

URBAN REGIMES AND THE CAPACITY TO GOVERN: A Political Economy Approach

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ABSTRACT: *Regime theory starts with the proposition that governing capacity is not easily captured through the electoral process. Governing capacity is created and maintained by bringing together coalition partners with appropriate resources, nongovernmental as well as governmental. If a governing coalition is to be viable, it must be able to mobilize resources commensurate with its main policy agenda. The author uses this reasoning as the foundation for comparing regimes by the nature and difficulty of the government tasks they undertake and the level and kind of resources required for these tasks. Political leadership, he argues, is a creative exercise of political choice, involving the ability to craft arrangements through which resources can be mobilized, thus enabling a community to accomplish difficult and nonroutine goals.*

To a casual observer, regime analysis might appear to be a return to classical urban pluralism, the reigning wisdom of 30 years ago and earlier. After all, the executive-centered coalition described in *Who Governs?* (Dahl, 1961) bears all the earmarks of a regime. Both pluralism and regime analysis emphasize coalition-building as an integral part of the governing process and both bodies of thought subscribe to the view that politics matters. There, I intend to show, the similarity ends. Fundamental differences separate the two approaches to urban politics.

Centrally concerned with such matters as the assimilation of immigrant groups and the political consequences of increasing social differentiation, the urban strain of classic pluralism drew heavily on a political culture approach (Banfield, 1961; Banfield & Wilson, 1963; Dahl, 1961), whereas the analysis of urban regimes stems from a political economy perspective (Elkin, 1987; Fainstein, et al., 1986; Logan & Molotch, 1987;

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Shefter, 1985; Stone, 1989a; Swanson, 1985). Other differences abound. In particular, pluralism assumes that governmental authority is adequate to make and carry out policies promoted by top officials so long as those officials do not lose popular favor. Regime analysis posits a different and more complex process of governance. Specifically, it recognizes the enormous political importance of privately controlled investment, but does so without going so far as to embrace a position of economic determinism. In assuming that political economy is about the relationship between politics and economics, not the subordination of politics to economics, regime analysts explore the middle ground between, on the one side, pluralists with their assumption that the economy is just one of several discrete spheres of activity and, on the other side, structuralists who see the mode of production as pervading and dominating all other spheres of activity, including politics.

In regime analysis, the relationship between the economy and politics is two way. At any given time, economic forces both shape and are shaped by political arrangements. Historically, the market economy of capitalism was established by a political process and remains subject to political modification (Polanyi, 1957). At the same time, the economy shapes politics and is a major source of issues (Fainstein, 1990).

Theorizing always involves taking some conditions as given in order to examine the relationship between others. Urban regime theory takes as given a liberal political economy, one that combines two conditions. One is a set of government institutions controlled to an important degree by popularly elected officials chosen in open and competitive contests and operating within a larger context of the free expression of competing ideas and claims. Second, the economy of a liberal order is guided mainly, but not exclusively, by privately controlled investment decisions. A regime, whether national or local, is a set of arrangements by which this division of labor is bridged (Elkin, 1987).

The version of regime theory propounded here holds that public policies are shaped by three factors: (1) the composition of a community's governing coalition, (2) the nature of the relationships among members of the governing coalition, and (3) the resources that the members bring to the governing coalition. Of course, this does not mean that the governing coalition operates in a social and economic vacuum; the socioeconomic environment is a source of problems and challenges to which regimes respond.

In writing about the international sphere, Krasner (1983, p. 1) says that regimes are "intervening variables between basic causal factors on the one hand and outcomes and behavior on the other." This formulation is akin to psychology's longstanding treatment of stimulus and response. Psychology came to understand early that, instead of simply stimulus and response, the response is mediated through the organism. Hence $S > R$, becomes $S > O > R$. In regime theory, the mediating "organism" is the regime. The full reality is, of course, more complicated than this, but the point is that in the role of intervening factor, urban regimes are potentially an autonomous force. As Krasner (1983, p. 5) says of their international counterparts, "they are not merely epiphenomenal." Politics matters.

Of course, politics can matter in different ways. Dahl's understanding of New Haven's executive-centered coalition is one version. Regime analysis, I shall argue, puts that same coalition in a different light, but one that is nonetheless still political. In setting forth differences between the two schools of thought, I will first present some key

assumptions of urban pluralism and then offer contrasting assumptions from regime theory. In the process, I will show how New Haven's executive-centered coalition can be reinterpreted and offer my own version of what urban regimes are about. The point I will emphasize is that a governing capacity has to be created and maintained. It is not just "there" for the taking, by electoral or other means.

URBAN PLURALISM: AN OVERVIEW

Pluralism is not to be equated with complexity; it is not just the absence of monolithic control. Classic urban pluralism is a particular explanation of how democratic politics works in a liberal order. Its principal tenets include the following:

1. In the US and its localities, the citizenry provides consensual support for the basic features of the system: a democratic governmental form, an economy of mainly private ownership, and a nonaristocratic social order. This consensus is a genuine expression of popular sentiment, not an engineered consciousness.

2. Consistent with the requirements of democracy, state authority is subject to popular control by means of open and free elections.

3. Operating within a framework of popular consent, the state enjoys a high degree of self-sufficiency, enough to be capable of allocating substantial benefits and imposing significant costs, and doing so on its own. Local government is the state writ small.

4. Consensus extends only to broad features. On more specific issues, the fragmented and unstable character of popular majorities makes public officials responsive to even small groups or those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged.

5. Politics involves aggregating the relatively stable and autonomously formed preferences of individual citizens. While amenable to persuasion about larger community interests, citizens are especially protective of their roles in the social order and of what affects them directly and immediately.

6. Power consists of a capacity to overcome resistance and gain compliance. Because control has the dimensions of domain, scope, and intensity, the cost of compliance assures that no one group can exercise comprehensive social control.

7. Political change is guided by a process of modernization.

Before showing how regime theory modifies or contradicts these elements of urban pluralism, I want to provide some elaboration of the pluralist position.

State Capacity, Elections, and Political Influence

Pluralist analysis rests first and foremost on the assumption of an autonomous state, capable of allocating substantial benefits and imposing significant costs. Perhaps because the state is conventionally defined in terms of a monopoly of legitimate violence, the legal authority of government is seen as sufficient for governing. Dahl (1961, p. 96) talks about government as "the single most effective institution for coercion" and assumes the adequacy of legal authority.

Add to this understanding of the state the condition of democratic control and voting strength becomes the key factor in political power. To be sure, pluralism acknowledges that resources other than the franchise come into play, but the vote remains central. For example, Dahl's study of New Haven stresses the place of elections in countering

any concentration of power, treating even the problem of inequality as election-centered. Dahl makes the following observation: "Running counter to [the] legal equality of citizens in the voting booth, however, is an unequal distribution of the resources that *can be used for influencing the choices of voters*, and between elections, of officials (Dahl, 1961, p. 4, emphasis added). The problem of inequality is thus described as one of how the uneven distribution of wealth and other resources modifies the formal equality of the franchise.

Popular majorities are typically the controlling force, but they are composed of temporary and unstable coalitions. Though there is consensus on fundamentals, a complex and highly differentiated social order with increasing occupational and role specialization provides fertile ground for conflict over particular and limited issues. Class cleavage is secondary, at most, to the specific, often short-term conflicts associated with interest group policies (Polsby, 1980, pp. 117-118).

In this system of fragmented and unstable political attachments, small size is not a disqualifying condition for political influence. Given that alignments are fluid and that on any particular issue many people will be inattentive or indifferent, a group with small membership may enjoy the strategic advantage of controlling the balance of power in a political contest. Politicians are thus constantly mindful of the need to seek the support of even small groups and avoid encouraging their opposition. While the power to govern rests on popular support, this support is always tenuous. Ordinarily "control over any given issue-area gravitates to a small group which happens to have the greatest interest in it" (Dahl, 1961, p. 191). Influence is specialized and impasse is an ever-present possibility.

