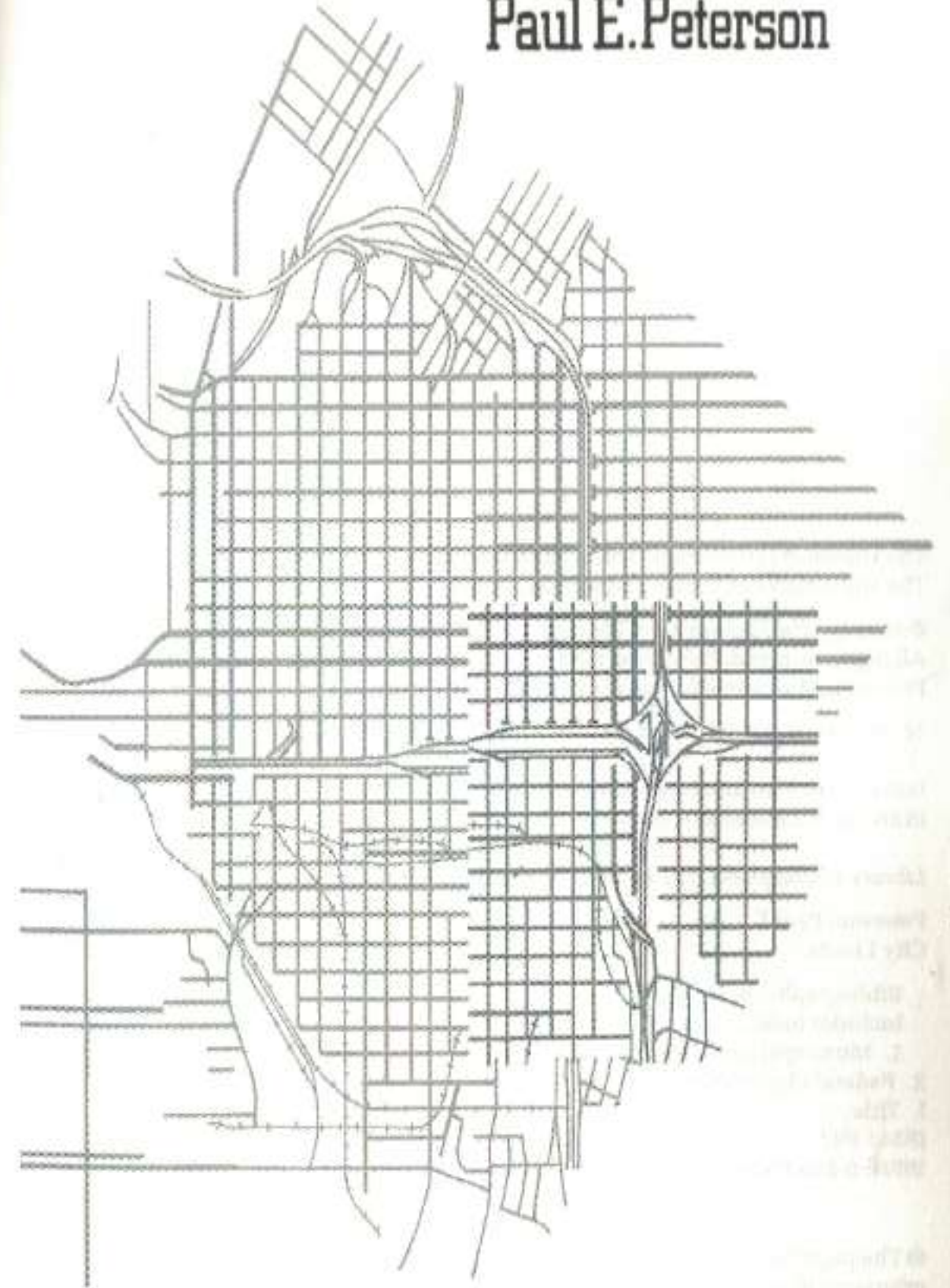


City Limits

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City Limits and the
Study of Urban Politics

