

# THE CALCULUS OF COALITIONS

## Cities, Suburbs, and the Metropolitan Agenda

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Reductions in federal urban assistance and devolution have made cities increasingly reliant on their state governments at a time when cities have lost political strength in state legislatures. This article identifies three types of coalitions that historically supported cities: party-imposed coalitions, interest-based coalitions, and governor-brokered coalitions. It shows how institutional, demographic, and economic changes have made these legislative coalitions less reliable. The article then considers prospects for constructing new city-suburban legislative coalitions. It argues that institutional constraints have limited the scope of preferences expressed by city and suburban legislators. The article concludes that prospects for city-suburban coalitions will depend on new issue definitions, institutional rules, and organizations that help city and suburban legislators redefine their policy preferences.

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**For nearly half a century**, the words *urban* and *crisis* have been closely linked in American politics and policy. Buffeted by major industrial transformations, suburban expansion, and racial conflict, older cities experienced economic decline and shrinking populations from the 1950s to the mid 1990s. The political importance of cities to the national success of the Democratic Party initially ensured that federal policy addressed urban problems even as older cities were losing ground to their suburbs. But the substantial reductions in federal urban assistance in the 1980s and the acceleration of

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devolution in the 1990s have made cities increasingly reliant on their state governments for assistance in addressing the major problems they confront.

The importance of state governments for cities is not new. Throughout American history, cities have lobbied their states to obtain funding and to protect or enhance their legal authority. States are responsible for the foundational legislation that determines city powers and resources; likewise, issues crucial to the fate of cities are fought out each year in state legislatures. Indeed, during the past 30 years, the importance of state decision making for cities has increased. Federal aid to cities has fallen precipitously. At the peak, in 1978, about 15% of city revenues (more than 25% in some big cities) came from federal aid. By 1999, federal aid was less than 3% of city revenues (Kincaid 1998; Judd and Swanstrom 2004). General revenue sharing on the federal level for cities died via congressional resolution in 1986 (Wallin 1998). With looming federal deficits and both houses of Congress controlled by Republicans, there is little prospect for increased federal aid. Cities must turn to the states.

Devolution of federal programs, a continual trend since the New Federalism of the 1970s, also makes cities more dependent on states. The conversion of welfare from a national entitlement to a state block grant under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program means that during recessions, as the need for welfare spending soars, cities cannot count on additional funding; it is up to state legislatures to provide it (Chernick and Reschovsky 2001).

However, the enhanced importance of states comes at a time when cities have lost political strength in state legislatures. Once reliable urban strategies, such as logrolling, coalitions with legislators from other distressed areas of the state, and control of the Democratic Party caucus, have become less effective in state legislatures as cities have lost population and as urban delegations have become less cohesive. As urban political strength has ebbed, a growing chorus of analysts has argued that cities can no longer go it alone and must engage in broader regional coalitions to thrive.

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The most prominent advocate of city-suburban coalitions today is former Minnesota State senator Myron Orfield. Noting that central cities and inner-ring suburbs face similar fiscal pressures, Orfield has made the case for city-suburban coalitions in the state legislature to enact policies such as tax base sharing and fair-share housing (Orfield 1997). More recently, Orfield has argued that "affluent job centers" are also among the strongest supporters of metropolitan reforms. Their support is motivated not by fiscal stress but by the fear that present patterns of development will damage the environment and undermine the quality of their lives, especially by generating traffic congestion and paving over green space (Orfield 2002).

Orfield's work generated excitement among advocates of regionalism because it outlined a novel strategy for addressing urban problems by ending the political isolation of cities. But because Orfield's strategy is based on an analysis of the objective interests of political jurisdictions, its central contribution is to illuminate new possibilities for coalitions. It cannot tell us whether local actors will actually choose this strategy or how the political institutions in which city and suburban actors operate affect the way they identify preferences and set priorities. Assessing the political prospects of regional coalition-building strategies requires understanding circumstances under which city and suburban political leaders will adopt such strategies. And because regional coalitions must pursue many of their most important goals in state politics, the political prospects for regionalism depend on the institutional openings and barriers in state politics.

