Volume 30.1 March 2006 38–53 International Journal of Urban and Regional Research

Political Leadership and Stadium Development in Chicago: Some Cautionary Notes on the Uses of Regime Analysis

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Abstract

Between 1988 and 1994, Chicago was the site of three major sports stadium projects — the construction of the new Comiskey Park (since renamed US Cellular Field) and the United Center, as well as the addition of stadium-lighting to the venerable Wrigley Field. This article analyzes the implementation of these projects with the aim of critiquing and reorienting contemporary regime theory. The more particular amendments to typical regime analysis focus on the 'opportunism' of political figures in shaping agendas and carrying through projects. The larger suggestions growing from this analysis pertain to the nature of regime theory as a mode of political analysis and, additionally, to a reconceptualization of how regime analysis can be linked to the normative assessment of urban policy.

In a six-year span from 1988 to 1994, four of Chicago's five major league sports franchises moved into new stadiums, or, in the case of the Chicago Cubs of Major League Baseball (MLB), substantially upgraded an existing 'home field'. In the former instances, the State of Illinois and City of Chicago built a new Comiskey Park (in early 2003 renamed US Cellular Field) to showcase the White Sox (also of MLB), and the owners of the city's major league professional basketball and hockey franchises, the Bulls and Blackhawks, built a new arena, the United Center, to jointly house their clubs.

Although the subsequent competitive performance of these sports teams was often unexceptional, each of their arenas annually has attracted millions of fans. Furthermore, the success of these facilities contributed to a much discussed revival of Chicago's central area neighborhoods. The most visible sign of this central city revival was a remarkable increase in residential development in Chicago's Loop as well as in adjoining areas to the north, west, and south of the city's downtown core (Allen and Richards, 1999). Coincidentally, the City of Chicago engaged in ambitious physical redevelopment initiatives to revamp downtown Grant Park (the 'Millennium Park' project) and create a 'theatre district' in the northeastern quadrant of the Loop. These physical developments, in conjunction with the city's successful hosting of major events such as World Cup soccer matches in 1994 and the Democratic Party National Convention in 1996, earned Chicago the reputation as a city on the rebound from decades of industrial decline and population loss (Lorinc, 2000).

Also benefiting from these developments has been the political stature of Mayor Richard M. Daley, whose administration (from 1989) presided over — some observers would claim, propelled — the downtown renaissance of the 1990s (Atlas, 1996; Clark *et al.*, 2002). Having entered office in 1989 via hotly contested party primary and general

We wish to thank the journal's reviewers for their helpful suggestions, and also Jonathan Davies and Bill Sites, whose comments contributed much to improving previous drafts of this article.

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election campaigns, Daley has won subsequent mayoral elections by increasing margins. Apart from his electoral victories, Mayor Daley has cemented a powerful governing coalition that draws on elite support across the city's racial/ethnic spectrum and includes major business, civic, and media institutions. Even in the wake of a series of municipal corruption scandals in 2004 and 2005, the current Mayor Daley, in the view of many local observers, is likely to hold the Chicago mayoralty as long (21 years) as his renowned father, Richard J. Daley, basing much of his mayoral leverage on the powerful pro-growth coalition that he assembled during his first decade as mayor (Mihalopoulos and Cohen, 2005).

Our interest in stadium development and regime evolution in Chicago is sparked by a paradox. The wave of stadium construction/upgrading that occurred at the turn of the 1990s, and which is typically viewed as a cornerstone of contemporary Chicago's renaissance as a glamorous central city, had its origins not during the mayoralty of Richard M. Daley, but during the term of Harold Washington, the city's 'progressive' or 'urban populist' mayor of the 1980s (Clavel and Wiewel, 1991; Grimshaw, 1992; Bennett, 1993; Ferman, 1996). Thus, while the promotion of professional sports may be a critical part of the Daley pro-growth program, the infrastructure of sporting facilities that anchors the city's sports boom derives from a mayoral administration which had — by virtually unanimous scholarly assent — markedly different policy priorities.

In this article we aim to unravel this paradox and, in so doing, reassess some of the crucial working assumptions and implications of regime analysis as it has come to be practiced in the last decade. The central portion of this article examines the key political economic features of Chicago's stadium development 'rush' of the late 1980s, using this case study material to argue that there are fluidities in the conduct of local politics that much recent regime analysis has tended to overlook. And beyond this reconsideration of the methods of regime analysis, we employ insights from our case studies to consider what appears to be an emerging problem in the general use of regime analysis: how to balance the relative demands of empirical description versus normative assessment within the confines of this particular approach to studying urban decision making. However, before examining Chicago stadium development politics and its lessons for regime theory, we turn to a brief outline of the development of regime analysis and some of its principal features as a mode of observing and interpreting local political action.

Regime analysis: political interpretation in quest of a paradigm

Regime analysis was initially conceived by political scientists Stephen Elkin (1985; 1987) and Clarence Stone (1989) in the 1980s. The intellectual context from which this new approach to studying urban politics had emerged was the following. During the 1950s and 1960s political scientists and sociologists, operating, in effect, as discipline-defined cohorts, had respectively advanced (and debated) the pluralist and elitist perspectives on political power in US cities (Polsby, 1980). Then, during the 1970s, the neo-Marxian writings of, among others, David Harvey (1973) and Manuel Castells (1980), migrated to North America from Europe, offering important insights on topics such as the relationships linking state and capital in urban redevelopment and the underlying forces driving regional economic shifts (Pickvance, 1976; Elkin, 1979).