Too often cities are treated as if they were nation-states. What is known about the politics of nations, it is said, can be applied to the politics of cities within them. And what is known about politics within cities can be applied to the politics of nations. Cities are little political systems, or miniature republics, or national politics writ small enough to be studied with ease. For the quantitatively inclined, nation-states have the disadvantage that they are few in number and difficult to study. Cities, on the other hand, are numerous enough that one can identify systematic patterns of variation, through the application of statistical controls, to data collected on a large number of cases.¹ And the more qualitatively oriented of empirical political scientists have, if anything, been more enthusiastic about the city. Every political scientist lives in a city, in a town, or at least in a village; by studying the politics around him, he can—with only modest research resources—gather the rich contextual information necessary for high-quality interpretive analysis, which he then generalizes to the nation as a whole.²

In the hands of most analysts, the factors shaping urban public policy are internal to the city. The rivalry among groups, the patterns of coalition formation, the presence or absence of competitive political parties, the power of local elites, or the vagaries of political campaigns are what influence policy outcomes. Moreover, parties, groups, the news media, bureaucracies, and other political institutions function similarly in local and national contexts. Generalizations about the behavior of these political entities at the local level, it is maintained, are applicable to the national level, and vice versa.

It is the burden of my argument that local politics is not like national politics. On the contrary, by comparison with national

politics local politics is most limited. There are crucial kinds of public policies that local governments simply cannot execute. They cannot make war or peace; they cannot issue passports or forbid outsiders from entering their territory; they cannot issue currency; and they cannot control imports or erect tariff walls. There are other things cities cannot do, but these are some of the most crucial limits on their powers.

Because cities are limited in what they can do, the powers remaining to them are exercised within very noticeable constraints. Moreover, even their political processes take a shape very different from that taken by national political processes. City politics is limited politics.

Because cities have limits, one explains urban public policy by looking at the place of the city in the larger socioeconomic and political context. The place of the city within the larger political economy of the nation fundamentally affects the policy choices that cities make. In making these decisions, cities select those policies which are in the interests of the city, taken as a whole. It is these city interests, not the internal struggles for power within cities, that limit city policies and condition what local governments do.

This approach differs from four literatures that have shaped the study of urban politics and intergovernmental relations: the debate over community power; the analysis of the conflict between political machines and reform movements; the literature on comparative urban policy; and studies of federalism. In their own way, each of these studies has taken the city as a more or less autonomous decision-making unit with all of the characteristics of the nation-state. In most cases political forces within the city are treated as the fundamental elements explaining what cities do. As a result, scholars have engaged in needless controversy, misinterpreted their findings, and failed to appreciate the full significance of their material. There nonetheless remains in these literatures much that is of considerable value, and I shall not hesitate to invoke their findings when pertinent to this analysis. What is offered in subsequent chapters must be understood as supplementary to the rich literature on the internal politics of American cities. To ignore internal factors altogether would be as misleading as to treat urban politics and policymaking solely in terms of them. It is only because the studies reviewed here have elucidated one aspect of urban politics so clearly that they are worth critical review.

The Community Power Controversy

The postwar study of urban politics owes much to the prolonged and still fascinating dispute over the distribution of power in local com-

munities. The dispute became central because it focused on a question of enduring significance but about which it was impossible to reach a satisfactory conclusion. The dispute was significant because its resolution had important implications for the country's claim to a democratic form of government. Yet the issue could not be resolved, because to know the distribution of power was to understand the causal forces determining government policy. To have a complete theory of political causation is to have an empirical theory of politics, a remarkable achievement likely to escape the wit of social scientists for some time to come.