Indeed, much of the debate about regionalism has focused on the interaction of the central city and its suburbs while the state's role in promoting or inhibiting regional interaction is ignored. In fact, states are critical players; they set the terms and conditions under which regionalism occurs. This is amply clear from the two examples of regionalism highlighted in the literature: Portland, Oregon, and the Twin Cities in Minnesota. In each, state action and new state laws created new rules and institutions that altered the terms on which cities and suburbs interacted. The state is thus a critical arena for studying the politics of regional coalition building.

This article examines these questions by analyzing the coalition-building strategies of central cities in state legislatures. The article begins by identifying the three major coalitional strategies that cities have used in state legislatures, showing how they have become increasingly unreliable. It next examines why cities have not pressed for new coalitions to address urban problems, showing how institutional constraints in the cities and in the legislature lead urban and suburban interests to formulate their preferences in narrow, short-term ways rather than the long-term perspective advocated by

proponents of regionalism. These political and institutional features of state politics suggest that coalition building for regionalism requires new institutional forms, such as suburban consortia, as well as initiative from groups outside the political system that have resources to engage in long-term processes of regional alliance building.

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Our empirical evidence is based on case studies of city lobbying of state legislatures in four states: Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and New York. These states were selected because they each contain distressed urban and suburban areas. At the same time, they vary in the geographic, economic, racial, and political characteristics of cities and suburbs. Illinois, Michigan, and New York have a single dominant city, while Ohio has three cities (Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati) of roughly equal size and influence. In each case, the percentage of the population in these large cities declined between 1960 and 2000.

These population declines have translated directly into a loss of legislators from the central city delegations. In 1950, for example, 33 legislators represented some portion of the city of Detroit out of 110 members of the Michigan House of Representatives. Today, there are only 13. Prior to the redistricting following the 2000 Census, New York City had 61 of 150 seats in the lower house of the New York State legislature, Chicago had 30 of 118 in Illinois, and Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Columbus combined had 14 of the 99 seats in Ohio. Not only has this decline in representation reduced the proportion of votes from city representatives in the legislature; it has also reduced urban influence in the Democratic caucuses in the legislature.

In each state, we interviewed the lobbyist of the major central city (or cities) and asked them to name their key legislative priorities and how they attempted to pursue them in the state legislature. We then interviewed key legislators named by the lobbyists and other knowledgeable informants, such as newspaper reporters and legislative staff. Our interviews, conducted in 2000–2001, focused on the previous 10-year period. We supplemented the interviews with roll-call analyses of votes, newspaper articles, government reports, and scholarly studies. In each case, our objective was to determine what issues were important to city governments in state legislatures, identify the different coalitions they assembled in pursuit of those objectives, and assess the presence of city-suburban coalitions of the type suggested by Orfield.

### THE DECLINING POLITICAL POWER OF CITIES IN STATES

Since the 1960s, the political influence of cities in state legislatures has eroded as cities have lost population and representation. Most central cities have suffered a substantial decline as a share of their state's population during the past decades (see Table 1). In 37 states, the largest city declined as a share of the state population. The drop was particularly precipitous in some states. Chicago, for example, declined from 35.2% of Illinois's population in 1960 to 23.3% in 2000, Baltimore from 30.3% of Maryland's population to 12.3%, Detroit from 21.3% of Michigan's population to 9.6%, and Denver from 28.2% of Colorado's population to 12.9%.

We also calculated the change in percentage of the state population for all large cities (more than 250,000 population) in the state. Many states with more than one large city also experienced substantial relative declines in the population of their large urban areas. Ohio's large cities declined from 28.0% of the state's population in 1960 to 16.2% in 2000, Missouri's from 28.4% to 14.1%, Minnesota's from 23.3% to 13.6%, and Pennsylvania's from 23.0% to 15.1%. To create majorities in state legislatures, large cities have always needed to add votes from representatives of other geographic areas. As Table 1 shows, even in 1960, most central cities were not close to a majority of their state's population. The reduction in city representatives since the 1960s has made efforts to construct majority coalitions even more challenging.

Given the importance of the topic, there is surprisingly little systematic research on how cities influence state legislatures.<sup>1</sup> The existing literature shows that central cities have always faced a fundamental political weakness when lobbying their states: Rarely, if ever, has a central city represented a majority of votes in both houses of the state legislature. The minority status of cities was exacerbated by the underrepresentation of urban areas prior to *Baker v. Carr* (1962). The implementation of "one man-one vote" came at a time, however, when most cities were losing population to their suburbs, and therefore it probably benefited suburbs more than cities (Reichley 1970; Burns et al. 2002).