If it is safe to propose that neither the pluralists nor the elitists ever quite vanquished the other side's perspective on urban decision making; however, it is equally the case that neo-Marxian work — when applied to cities in the United States — seldom managed to generate plausible accounts of local *politics*. Unlike European cities in the 1960s and 1970s, in American cities racially inflected political conflict, rather than class conflict, was the main engine unsettling urban polities (Katznelson, 1981). Moreover, the federal system of government in the United States, combined with the programmatic chameleonism of the Democratic and Republican parties, resulted in public policy

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inconsistencies that defied the ideological, social class, and policy regularities presumed by neo-Marxian analysis. To make the point baldly, US cities routinely produced 'class traitors' on both sides: Coleman Youngs as well as John Lindsays. Ironically, the main intellectual response to neo-Marxianism in the 1970s, Paul Peterson's (1981) rational choice-derived 'city interest' view, shared some of the same economistic shortcomings to be found in Harvey or Castells (Swanstrom, 1993). Indeed, from a disciplinary standpoint, such a state of affairs — that is, the rendering of the political as more or less a straight line extrapolation from the economic — relegated political scientists to an unsatisfying ancillary position as scribes of the inconsequential.

Rescuing urban political scientists, as well as quite a number of analysts in other social science disciplines, from this theoretical *cul de sac* was the pioneering work of Elkin and Stone. Stephen Elkin's main contribution to the literature of regime analysis, *City and regime in the American republic* (1987), at its core, can be viewed as an effort to define a socially just urban politics in the face of the inevitable: cities whose most powerful institutions are firmly rooted in the 'private sector' of entrepreneurs, large corporations, and civic organizations funded and staffed by business-leaning persons. Stone, in a series of analyses published in the early 1980s, sketched out a view of urban politics that expanded on the 'deviant' political science perspective of Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1970), who in the 1960s had argued that the analysis of visible institutional processes anchoring the pluralist view failed to recognize the nondemocratic effects of the typically unexamined protocols by which some issues (and not others) took their place on the public stage (Stone, 1980; 1982).

With the publication of *Regime politics: governing Atlanta, 1946–1988*, Stone (1989) fused the raw materials mined in the preceding years by identifying 'social production' (as opposed to 'social control') as the fundamental issue defining urban political action. The notion of social production tipped the analytical balance in favor of observing how political figures struggle to forge alliances with the private sector, in so doing, tapping capital for the symbolic and material resources necessary to insure public action. Crucially, because there is the prospect of different social visions animating the work of politicians — as well as significant variations among politicians as to coalition-building skill, and among cities, in reference to the mix of private sector interests — there was more than sufficient fodder provided to the analyst intending to observe and assess local political action.

In the 15 years since the publication of *Regime politics*, regime analysis has flowered into the dominant paradigm for interpreting urban politics. Most of this work has built on what was Clarence Stone's initially modest kit of conceptual tools: social production, the varied deployment of 'selective benefits' to cement coalition allegiance, and the often uneasy relationship between electoral and governing coalitions. Various analysts (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994; Imbroscio, 1997; Lauria, 1997; DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1999; Mossberger and Stoker, 2001), including Stone (1993), have contributed to the theoretical elaboration of these basic regime theory building blocks, with Barbara Ferman's (1996) parallel observations — that there are multiple urban policy 'arenas' (whose internal protocols may not be consistent with one another) and that locally grounded political cultural factors contribute much to the form of particular cities' regimes — representing one of the most fruitful conceptual extensions of regime analysis. Further elaboration of regime theory has derived from the work of scholars seeking to apply regime theory to cities outside the United States (Stoker and Mossberger, 1994; Cochrane *et al.*, 1996; John and Cole, 1998; DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1999), while both US-focusing and international scholars have proposed various regime classification systems (Stone, 1993; Kantor *et al.*, 1997; Imbroscio, 1998; DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1999). Finally, in the last few years — and to a considerable degree again following the lead of Clarence Stone — regime analysts have begun to probe new policy areas such as education (Henig *et al.*, 1999; Stone *et al.*, 2001), which promise to yield empirical findings at some variance from the original focus of regime analysis, urban redevelopment decision making.

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Anchoring regime analysis as a *theory* of urban politics is a crucial epistemological assumption: that a structural isomorphism links the foundational features of regime 'types', thus permitting the observer to identity characteristic regime formations in multiple locales. Though regime analysts vary somewhat in their specification of the underlying structural components of regimes; as a rule, specific regimes are presumed to reveal themselves via their agendas, the composition of their 'membership' (that is, which local forces are part of the policy-shaping coalition), and the means employed to hold coalition members in line, that is, through selective material benefits (Stone's initial formulation) or some other means.

In practice, when examining particular cities, regime analysts often tug at the fabric of local detail in order to achieve a fit with their paradigmatic structural materials: agendas, coalition participation, and modes of incentive distribution. For example, in the classic elaboration of regime theory, *Regime politics*, Stone proposes that in Atlanta 'one governing coalition … formed and held sway over its challengers for more than forty years' (1989, 183). Stone insists on this regime's continuity in the face of changes in its coalitional composition, as middle-class African-American entrepreneurs and political leaders assumed a central place in Atlanta's public affairs, as well as its agenda, as civil rights-derived public policy priorities evolved from secondary to core governmental commitments. In spite of these significant shifts in the city's political profile, Stone (1989: 234) discerns an ultimate political bedrock: 'In Atlanta … the very capacity for strong governance is dependent on active business collaboration'. Consequently, though the visible aims and leadership composition of municipal government may have changed, the city's underlying structure of political power was maintained. Writing prior to the appearance of the great bulk of regime analysis (and assuming a much more limited array of possible regimes), Stone's portrayal of regime continuity in Atlanta accepts a divergence between substantive power foundations and visible regime features that is at odds with the more rigid application of regime categories typical of subsequent regime analysis.