The three sides to the debate are too well known to require lengthy introduction.³ Those who saw a local "power structure" said that communities were controlled by a small group of leading businessmen and financiers, who together with mayors and trade union leaders beholden to them determined the community's future.⁴ Those who saw pluralist decision-making processes treated urban policies as the outcome of events in which diverse groups competed.⁵ A third view accepted the complexity of local political processes but then argued that overt political events in the community were only one manifestation of the distribution of political power, and not the most important one at that. To understand power required an appreciation of the forces that kept issues off local agendas; once this was achieved, the hands of an almost invisible elite would be detectable once again.⁶

In my view, all three positions are correct as far as they go. More exactly, all three positions have captured one aspect of local politics, and when put together (in chapters 7, 8, and 9) the three interpretations give a quite convincing portrait of the local political landscape. But before such a synthesis can be realized one critical error common to all three approaches must be appreciated: each of the three sides believed that the politics of communities could be understood roughly in the same terms as the politics of nation-states. All assumed that cities had few, if any, limits. When "power-elite" theorists identified a small group of power holders, they regarded the decisions this group made as the primary factors determining local policy. In fact these leaders were largely responding to factors external to the community that were quite beyond the control of the "power elite." When pluralists saw widespread and diverse participation in local politics, they believed that the choices being debated were the issues local residents regarded as most significant. They assumed that any question which divided community residents soon became a matter of controversy. But we shall see that many problems important to the well-being of most people seldom became issues for public discussion at the local level. And when they are raised, sup-

porters are too scattered and ineffectual to have more than transitory impact.

Does this not then imply that the most important issues are kept off the local agenda by a ruling elite that contrives a local consensus? At the very least, are there not rules and procedures that "bias" the issues that become the stuff of local politics? The answer can only be, "Yes, but . . ." Yes, in the sense that structures always limit the choices available to political systems. However, the qualifying "but" is exceptionally significant. The issues screened out of local politics are not eliminated by local electoral devices, bureaucratic manipulations, or a one-sided press. Nor are the issues removed from local agendas necessarily eliminated from the country's politics altogether. The demands that do not arrive on the agenda of local politics are those that fall outside the limited sphere of local politics. Only if local politics is treated as equivalent to national politics can one claim that one has discovered something significant about power in American society simply because one has found an issue that does not appear on a local agenda.⁷

Consider the most obvious example, national defense. No American city has seriously considered taking strong defensive measures against the possibility of attack from the Soviet Union. From that, one might conclude that a Communist elite keeps certain issues off local agendas. Yet one might also conclude that national defense is the responsibility of the central rather than local government. We shall see in chapter 4 that not just defense and foreign policy questions but many domestic issues have qualities that make them more appropriate for national than local resolution. Yet the "other face of power" school treats their absence from the local agenda as a telling fact about power. In doing so, they make unwarranted inferences about power relations in American society.

Political Machines and Urban Reformers

The prototypical conflict in urban politics has for decades pitted partisan political organizations against nonpartisan, good-government groups calling for the reform of City Hall. Political machines consolidated their political power through patronage, attention to the demands of competing ethnic groups, and the provision of government services through partisan channels. Reformers uncovered misappropriations of public funds, promoted civil service recruitment by merit criteria, and sought to standardize the distribution of services to all parts of the city.⁸

The standard interpretation of machine-reform conflict has been in terms of a class model of local politics.⁹ It has been stated most

persuasively in terms of the conflicts between the "ethos" of the machine, as representative of working-class immigrants, and the "ethos" of the reformers, who represented upper-class, silk-stockinged, Anglo-Saxon businessmen and professionals. The issues that divided machine from reform were rooted in two political cultures competing for dominance in the urban North. On the one side, the Catholic immigrant, whose culture emphasized family, neighborhood, and friendship ties, treated politics as another marketplace in which particularistic self-interests could be pursued. On the other side, the middle-class Protestant, reared in a milieu that delineated man's individuality, separateness, and equality before God, understood politics to be the pursuit of "justice," the ground upon which one created a "city on the hill" that would radiate its worth to the surrounding countryside.