Their minority status means that cities have had to build coalitions with other parts of the state to succeed in state legislatures. Throughout American history, the rural-urban political divide has presented obstacles to such coalition building (Derge 1958; Broach 1972). In *American State Politics* (1956), V. O. Key observed that the metropolitan/nonmetropolitan electoral divide is greatest in states where one large city seems to dominate the state. Two examples are amply documented in the literature: New York and Illinois (Benjamin and Brecher 1988; Nardulli 1989).

**TABLE 1: Change in Central City Population as a Percentage of State Population, 1960–2000**

State	% of State Population in Largest Central City		% Point Difference	% of Population in Central Cities >250,000		% Point Difference
	1960	2000	2000– 1960	1960	2000	2000– 1960
	1. Alabama (AL)	10.4	5.5	-5.0	10.4	0.0
2. Alaska (AK)	19.6	41.5	22.0	0.0	41.5	41.5
3. Arizona (AZ)	33.7	25.7	-8.0	33.7	35.2	1.5
4. Arkansas (AR)	6.0	6.9	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
5. California (CA)	15.8	10.9	-4.9	26.5	27.2	0.7
6. Colorado (CO)	28.2	12.9	-15.3	28.2	27.7	-0.5
7. Connecticut (CT)	6.4	4.1	-2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
8. Delaware (DE)	21.5	9.3	-12.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
9. Florida (FL)	5.9	4.6	-1.3	11.4	8.8	-2.7
10. Georgia (GA)	12.4	5.1	-7.3	12.4	5.1	-7.3
11. Hawaii (HI)	46.5	30.7	-15.8	46.5	30.7	-15.8
12. Idaho (ID)	5.2	14.4	9.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
13. Illinois (IL)	35.2	23.3	-11.9	35.2	23.3	-11.9
14. Indiana (IN)	10.2	13.0	2.8	10.2	13.0	2.8
15. Iowa (IA)	7.6	6.8	-0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
16. Kansas (KS)	11.7	12.8	1.1	11.7	12.8	1.1
17. Kentucky (KY)	12.9	6.4	-6.4	12.9	12.8	-0.1
18. Louisiana (LA)	19.3	10.8	-8.4	19.3	10.8	-8.5
19. Maine (ME)	7.5	5.0	-2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
20. Maryland (MD)	30.3	12.3	-18.0	30.3	12.3	-18.0
21. Massachusetts (MA)	13.5	9.3	-4.3	13.5	9.3	-4.2
22. Michigan (MI)	21.3	9.6	-11.8	21.3	9.6	-11.7
23. Minnesota (MN)	14.1	7.8	-6.4	23.3	13.6	-9.7
24. Mississippi (MS)	6.6	6.5	-0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
25. Missouri (MO)	17.4	7.9	-9.5	28.4	14.1	-14.3
26. Montana (MT)	8.2	10.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
27. Nebraska (NE)	21.4	22.8	1.4	21.4	22.8	1.4
28. Nevada (NV)	22.6	23.9	1.4	0.0	23.9	23.9
29. New Hampshire (NH)	14.5	8.7	-5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
30. New Jersey (NJ)	6.7	3.3	-3.4	11.2	3.3	-7.9
31. New Mexico (NM)	21.2	24.7	3.5	0.0	24.7	24.7
32. New York (NY)	46.4	42.2	-4.2	51.4	43.7	-7.7
33. North Carolina (NC)	4.4	6.7	2.3	0.0	10.1	10.1
34. North Dakota (ND)	7.4	14.1	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
35. Ohio (OH)	9.0	6.3	-2.8	28.0	16.2	-11.9
36. Oklahoma (OK)	13.9	14.7	0.7	25.2	26.1	0.9

