local services including schools, social services,

⁴³ Chriss Pickvance, "The Difficulty of Control and the Ease of Structural Reform. British Local Government in the 1980's"; *State Restructuring and Local Power; A Comparative Perspective*; Ed. Chriss Pickvance-Edmond Preteceille; London, Pinter Publisher, 1991, p. 70.

⁴⁴ Stewart Lansley, Sue Goss; Christian Wolmar, *Councils in Conflict: The Rise and fall of the Municipal Left*, Macmillan, London, 1989, p. 101.

⁴⁵ Wilson and Game, p. 146.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Davies, *Taking Stock: The Future of Public Library Service*, London: Unision, 2008, p. 22.

⁴⁷ Wilson and Game, p. 149.

⁴⁸ Nirmala Rao, *Towards Welfare Pluralism*; Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1996, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Stephen Bach; Ian Kessler, *The Modernisation of the Public Services and Employee Relations Targeted Change*, Palgrave, Macmillan, 2012, p. 20.



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environmental and leisure services. Although local authorities employ a smaller proportion of social care staff, there are approximately 50,000 social workers in the UK.⁵⁰

Volunteer organisations have become increasingly effective in providing public services; they assumed duties in the production and delivery of the services financed by the state and local administrations. Public aids and wages can cover up to 30% or all of their revenues.⁵¹

Today, local governments have become part of a complex organisational mosaic. In the provision of local services; The concept of "local governance" is used to express the authority of local governments shared with the private and public sector and voluntary organisations.⁵² While management is mainly related to state institutions; The concept of governance is used as a concept that involves many non-state actors and agencies and is more related to processes.

Local governments also provide policies and services to tackle the problems of more at-risk groups of society and disadvantaged children, the elderly and the disabled, through partnerships that are viewed as new paradigms. The main examples of these partnerships starting from 2000 are: Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs), Local Region Agreements (LAAs), Multi-Region Agreements (MAAs).⁵³

Local Development

There are 12 regions in the UK that are determined for regional development. These regions are South East, London, North West, East, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber, Scotland, South West, East Midlands, Wales, North East and Northern Ireland. Regional development policies and strategies; It is determined by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Ministry for Local Governments (Department for Communities and Local Government), and implementation is carried out through Regional Development Agencies and other supported professional organisations.

EU Local Development Policies are implemented by local actors. The role of municipalities in local development is very important. "Local Development Management" has been adopted as a new paradigm in Urban Management. Local Development; It is divided into six categories: physical development, social development, cultural development, economic development, political development and effective municipal management. Effective municipal management includes; citizen-oriented management, strategic planning,

⁵⁰ <http://www.Local Government Association, Local Authority Services/Lga.gov. Uk / lga / aio / 15142112>

⁵¹ Norman Flynn, "A Mixed Blessing? How The Contract Culture Works"; Sweet Charity; *The Role and Workings of Voluntary Organizations*, Ed. C. Hanvey-T. Philpot; Routledge; 1996, p. 60.

⁵² H. Howard Davis, "Quangos and local Government: A Changing World" *Local Government Studies*, 22:2, 1996, p. 9.

⁵³ Vivien Lowndes, Helen Sullivan, "Like a Horse and Carriage or a Fish on a Bicycle?"; *Local Government Studies*, 30:1, 2004, p. 52.



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performance management, transparent management, good governance, total quality management.⁵⁴

Municipality Management in the UK

Local governments have a say in the issues concerning the people of the various regions in England. They are managed and represented by local government councils. The decision-making power lies in the local councils, which are directly elected by the Parliament. The Parliament, which has partial autonomy, is the body directly responsible for the decision-making and implementation of the policy. In nearly 400 local authorities, local communities and the public are dealing with nearly 20,000 elected councillors, about 700 different issues, and providing nearly three million employment opportunities. Councillors are elected for a four-year term with a one-degree election.⁵⁵ The members of the council elect one councillor each year as the chairman of the council. With legal personality, they can buy and sell goods, make contracts and borrow. Assemblies are organised in the form of committees, and their main task is to agree important policies by discussing them.⁵⁶

Councillors are elected by members of the assembly, inside or outside the assembly. Every political party represented in the Parliament has the right to nominate a candidate for the presidency. Apart from the big city municipalities and municipalities, the provincial, urban and rural regions, the council president chairs the council meetings and represents the city as a prestigious civic representative. The duties of the presidents differ according to the size of the local unit.