Reality's troubling propensity to not fall cleanly within analytical categories undercuts much regime analysis. In some cases practitioners of regime analysis simply steer clear of closely observing the relationships linking agendas, coalitions, and transferable political capital. As a result, what passes for regime analysis is really little more than descriptive narrative concerned with public sector/private sector interactions. At the other end of the analytical spectrum, some analysts use category expansion to enhance political explanation. Alan DiGaetano's and John S. Klemanski's (1999) ambitious study of Boston, Birmingham, Bristol, and Detroit, *Power and city governance*, adds conceptual architecture to regime analysis with the aim of reducing empirical/theoretical inconsistency. DiGaetano and Klemanski expand the number of distinguishable regime types by proposing that regime agendas, such as 'pro-growth', can be tied to varying 'strategies', including 'regional capital', 'industrial development', and 'human capital'. This allows DiGaetano and Klemanski to make rather fine distinctions in reference to regime transition/transformation in their four cities, but as the readers of their study — as well as other regime exercises that produce complicated classification systems — may have noted, identification of so many highly specific regime types, at some point, begins to reconverge with more straightforward observation of variation in the details of local decision making (Sites, 1997).

Even as regime theory has assumed its central place in the analysis of urban politics, various regime analysts have begun to express disquiet with the utility of their theory. Clarence Stone (Stone *et al.*, 2001; Stone 2005: 334), in the company of several of his colleagues who worked on the multiple-city Civic Capacity research project, has acknowledged that effecting substantial urban school reform seemed to elude the grasp of reform-minded urban regimes. In spite of local elites' commitment to some form of cooperative, human capital regime in most of the cities observed by Stone and his team of researchers, coalition activity directed at improving schools and students' performance did not produce much in the way of measurable positive outcomes. As

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such, a core proposition that Stone (1989: 242–244) had derived from his early analyses of Atlanta — that more inclusive local decision making could yield tangible policy benefits through more effective 'social learning' — was not validated by this subsequent research.

More fundamentally, English political scientist Jonathan Davies (2002: 9) has proposed that regime analysis has yet to come to terms with a serious gap in its scope of interpretation: that while regime analysts 'acknowledge the structural position of capitalism … they lack an explanation of economic trends and how these trends affect local politics'. In effect, Davies contends that contemporary regime analysts have often forgotten one of the crucial assumptions animating Stone's and Elkin's pioneering writings of the 1980s, that the structures and protocols of capitalism impose substantial limitations on local decision makers. Responding, in a sense, to both Stone's and Davies' concerns, a longstanding friendly critic of regime analysis, David Imbroscio (2003), has proposed that regime theory needs to refortify itself with a more specific normative content, to be achieved via the articulation/assessment of various 'alternative' economic development models, which give priority to principles such as 'community stability' and 'economic localism'.

The inferences we draw from our case study analyses are directed at contributing to this emergent debate over the uses and future of regime analysis. In particular, we argue (1) that regime analysts should take care to avoid imposing the characteristic structures of regime identification and classification onto the often messy and theoretically nonconvergent details of local political action and (2) that in addition to the structures of capitalism, emergent ideological constructs, which divert observers from considering underlying social cleavages, both inhibit the accurate apprehension of local politics and the use of regime theory as a tool for assessing the normative content of urban decision making.

Stadium projects, politics, and regime dynamics

In the following pages we employ information drawn from an investigation of Chicago stadium development politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Spirou and Bennett, 2003). In producing this previous analysis we collected sports franchise- and City of Chicago-generated planning documents, conducted interviews with participants in the debates/negotiations yielding each project, and examined a variety of secondary, principally journalistic materials. Our aim at present is to make three basic observations about the emergence, execution, and political structuring of the new Comiskey Park, Wrigley Field, and United Center projects. In the first instance, although the building/renovation of sports facilities has been an important element of Chicago's 'repositioning' as a thriving post-industrial metropolis, the main impetus for these projects was not the city's municipal leadership, but rather the city's professional sports franchise owners. Second, even in the broadest sense, at the point when plans for these projects began to take shape, the ultimate outcomes of these plans were quite unsettled. More than simply technical questions of advantageous siting, building design, finance, and construction, these projects involved complicated corporate/municipal/neighborhood negotiations, the results of which were largely dependent on how effectively neighborhood opponents of these projects could articulate their views and generate political leverage.

Third, responding to the emergent arraying of political interests and energies associated with each project, municipal leadership adopted varying roles as a participant in the resolution of these plans/conflicts. In the case of the evolution of the new Comiskey Park, municipal officials were induced to take on the role of 'enabler'. As the Chicago Cubs owners and Lake View neighborhood residents fenced over if and how Wrigley Field would be upgraded, the City of Chicago cast itself as 'mediator' between

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local antagonists. In what is, chronologically, the case that most evidently bridges the Harold Washington and Richard M. Daley eras, Mayor Daley's administration, in effect, assumed the role of 'executor' of a deal already reached by the builders of the United Center and their Near West Side Chicago neighbors.