Fragmentation can lead to stalemate (Sayre & Kaufman 1965, pp. 716-719), but does not have to. After all, the New Haven of Mayor Richard Lee was a place of enormous and politically significant physical restructuring. In Dahl's (1961, p. 201) words, "rapid comprehensive change in the physical pattern of a city is a minor revolution," and Richard Lee's New Haven underwent such a revolution.

Dahl explains Lee's success in redevelopment as a matter of skill in activating latent support and skill in negotiating through a tangle of particular costs and benefits. Consider a significant detail in how Dahl works this out. Parallel with this discussion of redevelopment, Dahl argues that African-Americans in New Haven made exceptional use of voter influence. He observes, "Some citizens... have fewer alternatives to political action than others. Probably the most significant group in New Haven whose opportunities are sharply restricted by social and economic barriers are Negroes" (Dahl, 1961, p. 293). Dahl (1961, pp. 294-295) then cites higher voter participation by blacks in New Haven as evidence that they make use of formal political equality to pursue their goals. By contrast, he argues, those who are better off socioeconomically prefer to pursue their goals in the private sector (Dahl, 1961, p. 294).

In this view, government authority, as an allocator of opportunities, assures a form of societal mutual accommodation in which everyone is able to gain at least something. The public and private sectors are treated as distinct and government is seen as an autonomous power, checked primarily by the reciprocal relationship between public officials and their constituents. Thus, by treating the public and private sectors as politically distinct and downplaying the complex interrelationships between government and the economy, Dahl can show how specialization of influence is consistent with

change. Redevelopment, he admits, was of special benefit to downtown property interests, but only as part of a policy of “shared benefits to citizens in general” (Dahl, 1961, p. 61). Overall, then, Dahl sees New Haven, not as a place locked into the status quo, but one in which socioeconomically disadvantaged groups can use their leverage as strategic voting blocs to open up opportunities and move ahead.

Preference Formation, Power, and Political Change

Radical critics have made the pluralist understanding of consensus a special target. If class cleavage rises to the surface only infrequently, radical analysts charge, it is because the dominant class exercises ideological hegemony: It has inculcated the subordinate class with a politically disabling outlook (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1980). In response, pluralists argue that the media of communication and the process of socialization themselves are pluralistic. Competing ideas can be heard and information is sufficiently available for the public to find out about any issue that concerns it. Because most issues involve complex tradeoffs, Polsby (1980, p. 116) maintains that no one should second-guess citizen preferences. He says, “the imputation of ‘false class consciousness’ suggests that the values of analysts are being imposed arbitrarily on groups in the community” (Polsby 1980, p. 116). If there is consensus, it is presumed genuine.

Preferences on particular issues stem from the individual’s position in a complex society. In Graham Allison’s (1971, p. 176) terms, “where you stand depends on where you sit.” Consistent with the expectations of James Madison in *Federalist* No. 10, pluralists believe that social heterogeneity prevents any single group from gaining dominance. In their view, politics is essentially a matter of aggregating preferences. This means that coalitions are inherently unstable (Polsby, 1980), hence competition is easily preserved.

The rejection of false consciousness takes on added importance in the light of the pluralist conception of power. Pluralism adheres to what I call a social control model of power in which the crucial factor is the cost of compliance (Stone, 1989a, 1989b). This is the Weberian formulation about A getting to B to do what B would not otherwise have done. Even Dahl’s (1982, p. 33) later works subscribe to this concept and continue to describe power as inevitably dispersed. The cost of compliance makes that pattern inevitable, given that power involves scope (range of activities) and intensity (depth of what is asked of actors) as well as the extent or domain (number of actors subject to the exercise of power). On the other hand, radical critics argue, if preference formation is not autonomous, resistance is undercut; the cost of compliance ceases to restrict those who would exercise social control (Lindblom, 1973, pp. 201-213).

As one peels back the assumptions underlying the pluralist concept of power, an inconsistency emerges. Power consists of comprehensive social control, hence in almost any complex society, it is certain to be extremely limited. The cost of compliance restricts the reach of power and makes most power relationships reciprocal. So, while government is the principal institution for achieving and maintaining social control, it cannot do much without voluntary compliance. To anticipate the regime argument, how significant is electoral control of government? What does it mean for weak public officials to be responsive to small or socioeconomically disadvantaged groups?

To treat elections as centrally important is to assume that the governments they control and guide are significant instruments of power. However, the social control model of power, emphasizing as it does the cost of compliance, suggests that government is mainly an aggregator of preferences, hence it operates largely by incrementalism and mutual adjustment.

In the pluralist view, because no one has much power, social change is largely apolitical. It is a process of modernization, involving both the transition from a traditional to a modern outlook and heightened social differentiation. Machine v. reform politics is a culture clash, reflecting the faster process of modernization for the educated middle class. In *Who Governs?*, the transition from “the patricians” through “the ex-plebes” to “the new men” is shorthand for modernization and highlights a process of increasing role differentiation (Stone, 1989b). In Dahl’s (1961, p. 59) view, because “political heterogeneity follows socioeconomic heterogeneity,” social differentiation increasingly disperses power. Thus power and conflict are shaped by, but do not contribute to, social change.

The economy is largely absent from pluralist accounts of political cleavage. Race is seen as a stubborn problem, but ethnic ties as a source of conflict are described as yielding to a process of modernization and assimilation. Political leaders vary in role, from caretakers who do little, through brokers who mediate conflicts, to entrepreneurs who play active parts in putting together large and complex projects. Social differentiation makes concerted action a problem. Banfield (1961, p. 252) observes of Daley’s Chicago that it “is too big a place, and the interest in it too diverse, for agreement to occur very often.” Political leadership consists mostly of aggregating preferences that emerge from the processes of social change and power is exercised within those bounds (Dahl, 1961, p. 204). Governance rests on popular consent in an increasingly diverse constituency.

SUPPLANTING URBAN PLURALISM

Regime theory modifies or contradicts the above principles of urban pluralism. Let us turn to the specifics.

Sufficiency of the State

Urban regime theory assumes that the effectiveness of local government depends greatly on the cooperation of nongovernmental actors and on the combination of state capacity with nongovernmental resources. Economic well-being is contingent on private investment (Peterson, 1981). The point, however, is a broader one: To be effective, governments must blend their capacities with those of various nongovernmental actors (Crenson, 1983).

The distinction between the public sector and the private sector can be made conceptually, but can also be a highly misleading guide to empirical reality (Mitchell, 1991). That reality is one in which government and business activities are heavily intertwined, as are government and nonprofit activities. This is not to say that government is an inconsequential institution or that public officials are unable to rally support and mobilize efforts on behalf of broad social purposes. Rather, it is to

emphasize that, in a liberal order, many activities and resources important for the well-being of society are nongovernmental and that fact has political consequences.

According to regime theory, holding a public position in and of itself enables officeholders to do relatively little, especially by way of introducing new practices and relationships. This is not to deny that the writ of national authority is generally greater than the writ of local authority, and the writ of authority in European countries appears to be significantly greater than in the US. The main point is that even at the national level in a so-called “strong state” country, the character of a liberal society is that many essential activities are nongovernmental, and, in rearranging these activities, government authority needs the cooperation of private actors. Coercive uses of authority can contribute to a rearrangement, but that can be most readily achieved where there is an active and cooperating constituency supporting the coercion and monitoring compliance.

The act of governance requires the cooperation of private actors and the mobilization of private resources. Talk about state autonomy should not obscure that fact.

Electoral Power Reassessed

If holding public office were sufficient warrant to govern, then elections would be centrally important. The important questions would be about how voters are influenced and elections won. In regime theory, these are not trivial questions, but they also are not the central questions. Often the winning electoral coalition is not the governing coalition (Ferman, 1985). The reason is that government authority is inadequate for governing, hence the cooperation and participation of nongovernmental actors becomes essential.

Why belabor the obvious point that in a liberal order many important activities are nongovernmental? Consider a definition of politics offered by Bernard Crick:

Politics...can be simply defined as the activity by which different interests within a given unit of rule are conciliated by giving them a share of power in *proportion to their importance to the welfare and survival of the whole community* (Crick, 1982, p. 21, emphasis added).