The opposing institutional networks created by political machines and their reform opponents reflected these value differences. Machines favored ward elections, long ballots, decentralized governing arrangements, and the close connection between government, party, neighborhood, and ethnic association. Reformers preferred citywide elections, short ballots, centralized governing institutions, and the application of universalistic norms in the provision of government services. Governmental efficiency was to be preferred over responsiveness to neighborhood, party, and ethnic particularities.

There is much to be said for this analysis. Many conflicts in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, San Francisco, and other big cities divided sharply along just these lines. The ethnic compositions of machine and reform leaders stood markedly in contrast with one another. Over time, public institutions have become more centralized partly in response to reform pressures. But these cultural conflicts and structural innovations provide only weak evidence for a high level of class conflict in local politics. First, the leadership of political machines was hardly less well connected with local commerce and industry than were the reformers. Although the middle- and upper-class origins of the reformers cannot be disputed, there is no less evidence that leading machine politicians were—or at least became—prosperous businessmen, lawyers, and real estate developers.¹⁰ Second, the incidence of reform structures in American cities has been unrelated to the class composition of cities, once regional differences are taken into account.¹¹ Whatever the class bias of the reformers, they must not have differed from machine politicians so decidedly that working-class supporters rushed to the defense of machine institutions wherever their numbers permitted it. Third, the public policies of machine cities have not differed from those of reform cities in ways that conform to a class model of poli-

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tics. Few studies have shown any clear-cut differences; those that do are unable to show that either the working class as a whole or the unemployed and needy in particular are better treated in the machine cities.¹² Finally, and fundamentally, the political machine was an institution marvelously suited to the needs of businessmen in a rapidly industrializing society. American workers, no less than their European counterparts, experienced long hours, low wages, harsh working conditions, and great fluctuations in employment opportunities. Strikes, unionizing efforts, socialist agitation, violent confrontations between workers and police, and systematic suppression of union leaders by corporate detectives and federal judges were regular features of late-nineteenth-century politics. But these factory disputes seldom had a decisive influence in local politics. Although local political parties sometimes cooperated with union leaders, they were never beholden to them. Political machines seldom put their weight behind the most vigorous expressions of working-class protest; by and large, they stood on the side of "law and order" in the local community.¹³

Scott's comparative analysis of the functions of political corruption in emergent, industrializing societies is a most useful corrective to those applying a class model to the politics of machine and reform.¹⁴ He shows the regularity with which corruption occurs whenever formal political equality coincides with great disparities in private wealth and social position. Where the masses are politically active, the privileged support political leaders who can manage voter discontent without challenging the socioeconomic status quo. Patronage and corruption lubricate the friction between the world of equality and the world of privilege. Nowhere did this process operate more smoothly than in industrializing nineteenth-century America. The political machine in the United States was at once at home with the ethnic immigrants and with the business entrepreneur, who was always willing to make a deal. From the capitalists' perspective, machines hardly needed replacement by silk-stockinged reformers. In many cities, Chicago being only the best known example, businessmen regularly rejected reform appeals for help.¹⁵

Inasmuch as conflicts between machine and reform are only poorly understood when phrased in class categories, the persistence with which social scientists and historians have resorted to this interpretation requires explanation. One factor, it seems, is the easy but mistaken equation that is made between national and local politics. For example, municipal reformers are often unfavorably compared with the New Deal reformers. In Hofstadter's terms, the former were a reactionary group protesting the disappearance of a bygone

rural past, while the latter were liberals seeking to moderate the worst abuses of a capitalist system.¹⁶ In other comparisons the municipal reformers were structural or procedural innovators who provide only for new political arrangements, while the New Deal reformers focused on substantive changes in the social and economic order.¹⁷ In these comparisons it is assumed that substantive social innovation can be introduced as easily at the local as at the national level. There are no limits to what cities can do. As we shall see, these assumptions have little warrant. Once the limits on cities are appreciated, the conflict between machine and reform appears in another light. The cultural conflict remains, but it assumes a different social and political significance.