*(continued)*

**TABLE 1 (continued)**

<i>State</i>	<i>% of State Population in Largest Central City</i>		<i>% Point Difference</i>	<i>% of Population in Central Cities &gt;250,000</i>		<i>% Point Difference</i>
	<i>1960</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2000– 1960</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>2000– 1960</i>
	37. Oregon (OR)	21.1	15.5	-5.6	21.1	15.5
38. Pennsylvania (PA)	17.7	12.4	-5.3	23.0	15.1	-7.9
39. Rhode Island (RI)	24.1	16.6	-7.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
40. South Carolina (SC)	4.1	2.9	-1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
41. South Dakota (SD)	9.6	16.4	6.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
42. Tennessee (TN)	13.9	11.4	-2.5	13.9	21.4	7.5
43. Texas (TX)	9.8	9.4	-0.4	29.6	31.9	2.3
44. Utah (UT)	21.3	8.1	-13.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
45. Vermont (VT)	9.1	6.4	-2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
46. Virginia (VA)	7.7	6.0	-1.7	7.7	6.0	-1.7
47. Washington (WA)	19.5	9.6	-10.0	19.5	9.6	-9.9
48. West Virginia (WV)	4.6	3.0	-1.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
49. Wisconsin (WI)	18.8	11.1	-7.6	18.8	11.1	-7.7
50. Wyoming (WY)	13.2	10.7	-2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	15.8	12.4	-3.4	12.9	11.8	-1.1

#### **BUILDING MAJORITIES: THE CALCULUS OF COALITIONS**

Although cities never had a majority in state legislatures and were viewed with hostility by many rural, small-town, and suburban legislators, they nonetheless managed to achieve many of their goals in state politics through coalition building. Cities traditionally relied on three major coalition-building strategies in state legislatures. Each of these strategies, however, has become less reliable as demographic and institutional shifts, including the atrophy of local party organizations, the growing power of state legislative leaders independent from local party organizations, and the initiation of term limits in some states, have eroded the bases for city coalition building.

#### **Party-Imposed Coalitions**

The first, and historically the leading, strategy has been party-imposed coalitions in which the dominant party in the city (usually Democratic) persuades the party's legislative caucus to impose discipline to support the city's

interests. This type of alliance generally involves logrolling among party members from different regions. But often a shared interest in an active or generous state role unites such coalitions, even if the specifics of what coalitional partners want are different. Traditionally, such party-based coalitions have joined central city representatives with those from distressed rural and small-town areas on issues related to poverty, economic development, and education funding.

New York City, Chicago, and Detroit all relied on this strategy in the past. Each of these very large cities voted heavily Democratic, and their sizable city delegations dominated the state Democratic caucus. In Ohio, no comparable pattern existed. Cleveland was the only major Ohio city where organized Democrats dominated local politics, but its delegation was not strong enough to dominate the state Democratic Party. Moreover, Ohio's Democrats were considerably weaker than in the other three states. Ohio cities and Ohio Democrats have become even weaker in the past decade with the dominance of suburban and rural interests in the legislature, dubbed "the return of the cornstalk brigade"—the traditional rural Republicans—by many observers of Ohio politics.

In Michigan, Detroit's influence at the state level was enhanced by its critical role in electing Democrats to state government after 1948. Detroit's influence stemmed from its large population and overwhelming Democratic allegiance. With the takeover of the state Democratic party by organized labor in the 1940s, Detroit's vote was strongly mobilized for the first time. Yet even in its heyday, Detroit's influence in state politics was attenuated as a result of Progressive era reforms, which prevented the machine-style politics that tied state actors directly to city interests in New York and Chicago, often through the exchange of state patronage for city votes (Fenton 1966; Greenstone 1969).

The Democratic Party in New York and Illinois, in contrast with that in Michigan, has been the central vehicle for achieving city goals in the state legislature. The New York legislature has been politically divided since 1974: Democrats control the Assembly and Republicans control the Senate. New York City Democrats have always dominated the Democratic caucus in the Assembly. As long as they are united, New York City Democrats can veto any statewide legislation. This puts the New York City delegation in an excellent position to engage in logrolling. Democratic New York City mayors have traditionally worked through the Democratic speaker of the Assembly, who represents New York City in the last-minute, closed-door bargaining that always takes place over the budget between the assembly speaker, the majority leader of the Senate, and the governor. The method has generally served New York City well.

In Illinois, influence within the Democratic caucus has been the foundation of Chicago's power in the state legislature. Chicago traditionally worked through its tightly organized legislative delegation to pursue its interests, and Chicago's storied political machine gave its Democratic state legislative delegation unusual cohesion in the Illinois legislature.<sup>2</sup> During the long reign of Richard J. Daley (1955–1976), the Chicago mayor was the undisputed leader of the city's and Cook County's legislative delegation. The large size of Chicago's delegation and the mayor's power in the state central committee of the Democratic Party made it easy for the city to dominate the Democratic legislative caucus.