Crick never elaborates on the stipulation “in proportion to their importance to the welfare and survival of the whole community” but it is surely in need of some comment. For one thing, the question of who contributes what to the general well-being is itself subject to debate and conflict. Even so, it directs attention to a fundamentally different proposition from one person-one vote.

The definition emphasizes that politics is a great deal more than voting for and holding public office. If governance is furthering the welfare and assuring the survival of a body of citizens, then actors and activities labeled private are de facto an integral part of the governmental process and elections are of limited importance. Furthermore, once the sufficiency of formal authority for governance is in doubt and elections come to be regarded as inadequate forms of popular control, the conditions that make government responsive to socioeconomically disadvantaged groups are no longer met.

Power: from Social Control to Social Production

In the eyes of some, the dual weakness of government authority and of electoral control of government constitute conditions under which a private elite can exercise control. That, however, is not the regime argument. Instead, regime analysis concedes to pluralism the unlikelihood that any group can exercise comprehensive social control but also holds that the absence of monolithic control is so universal as to be uninteresting. Because the pluralist conception of power is in many ways uninteresting, regime theory offers as an alternative a social production model of power (Stone, 1989a). This is a facilitative concept, "power to" rather than "power over" (Arendt, 1961; Pitkin, 1972; Parsons, 1969; Clegg, 1989).

A social production model of power makes the usefulness of Crick's definition of politics more apparent. Instead of the power to govern being something that can be captured by an electoral victory, it is something created by bringing cooperating actors together, not as equal claimants, but often as unequal contributors to a shared set of purposes.

There is an admitted kinship between pluralism and the social production model of power. In regime theory, the capacity to govern is always partial and it is subject to the centrifugal forces to which pluralists are sensitive. Yet, a basic difference remains; governance is not the issue-by-issue process that pluralism suggests. There are several reasons why. One is that nongovernment resources are highly skewed and reflect a stratified society. Once the equalizing effect of one person-one vote is heavily discounted, the classic pluralist argument about dispersed inequalities cannot be sustained. As Rokkan (1966, p. 105) said, "Votes count but resources decide."

There is an undeniably high level of specialization of interest and role differentiation does characterize modern society, but the question of political involvement is more complicated than that. Those actors rich in resources by that fact have much to protect. Downtown banks, for example, have extensive investments, loans, and trust holdings. These concerns lead them directly into redevelopment, transportation, and tax policy. Social peace, race relations, and police practices are also salient as are education and the quality of the work force. With such wide policy concerns, not to mention the possibilities of serving as holder of government deposits and lender of money to municipal authorities, downtown banks have a very strong incentive to care about the character of city government, the community's political climate, and the allies on whom they can count. Extensive involvement in city affairs is thus to be expected.

Public choice literature tells us that coalitions tend to cycle, that is, to be unstable (Oppenheimer, 1975). That would surely be the case if politics were simply a matter of aggregating preferences about the distribution of a given body of benefits. Occurrences of coalition stability point to a different concept of politics, one in which politics is about the production rather than distribution of benefits. Moreover, we need not treat preferences as fixed; they evolve through experience and therefore are informed by available opportunities (Cohen & March, 1986, pp. 220-221).

On the surface, the argument offered here appears counterintuitive: that fixed preferences give rise to unstable coalitions and fluid preferences to relatively stable ones. However, the key assumption is in the accompanying assumption about the nature of politics. If we start from the premise that the amount and kind of benefits and

opportunities depend upon the creation and maintenance of cooperative arrangements, then we can see how attachments form and are reinforced.

A concept borrowed from economics amplifies the point: Transaction costs mean that established relationships have great value in facilitating future cooperation. Hence, once formed, a relationship of cooperation becomes something of value to be protected by all of the participants. Furthermore, because a governing coalition produces benefits it can share or withhold, being part of an established coalition confers preemptive advantages (Stone, 1988). Hence, there is an additional reason to preserve rather than casually discard coalition membership.

For those on the outside, gaining membership in a governing coalition possesses considerable appeal. Of course, several considerations may be at work and the concessions required to gain membership may be too great to be met by an outside group. Even so, there is a cost, a set of foregone opportunities, that attaches to being an outsider. Indeed, this point exposes a fundamental difference between the social control and social production models of power. The social control model focuses on control and resistance, with the cost of compliance serving to limit the power of the superordinate actor in accordance with the subordinate actor's will to resist. This is what March (1966) calls a power depleting model. The social production model makes being on the outside (the counterpart to resistance) costly to the subordinate actor. The social production conception is what March calls a power generating model. The power generating aspects of governance help explain how a prevailing coalition, such as the biracial coalition that governs Atlanta, can have such durability.

The social production model of power offered by regime theory thus differs in important respects from pluralism. While accepting the obvious point that society is too complex to be controlled by a single force, regime theory suggests that universal suffrage and social differentiation have limited explanatory power for urban politics. Such democratic concepts as one person-one vote and equality before the law are significant, but the unequal distribution of economic, organizational, and cultural resources has a substantial bearing on the character of actual governing coalitions, working against the kind of fluid coalition and power dispersion predicted by pluralist theory. As we turn next to the topic of preference formation, we will see that the "power to" of the social production model translates into a form of "power over." The translation is, however, far from simple and direct.

Preference Formation and Consent

Because people respond mainly to what is immediate and concrete, the pluralist notion of consensus possesses little explanatory power. There is little reason to believe that broad and vague ideas control particular and concrete actions and at least some reason to think that action often precedes belief (Cohen & March, 1986; Fantasia, 1988; Pitkin, 1972, p. 324). Furthermore, as Tilly (1984) has argued, society is more appropriately thought of as a loosely coupled network of interactions than as a cohesive unit bound together by common beliefs.

Let us turn, then, to the question of preferences on particular issues and let us assume narrow cognition: that ordinarily, people respond to what is familiar, immediate, and concrete. This view underlies the longstanding concept of satisficing (March & Simon,

1965) and has long been used in psychology (Milgram, 1974, p. 38). Narrow cognition is consistent with the pluralist view that individual preferences, at least on particular issues, derive mainly from one's place in a highly differentiated society. However, we radically alter our understanding of politics if we think about preferences as being formed, not in the context of a static social structure, but rather in a context of dynamic social interactions that sometimes reveal new possibilities and offer changing opportunities (Darnton, 1989). Combined with narrow cognition, this step suggests that policy preferences are relatively fluid.

What, then, are preferences based on? Are human beings rational egoists or are they shaped by some more complex process at work (Grafstein, 1992)? Are preferences formed atomistically or is there a social dimension? Classic pluralism did not face this question because a static position in the social structure allows for a comfortable convergence between rational egoism and highly specialized socialization into a role.

Though my own thoughts are preliminary, it might be fruitful to posit some elementary principles of motivation. There is an economizing side to the self that drives us to get what we can with minimum effort and expenditure. However, the principal of polarity tells us not to expect behavior to consist of a single tendency (Muir, 1977). A single tendency leaves nothing to explain; it just is. By contrast, polarity or opposing tendencies present the possibility of explanation in the form of specifying the conditions under which one or the other tendency prevails.

As a preliminary step toward identifying an appropriate polarity, let us assume that behavior is guided by mixed motives. Specifically, let us assume that, varying with the circumstances, the economizing tendency is counterpoised by a social purpose tendency. How, it might be asked, can a social purpose tendency be reconciled with limited cognition? Part of the answer has to do with the purposive side of the self and desire to be associated with something larger than the life of an asocial individual (Muir, 1977; Margolis, 1990; Chong, 1991). Another part of the answer is that narrow cognition is not a stationary condition. Vision can be expanded by discussion and interaction, leadership, exposure to a social movement, participation in a set of activities that point beyond the immediate, and much more.

Social relationships and experiences make a difference. Of course, if these relationships and experiences are characterized by treachery and distrust, then one learns to be guarded and withdraw into the economizing self. Ordinarily, narrow cognition does not result in the extreme of personal withdrawal. Instead, for most of us most of the time the purposes we pursue involve small familiar groups and the responsibilities attached to those groups and to our careers (Barnard, 1968, pp. 267-268). Centrifugal forces are real, but stop well short of solipsism.