Comparative Analysis of Urban Public Policy

In recent years the traditional studies of community power and of machine-reform conflict have been superseded by a growing interest in urban public policy. These studies are noted for their large data banks, technical sophistication, and focus on policy outcomes as well as political processes.¹⁸ Yet the most influential of these studies owe much to the earlier literature, for they, too, treat local public policy largely in terms of the conflict and bargaining among disparate groups, agencies, and factions internal to the local political system. For example, students of taxation and expenditure policies have interpreted their findings largely in terms of local political relationships. In one widely cited study, the authors argue that the lower correlations between demographic variables and expenditures in reform, as compared with nonreform, cities are due to the lesser "responsiveness" of reform systems.¹⁹ When Clark found higher expenditure levels in more decentralized political systems, he concluded that decentralization allowed easier access to officials by a wider number of pluralist claimants for public benefits.²⁰ And even economists now include numerous "taste" variables (percent non-white, percent foreign stock) in regression analyses of variations in state and local expenditure patterns.²¹ Without apology, these economists make the crude assumption that every resident (of whatever age) has equal influence in shaping the collective "taste" function of the local community.

Yet, with all the attempts to explain public policy in terms of political variables, the extensive findings on expenditure patterns among states and localities within the United States remain largely a muddle. Two decades after the pioneering efforts in this tradition, no internally consistent set of propositions has begun to emerge.²² In part this is due to the internal politics model itself, which is so

flexible that it can be folded and stretched to cover almost any finding. High correlations show high government responsiveness; low correlations show low government responsiveness. If one governmental characteristic has no explanatory power, then the analyst need only search for a means of quantifying another. In the end the model becomes less of a theoretical construct guiding the selection and analysis of data than a coverlet loosely resembling the society's democratic myths (a big red, white, and blue blanket, as it were) that can be tossed over almost any empirical result.

Almost, I say, because a second problem has been the difficulty of incorporating within the bargaining model the numerous instances when "environmental" variables—incomes, property values, urbanization, and so on—account for much of the variation. Indeed, Thomas Dye's work on state revenue policy, in which he concluded that variables endogenous to most bargaining models of policy-making had little impact on policy at all, has been a continuing embarrassment.²³

Finally, the whole research tradition has been mired in a seemingly insoluble dilemma of finding comparable units of analysis. Although units of government in the United States often have the same names—states, counties, municipalities—these entities, even when they have the same name, differ in theoretically significant ways to an extent that makes it very difficult to treat them as comparable systems. Especially if one regards public policy as the outcome of a bargaining process among competing groups and interests, these differences create problems that have almost always defied solution. Every alternative is open to serious question.

Consider those studies which take expenditures by municipal governments as the dependent variable to be explained.²⁴ The rationale for comparing these units of government is that in each case they have primary responsibility for the governance of a community and that all decision makers are subject to some set of group pressures and competing interests. In nearly all cases formal authority is in the hands of elected officials. However, the functional responsibilities assigned to these municipal governments by the state vary enormously in different parts of the country. In some cities these governmental units not only are responsible for routine housekeeping functions such as police and fire protection but also are the managers of health, welfare, and educational systems. In other cities the state has assigned just the basic housekeeping functions to municipal governments and has reserved for itself or assigned to counties or special districts the responsibility for hospitals, schools, parks, and welfare. All sorts of combinations can be found. In other words, the same word, "municipalities," refers to political entities

with vastly varying functional responsibilities; any attempt to explain overall expenditure patterns in terms of local political pressures is confounded by the fact that differing functional responsibilities are themselves the primary determinant of expenditure variation.²⁵

An alternative solution that other scholars have employed is to combine all the expenditures by all the local governments servicing a particular geographic area.²⁶ The total of all expenditures by the entire local government system is taken to be the policy to be explained. The assumption here is that within each geographic area—a city, a metropolitan area, or a county—comparable governmental functions are being performed by the total system of local government. By looking at what is associated with the variations in expenditures by this system, one can illuminate the factors that affect the level (in terms of financial costs) at which the system performs its functions.