Although the assembly has absolute power in the local government unit, it can transfer some of the powers to the committees if it wishes. Committees are usually established with 15-20 members. Assemblies organise services through committees and subcommittees according to their service areas. Some of the committees established such as education, health, social security, finance, fire brigade, child and social aid committees have been made compulsory by law. Local governments can also establish general or special-purpose committees in their service areas.

If it is written by the Crown that they will be given the title of "Lord" to the mayor in establishment status, the mayor of that municipality is called "Lord Mayor". This title has only a spiritual superiority feature. In units other than that, only the "Mayor" title is used. The duties of mayors who are given the title of "Chairman" in provinces, urban areas or rural areas outside the big city municipalities and municipalities differ according to the size of the local unit. Social tasks gain great weight and priority in large units. The status of the mayors is more symbolic. Duties of elected Mayors; providing political leadership and making

⁵⁴ Preuss Lutz, *Addressing Sustainable Development Through Public Procurement: The Case of Local Government*, Emerald Group Publishing, 2009, p. 213.

⁵⁵ Wilson and Game, p. 36.

⁵⁶ G. W. Jones, "Local Government in Great Britain, 1988-89", *Local Government and Urban Affair in International Perspective*. Ed. Joachim Jens Hesse, Baden, 1991, p. 167.



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recommendations in political frameworks. The council they are affiliated with decides on new laws, political framework and budget, and appoints the council managers. With metropolitan municipalities; It is a feature of the local system in England that others have separate duties and powers with separate statuses. In the local government system, big cities are self-sufficient for financial and administrative aspects and are responsible for all services such as local planning, industrial development, environmental regulations, environmental health, tax collection, environmental cleaning, parking, cemeteries, funerals, pavements, and public toilets. The small city administration, on the other hand, was shared among the local administrative units by taking into account the characteristics of the settlement type.⁵⁷

The London Metropolitan Municipality is designed as a local government unit that leads the general quality of issues that concern all of London, prepares plans, and provides collaboration and coordination among the London municipalities.⁵⁸

The London administration differs from the rest of the country as the Greater London Administration - GLA. The Greater London Administration consists of the Mayor, the London City Council, and support staff as a unified agency. For London; Considering its features, different bodies, duties, powers and services are provided from other local administrative units. For London and its surroundings, the Greater London Council has been established to replace the county council of elsewhere. Within the area in which it is responsible for council administration, London Municipalities (London Boroughs) are divided into 32 administrative levels.

After the 2000 law; The mayor and the Parliament were elected by direct election for the first time. This situation gives the mayors authority to provide political leadership, offer a political framework, budget proposal, and make management decisions within the political framework.⁵⁹ Planning, economic development, health, transportation, culture, environment, police, fire and emergency services are among their responsibilities.

The Mayor of London is the spokesperson of the city and sets policies to ensure the development of the city. London Transport works with the Metropolitan Police, the London Fire and Emergency Planning Administration, and sets their budgets. He is responsible for managing the London Development Agency, which provides local development of projects on determining London's economic and transformational strategies, contributing to its sustainable development, investment, efficiency, competitiveness, improving the talents of the people and providing employment.⁶⁰ These bodies are under the control of the London City Council. Since the Assembly is responsible for voters both legally and politically, it does not only work as a decision-making body but also has executive powers. It is responsible for balancing the

⁵⁷ <http://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-and-land/what-we-do/health>

⁵⁸ <http://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/jobs-and-working-city-hall>

⁵⁹ Colin Copus, *Leading the Localities, Executive Mayors in English Local Governance*, Manchester University Press, UK, 2013, p. 10.

⁶⁰ Fact Sheet; *Spatial Planning and Urban Renewal in London*, Legislative Council Secretariat <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/sec/library/0708fs09-e.pdf>



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Mayor's policies by closely examining their decisions. It investigates the issues that are important for the city and publish their suggestions and findings.⁶¹

The power and responsibilities of local authorities are defined by law. In other words, local governments have the freedom to exercise powers that are not against the law. Powers and functions are gathered in assemblies. The key element on the agenda of local government reform is the approval of political leadership for the local community. Local governments need approved leaders and those who are politically responsible should be visible.⁶²

Political Leadership of Elected Mayors

Leadership roles, authority and power in the field of activity given to local administrations by the society have increased in England today.⁶³

The first local referendums were held in 2001. Most have continued to reject the idea of the elected mayor. During 2012, the coalition government initiated 10 further mayoral referendums in England's largest cities but only one, Bristol, opted for an elected mayor. The mayoral system on offer in the 2012 referendums was vague, with mayoral powers and accountability mechanisms left undefined. Turnout figures of around 24% in Manchester, Nottingham and Bristol, rising to 35% in Bradford, suggested, as in earlier mayoral referendums, that the public is at best lukewarm in expressing a view about this opportunity. Overall, there is no evidence of widespread public support, yet the prospect of more mayors remains firmly on the policy agenda.⁶⁴