The private sources of regime agenda items

The proposals to build/upgrade sports facilities in Chicago during the 1980s invariably originated in the private sector. Moreover, in respect to the Chicago White Sox ownership's advocacy of a publicly financed home field, as well as the Chicago Cubs' efforts to win municipal approval for adding playing field lights to Wrigley Field, the shifting economics of sports franchise ownership represented a powerful contextual feature explaining the franchises' perceptions of self-interest. The more complicated 'road to the United Center', in fact, involved three of Chicago's major leagues franchises — the National Football League's Chicago Bears, as well as the Bulls and the Blackhawks — but once again emergent trends in sports economics were at the heart of the particular sports stadium 'model' preferred by the Bulls and Blackhawks ownership.

In 1981 an investment combine headed by Jerry Reinsdorf and Eddie Einhorn purchased the Chicago White Sox from an ownership group headed by well-known baseball entrepreneur Bill Veeck. Veeck had managed various baseball franchises since the 1940s, and was often described as a 'showman' given his penchant for spectacular, audience-pleasing promotions. It was Veeck, for example, who had modified the center-field scoreboard at Comiskey Park in the early 1960s, adding carnivalesque lighting and fireworks displays detonated immediately after a member of the White Sox had hit a home run. However, soon after taking over the White Sox, Jerry Reinsdorf declared that Comiskey Park had been allowed to become the 'world's largest outdoor saloon' (Fitzpatrick, 1986), and over the course of the next several years, the new owners of the White Sox pursued a course of action aimed at redefining the baseball club's image — in particular, seeking to cultivate support in the Chicago area's booming western suburbs — and pressuring the City of Chicago to construct a new home for their baseball team.

In the short run, the White Sox won City of Chicago fiscal assistance for modifying the old Comiskey Park, in so doing adding a bank of skyboxes beneath the upper deck grandstand. By the mid-1980s, however, the White Sox owners had commissioned an engineering report declaring the ballpark unsuitable for further renovation, and coincidentally, White Sox management was exploring the possibility of franchise relocation. Ultimately, the White Sox never came to terms with either a suburban Chicago municipality, nor any of several prospective 'out-of-region' municipalities, but in December 1986 a City of Chicago/State of Illinois/White Sox agreement produced state legislation authorizing the construction of a new Comiskey Park. Yet as late as the spring of 1988 the White Sox persisted in relocation talks with officials in St. Petersburg, Florida, and as a result, induced a second, more generous state-authorized stadium proposal.

In the early 1980s the ownership of the Chicago Cubs passed from the paternalistic Wrigley family — which unlike every other MLB franchise owner, had resisted the scheduling of night-time baseball games — to the Tribune Company, a media conglomerate owning such properties as the *Chicago Tribune* and WGN television. WGN was a pathbreaking cable television station, and in the words of a WGN executive, the Tribune Company's purchase of the Cubs offered the 'opportunity to control live programming, which is the most important thing to a television and radio station' (Gershman, 1993: 218). Furthermore, this executive might have added, live evening programming was especially desirable.

However, even as various officials with the Tribune Company and the Chicago Cubs began to suggest that an upgrading (to allow evening baseball) was in order for Wrigley Field, neighborhood activists and allied politicians pushed through City of Chicago and State of Illinois legislation aimed at preventing the addition of lights to Wrigley Field.

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Following the Cubs' qualifying for post-season play in 1984, and having one of their scheduled home games relocated to San Diego (their playoff opponent's home city) to permit an evening network television broadcast, the Cubs franchise stepped up efforts to win repeal of the local and state restrictions on modifying Wrigley Field. During the next several years a three-sided negotiation process brought together Cubs representatives, local activists from Wrigley Field's neighboring — and very well-organized — Lake View community, and the City of Chicago. In early 1988 Chicago's city council approved an ordinance allowing the construction of field lighting at Wrigley Field in return for Cubs franchise commitments to limit the annual number of evening contests and to work with its Lake View neighbors on various crowd control, traffic management, and anti-littering measures. Though neighborhood activists did not express great admiration for the terms of this negotiated settlement, in the subsequent years, the Cubs and their adjoining neighborhood have co-existed in reasonable harmony, even when the franchise proposed further renovations at Wrigley Field in 2001 (Washburn, 2005).

The serpentine decision-making process yielding the construction of the United Center began in the mid-1980s. At that time, the Chicago Bears of National Football League were fielding very competitive teams (in 1986 winning the Super Bowl championship) while becoming increasingly dissatisfied with playing field conditions, locker room facilities, and public amenities at their home stadium, the publicly owned Soldier Field. By mid-1987, following Mayor Washington's convening of a blue-ribbon site selection committee, the City of Chicago and Bears had agreed to the construction of a new professional football stadium on Chicago's Near West Side. Although the stadium would be privately financed, the City of Chicago pledged to assist with land acquisition, resident relocation, and infrastructure investments. For their part, the Bears joined a multi-partner development consortium including a major local hospital (which planned to build a sports medicine complex) and the Chicago Blackhawks of the National Hockey League, whose owner, William Wirtz, planned to renovate his nearby Chicago Stadium.

The West Side Bears stadium never made the leap from drawing board to three dimensions, in large part due to conflicts between the Bears and Blackhawks franchises over facility-siting issues. Nevertheless, press accounts suggest that Blackhawks owner Wirtz — upon visiting the new basketball arena housing the Detroit Pistons in Auburn Hills, Michigan — realized that there were tremendously enhanced profit-making opportunities associated with — rather than upgrading the 60-year old Chicago Stadium — building a new sporting palace (McCarron, 1988). Moreover, Wirtz found a ready partner for this project in Jerry Reinsdorf, principal owner of the Chicago Bulls, at that time an up-and-coming NBA team led by the incomparable Michael Jordan. Thus was hatched the plan to build the United Center, a stadium seating more than 20,000, including 216 skyboxes, and otherwise offering a consumer's paradise of restaurant, tavern, and souvenir-purchasing options.