In some ways this is a considerable improvement on taking as the dependent variable only those expenditures by a single type of local government. One reduces substantially the variation in functional responsibilities assigned to the governmental systems being compared. Nonetheless, it remains the case that there will be variation in the degree to which the state government will have reserved to itself certain governmental functions. For example, in some states no local government plays a financially significant role in the distribution of welfare benefits; in other states some combination of local governments is responsible for nearly half of the welfare expenditures.

For those explaining policies in terms of internal political processes a second problem is even more severe. The total of local expenditures is a measure of the sum of activities by the entire local government system servicing an area. Each part of that system may have its own distinctive method of resolving political conflict. The municipal government may be elected in a partisan election, the school board may be chosen by a caucus and elected almost unanimously in a low-turnout, nonpartisan election, and the sanitation district commissioners may be appointed by a government whose boundaries do not even coincide with the geographic area in question. What set of political variables can be meaningfully related to the aggregated expenditures of these several governments? It is no wonder that most political scientists have felt uncomfortable with this solution.

These same problems of comparison have been equally troublesome at the state level. Some research has taken as its dependent variable the expenditures directly appropriated by statewide institutions.²⁷ But in these cases the analyst fails to take into account

the great differences among the states in the governmental functions the state has reserved to itself as distinct from those it has assigned to local authorities.²⁸ The alternative solution is to combine all state and local expenditures within a state into one dependent variable. But if policies are the product of a state's internal politics, the inclusion of both state and local expenditures into one combined measure of governmental activity can hardly be justified. As Ira Sharkansky has observed: "When they combine the spending of state and local governments, the researchers fuse the decisions of many separate authorities. As a result, they mask real political processes and lose the opportunity to gain an understanding of financial decisions at either state or local level."²⁹ In other words, how can measures of statewide political activities, such as the competitiveness of the state party system, or participation in statewide elections, be expected to predict overall levels of expenditure which are the product of both state and local government decisions?

These methodological issues help account for the durability—and futility—of the debate in the expenditure literature concerning the relative importance of political and economic variables. When governmental units whose functional responsibilities are similar have been compared, it has been inappropriate to introduce political variables into the analysis. When Dye chose to do so, it was not surprising that he found political variables had little impact.³⁰ On the other hand, when one can obtain meaningful indicators of differences in political processes, the expenditure data do not lend themselves to easy comparison because these units do not have similar functional responsibilities. Consequently, the debate on the relative importance of political and environmental variables continues on its meaningless course.³¹

Once the limits on cities are defined, a different approach becomes possible. As will be shown in chapter 3, the political variables no longer remain relevant to the analysis, because the internal political arrangements of the city are not treated as the decisive factors affecting local policy. At the same time the environmental variables are no longer understood as nonpolitical determinants of policy. Instead, they become indicators of the factors external to the city which give precision to the limits within which city policymakers exercise their discretion. One is no longer interested in the relative importance of political versus environmental variables but in the relative importance of different environmental variables. Each social and economic factor provides information on a set of constraints which limit city choice; to discover the relative importance of these environmental variables is to learn about the way in which the structure of local government operates to limit political choice. What was once taken to be

information about elements external to the political system is now understood to be information about the structure and interests of local government.

Modern Federal Theory

Modern federal theory has replaced the older concept that each level of government must pursue the functions appropriate to it with the flexible idea that the national government can and does exercise any function performed by state and local governments. Martin Grodzins's metaphor of the "marble cake" captured this new understanding of relationships in the American federal system.³² He argued that power was both widely diffused and widely shared. The overall pattern had become marked more by cooperation and mutual assistance than by confrontations between dual sovereigns. Intergovernmental relations were characterized by endless processes of sharing and exchange. The resulting formation, like a marble cake, had no discernible structure at all.