As individuals move up in an organization or take up new activities, the social purposes they are cognizant of may expand or at least change. Large purposes may become more attractive than small ones. Why would a Martin Luther King forego personal wealth, comfort, and safety for a life of danger and modest material reward? It was hardly stereotypical economizing behavior. Presumably the magnitude and nobility of the cause had an appeal (Stone, 1990).

Still, not all grand and noble causes enlist active supporters. For that matter, over time many a would-be social reformer becomes cynical and opportunistic. What, then, explains the differential appeal of causes? People may, of course, disagree about whether

a cause is socially useful or harmful. Among those considered good and socially useful, an important consideration is perceived feasibility. Lost causes or hopeless causes command few supporters. After all, the current cliché is about wanting “to make a difference,” not about searching for a chance to make a futile gesture.

There is circularity in the relationship between commitment to a cause and its feasibility. The more people support a cause, the greater its feasibility. The point tells us something about the nature of leadership. The role of leaders is not simply to depict causes as socially worthy; they also try to convince followers that the cause is achievable and that the time is right to act (Stone, 1990; Chong, 1991). Of course, this also means that the leader-follower interaction is very complicated and that the follower-to-follower relationship plays a vital role, in some cases even blurring the distinction between leader and follower (Burns, 1978).

Fluid Preferences and Governance

Now we can see why it is important to reject the idea that politics is merely preference aggregation. If preferences are fluid, then their aggregation cannot be compartmentalized from the prior question of their creation. The interactions people engage in and the relationships they form (negotiations and coalition building, for example) shape preferences, including understanding about what is feasible and what is not. In this process, those with more resources (especially resources that can build additional support or advance a policy purpose) have a superior opportunity to rally support to the cause they favor. To be sure, the cause is likely to undergo modification and elaboration as support is built and conflict managed, but those with the most to contribute have a larger voice. Those with fewer resources to contribute have a lesser voice and may well be confined to what I have called elsewhere “small opportunities,” particular projects and individual benefits that are essentially byproducts of the main policy thrust (Stone, 1989a).

Fluid preferences thus refer to the potential for change and the phrase is not meant to suggest that they are highly volatile and change on a day-to-day basis. An established pattern of interaction and structure of resources has substantial staying power (Baumgartner & Jones, 1991).

Resources need not be material. As pluralists have long argued, they can consist of skill, ability to inspire, organizational capacity, technical expertise, or other intangible factors. However, material resources are especially useful. They are serviceable for almost any project and they can be shifted from one purpose to another. They are also especially useful in initiating an interaction around some shared objective. Material transactions frequently provide immediate results, requiring no stretching of narrow cognition. They also do not require a high level of trust, hence they are quite workable in an impersonal and socially heterogeneous setting, characterized by uncertainty and shallow relationships. Moreover, through repeated face-to-face exchange, material transactions can lead to less shallow and more complex relationships.

The relationship between preference formation and material resources is more complicated than the simple fact that some actors have more dollars than others. Some purposes are more readily coordinated and promoted by material means and, once a climate or ecology of material transactions is established, other such transactions are

readily made (Crenson, 1971, pp. 170-176). For that reason, some purposes may be more tractable than others. In short, the ready availability of means rather than the will of dominant actors may explain what is pursued and why. Hence, hegemony in a capitalist order may be more a matter of ease of cooperation around profit-oriented activities than the unchallenged ascendancy of core ideas.

If people are purposive, but purposive in the sense of wanting to be involved in achievable goals, and if some goals are more readily achieved than others, then people will tend toward those goals that are achievable. This may be the case even when hard-to-achieve goals are deemed desirable. It matters, then, how much effort it takes to organize people to do something. Russell Hardin (1982, p. 221) argues, "social states of affairs are often much more to be explained by what *can* be tacitly coordinated than by what anyone's preferences or reasoned outcomes might be." This is not to discount reflection and deliberations as elements in the human condition. They play a creative role, but they are likely to have a lasting impact only to the extent that they are embodied in concrete activities and vital social relationships.

With these general points in mind, let us reconsider the case of urban redevelopment in New Haven. Was Mayor Lee acting on preferences already held? Yes, in the sense that there was widespread sentiment in favor of revitalizing the city. However, because redevelopment also involved considerable displacement (20% of the city's population), social disruption that accompanied large-scale change in land use, delays and uneven success in rebuilding, numerous opportunity costs, and many unanticipated consequences, vague sentiment about city revitalization is hardly the whole issue. The real question is how the program could be sustained in the face of substantial opposition.

Raymond Wolfinger's (1974, p. 343) comment about one of the major components of redevelopment is instructive: "The [Church Street] project's inception, development, and survival depended on four important advantages possessed by the Lee Administration: technical skill, public relations talent, Lee's control of his government and party, and his alliance with businessmen and Yale." Encouraged by the availability of federal money, urban redevelopment in New Haven could claim high priority, not because of popular demand nor even because popular resistance was lacking, but because a few resource-rich and executive controlled sectors of the city supported the program and could provide the means necessary for its execution. It was what could be done; it was what could be coordinated.

Maintaining routine services can, of course, be coordinated even more easily than carrying out a controversial program, but urban redevelopment in New Haven met the needs of the regime members described by Wolfinger. It provided Mayor Lee with a highly visible program and a chance to make a name as a person of action. It offered cosmopolitan professionals the opportunity to make their mark. It was consistent with the patronage needs of the party organization and it enabled downtown business and Yale to make an effort to improve their environment. Redevelopment was also a generator of jobs, contracts, and such socially worthy small opportunities as new school buildings and housing for the elderly. It could therefore generate supplementary support and help manage conflict. In short, it was the social production model of power in operation.

The lesson of New Haven is not that an urban regime must be activist. Rather, it is that political leaders and professional administrators of an activist inclination need

coalition partners who can provide resources useful in launching major projects and managing the resulting conflict. This is not to suggest that activist efforts are necessarily successful. Program activism sometimes loses. In Kalamazoo, for example, tax conscious, small property holders used the referendum process to veto that city's program of redevelopment (Sanders, 1987).

The real lesson of New Haven is that we should treat power with special care. It is not enough to see the city's story as one in which a set of strategically positioned and resource-rich actors imposed their will on others. Nor is it enough to debate whether the prevailing group represented majority sentiment or just a form of acquiescence. That scenario misses the point about fluid preferences.

If preference is influenced by perceived feasibility, then the will of the governing coalition was shaped by what was seen as achievable. The availability of federal money and the structure of the urban renewal program were strong inducements for the formation of a business-government partnership. Although the partners were far from unwilling to join together, it is perhaps significant that there were no similar inducements for other coalitions. Federal money and the structure of the urban renewal program were only one set of factors. Redevelopment is amenable to execution in a way that many other policy initiatives are not. Redevelopment requires mainly the coordination of effort among a small number of elite actors. They can command the essential resources and, if they reach agreement, the program can move ahead even in the face of significant opposition. Moreover, redevelopment carries with it an abundance of selective incentives that a policy issue such as educational reform lacks. The logic of the situation in New Haven made a coalition with business attractive and redevelopment appealing to city hall. The achievability of redevelopment shaped preferences, especially those of key public officials.

In urban pluralism, preferences form in a manner exogenous to the power relationship. Power is a contest of wills, that is, a contest over whose preference will prevail. In this contest, resources may be unequal, but everyone has limited resources and therefore a limited capacity to impose their will on someone else. By contrast, the social production model treats preference formation as endogenous to the power relationship. Preferences are influenced by practicability: Achievable goals are attractive, difficult-to-achieve goals are unattractive. Of course, feasibility is not the only factor that influences preference; other considerations also enter the picture. We should remember as well that practicability need not be an all-or-nothing matter. Even with these caveats, one can still say that the logic of the situation in New Haven favored urban redevelopment in the Richard Lee era.

Once we think about the logic of the situation, given fluidity of preferences, power ceases to be simply a question of whether dominant actors can freely impose their will. Intention is partially shaped by the situation. Just as some actors possess more resources than others, some actions are more compelling than others. Ease of coordination enters the picture.