In order for the Wirtz/Reinsdorf stadium proposal to move forward, however, neighborhood opponents of the original football stadium, who viewed the basketball/hockey arena proposal as little more than a scaled-down land grab, needed to be mollified. For nearly two years, from mid-1989 until mid-1991, the sports franchises negotiated with representatives of the local neighborhood coalition, the Interfaith Organizing Project. By the time these negotiations were concluded, local residents had won a substantial relocation assistance package for the handful of families in the way of the new stadium, and in addition, a variety of other commitments by the two sports franchises in support of nearby community development efforts. The United Center opened in 1994, in time for Michael Jordan to return from retirement and lead the Bulls to their fourth, fifth, and sixth NBA championships during the 1990s. Although the United Center as a physical facility — unambitious in design, surrounded by acres of surface parking — contributes little to its immediately surrounding cityscape, on its eastern margins Chicago's Near West Side has also experienced a marked commercial and residential revival.

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The uncertainty of neighborhood mobilization and agenda advocacy

Though conventional wisdom may still proclaim that 'you can't fight City Hall', it is more accurate to propose that some neighborhoods do, and some do not successfully fight powerful outside-the-neighborhood institutions. As our three cases suggest, however, it is not entirely predictable which local communities will succeed and which will fail in defending their turf. Table 1 summarizes the processes and outcomes associated with the three projects under discussion.

Of our three case studies, the Cubs/Lake View negotiations represent the institutional/neighborhood confrontation whose outcome was most predictable. This is in large part attributable to the Lake View neighborhood's longstanding record of effective local advocacy, itself a function of the neighborhood's 'winning' demographic profile: home to large numbers of middle-class property owners, including a substantial number of professional persons. The principal local neighborhood organization, the Lake View Citizens Council (LVCC), had been founded in the 1950s. In direct response to the Tribune Company's moves to upgrade Wrigley Field, the LVCC spun off CUBS (Chicagoans United for Baseball in the Sunshine), an explicitly anti-lights group that mobilized public demonstrations, contacted officials, and at one point fielded a legal committee numbering eight attorneys. There are, of course, LVCC and CUBS activists who claim that the 1988 agreement to add lights, limit night-time games, and commit the baseball franchise and Lake View activists to an ongoing dialogue on neighborhood impacts was a sorry defeat for the neighborhood. Nevertheless, by the standards of most franchise/neighborhood conflicts, the residents of Lake View won an impressive set of concessions from the Chicago Cubs. While the blocks directly adjoining Wrigley Field

Table 1 Three stadium development projects in Chicago, 1988–1994

Location	Project initiator	Community response	Sustainable community benefits	Role of government
South Armour Square (construction of New Comiskey Park later US Cellular Field, 1991)	Corporate owner of Chicago White Sox (Jerry Reinsdorf and Eddie Einhorn aiming to increase profit)	Limited (lack of community organizing, unable to enlist local alderman, racial and class tensions, division between public housing residents, homeowners and renters)	Non-existent (displacement)	Enabler
Lake View (installation of lights at Wrigley Field, 1988)	Corporate owner of Chicago Cubs (Tribune Company aiming to increase profit)	Long history of active community organizations, considerable opposition (LVCC and CUBS), well organized campaign utilizing primarily conventional participation means	Extensive (city/neighborhood protection plan, Chicago Cubs contributions to community well-being, Tribune concessions to alleviate negative consequences of night games, limited night games)	Mediator
Near West Side (construction of the United Center, 1994)	Corporate owner of Chicago Bulls and Chicago Blackhaws (Jerry Reinsdorf and William Wirtz aiming to increase profit)	Emerging religious community organizations (IOP), considerable opposition, mostly demonstrations and effective resident participation	Moderate (displaced residents received choice replacement housing, local library and community center, funding for additional affordable housing)	Executor

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have certainly been commercialized during the last 15 years, the larger Lake View neighborhood has prospered, suffering little or no significant hardship as a result of stadium modernization.

A synopsis of the governmental/White Sox/South Armour Square interactions preceding the development of the new Comiskey Park reveals an inversion of virtually every aspect of the Cubs/Lake View negotiations. South Armour Square, directly to the south of the original Comiskey Park and soon-to-be-site of the new facility, was a geographically isolated, poor-to-working class residential enclave. Although local residents did create an organization to promote their interests, representatives of the Illinois Sports Facility Authority (ISFA, the public agency mandated to build the new baseball stadium) and the White Sox engaged in only sporadic negotiations with representatives of South Armour Square. Indeed, the ISFA never held public hearings on the siting of the new sports complex. Furthermore, unlike LVCC and CUBS, the South Armour Square Neighborhood Coalition (SASNC) was unable to forge alliances with either local political representatives or grassroots organizations in adjoining neighborhoods. Ultimately, the ISFA broke what resistance was mounted by the SASNC via a classic divide-and-conquer strategy: offering substantial relocation subsidies to homeowners and renters willing to sign a document approving the public agency's taking of their property. The SASNC was fractured by this deal, and although the remnant organizational membership filed suit to block the stadium project, construction of the new Comiskey Park proceeded. Years later the South Amour Square residents' litigation was dismissed in federal district court.

