

alone. To achieve metropolitan reorganization required the support of suburban political leaders in an action conspicuous to the mass public. A downtown business elite had little capacity to enlist suburban political allies on a visible issue in which business interests and suburban residential interests were plainly at odds.

The failure to achieve metropolitan reorganization demonstrates yet another point. Social scientists are accustomed to an analytical framework where there is a clear distinction between independent and dependent variables. Drawing on Lowi's policy typology,⁶ Paul Peterson constructed an interpretation of city politics in which, within each policy arena, the type of policy (the independent variable) molds the form of political participation and the character of politics (the dependent variables).⁷ But policy and politics are, I suggest, related in more complex and less linear ways than this construct allows. The regime analysis I am employing offers a different dynamic. Politics in the form of the governing coalition shapes policy, *and* policy also shapes the regime. The reasoning here is not a simple reversal of the policy-causes-politics argument but rather that policy and politics are circular, each at various points causing and being caused by the other. In this view, causation is in part a matter of enacted change. Some actions are what Selznick calls "character-defining."⁸ Sometimes changes in policy come first; sometimes politics (the character of the governing coalition) forges policy. Either can have profound impact—illustrating the argument that the interplay of event and structure is a process of *structuring*.⁹

In the case at hand, the inability of Atlanta's city hall/business elite alliance to expand the city's boundaries was an event that shaped the regime. Thwarted in its effort to gain (suburban) white voters and restore the earlier electoral coalition, white business executives had to develop a working relationship with black political leaders whose influence lay in having the votes to control city government.

There are other instances as well of policy shaping politics in highly particular ways. Nationally, as federal urban policy shifted from strict to lenient guidelines about citizen participation, community groups have lost an advantage. Likewise, increased emphasis on using public money to leverage private investment serves to weaken the neighborhood position and enhance that of development capital.¹⁰ By facilitating the creation of entities based on a public-private partnership, federal policy encourages the adoption of local policies that, in turn, diminish the political force of popular majorities in city politics. The creation of complex tax districts and arrangements, the use of tax-exempt bonds, and reduced requirements for bond referendums have similar effects on city politics. Atlanta's urban regime, like that in other cities, is constantly subject to the impact of continuing change in federal and state policy.

However, there is more to shaping an urban regime than formal policy

enactments. The Atlanta experience illustrates how a unified business elite can deploy its own resources to devise patterns of civic cooperation in which it is a guiding force. In Atlanta, as the old system of negotiated settlements became tattered from the winds of social change, the downtown business elite began a comprehensive program of repair. Its creation of Action Forum, in particular, along with the active involvement of black business leaders in the Chamber of Commerce, CAP, and business trips to promote investment in Atlanta, provided multiple opportunities for biracial interaction centered on the policy agenda of downtown business. Because these arrangements provided networking opportunities, which in turn brought some blacks into the white corporate structure of Atlanta and opened up business opportunities for others, they appealed to black entrepreneurial aspirations. The system of interaction was not one concerned with race relations in general; rather, it was a set of arrangements that linked elements of the black middle class closely with white business interests.

Minority business opportunities, first opened up with MARTA and then broadened and firmly established under Mayor Jackson's program of joint ventures and minority set-asides for city contracts, solidified the business foundation of biracial cooperation. Although white business interests initially resisted some of these programs, black electoral power was too substantial to be disregarded. In this instance, it might be said that politics shaped policy, but that puts the matter too simply. The black-led city government's policy of promoting minority business enterprises meshed smoothly with the networking efforts of downtown business executives, and the two initiatives jelled into a new form of biracial cooperation. Indeed, the agreement to cooperate around business opportunity is now so firm that, as we have seen, other considerations and policy concerns yield to business-guided development—so long as it provides minority business opportunities.

Although the group benefits generated by these arrangements are limited and partly symbolic, the alliance is strengthened by the presence of particular benefits (selective incentives) that reinforce the attachment of black business executives to the coalition. The black business executives, in turn, provide campaign funds and various types of civic leadership that are an integral part of black political mobilization in Atlanta. Hence, the coalition, like its counterpart in the earlier period of negotiated settlements, is self-sustaining enough to withstand considerable community opposition.

The fact that the coalition is held together by interaction and cooperation around business interests gives Atlanta a distinctive policy stance in development. Atlanta, for example, is a nonlinkage city (see pages 170-171). Further, a comparative analysis of UDAGs (Urban Development Action Grants) by Susan Clarke shows that Atlanta stands out as a city that attaches few conditions to government-subsidized development opportunities.¹¹ The governing coalition's method of operation thus freezes out other considerations

and facilitates full-tilt development to the detriment of neighborhood and preservationist interests.