Party-imposed coalitions may be difficult to maintain when cities cannot dominate the party caucus, when party discipline cannot be enforced, or when the broad interests of the city and other distressed areas begin to diverge. All three developments have weakened New York City, Chicago, and Detroit in their state legislatures.

While the Detroit delegation usually votes as a group, it is now too small to make a major difference. The delegation, whose hold over the Democratic caucus was always somewhat tenuous, is just one voice among many in the party. Particularly on issues involving money and resource distribution, voting in the Michigan legislature tends to be by region, with legislators (including Democrats) less willing to support Detroit the farther west they are in the state. These growth areas resent the disproportionately high share of resources going to Detroit through programs such as state revenue sharing. As one interviewee observed, "there is a feeling that Detroit is getting 'too much' and that it is inefficient."

New York City's large population has allowed it to retain considerable representation in the state legislature, but the willingness of the Democratic Party to protect city interests has been hampered by the decline of the county party organizations. The web of party connections that tied legislators to city government has atrophied. At one time, legislators owed their election to powerful county bosses, like Ed Flynn in the Bronx and Carmine DeSapio in Manhattan. After reform decimated the power of county Democratic machines in New York City, state legislators became much more independent of the local party and its connections to city government (Shefter 1985; Stonecash 1998). Today, legislators rely more on money than on party workers to get reelected.<sup>3</sup> If Democratic members of the Assembly are dependent on anyone, it is the speaker, who hands out substantial cash through legislative campaign committees as well as key perks, including committee assignments and legislative staff.

The ties between the city and Democratic state legislators have been further attenuated during the past decade of Republican mayors in New York

City. With a Republican in the mayor's office, the game in Albany changed, weakening the city's bargaining position.

The repeal of New York City's commuter tax shows the weakness of relying upon party-led logrolls to protect the interests of New York City. Initially passed in 1966, the commuter tax levied a modest 0.45% tax on incomes earned in the city. Nevertheless, the tax raised a significant amount of revenue because about 450,000 people commute into the city each day to work (Chen 2002). The city's Independent Budget Office projected that repeal of the commuter tax cost the city \$475 million in 2000 (Haberman 2000).

The repeal of the commuter tax began with the retirement of a Republican senator from a district in Rockland and Orange Counties, one of the few potential swing districts in the state. Suburban sprawl north of Westchester County meant that this district now had many commuters into the city. With an edge in registered voters, the Democrats figured they had a good chance to cut into the Republican Senate majority. At one point in the campaign, the Democratic Senate candidate called for repeal of the commuter tax. The Republicans jumped on the issue: Their candidate not only supported repeal but promised that the Senate would actually pass such legislation, which they promptly did. To everyone's surprise, Democratic Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver called the Republicans' bluff and came out in support of repeal. Former mayor Ed Koch charged Silver with "treason of the highest magnitude" (Haberman 2000).

Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who lobbied furiously to stop the repeal, could not count on the Republican-controlled Senate to protect the city's interests. The five Republicans from New York City voted against repeal, but every Republican senator outside of New York City voted for repeal. Together with five non-New York City Democrats, a firm majority was assembled in the Senate for repeal. The key to repeal of the commuter tax, however, was the 21 New York City Assembly Democrats who voted for repeal. They were pressured to vote for repeal by Democratic Speaker Silver, who was more concerned about winning a swing district in the suburbs than he was about the fiscal viability of New York City. Together with the Assembly Republicans and Democrats from outside New York City, New York City Democratic votes pushed repeal over the top in the Assembly. In short, the commuter tax was sacrificed to narrow partisan advantage; Speaker Sheldon Silver sacrificed the commuter tax in a vain effort to take a Senate seat from the Republicans in a swing suburban district. With the Democratic Party having to rely more and more upon suburban voters to achieve a majority, it is no longer a reliable protector of the interests of New York City.

Of our four cases, Chicago is the best example of a large city maintaining its power in the state legislature through its influence over the Democratic

caucus. Although the city delegation has declined as a proportion of the state legislature, it is still large enough to dominate the Democratic caucus. Moreover, in the past decade, the city's delegation in the state legislature has retained the strong cohesion built during the machine's heyday. Even so, the trends that have weakened big-city influence in the Democratic caucuses of other states are evident in Illinois.