The first elected executive mayors took office in 2002, but only in a very small number of local councils: 11 in total (excluding the London mayor) at the outset. Common factors in the development of the political leadership of the elected mayors of Britain: developing the political leadership by creating strength, specific alliances or coalitions needed to meet the needs of the parliamentary party groups, managing the dynamics and tensions of the parliamentary party groups, developing community-wide mayor support networks, management to expand the authoritative limits of their networks, to develop and maintain a high political public profile, and to have the leadership requirement they face in managing the assembly and society.⁶⁵

As a support program in the development of political leadership, the "Local Vision project" aims at system change through leadership development. "National Future Vision Program"; It is an initiative believed that it will be more useful for people working on solving local problems.

⁶¹ <http://www.london.gov.uk/government/publications/local-leadership-new-approaches-improving-the-health-communities>

⁶² Tony Blair, *Leading the Way: A New Vision for Local Government*, London, Institute of Public Policy Research, 1998, p. 51.

⁶³ Leadership Centre for Local Government, 2008.<http://www.localleadership.gov.uk>

⁶⁴ John Fenwick; Howard Elcock, "Elected Mayors: Leading Locally?" *Local Government Studies*, 40:4, 2014, p. 581-599.

⁶⁵ Copus, p. 48.



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In the last twenty years, restructuring of public administration in local governments has continued. The radical change among these works was the "Next Steps" Initiative published in 1988, and then the "Competition for Quality" program launched in 1991 and "Citizen Charter" program applied to local units from the center. The impact of these initiatives can still be seen today. Among the developments are the decline in official policy, the spread of public and stakeholder engagement, increased support for participation, and the centralisation of local authority and power transfer. It is possible to follow these developments closely with good practices. Tower Hamlets-Young President / PB, Bradford-Elderly Participation, Redbridge-Redbridge, and South Tyneside- Neighborhood Assessment examples are successful examples of community participation in local government decision processes. As new trends in participation in Local Administrations; Applications such as transfer of powers to local government, separation from official processes, direct democracy, neighborhood management, large community bank and leading societies (value transfer, e-participation, participatory budgeting) are seen.⁶⁶

Directly elected mayors are the political leaders of the council and have overall responsibility for council policy and the delivery of services. Adequately resourced mayoral offices and advisory staff, with no legislative restrictions on size or budget. Mayors appoint a cabinet of no more than 10 councillors and decide their portfolios. (Copus, 2013:210). Councillors provide an important role in holding the executive to account by examining and questioning the decisions made. Only the full council can decide the budget and annual plans of key services.⁶⁷

New Localism

The terms autonomy and democracy, especially with reference to localism and promotion of local democracy involve defining local autonomy:- as freedom from higher authorities, by the effects of local governance and its freedom to achieve particular outcomes, as the reflection of local identity, the ability of communities to reflect their own sense of place and meaning within localities.⁶⁸ Localism in British politics has seen many forms, and in its current avatar it is being debated as the Decentralisation and Localism Bill in the Westminster parliament. According to Davies; localism of a kind can be traced back to Aristotle who argued that intermediary groups are essential to the exercise of liberty and freedom in a state, failing which there can be no opposition to tyranny.⁶⁹ During the nineteenth century; the Industrial Revolution and imperialism that shaped Britain moved the

⁶⁶ <http://www.services.parliament.uk/documents/commons-information-office/102pdf>

⁶⁷ <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/who-runs-london/london-elections/elected-mayors>

⁶⁸ Lawrence Pratchett, "Local Autonomy, Local Democracy and the New Localism", *Political Studies*, 2004, Vol. 52, p. 358-375.

⁶⁹ Jonathan S. Davies, "New Localism", in *The Oxford Handbook of British Politics*, Ed. by M. Flinders, A. Gamble, C. Hay and M. Kenny, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 405.