The events yielding the United Center reveal a pattern of neighborhood/institutional interaction lying somewhere between the poles represented by the Wrigley Field and new Comiskey Park cases. In one sense, the failed Bears proposals gave Near West Side neighborhood activists some 'lead time' preceding the Wirtz/Reinsdorf proposal for the same general site. Although the Near West Side was, like South Armour Square, a poor neighborhood, it spans a much larger geographic space, thus opening the possibility of a broader oppositional mobilization. Furthermore, though a relatively obscure organization in the mid-1980s, the local Interfaith Organizing Project (IOP) was staffed by experienced community organizers, and the group revealed a flair for mounting media-drawing public demonstrations, such as its 1988 touch football game near the suburban home of Bears president Michael McCaskey.

The IOP's internal discipline was also displayed in the two-year long negotiations with Wirth and Reinsdorf, during which the franchise owners — possibly mimicking ISFA strategy — tried to peel off opponents by offering them advantageous individual relocation packages. In fact, the IOP members held firm, and the Blackhawks/Bulls consortium resolved matters by offering the neighborhood a generally advantageous set of incentives. The deeper ambiguities of these negotiations have emerged in the long run, as rapid gentrification has begun to transform the Near West Side, and the IOP has fragmented. One group of IOP activists has moved on to become close partners of the franchises owners, collaborating on a series of subsequent neighborhood projects. The IOP, itself, has lost its community prominence even as a second faction in the organization has opposed overly close neighborhood collaboration with the owners of the United Center.

The shifting municipal role

Although private sector actors initiated each of the stadium projects we have discussed, quickly enough their proposals found a place on the public agenda. As we describe how city government sought to advance, arbitrate, or endorse these projects, we have in mind two senses of 'role': (1) the practical means employed by city officials to define and deliver these projects, as well as (2) the more elusive, presentational 'shaping' of the public role. By the latter we refer to how public officials 'sell' their chosen courses of action

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to the public, which often involves construing what they have done in a manner that is not necessarily consistent with the specifics of their actions (Edelman, 1964: 65–83).

Simply put, as the Chicago White Sox aggressively explored out-of-town relocation options in the mid-1980s, the City of Chicago (and, to a lesser degree, the State of Illinois) was thrust into the role of stadium project 'enabler': negotiating with the franchise owners the terms of a publicly financed stadium 'deal', promoting state authorizing legislation, participating in the formation and operation of an institutional apparatus (the ISFA) to deliver the stadium project. The city government was so far 'out front' of the new Comiskey Park project that, when neighborhood opponents of the stadium proposal cornered then-mayor Eugene Sawyer at a public meeting in 1988, his line of defense was to claim that the stadium was not his doing, but rather the pet project of his widely admired and recently deceased predecessor, Harold Washington. Irrespective of which mayor is to be praised (or blamed), the new Comiskey Park was at this time widely viewed as a 'city project'.

In contrast, even before the City of Chicago sought a way around the impasse over adding lights at Wrigley Field, a clearly marked battle line — pitting Cubs officials and Lake View residents — distinguished the main options for the ballpark and community. Though Cubs officials often spoke of departing Chicago, and neighborhood activists were frequently uncharitable in describing how Mayor Washington and his representatives served as 'mediators' between franchise and community, city officials repeatedly emphasized that their role in this conflict was to find a solution benefiting not just the baseball team or neighborhood residents, but both sides of the dispute, and thereby, the city at large.

Finally, on the city's Near West Side, the sequence of feuds between varying institutional representatives and local residents had, by the early 1990s, clearly shaped how the administration of newly elected Mayor Richard M. Daley approached the United Center proposal. In effect, Mayor Daley insisted that the then-relevant parties to the conflict settle their differences among themselves. That done, the City of Chicago endorsed their agreement and committed itself to delivering a comprehensive program of neighborhood improvements. What is most striking about how the Daley administration took on the role of 'executor' is its insistence that the resolution of the Blackhawk-Bulls/IOP conflict was not so much the agreement to build a sports facility, but rather, as Mayor Daley put it, 'the first step in the rebirth' of the Near West Side (Reardon, 1991).

Regime agendas: opportunism articulated

If, as we are suggesting, the issues that must be addressed by mayors, city council members, and municipal administrators are often thrust upon them by private sector interests, then it is useful to reconsider regime theory's underlying assumption of structural isomorphism, that is, the patterning of regime agendas, coalition participation, and distribution of benefits. It is our sense that most regime analysts assume not just that this isomorphism accurately reflects an on-the-ground grouping of meaningful political variables, but that, as well, these variables tend to be manipulated in the following rationalistic manner. Political leaders with ambitions to leave their mark on the local body politic define their programs, seek allies who share their fundamental aims or can be enlisted as supporters via selective benefits, and — using personal-, social group-, or government-derived resources — distribute a mix of private and public 'goods' in order to cement political coalitions.