Although the Chicago state legislative delegation has a history of strong cohesion, after Mayor Richard J. Daley's death in 1976, it became clear that Chicago's ability to count on a united Democratic delegation was not guaranteed (Gove 1982). Open fissures began to emerge among Chicago's Democrats in 1983 when Chicago's first Black mayor, Harold Washington, took office (Fossett and Giertz 1989). Under the current mayor, Richard M. Daley, racial splits have been less prominent, and Chicago once again works through its legislative delegation. However, Daley's power is not as extensive as his father's was because in the intervening decades state legislative leaders have built independent power bases. This is, in part, a result of institutional reforms. The elimination of multimember legislative districts, for example, made legislators more dependent on the legislative leaders who "could draw their district boundaries, sponsor their candidacies, raise cash to run their campaigns, and dictate their legislative agendas" (Pearson 1997). The increasing importance of money in campaigns has also increased the independent power of legislative leaders, who now amass campaign war chests, which they distribute at their discretion.

The declining weight of the city's delegation among Democrats has likewise given the Democratic leaders greater independence. As a result, the mayor is more likely to confront current Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan (a Chicago-bred politician whose district now straddles Chicago and its suburbs) on equal terms, rather than as undisputed leader of the state party. For the most part, the speaker has supported Chicago's priorities in the legislature. On occasions, when his views differ from those of the mayor—as they did around the city's proposed 1992 World's Fair—the speaker will pursue his own course and win. In addition, the decline in Chicago's political strength in the Democratic caucus, nearly half of which comes from outside Chicago, means the speaker cannot always place Chicago's interests first.

Despite the tensions between the Democratic leadership and the mayor, Chicago continues to be the main organized force in the Democratic caucus. The unity of the city's delegation on major economic development projects and the continuing weight of the city's representatives mean that the city finds support for most of what it wants from the Democratic leadership in the legislature.

### Interest-Based Coalitions

A second basis for coalition is shared interests. This is the type of coalition that regionalists, such as Orfield, advocate today among cities and suburbs. Historically, however, coalitions of interest have typically united large cities with depressed rural areas or with smaller-sized central cities. Term limits and diverging interests due to economic and demographic changes have made these alliances more difficult to sustain than in the past.

Ohio, with its three large cities, would appear to be a natural case for interest-based legislative alliances among cities. But the “3Cs” (Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus), do not often coordinate their strategies or form legislative coalitions. One respondent noted that Cincinnati and Cleveland were so different it was as if “they are in a different state.” On occasion, interest-based coalitions among cities do emerge.

The Cincinnati lobbyist stated that he is constantly trying to build coalitions in support of Cincinnati’s issues. When issues affect all or a large number of Ohio municipalities, Cincinnati works with and through the Ohio Municipal League, sometimes testifying on behalf of the league or coming with the league to express concerns. In other cases, the city seeks out particular urban allies. For example, Cincinnati spearheaded a successful effort to direct more state housing funds to cities, mobilizing support from Cleveland, Columbus, and Toledo. But it is hard for the larger cities to build alliances with the smaller ones because there is much jealousy among Ohio’s smaller cities, dubbed “the other Ohio” by the *Toledo Blade*. The limited power of Ohio cities is reflected in their largely defensive strategy in the legislature: They seek to preserve their share of the local government fund but do not press much beyond preserving what they have. Columbus Mayor Greg Lashutka’s efforts in the 1990s to craft a joint proactive legislative effort on the part of cities met with little success.

The most striking development affecting urban power in Ohio politics is the new political organization and assertiveness of townships and rural areas. The townships represent suburban and rural areas that want to check urban power. In 2000, these interests succeeded in altering the state annexation law in ways that benefit suburbs and rural areas. The annexation law had been used most extensively by Columbus, which has grown dramatically during the past 40 years (both Cleveland and Cincinnati were long since landlocked by earlier incorporations). The new law does not prevent future annexation, but it makes it easier for townships to challenge annexations.