Even where tax abatement and tax-exempt bonds are provided, the city exacts nothing more than paper agreements by businesses "to attempt in good faith" to satisfy the city's goals of wider employment opportunities. No targets are set; no enforcement procedure is employed.¹² The city's Office of Contract Compliance is concerned with assuring that legitimate minority businesses receive a share of city funds through contracts, subcontracts, or joint-venture arrangements — not with promoting more inclusive employment practices. In the few cases where investigative reporting has looked into the employment gains from city subsidies to business, the results show none.¹³

BLACK POLITICAL MOBILIZATION AND UNCRITICAL MAYORAL SUPPORT

By several indicators, public policy in Atlanta is economically regressive; that is, it favors the interests of upper-strata groups and disregards or harms the interests of lower-strata groups. Consider the following: (1) Unionized city workers have been frustrated in their efforts to pursue higher wages, and strikes have twice been broken; (2) the city's commitment to full-throttle development provides no system of linkage whereby employment needs, job guarantees, affordable housing, historic preservation, or arts facilities are addressed; and (3) a regressive sales tax provides the local funding for MARTA and supplements the property tax as a general source of revenue.

When Andrew Young promoted the latter — a one-cent add-on to the state sales tax for general city revenue — he rebutted critics of the measure by arguing that "a sales tax administered by the state or federal government might be regressive . . . , but not one administered by the city council and me. Not only did we head off a property-tax revolt, but we'll deliver more services to the poor. Only liberal ideologues can call that regressive."¹⁴ The facts offer little support for Young's claim. The state places on Fulton County, not the city of Atlanta, the responsibility for health and welfare services. Two of the major uses to which "windfall" sales-tax revenue has been applied are (1) the redevelopment of Underground as a tourist-oriented shopping and entertainment center and (2) the building of a City Hall annex. Neither project does much for the city's poor; both, however, provide opportunities for minority business enterprises.

Charles King, a sometime critic of Young in the black community and president of the Urban Crisis Center, said that Young is "working under Reagan's 'trickle down' theory, which doesn't work for black people." King added that Young had reassured the white business community but had "sacrificed the poor."¹⁵ A recent study documented that "Atlanta's poor are spend-

ing a greater and greater portion of their incomes — often as much as two-thirds — for increasingly dilapidated housing in neighborhoods far removed from the booming employment growth metropolitan Atlanta is famous for."¹⁶ It is not esoteric information, then, that the benefits of development in Atlanta trickle down very little to a large lower class.

Why has there been no revolt against the city's black political leadership? Various events taken together suggest that it is a case of racial solidarity overriding class friction. A black political mobilization against incumbent black political leaders — especially the mayor — is highly unlikely. Blacks in Atlanta were so long excluded from a share of power in running the city that, as a group, they are wary of a public challenge directed at centers of black political control. Black ministers, who are key links between black officeholders and the black public, have indicated that any impairment to an incumbent mayor is perceived as a weakening of black solidarity and a threat to black political power. This perception helps to explain how Maynard Jackson was able to mobilize black clergy against striking municipal employees and how Andrew Young mobilized them for the city sales tax and the Presidential Parkway.

The importance attached to black control of executive power is illustrated in the Atlanta School Compromise of 1973. Black participants in the biracial committee agreed to give up busing as a means to racial balance in exchange for a black school superintendent and other high-level black administrative appointments. One might characterize that trade-off as a move to broaden "patronage" for the black middle class, but that would be a distortion. The new superintendent was not a local person, but someone recruited from California (and his successor was brought in from New York). In other words, the point of the compromise was not to provide jobs for a set body of insiders; it was to gain for blacks as a group the position of power represented by the control of the key post of school superintendent.¹⁷

Thus far, Atlanta's black mayors and their close allies have been immune to black insurgency. On the other hand, elections involving no incumbent and two black candidates can split the black electorate, as was the case in the 1986 congressional primary between John Lewis and Julian Bond. Although black political power seems secure, this occurrence of a divided electorate in which white voters held the balance of power was enough to give rise to a unity meeting sponsored by Concerned Black Clergy of Metro Atlanta.¹⁸

One inference from this sequence is that ministers are important gatekeepers for the black electorate in citywide elections. The concerns of the clergy about the tenuousness of black political power and their tendency to be guardians of black solidarity make it unlikely that they would become involved in lower-class insurgency against an incumbent black mayor. They have a strong incentive not to bring attention to class division within the black community. Furthermore, black ministers (somewhat in the manner of precinct

bosses of old) ask city officials for favors and considerations for parishioners. This practice adds strength to a tendency to "go along to get along" and makes a critical stance improbable.