The metaphor diffused rapidly in the literature on federalism. It fitted nicely with the current process-oriented focus of the political science discipline as a whole; and it seemed to give point and direction to descriptive studies of intergovernmental relationships. The more innovative writers added their own metaphoric variations: picket fence, upside-down cake, harlequin ice cream brick, or what have you.³³

Although Grodzins revitalized federal theory by focusing attention away from an outdated concern with dual sovereignty and toward an understanding of contemporary intergovernmental relationships, his successors have not advanced his work much beyond the marble cake metaphor. However apt and appealing this analogy may be, comparing federalism to a structureless piece of pastry is in the end nontheory. It suggests flux, change, and complexity when one purpose of theory is to identify, to the extent possible, simplicity, pattern, and order. It directs attention toward individuals, groups, and processes when the essence of federalism is a stable relationship among structures of government.

As a result, we have yet to develop a theory of federalism. Contemporary descriptive analyses, persuasive as they sometimes are, have (1) failed to give a distinctive meaning to federalism, (2) failed to preserve any distinctions among functions appropriate to each level of government, and (3) failed to identify any pattern to cooperative and conflictual elements in the federal system. Influenced by the process-oriented behavioralism of the discipline at large, they have all but ignored the structural arrangements of the

federal system. Instead, they have concentrated research energy on the activities of groups, elites, constituencies, and bureaucrats at all governmental levels.

Crucially, their definitions of federalism are so vague that it is impossible to distinguish federalism from relationships between central and field offices in a unitary government. Daniel Elazar's efforts are more careful than most, but even he defines federalism

as the mode of political organization that unites smaller polities within an overarching political system by distributing power among general and constituent governments in a manner designed to protect the existence and authority of both national and subnational political systems, enabling all to share in the overall system's decision-making and executing processes.³⁴

By this all-encompassing definition, even the United States Forest Service is a federal system. Its decision-making processes are divided between central and field offices, which are united by a handbook of rules and regulations that protects the existence and authority of each layer. Yet Kaufman has judged the Forest Service to be a highly centralized agency.³⁵ By Elazar's definition, relations between the federal government and defense contractors are also aspects of a federal system. Indeed, a book that he has coedited devotes an entire section to such public-private relationships.³⁶ But, certainly, the concept of federalism, when applied in this way, begins to encompass almost all political relationships. Perhaps this is Elazar's intent, for in the same paragraph he says that federalism "is more than an arrangement of governmental structures; it is a mode of political activity that requires certain kinds of cooperative relationships through the political system it animates."³⁷ This free-flowing assertion is certainly in keeping with the emphasis on process characteristic of behavioral approaches, but it does little to focus the study of intergovernmental relationships. To be sure, modern interpreters of American federalism are understandably concerned not to define federalism in narrow, constitutional terms. But modern federal theorists have not supplied a sufficiently focused substitute for traditional definitions of federalism in order that a distinctive, middle-range theory of intergovernmental relations could emerge.

Furthermore, without a definition of federalism, modern writers have been unable to state the characteristic and appropriate function of each level of government. Grodzins himself was reluctant to undertake such a task. In a fascinating commentary Martin Diamond observed that Grodzins "was driven by the difficulty of defining localness towards rejecting any standard for distributing functions between state and national government. He came to argue that 'Local

is As Local Does.'"³⁸ The theory degenerates into sheer description. And, once again, it becomes impossible to distinguish the federal system from a decentralized administrative structure.

Perhaps it is unkind to suggest that modern theorists are left without a standpoint from which to study intergovernmental relationships. After all, Grodzins, Elazar, and other students of Grodzins have commented extensively on the federal "partnership," and have given intelligent accounts of a cooperative sharing of power among governmental levels.³⁹ But even though their empirical studies are lucid and helpful, general theoretical explanations of the pattern of cooperation and conflict among governmental levels have not emerged.

A modern theory of federalism becomes possible only when cities, states, and national governments are understood to differ in their essential character. If cities are like nations, then any activity performed by nations can be performed by cities. And politics at the national level will be similar to politics at the local level. But once the particular limits on local governments are defined, one can establish a theory of government structure that assigns certain functions to the central government and others to local governments. This becomes a central concern of chapter 4.