Let us add one final dimension to the matter of preference formation. Preferences do not emerge from atomistic relationships. Social bonds matter enormously, not only because they inform us, but because we want to maintain them. What the isolated individual might prefer is modified by a desire or need to take into account the consequences of that want on someone else. This is what Crick's definition of politics

is about: a situation in which differing interests take one another into account by sharing in governance. This ideal is seldom met on a universally inclusive basis, but a significant degree of mutual “account taking” is surely an integral part of building and maintaining a coalition.

Hannah Arendt (1961, p. 164) captures the point nicely when she observes, “All political business is, and always has been, transmitted within an elaborate framework of ties and bonds for the future.” For Arendt, the process of governing is one of acting within a set of relationships and acting with an eye on the future state of these relationships. Coalition partners thus educate one another in two ways. One is a simple exchange of information. The other is educating one another about the nature of their interdependence. Mere information about another can be disregarded. The understanding of an interdependent relationship is a more insistent matter. Indeed, at its most profound level, such an understanding may redefine identity. That is a major reason why the composition of a governing coalition and the nature of the relationship between its members have a profound effect on policy.

As coalitions form and change, new considerations and new understandings come into play and preferences modify. Tensions may abound within a coalition, but those who can bring the necessary resources together and coordinate their efforts have an opportunity to constitute a governing coalition. The chance to pursue significant policy aims can have the effect of subduing differences and reshaping outlooks. The very act of cooperating with other people enlarges what is thinkable and it may give rise to new or expanded preferences.

Preferences change because understanding changes. In this process we alter the boundaries of social intelligence, not by force of intellectual effort, but by the experience of interacting purposefully with others. The nature and composition of a governing coalition is thus vitally important, not only for who is included, but also for who is not. A narrow governing coalition means that policy is guided by a narrow social understanding and a struggle to alter participation in the coalition may ensue. It is appropriate, then, to turn to the issue of political conflict and policy change.

Political Economy and the Sources of Political Conflict

In classic urban pluralism, the economy is considered principally for its social consequences. Increasing levels of education, the expansion of the middle class, and ethnic assimilation diminish class and ethnic cleavage, foreordain “good government” opposition to machine politics, and promise the eventual triumph of a reform morality.

Mainly, the pluralist world is divided into discrete spheres of activity. People go about their specialized activities largely unconcerned about or unbothered by those outside their own narrow sphere. As Nelson Polsby (1980, p. 117) says, “If a man’s major life work is banking, the pluralist presumes he will spend his time at the bank and not in manipulating community decisions.” The economy and political affairs are thus seen as separate arenas. Aside from issues of political morality, conflict is largely internal to discrete spheres of activity and the prevailing pattern is one of mutual adjustment. Moreover, pluralists believe that blockage in one area (minorities in private employment in Dahl’s example) leads to increased effort elsewhere. Given pluralist assumptions about dispersed power, one would indeed expect social practice overall to offer

something to everyone. Dispersed power also leads to expectations about equilibrium and incremental change.

Social, economic, and technological changes might temporarily disrupt various points of equilibrium, but mutual accommodation would work to restore them. In a system of dispersed power, slack political resources, Dahl argues, can be used to correct felt wrongs and open needed opportunities. Any political action that imposes one-sided costs is likely to be opposed by mobilization to redress the balance.

Regime theory generates no such expectation. Power as social production capacity (“power to”) is not assumed to be dispersed and spheres of activity are not assumed to be discrete. Regime theorist Susan Fainstein’s (1990, p. 123) political economy perspective makes a sharp contrast with pluralism. In her view, “political forces are ultimately rooted in the relations of production.” To be sure, she argues, political forces enjoy a degree of autonomy and they are affected by noneconomic as well as economic factors, but the agenda of political struggle is closely tied in with the economy. Still, the politics-economy relationship follows neither fixed pattern nor set trajectory. In a sense, history is a series of momentous struggles over the terms of that relationship, with no predetermined outcome.

In a political economy perspective, redevelopment is a response to a far-reaching process of economic restructuring, a response:

to the transformation of the economic bases of cities in the advanced capital world from manufacturing to services; the rapid growth of the producer services sector within cities at the top of the global hierarchy; the simultaneous concentration of economic control within multinational firms and financial institutions, and decentralization of their manufacturing and routine office functions” (Fainstein, 1990, p. 120).

Economic change raises questions of equity: Who will benefit and who will bear the cost? It also forces decisionmakers to ask how various economic and noneconomic considerations are to be weighed against one another (Logan & Molotch, 1987). The pace as well as the exact form of restructuring is an issue. As Karl Polanyi (1957, pp. 36-37) has argued, “The rate of change is often of no less importance than the direction of the change itself.”

Classic pluralism suggests that the costs and benefits of restructuring should be widely spread and that the capacity of adversely affected groups to mitigate harmful actions should make for slow and orderly change. By contrast, regime theory predicts that restructuring will reflect the concerns of the governing coalition and its capacity to understand and appreciate the consequences of its actions. The small opportunities attached to redevelopment work against a countermobilization, as does the limited importance of electoral power.

Restructuring does not itself dictate that a city like New Haven must concentrate on the physical reconstruction of its central business district and displace one-fifth of its population without adequate attention to relocation facilities. Nor does it dictate that a city like Baltimore must concentrate for years on converting its harbor area to convention and tourism uses while neglecting its school system (Orr, 1991). Regime theory focuses on the nature and composition of the governing coalition and, instead

of assuming a widespread capacity to redress imbalances, asks how and why some concerns gain attention and others do not.

By embracing a political economy perspective, regime theory rejects the notion that modern life consists of discrete spheres of activity, largely insulated from one another. The physical redevelopment of the city can be seen as part of a fundamental process of restructuring. Through the modification of land use, redevelopment spills over into all areas of community activity.

With community life unsegmented in a political economy perspective, conflict and policy change come into a different light. In the process of economic restructuring, physical redevelopment competes with education for priority. If the conditions of employability and the pathway to economic productivity are changing, why has human investment policy not enjoyed a higher priority? Restructuring in and of itself cannot answer that question, nor can pluralism with its assumptions about dispersed power. By contrast, regime theory can provide an answer and can suggest as well what would help to alter urban policy priorities. Before turning to the specifics, I want to address briefly the larger issue of the character of political change and the context within which regime-building efforts occur.

Political Choice and Political Change

Regime theorist Martin Shefter (1976, p. 19) rejects the view “that political institutions mechanistically reflect, and are uniquely determined by, an underlying configuration of social forces.” He argues instead that governing arrangements are artifacts, formed in an intentional manner. Tracing the evolution of the Tammany machine in New York, Shefter follows the coalition-building efforts and strategic maneuvers of contending elites, and shows “that alternative political structures can exist in a given social environment.” He thus joins Barrington Moore in treating history as an opportunity to explore “suppressed possibilities” (Moore, 1978, p. 376; Smith, 1983), that is, Shefter views political change as a process in which choice and struggle play a part as some arrangements gain sway over others.

To talk of choice and struggle is not to suggest that elites have a clear and comprehensive vision of the alternatives they shape and advance. Narrow cognition precludes that scenario. Nor is it to suggest that elites have free rein to pursue whatever their political imaginations can bring forth. Elites cannot easily ignore powerful trends such as economic restructuring and they find themselves constrained by such forces as the mobility of capital.

Political explanation is not simply the realm of choice left over when constraints are taken into account. It is, in part, a matter of how constraints are modified or maneuvered around. Jones and Bachelor (1986, p. 212) use the term “creative bounded choice.” Hannah Arendt (1961, p. 117) writes about, not subordination to, but “the domination of necessity.” Political freedom, she says, is about people deliberating and acting together to modify what would otherwise be an expected course of events (Arendt, 1961, pp. 168-171).

Modifying an expected course of events calls for more than deliberation and expression of intent. It requires a set of arrangements that brings together needed resources and motivates participants to play their essential parts. Action is central.