But what if, as a large body of observation indicates, political figures find that much of their interaction is with 'allies' whose support is contingent in at least two ways: (1) by virtue of their interest in specific governmental initiatives, not the entirety of a municipal agenda and (2) temporally, in the sense that, unless their interests are met

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within some reasonable time frame, they will simply withdraw from the public arena (for example, by removing their business to another city)? In such cases, political leaders may choose coalition partners *and then* fabricate an agenda linking their own aspirations with the particularistic concerns of their contingent partners. Indeed, it is only by considering the patterning of regime agendas, coalition partners, and benefit distribution in this fashion that we can make sense of the Harold Washington aide who, in the throes of City of Chicago/White Sox negotiations, asserted: 'Losing a major-league baseball team is no different than losing a Wisconsin Steel (McCarron, 1985)'. The latter was a major South Side Chicago industrial facility that had shut down in 1980. Moreover, industrial retention and the maintenance of high-paying union jobs within Chicago were closer by far — compared to sports franchise assistance — to the expressed program of the Washington administration. In order to rationalize substantively discordant policy, this Washington administration official rescripted the aims of the new Comiskey Park deal: rather than offering a highly advantageous stadium package to a highly self-interested sports franchise, the Washington administration was saving jobs for Chicagoans. Furthermore, a few years later — having avoided the politically sticky and financially costly entanglements that had characterized the new Comiskey Park bargaining — the Daley administration took advantage of the Blackhawks-Bulls/IOP deal to proclaim that it would begin rebuilding a downtrodden Chicago neighborhood.

Nor is this opportunistic crafting of useful fictions — which are presented as agendas — unique to Chicago, or for that matter, to the politics of urban development. Lynne Weikart's (2001: 377) account of Rudolph Giuliani's mayoralty in New York City notes critical discordances between Giuliani mayoral practice and many of the precepts of what has been termed new public management (NPM): 'Mayor Giuliani embraced NPM principles when it suited his own political agenda and failed to embrace them when it was politically inconvenient'. Nevertheless, Giuliani aides routinely presented the personally volatile, hierarchically inclined mayor to New Yorkers as a skilful organizational innovator, whose cutting edge management acumen was at the core of the city's recovery from the economic, public service, and racial/ethnic crises of the 1970s and 1980s.

It is just this opportunism — building public agendas on the shoulders of cleavage-riven coalition partners, advancing particular project configurations in the face of possibly well-organized opposition (and recognizing that the 'final product' may vary from the plans), determining whether or not to take the lead in promoting projects (and if the latter, calculating the timing of one's endorsement of others' initiatives), or even repackaging mayoral eccentricities as management innovation — that constitute the 'micro-processes' of local political maneuvering discussed by Clarence Stone (2004) in a recent restatement of the regime perspective. In their rush to classify, too often Stone's successor regime analysts have deterministically imposed categories and deductive lines of causality onto what are, in fact, far more fluid patterns of coalition formation and policy making.

Wrenching the political from the economic

Let us now return to Jonathan Davies' (2002: 12) observation that regime analysis neglects the 'wider dynamics in political economy'. In one sense, Davies is offering good advice that is likely to be misused. For the classification-oriented regime analyst, the lesson to be derived from Davies' argument could be to add another deterministic layering to regime analysis' structuring of factors, in all likelihood to be defined via a small number of 'typical' macro-economic/local politics paths. This is not a desirable state of affairs if, as we argue, one of the main bad habits that has emerged among regime analysts is a propensity to fall back on classification rather than to pursue nuanced analysis of local political processes.

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There are clearly wider economy/local process linkages that up until this point regime analysis has downplayed, such as the evolution of local governmental institutions in response to emergent developments in the economic sphere. Local institutional structures are not permanent, and, in fact, adjusting the structure and workings of local/regional public institutions can represent a crucial means by which private sector interests — typically working in league with governmental figures — seek to reshape the arenas of local policy making to their advantage. This is precisely the kind of political action that Dennis Judd, David Laslo, and Dick Simpson (Judd, 2003; Judd and Simpson, 2003; Laslo, 2003) have begun to describe in a series of analyses examining the use of 'public authorities' to advance large-scale urban/regional infrastructure projects.

With Jonathan Davies, we are also of the view that informed political analysis must consider how capitalism's underlying values, characteristic modes of operation, as well as its fluctuations as an enveloping network of interactions, both direct and constrain local political action. Nevertheless, Clarence Stone (2004: 7) is correct in asserting that regime theory should be viewed not as 'grand explanation', but rather, as a middle-range theory that succeeds best as a 'way of examining how large forces for change play out concretely across a range of localities'. As such, regime analysts' *focus* in explaining urban politics and policy making should remain on the definitions of agenda, marshaling of forces, administrative/policy protocols of urban governance, and ultimately, local policy outcomes. This more limited specification of regime theory's scope leaves much room for the assessment of large factor/local action connections, especially if regime analysts look in a somewhat different direction than that proposed by Davies.

Regime theory and the normative assessment of urban politics

A number of years ago, Canadian political scientist Warren Magnusson (1996: 144) observed: 'Analysts once worried about the domination of communities by power elites, but the aim now seems to be to create such elites where they do not exist. The common complaint is that "communities" are unable to take charge of their own destinies'. In a sense, regime theory — through its analytical prioritization of social production over social control — has contributed to the anomaly observed by Magnusson. In a global context whose most salient feature is assumed to be inter-regional and even inter-municipal economic competition, local constellations of interest — corporations, labor unions, neighborhood movements, and political parties — can be construed as 'all occupying the same boat'. This assumption was central to the Clarence Stone-led Civic Capacity and Urban Education Project, even as this team's local research has revealed some very conflictual city-specific political environments (Henig *et al.*, 1999).