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focus of governance away from the local, whilst national and global interest dominated political discourse.⁷⁰

New localism is the term to describe the shift in power back to the local, taking place today from horizontally across public, private, and civic networks. The concept of new localism can be traced back to the new urban politics of the late 1990s where urban localities began to feel the brunt of economic globalisation.⁷¹ In the UK, the concept of new localism began life under the New Local Government Network in relation to 'third way' thinking. The drive towards new localism can be seen as a result of the recognition, on behalf of the New Labour government, of the limited success of the post 1997 local government modernisation agenda. The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government that formed after 2010 General Election maintained the focus on localism as a key policy, though they pledged to move away from the top-down 'big' government approach of New Labour. Instead they moved towards a localism in which communities took on responsibility for delivery of services, rather than allocation of resources which remained centralized.⁷²

New localism can be viewed as a just response to the complexity of modern governance and one which allows for dimensions of trust, empathy and social capital to be developed in aid of civic engagement. The following ideas have been put forward as representing the institutional expressions of new localism: - More directly elected single purpose bodies - A string neighbourhood government and - The rise of strategic local government. New localism is new in the sense that it marked a break away from the mainly managerialist local government reforms towards recognising and prioritising the role of community empowerment and local involvement as a major policy target.⁷³

The new localism has two key features. Firstly, it recognises the importance of national standards and priorities as a driving force for public policy. Secondly, the new localism also recognises the primacy of the institutions of local governance in delivering public services on behalf of the centre, as well as wider arguments for locally sensitive policy implementation and community leadership.⁷⁴ New localist policies enable a more efficient and effective way of meeting community: Localism means that public services are more likely to reflect the needs and preferences of communities as local citizens have the opportunity to directly set priorities and the nature of local services. They also have a greater ability to hold their local decision-

⁷⁰ Mark Evans, David Marsh, Gerry Stoker, "Understanding Localism", *Policy Studies*, 2013, Vol. 34, No. 4, p. 401.

⁷¹ Susan E. Clarke, "The New Localism: Local Politics in a Global Era", in *The New Localism, Comparative Urban Politics in a Global Era*, Ed. by G. Goetz, S. E. Clarke, Sage Publications, London, 1993, p. 2.

⁷² Evans, Marsh, Stoker, p. 403.

⁷³ Joe Painter; Lena Dominelli, Gordon Macleod, Andrew Orton, Roksha Pande, *Connecting Localism & Community Empowerment: Research Review and Critical Synthesis for the ARHC Connected Community Programme Project Report*, Durham University, 2011, p. 12.

⁷⁴ Lawrence Pratchett, "Local Autonomy, Local Democracy and the New Localism", *Political Studies*, Vol. 52, 2004, p. 369.



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makers to account. Localism; ensures power and authority is shared around: Extreme concentration of power and authority is a risk to all societies. Localism; is one way of ensuring that power and authority is spread around communities rather than concentrated in one place, improves the coordination and integration of public services, builds community resilience, Localism spurs innovation. Localism is good for local democracy, reduces the overall cost of government: Localism involves shifting a range of decisions from central government to communities.⁷⁵

Conclusion

Although it has a unitary structure, it can be seen that great importance is attached to local governments in its historical development in England, a country where decentralisation can be implemented. The reason why local governments are strong is that they have a centuries-long history and values. Local government in the UK has been subject to many different reforms. Traditional local administration was centred very much on a notion of community and providing services for localised benefit. In the 20th century, the system underwent a long period of centralisation, as the national government became concerned with social inequalities and the provision of national public services.

In today's world, which has undergone a major change, the process of democratisation also greatly affects state administration and control systems. In England, which has a strong traditional structure, it is seen that local governments have instigated important changes in this process. Today, it shares many powers and responsibilities with organisations set up at regional and local levels. In this way, by eliminating the drawbacks of the centralist structure, they are provided with a more democratic structure. The realisation of local democracy can only be achieved by high participation of the people in local administrations. Nonetheless, the push for devolution in the 21st century, predominantly through the Localism Act, has led to a significant asymmetry of powers in different parts of the UK.

As a result, Local government is: a form of geographical and political decentralisation, in which directly elected councils, created by and subordinate to Parliament, have partial autonomy, to provide a wide variety of services, through various direct and indirect means, funded in part by local taxation.

On the other hand, it is observed that they attach great importance to elected political leadership in local governments and make efforts for their development. As in the case of London Metropolitan Borough; elected local governments are effective in expressing community identity, emphasising diversity, encouraging innovation and learning, appropriate collaboration and rapid response, ensuring citizenship and participation, providing political education and training, and disseminating power. It is understood that the changes in the functions of local governments will continue within the framework of the cultural, political, social and economic values of England.

⁷⁵ <http://localism.nz/proposal/10-reasons-to-give-localism-a-chance/>



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Thus, new localism was new in the sense that it marked a break away from the mainly managerialist local government reforms to recognising and prioritising the role of community empowerment and local involvement as a major policy target.

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