Plan of the Book

Many studies of urban politics and of intergovernmental relations have conceptualized local governments as nearly autonomous sovereignties with almost as much discretion as national government.⁴⁰ Of course few, if any, studies explicitly make this assumption; on the contrary, in many of the studies one finds discussion of external influences, the impact of higher levels of government, and the need for understanding the community in the context of the larger society. Yet these references are never integrated into the analytical constructs employed. Instead, the repeated emphasis on internal political relations implies that it is within the city that the key determinants of public policy are to be found. Although much can be said within that framework, the study of local government can no longer ignore a city's limits.

In subsequent chapters the significance of city limits for both public policy and local politics is elaborated. In chapter 2 the theory underlying the analysis is elaborated. I find the primary interest of cities to be the maintenance and enhancement of their economic productivity. To their land area cities must attract productive labor and capital.

Part 2 is devoted to the study of urban public policy. Chapter 3

develops a typology of public policies. Those policies which enhance the city's productivity are called developmental; those which have an adverse economic effect, even though the needy of the community may benefit, are identified as redistributive; and those whose economic effects are more or less neutral are labeled allocational. Because each of these types of public policy affects the interests of cities differently, the factors producing them vary from one policy area to the next. I demonstrate the differences among the three policy areas through a regression analysis of the determinants of expenditure levels for nine different public policies. Any reader who is reluctant to subject himself to statistical pyrotechnics can pass over the latter half of this chapter with its accompanying tables and still grasp my basic argument. Chapter 4 shows the distribution of policy responsibilities among varying levels of government. The national government bears the greatest responsibility for redistributive policies, while local governments are primarily responsible for allocational policies. Chapter 5 concludes by showing that policies vary depending upon the structure of local government systems. In big cities, where local governments are large and have monopolistic control over a large land area, some degree of redistribution occurs even at the local level. Where local governments are small, numerous, and highly competitive with one another, as in suburbia, redistribution is kept to a minimum. This analysis is illustrated by a detailed examination of school policy, the activity which weighs most heavily on the local taxpayer.

Part 3 examines urban political processes. Chapter 6 examines the marginal role played by parties and groups. Chapter 7 looks at developmental policies; it concludes that in this policy arena the findings of "power-elite" theorists are most applicable. Chapter 8 examines the pluralist nature of allocational politics. Chapter 9 explains why redistributive issues give the appearance of "another face of power" that keeps certain topics off local agendas.

Finally, part 4 explores empirically and normatively certain efforts to change the limits on local politics. Chapter 10 examines New York City, a case which some may think runs counter to the thesis of this monograph. The concluding chapter offers a set of policy recommendations that would dramatically broaden the city's limits.

The Interests of the Limited City

Like all social structures, cities have interests. Just as we can speak of union interests, judicial interests, and the interests of politicians, so we can speak of the interests of that structured system of social interactions we call a city. Citizens, politicians, and academics are all quite correct in speaking freely of the interests of cities.¹

Defining the City Interest

By a city's interest, I do not mean the sum total of the interests of those individuals living in the city. For one thing, these are seldom, if ever, known. The wants, needs, and preferences of residents continually change, and few surveys of public opinion in particular cities have ever been taken. Moreover, the residents of a city often have discordant interests. Some want more parkland and better schools; others want better police protection and lower taxes. Some want an elaborated highway system; others wish to keep cars out of their neighborhood. Some want more inexpensive, publicly subsidized housing; others wish to remove the public housing that exists. Some citizens want improved welfare assistance for the unemployed and dependent; others wish to cut drastically all such programs of public aid. Some citizens want rough-tongued ethnic politicians in public office; others wish that municipal administration were a gentleman's calling. Especially in large cities, the cacophony of competing claims by diverse class, race, ethnic, and occupational groups makes impossible the determination of any overall city interest—any public interest, if you like—by compiling all the demands and desires of individual city residents.

Some political scientists have attempted to discover the overall