We thus note a double irony in Stone's (2004: 1) characterization — an 'apolitical treatment of the economic perspective' — of the Imbroscio (2003: 276) argument that regime analysis should promote 'an altogether different policy agenda' emphasizing values such as economic localism, community stability, and human capital development. In the first instance, Imbroscio's injunction to both regime analysts and municipal leaders to adopt this particular value perspective smacks of US Progressive-era managerial reformism, which often supposed that if the public and officialdom could simply be enlightened, their support for reform measures would be assured (Schiesl, 1977). Imbroscio's program is a 'bottom-up' strategy of engagement with the wider economy, that is, by pursuing an array of policy options tending to reduce the mobility of capital and stabilize local economic institutions. Many citizens, public officials, and scholars — no doubt — accept this proposition, but, just as surely, many do not, and there are powerful ideological and institutional forces driving a more globalist, less localist economic order. Why Imbroscio steers away from addressing just how,

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politically speaking, his program might be promoted and implemented is not a matter that we can explain. However, we do note that in a more thoroughgoing, contemporaneous discussion of this program, the reality of politics and public persuasion also seems to fall by the wayside (Williamson *et al.*, 2002).

The second irony, though, is a matter of Stone's — and by extension, a considerable number of like-minded regime analysts' — succumbing to a similar reform/politics bifurcation in their recent efforts to extend regime analysis into new policy areas. It is our view — following Magnusson — that a variety of ideological, or in some cases, rhetorical developments have directed mainstream academic political analysis of cities away from questions of social cleavage and material conflict of interest in favor of perspectives that *presume* underlying commonalities of interest, and consequently, suppose that policy amelioration is necessarily a matter of collaborative action. Certainly, much of the research and policy prescription growing out of Robert Putnam's (2000) social capital analysis of community decline views cooperation, not conflict-inspired mobilization, as the surest means to rebuild neighborhoods and cities (DeFilippis, 2001; Mayer, 2003). In reference to the Civic Capacity and Urban Education project, local elites and the Civic Capacity researchers alike seem to have accepted the presumption that reformist political coalitions, as so *self-defined*, would be the correct vehicle for implementing efficacious educational innovations. That most of the examined cities failed to improve their public schools was therefore attributable to breakdowns in coalition formation and maintenance. At least two other explanations seem not to have been explored at any length: (1) that local political conflicts over school reform were evidence of substantive policy disagreements and that within-coalition, majoritarian courses of action might have represented second (or third or fourth) best policies or (2) even in the absence of intra-coalitional disputation, chosen school reform measures did not come to terms with substantive barriers to student achievement. In short, much of the work produced by this project seems to have forgotten a core concern of early regime analysis, which was the critical examination of both the substantive aims of urban policy as well as the means chosen to deliver policy.

It is in this fashion that we think contemporary regime analysis should confront something 'wider' in the political economic firmament. As a mode of political analysis, we feel that recent regime theory's main shortcoming has been its unwillingness to interrogate the ideas and associated institutional practices that have given rise to current fashions in urban reformism, as well as to the quite possibly related quiescent politics of contemporary cities (Sites, 1997; Mayer, 2003).

Epilogue

Based on our preceding discussion, we think that the paradox of Chicago Mayor Harold Washington's sponsorship of major stadium development projects has been resolved, just as, analogously, other research has explained the somewhat surprising progressive tendencies that have been exhibited by the subsequent Richard M. Daley administration (Rast, 1999; 2005). The focus of our concluding comments, therefore, will be on the significance of our Chicago-based observations for the larger field of regime analysis. In the first instance, we want to emphasize the importance of various characteristic features of and micro-processes associated with the politics of local urban policy-making in contemporary cities: the persisting tendency for many, if not most public agenda items to have their genesis in 'private', nongovernmental institutions; the opportunistic practices of political figures in seizing upon agenda items and coalitional partners; the varying modes of 'presenting' municipal intervention. At one level, the salience of these items is, as we have suggested, cautionary. Regime analysts seeking to classify particular cities, or to locate the policy tendencies of a given city at a given time within a particular

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classificatory arrangement, should take care not to distort the observation of local power relationships, how these power relationships structure policy selection, and the policy outcomes thereby produced, by forcing messy local realities into pre-set analytical categories.

More generally, we urge regime analysts to recall the context and normative concerns that originally animated this urban research perspective. On the one hand, political turbulence as the expression of real conflicts of interest, as well as of differential group access to social recognition and resources, by virtually universal assent animated the highly conflictual urban politics of the 1960s and 1970s. Although urban political contestation has declined to a significant degree since the 1970s, this is not of itself proof that underlying cleavages have dissipated. If anything, new conceptualizations of public–private partnership, or more profoundly, of essentially open societies marred only by variations in access to social capital, may serve to perpetuate social inequality and the dominance of social and institutional systems by particular elites. Urban regime theory may be but a mid-range strategy for interpreting local urban politics, but as such it ought to maintain a critical stance in evaluating policies, especially as these policies and the political/administrative means chosen to implement them, in the near term, fail to achieve their expressed aims, or over the longer arc of time, contribute to the perpetuation of broad social inequality.

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Résumé

Entre 1988 et 1994, Chicago a connu trois grands projets de stades: la construction du nouveau site sportif de Comiskey Park (rebaptisé depuis US Cellular Field) et celle du United Center, ainsi que l'aménagement de l'éclairage sur le vieux terrain de Wrigley Field. Cet article analyse la mise en oeuvre de ces projets en critiquant et redirigeant la théorie des 'régimes' contemporaine. Les corrections les plus spécifiques apportées à l'analyse des régimes courante s'attachent à l'opportunisme des personnages politiques dans la mise en forme de leurs programmes et l'exécution de leurs projets. Les pistes plus larges qu'offre cette analyse tiennent à la nature de la théorie des régimes en tant que mode d'analyse politique et, parallèlement, à une nouvelle conceptualisation du lien entre l'analyse des régimes et le diagnostic normatif d'une politique urbaine.

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