Mobilization, organization, and the generation of new capabilities within the nongovernment sector is as important as, or more so, than making a legislative claim. Hence, we come back to the question of the adequacy or inadequacy of government authority. In a liberal order, important resources lie outside the government sector and behavior is not closely guided by exertions of authority. A substantial rearrangement of established and therefore “expected” social and economic practice (that is, a major policy innovation) typically requires some form of effort that joins government and nongovernment resources. It is to the nature of that effort I now turn.

REGIME AND GOVERNING CAPACITY

By emphasizing the inadequacy of legal authority for bringing about policy change, regime theory can perhaps clarify what is at issue with the rediscovery of the state. When studied historically, the state emerges as a political entity with a limited and variable capacity to govern (Skowronek, 1982; Badie & Birnbaum, 1983). Further, as Skocpol (1985, p. 17) says, there is an “unevenness [in capacity] across policy areas” as well. In regime theory, because “stateness” guarantees no given level of effectiveness, those who would govern find themselves drawn toward interdependence with various societal interests (Skocpol, 1985, pp. 19-20). The special weakness of the American local state reinforces the point.

Some discussions of state capacity focus on technical competence, on the training of officials, and the expertise they possess. While technical capacity is not inconsequential, I want to emphasize a different aspect of capacity: the capacity to stimulate the cooperation of private actors. Responding effectively to a challenge like economic restructuring means bringing about substantial change in established social and economic practice and that means drawing on nongovernment resources and enlisting nongovernment actors. The character of that undertaking depends on the policy aim pursued.

The inadequacy of government authority standing by itself accounts for the frequent discrepancy between the winning electoral coalition in a locality and the coalition that actually governs the locality. The inadequacy of government authority is also a reason why, in order to explain the policy action of a regime, it is necessary to go beyond the composition of the governing coalition. Because members of the coalition are not simply dividing the spoils of office, the nature of the relationship among the coalition members matters. It is particularly significant that this relationship includes the resources members bring to bear on the task of governance.

In order for a governing coalition to be viable, it must be able to mobilize resources commensurate with its main policy agenda. Participation in governance, especially for those who are not public officials, is based heavily on the goals they want to achieve. Participation may modify these goals, but participation is still purposeful. It follows that, if a coalition cannot deliver on the agenda that holds it together, then the members will disengage, leaving the coalition open to reconstitution. In the same manner, doable actions help secure commitments and perhaps attract others with similar or consistent aims.

A Typology

Let us now move from general proposition to concrete cases. In doing so, I offer four types of regimes, regimes that vary in the difficulty of the governing tasks their policy agendas call for. Three of the four represent regimes that correspond to types well documented in research on American cities. The fourth is at least partly hypothetical and represents an extension, not a recounting, of the experience in a few American communities. I have not crafted the typology to the cross-national experience because differences in central government structure, national policy, and party system can mean that locality-to-locality comparisons across nations are extremely complicated (Keating, 1991). Even within the US, the types represent simplifications.

The purpose of the typology is not to illuminate the complexity of concrete cases, but rather to show how, if policy change is to be brought about, the resources must match the requirements of the proposed agenda. The typology makes concrete the argument that governance requires more than the capture of elected office. The logic of the typology is that those who would exercise political choice and alter current policy can do so only by making use of or generating an appropriate body of nongovernmental resources.

1. *Maintenance regimes* represent no effort to introduce significant change. They provide us with a benchmark against which to compare other types of regimes. Because maintenance regimes involve no effort to change established social and economic practice, no extensive mobilization of private resources is necessary and no substantial change in behavior is called for. Such regimes center on the provision of routine services and require only periodic approval at the ballot box.

Motivational demands are minimal. Skepticism or indifference is not a problem. A desire to keep tax levels down is often at work, but support for that position calls only for occasional participation in elections. Few demands are placed on elites.

Since maintenance regimes require little of public officials and low taxes are usually popular, why are maintenance regimes not more prevalent (as they once were)? The answer is that, while demands are few, rewards are small. For nongovernment actors, maintenance calls for contentment with things as they are and "as they are" may include a state of decline. For public officials, maintenance means foregoing opportunities to make a mark on the world and names for themselves. Maintenance is appealing mostly to provincials who are content to operate in a small arena populated by friends and neighbors.

2. *Development regimes* (such as Lee's coalition in New Haven) are concerned primarily with changing land use in order to promote growth or counter decline. Therefore they represent efforts to modify established social and economic patterns and they involve the linking of private investment to public action. For private investors to commit their resources, they must believe that positive change is feasible and they may well see a series of public actions as necessary steps to assure that feasibility. These steps may consist of acquiring and clearing land, building public facilities, or providing other subsidies.

Because they involve change and disruption, development projects are often controversial. They provoke opposition and contain risks for public officials who back them. Hence, development activities are often insulated from popular control

(Friedland, 1983). They impose no motivational demands on the mass public and are advanced easiest when the public is passive. What they do require is coordination between institutional elites. Coordination may involve some inducements, but little coercion. A set of actors must move in concert, but the number is small. It is not inherently difficult for them to frame a shared vision and inducements do not have to be spread widely.

Given that there are risks of popular disapproval, elected officials could be expected to be wary about identifying themselves with large development projects. However, in America's post-World War II cities, mayors have consistently associated their administrations closely with development activity. Such activity is a response to economic restructuring and it meets a need for quick and visible action. The immediate negative consequences are usually localized and mayors have tended to identify themselves more closely with the announcement of plans than with the details of implementation (Sanders & Stone, 1987). Still, some, such as Boston's Kevin White, have paid the price of electoral unpopularity.

Development activity not only gives rise to controversy, it also generates an abundance of selective incentives and small opportunities: jobs, contracts, fees, new schools, parks, theater facilities, and many more. These can help enormously in managing conflict and softening or dividing the opposition. In terms of degree of difficulty in the governing task, development does not rank very high. It calls mainly for elite coordination and, to help manage conflict, insider transactions. Insofar as the mass public is concerned, all that is required is that they not inflict electoral defeats. The resources needed are those of legal authority (principally the power of eminent domain), private investment monies, development expertise, transaction links within the business sector, and public funds for various forms of subsidy. Over the years, federal and state governments have provided substantial public money to localities for development purposes.

3. *Middle class progressive regimes* focus on such measures as environmental protection, historic preservation, affordable housing, the quality of design, affirmative action, and linkage funds for various social purposes (Clavel, 1986; Conroy, 1990; Kann, 1986; Shearer, 1989). Because exactions are part of the picture, if they are to amount to anything, development must be encouraged or at least not prevented. Progressive mandates thus involve monitoring the actions of institutional elites and calibrating inducements and sanctions to gain a suitable mix of activity and restriction. The governing task consists of a complex form of regulation.

Unlike the development regime, the government-business relationship in a progressive regime is not a largely voluntary relationship. Coercion plays a larger part than in development regimes. On the other hand, the relationship is not purely coercive. Business has the option of disinvesting. Some might argue that the difference between development regimes and progressive regimes is that progressive cities simply are more attractive as investment sites. That, however, misses part of the picture. Even cities faced with economic decline often have areas within them that are quite attractive to investors, hence some form of negotiated arrangement is possible. At the same time, many cities that are highly attractive to private investment nevertheless impose few restrictions.

Furthermore, investment partnerships can be worked out between government and nonbusiness interests, for example, New York City's long-running progressive housing policy rested partly on the use of financial resources from labor unions (Fainstein & Fainstein, 1989). Nonbusiness investors may be inexperienced and, for that reason, more difficult to work with than their business counterparts. None of this is to deny that cities differ in attractiveness to private investors and differences in attractiveness affect the potential for progressive measures, but there is clearly more to it than that.

A progressive regime requires an attentive electorate. Progressive mandates often rest on a base of active popular support. If the referendum process is a keystone in regulation, as in San Francisco (DeLeon, 1990), then dependence on mass support is direct and central. Regulation does not require extensive participation by masses of people but, because progressive mandates may involve significant tradeoffs, citizen participation is useful in informing citizens about the complexities of policy while keeping them committed to progressive goals. The difficult part is maintaining that commitment by setting goals that are feasible but also socially significant. Citizen involvement in community affairs and in oversight boards and commissions may help preserve that commitment. Progressive regimes show that elections are not an insignificant part of the government process, but they also illustrate the need for something more than periodic approval.