Black clergy in Atlanta are not apolitical. They are an integral part of the city's electoral politics, and under the right conditions, they could be part of a mobilization on behalf of the interests of the black lower class. This capacity was demonstrated in the instance of the planned MARTA spur line to Proctor Creek near the Perry Homes public-housing project. The line was promised in the 1971 referendum as evidence that rail service would be extended to poor black areas as well as affluent white ones. At one point in 1986, MARTA appeared to be on the brink of dropping that proposed spur from its plans. A citizens' Committee of 50 was appointed to consider the question of MARTA priorities. When an authority report suggested substituting a busway for the rail system, the planning staff officially recommended against a rail line. However, opposition in the black community, including the clergy, was mustered against the change, and after some hesitation, the Committee of 50 recommended that MARTA honor its 1971 promise and construct the rail line. The Atlanta *Constitution* reversed its position to give strong editorial support to the recommendation, citing the need to maintain trust.¹⁹ Though the rail line is not built at this writing, the episode shows that black political mobilization can be effective in gaining policy concessions for the lower class. The effort was directed, however, not against an incumbent black mayor, but against a biracial MARTA committee containing both city and suburban representation.

What does this interplay of forces imply for the future? Until black mayors can no longer exploit their symbolic position as the embodiment of black political power, they appear to be free to pursue their own alliance-building needs with the white business elite, to the neglect of the black lower class. Innovations in city policy, the sales tax in particular, reflect that latitude. On the other hand, the controversy over the MARTA spur line reveals a mostly latent potential for less regressive policies. Without efforts by the clergy, however, the lower class seems largely unable to enlist support for a broadened set of policy concerns. On its own, the black lower class lacks resources for political organization that are comparable to those available to the black middle class.

BUSINESS UNITY AND INVESTOR PREROGATIVE

The downtown business elite brings many resources to bear in obtaining for itself a central place in the city's governing coalition. Many are plainly revealed in the events that constitute Atlanta's postwar political experience: campaign funds, staff time devoted to civic activity, business contacts ex-

tended to black entrepreneurs, and voluntary contributions, to name a few. The Chamber of Commerce uses its membership to promote close business-government association through its "buddy" system, in which chamber members are assigned to keep in contact with members of the city council. The art museum, the new day-care center at the Bowen Homes public-housing project, and land for a downtown park are representative of the business elite's contributions to community facilities.

The business elite is hardly a group indifferent to community well-being; rather, its members are active and involved. What makes this involvement so effective is the high degree of business unity. Although there are certainly tensions within the Atlanta business elite—upper downtown versus lower downtown, Portman versus Cousins as developers, and many more—they do not make their differences public. The banks, the utilities, the major department stores, the daily newspaper, and Coca Cola, in particular, have a long history of acting in concert, and they draw other businesses that may be newer to the Atlanta scene into the same pattern of unified public action. In its relations with the external world, the business elite does not divide into factions; hence, no segment of the business elite can be an ally in a coalition against another segment.

The unity of the business elite rests on several foundations. One is that it is structured to have a single voice. CAP provides the elite with an organization separate from the more inclusive Chamber of Commerce. Within CAP, the elite can discuss issues, formulate plans, and monitor policy performance with the assistance of a staff employed to promote their particular shared interests. There is, of course, the potential for a split between CAP and the Chamber of Commerce, coinciding with a division between large and small business. That has not occurred, though the early days of urban renewal clearly posed that possibility. C. Wright Mills has explored as closely as anyone the tendency of small companies to follow large ones, and his analysis seems on target.²⁰ In Atlanta as elsewhere, large business has special prestige in the eyes of small business. Moreover, large concerns have the staff and funds to create task forces (formal and informal), to make things happen and sometimes, as in the case of Underground, to overwhelm opposition from smaller businesses. Large corporations are especially useful to formal organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce as a source of both funds and prestige. In Atlanta, Coca Cola epitomizes this phenomenon, and it often serves as the bellwether for the business community.

One of the considerations at work within the business community is that small businesses are reluctant to challenge a position taken by the banks. Credit-worthiness, especially for a small company, is too subjective for businesses to disregard how an action will affect their standing with lending officials. Aside from that, small businesses downtown see their well-being tied closely to that of major enterprises; hence, they have a disincentive to