The pursuit of progressive mandates is a more difficult governing task than development. The coordination of institutional elites is as much a part of the progressive task as the development task and it may be more difficult because action is less voluntary. The involvement of citizen groups and the need for active and informed public support heighten the difficulty of the task. The resources required include those needed for development plus the organizational capacity to inform, mobilize, and involve the citizenry.

Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to add a comparative or cross-national dimension to the discussion. The US context is one of weak and, especially at the local level, nonprogrammatic parties. Moreover, the US to an unusual degree leaves responsibility for planning in local hands. Consequently, in the area of land use regulation, US local governments have more to do with weaker political organizations than almost any other advanced industrial society. It is not surprising, then, that most progressive communities in the US have large middle class populations. The weakness of party organization gives special importance to nonpolitical civic organizations and to organizational and technical skills that the middle class can provide on a volunteer basis. At the same time, even in such a different national setting as Paris, France, the middle class plays a crucial role in progressive government (Body-Gendrot, 1987).

4. *Regimes devoted to lower class opportunity expansion* would involve enriched education and job training, improved transportation access, and enlarged opportunities for business and home ownership. In the US, such regimes are largely hypothetical, but there are hints of such regimes in community-based organizations, such as Baltimore's BUILD, which has gained a place in that city's governing coalition (Orr, 1991). A few cities, Chicago under Harold Washington, for example, have moved in that direction from time to time.

I use the term opportunity expansion rather than redistribution to suggest that the programs need not be zero-sum, as the word redistribution suggests. The lower class

can be treated as something more than claimants for greater service; efforts can be directed toward expanding opportunities through human investment policies and widened access to employment and ownership. As the quality of the work force rises and ownership becomes more widespread, there are potential gains, both economic and noneconomic, for the community at large. The challenge, of course, is how to organize a community so that such admirable aims can actually be pursued.

A regime of lower class opportunity expansion involves the same difficulties as progressive regimes, plus some of its own. To be done on a significant scale, enlarged opportunities for employment and for business and home ownership require altering practices in the private sector, but without driving away investment. Achieving these goals calls for coordination among institutional elites, but not on a purely voluntary basis. It requires regulation and regulation is most sustainable when backed by a popular constituency. Because a lower class constituency lacks some of the skills and organizational resources that a middle class constituency would start with, the effort to equip it for that watchdog constituency role is more substantial than the effort needed to mobilize a middle class constituency and that is only part of the story.

A major challenge is the motivational one. A lower class population is conditioned to restricted opportunity and is skilled in coping with disappointment and frustration. This is the circumstance that leads some to talk about a culture of poverty, but that term is too antiseptic to describe the concrete reality on which limited expectations are based. It carries with it an element of "blame the victim." Its only usefulness is to highlight the difficulty of changing expectations based on long conditioning. But, then, why talk about culture? Why not talk about the conditioning, which, for the most part, is ongoing?

Altering opportunities on a class basis calls for more than loose references to self-help or pep talks to individuals about working hard to get ahead. In the first place, the process requires that opportunities be real, that those who meet education or training requirements be offered decent jobs, not dead-end jobs with no future (Bernick, 1987). School compacts that guarantee jobs to high school graduates or that assure financial support for a college education are the kinds of practices that make opportunities real. A few individual opportunities or scattered chances to compete for a restricted set of positions are not enough.

The availability of the opportunities is only the first step. Lower class children also need to believe that the opportunities are real and that they are actually attainable. Given a background that encourages low expectations and cynicism about life chances, members of the lower class are likely to pursue opportunities only if they are encouraged and supported not only individually but also through their families and their peers. Put another way, changing conditions on paper is not enough. Previously conditioned expectations have to be altered. To do that, it is necessary to create a complex set of incentives that are extensive enough to affect classwide views and that are intensive enough to sustain ongoing personal commitments to make use of expanded opportunities.

For opportunity expansion regimes, the coordination task is immense. Given that the participation of elites may be less than fully voluntary, coordination among them is itself no simple matter. Given the needs they must meet, they may find that coordinating resource allocation among themselves is not enough; they may also feel

compelled to make concerted efforts to garner assistance from the state government or other extralocal sources. Mobilizing a lower class constituency itself is another immense task, requiring the combined efforts of government and nongovernment actors (Henig, 1982).

The most difficult feature in the entire process is achieving congruence between the provision of opportunity by established institutions and the use of those opportunities by the lower class. If the opportunities are not available to a high degree, then lower class expectations will not modify. However, if opportunities are made available and are poorly used, then the institutions providing those opportunities will withdraw or divert their efforts to a different task.

The kind of large-scale campaign needed to expand opportunities on a class basis would be long and hard. It would offer few quick returns to individual officeholders (and American politics, especially at the local level, is very much an instrument of personal political organizations). Overcoming a cycle of disappointment and cynicism is a governing task far more difficult than even the pursuit of the mandates of middle class progressives. It would require all of the resources needed for a progressive regime plus the creation of a capacity for mass involvement in supporting and making use of programs of opportunity expansion. Though it need not be done all at once, it has to be done on large enough scale and at fast enough pace to encourage and sustain a changed outlook within the lower class. In addition, it would probably require funding or other program supports beyond what can be raised within urban localities.

A Schematic Representation

If we return to the earlier proposition about policy agendas and resources, we can now present it schematically (see Fig. 1). The horizontal axis represents increasing degrees of difficulty in the governing task. The vertical axis represents increasing levels of resources needed as the difficulty of the task increases. Where resources are commensurate with the tasks that characterize various regimes, we have an area of regime viability. Where resources and task are not commensurate, regimes lack viability.

With this figure in mind, we can then return to the earlier issue about political choice and policy action. Promoting development, pursuing progressive mandates, and seeking opportunity expansion for the lower class are not choices available through a simple process of enactment. To pursue these policy alternatives means to marshal the resources required for their achievement. Policy choice, then, is a matter of regime building, of bringing together the essential partners on a basis that enables them to meld together the resources commensurate with the governing responsibility undertaken. There is a role for reflection and deliberation, but the role is not simply one of choosing desirable goals. Instead, it is one of devising a means whereby the government and nongovernment sectors can cooperate fruitfully. To fail to treat the question of means adequately is to invite disillusionment and the abandonment of socially worthy goals. Cynicism and opportunism are sure to follow.

A first step in understanding the issue of means is to grasp the fact that governmental authority, standing alone, is inadequate. I have attempted to use regime theory to show why. Another step is to abandon the analytically convenient but politically inappropriate notion that governance is about aggregating relatively stable policy

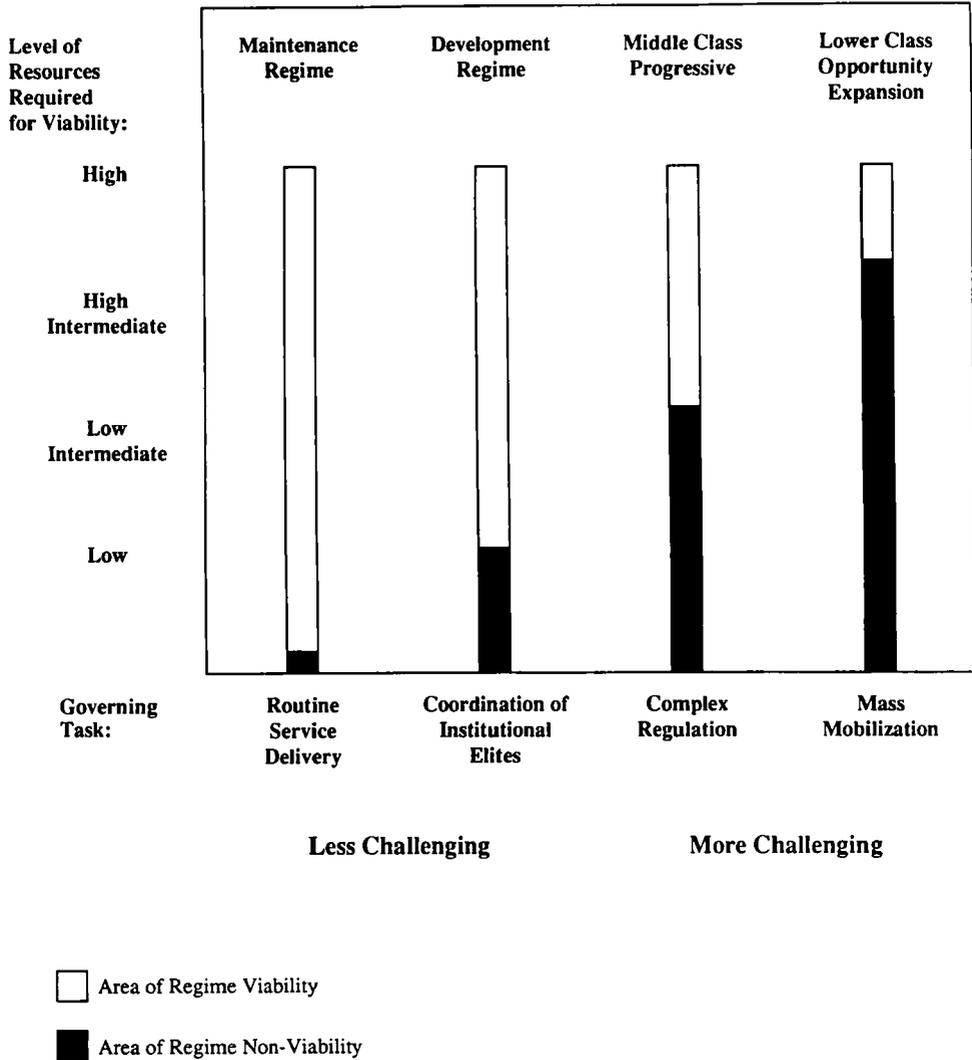


FIGURE 1
Regime Viability

preferences. These preferences are fluid and the ones deemed worthy will thrive only if provided a supportive environment. Regime theory provides a way of thinking about what constitutes a supportive environment.

CONCLUSION

In facing the challenge of regime building in American cities, two features of the national political economy must be reckoned with. One is a large and varied

nongovernment sector that not only controls most investment activity but also contains most of society's associational life. The other is that government authority relies more on inducing actions than it does on simply issuing commands. It is not enough, then, to put good people into office. There is little they can do on their own. Even their use of coercion depends on an actively supportive constituency.

If the restructuring of the economy is to be dealt with constructively, if urban poverty and racial division are to be ameliorated, appropriate regimes are required, that is, arrangements that combine government and nongovernment efforts. Building and maintaining appropriate urban regimes entails overcoming two related barriers. One is the inherent difficulty of promoting policy change. The other is the tendency for coalition formation to be guided by the availability of selective material incentives.

Machiavelli (1985, pp. 23-24) captured the difficulty of innovation in *The Prince*, observing:

nothing is more difficult to handle, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage, than to put oneself at the head of introducing new orders. For the introducer has all those who benefit from the old order as enemies, and he has lukewarm defenders in all those who might benefit from the new orders. This lukewarmness arises partly from fear of adversaries who have the laws on their side and partly from the incredulity of men, who do not truly believe in new things unless they come to have a firm experience of them.

If Machiavelli is right, the motivation to support change comes more easily after the fact, but political reality calls for active support as a precondition of basic policy change. The challenge for political leadership is how to make a new order believable before it is experienced, how to generate and maintain active support for "new things" before the public has had an opportunity "to have a firm experience of them." This is unlikely to be purely a matter of rhetoric; basic policy change is perhaps more likely through concrete efforts that demonstrate how small steps can cumulate into larger moves.

If few resources are readily available, the easiest regime to build is one devoted to the maintenance of routine services, but that would mean not responding to economic restructuring and its attendant social problems. Given a determination to act, the easiest response is a development regime. Of course, it may arouse neighborhood opposition and see proposals blocked, but it has the capacity to modify proposals or present alternatives. The resilience of development policy lies partly in the selective incentives it generates. Development is not an all-or-nothing matter. It consists of an aggregate of discrete projects, each of which offers tangible and immediate benefits to the operational actors: They stand to receive contracts and fees as well as a chance to play a part in visible accomplishments. For operational actors especially, reinforcement is immediate. The general and long-term benefits may be in doubt, but the project is, nevertheless, visible and can be touted as an improvement. Tangible and immediate benefits to private actors (profits) can be tapped directly or indirectly to provide tangible and immediate benefits to public actors (e.g., campaign funds). Because the benefits are easily divisible, they can be used to bridge racial or other social divides and to bypass ideological differences.

Political leadership, that is, the creative exercise of political choice, is not about following the path of least resistance. In the case of urban regimes, it consists neither in doing nothing nor simply making use of the incentive already in place. It is about developing a larger view of what might be and then crafting the arrangements that advance that vision. After all, associational life is not built entirely on selective incentives and pursuit of material reward.

It should be possible to bring groups together around broader issues. Suburban communities, for example, often give public education top priority. How is this possible? Ideology seems to have little to do with it. Suburbs are communities in which civic participation is often oriented to family concerns such as education for their children. The suburban resident who is also a manager in a business corporation, as suburban resident, has different priorities from those she or he might have as corporate official. Suburban civic participation is often organized around support for education through PTAs and related organizations. Participants come together in their role as proponents of a good school system. Their individual concerns are merged into a shared concern. Their tendency to be purposeful is given social expression. Furthermore, in middle class suburbs, an educational thrust is a highly viable policy purpose, reinforced by the ready availability of both public revenue and a community environment that nurtures belief in the availability of opportunity and the social capital to take advantage of it.

In the city, if family concerns and concerns about the quality of community life are not given public expression, business profitability will fill the vacuum. Business interests control resources that can be devoted to civic activity and business executives are based in an organizational setting that emphasizes obligations to stockholders and other business executives (Stinchcombe, 1968, pp. 181-186). In this setting, purpose is defined in terms of material gain and people cooperate in order to further material gain. If city policy is to pursue a wider agenda than development, then nonbusiness actors have to be brought into the regime. Participants, business and nonbusiness alike, must occupy roles that focus on social concerns and on ways of addressing those concerns, but social concerns cannot be sustained in a vacuum. Fiscal resources and concerted efforts to provide a supportive environment are also needed. In the affluent suburb, priority for education is easy; it can be built on strong supports in the private lives of residents and the tax base they provide. In the city, the coordination of public and private efforts requires effort and leadership skill. The political challenge is greater.

The development experience can be misleading. Because material incentives play a large part, it may appear that they play the only part. Similarly, because participation in an achievable small purpose is more attractive than participation in an unachievable large purpose, it may appear that only small purposes are attractive. In expanding policy choice, the role of political leadership is to weave material and nonmaterial incentives together and to combine achievable small purposes in a way that contributes to a large purpose.

In his analysis of organizational leadership, Chester Barnard (1968, p. 284) said “the morality that underlies enduring cooperation is multidimensional.” Contrary to the assumptions of some analysts, cooperation is not an unnatural act that people have to be coerced or bribed to perform. To be sure, the centrifugal force of individual interest and immediately achievable purpose have to be reckoned with, but there is also the possibility of tapping the human yearning for larger social purpose. Indeed, Barnard

(1968, p. 282) argues, without a larger purpose, an organization is likely to be short-lived.

If freedom consists of being able to exercise choice, political freedom for American cities requires a capacity to build regimes with broad agendas. For that to happen, urban political leaders have to envision the city as more than a location for physical development and they must be able to devise arrangements that involve nonbusiness elements of the community in governance. The weakness of formal authority leaves a vacuum that business interests have the ready resources to fill. The existence of progressive regimes, instances of community-based organizations, such as Baltimore's BUILD, and the capacity of suburbs to support alternative forms of civic cooperation all indicate that regimes capable of pursuing more inclusive agendas are possible. The creation of such regimes depends as much on what happens in the nongovernment sector as in the government sector. Ultimately, however, it depends on how and in what ways the two sectors are joined.

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