Historically, the Detroit delegation had structured an alliance with Democratic members from distressed areas of northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Initially, this alliance was built around specific common interests

susceptible to logrolling, but it was strengthened and sustained through the collegial relationships between long-serving Democratic committee chairs. It also reflected the strong labor orientation of members of both the Detroit and the Upper Peninsula delegations. Frequently, these alliances received party caucus support. However, term limits in Michigan have substantially reduced the potential for Detroit–Upper Peninsula logrolling coalitions. Cities benefit from long-term relationships that build the trust necessary for successful logrolls. Prior to term limits, Detroit’s legislative representatives had seniority (because they ran in what were essentially one-party districts and were immune to defeat) that allowed them to form long-term relationships with representatives from other regions. Since term limits, the advantages of seniority have disappeared, and the trust among representatives, who do not have time to build strong ties, has declined. As a consequence, representatives from Detroit have found it much more difficult to win support for city needs in the legislature.

Until relatively recently, New York City relied upon bipartisan coalitions with upstate cities. In the late 1960s, Mayor John Lindsay led a coalition of the state’s six largest cities to win more financial support from the state. The fact that Lindsay was originally elected as a Republican in 1965 and some of the upstate mayors were Republicans facilitated passage by making it more difficult to view the issue through the usual upstate-downstate divide. With support from Republican Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Lindsay’s mayoral coalition succeeded in winning passage of New York State revenue sharing in 1971.

However, since 1980, New York State revenue sharing has gradually been gutted. Between 1988 and 1994, state revenue shared with localities fell from more than \$1 billion to less than \$500 million. The decline of revenue sharing reflects the decay of the bipartisan interest-based coalition between New York City and upstate cities, whose objective conditions and policy interests have diverged. While upstate cities suffer from deindustrialization and declining population, New York City has a prosperous, fast-growing service economy, fueled in part by massive immigration. Upstate cities do not experience the same problems as New York City and are often jealous of New York City’s wealth and power. To cite one example of a policy divergence, many upstate cities face the challenge of coping with abandoned houses, while New York City faces a severe housing shortage. In 2000, the “Big Four” upstate cities—Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, and Albany—formed their own interest coalition without New York City and successfully lobbied the legislature for state aid to address their structural deficits. Indeed, it is accurate to say that New York City now has no permanent coalitions with other cities that cross issue areas. If they join together at all, it is issue by issue.

Although New York City engages in logrolls on specific issues, these are essentially ad hoc coalitions that give the city less power over the legislature than did earlier coalitions based on strong party cohesion or interest-based alliances with other central cities.

Chicago has long pursued an interest-based logrolling strategy with downstate Democrats representing distressed coal and agricultural communities. This strategy was facilitated by the underlying common interest of both regions in getting more resources from the state. This Chicago-downstate alliance benefited from the political weakness of Republicans from the five suburban “collar counties” outside Chicago; in alliance, Chicago and the downstate Democrats could make the Republican suburbs foot the bill for their legislative initiatives.

However, the Chicago-downstate alliance has become somewhat less powerful as downstate areas have lost population and representatives. Moreover, as in New York, the interests of downstate and Chicago have diverged as Chicago became more economically prosperous and downstate languished during the 1990s. For example, on educational finance issues, the city-downstate alliance has become more strained. Several interviewees noted that in the past, school-funding formulas made it easy for the city to align with downstate areas, as both areas had low property values. In the words of one interviewee, “downstate superintendents would say that if it is good for Chicago, it is good for us.” As the city’s property tax base climbed and downstate property values have stagnated, and as downstate school enrollments have declined, the interests of the city and downstate on school finance have diverged more than they did in the past. Yet these differences do not appear fatal for the city. One Democratic legislator from the city indicated that downstaters often grumbled about supporting Chicago-specific economic projects. The legislator went on to note, however, that strong rhetoric was not matched by action and the city could generally rely on downstate Democratic votes in the legislature.

### **Governor-Brokered Coalitions**

Governor-brokered coalitions are increasingly important in state politics. Governors (including Republican governors) often play a key role in building cross-party legislative coalitions to support urban priorities. This is especially true for major infrastructure projects that require legislative approval. Regardless of partisanship, governors are likely to see the importance of strong cities for the entire state. Although Republican gubernatorial candidates, elected statewide, may not get many votes from cities, even a small urban vote may be important. Moreover, governors are responsible for the

entire state and are aware that fiscally stressed cities can harm state economies. This does not mean that governors necessarily favor city interests but rather that they protect cities against possible adverse initiatives by legislators with narrower geographic interests. Finally, in many cases, major corporate interests that donate heavily to campaign coffers are urban based. Governors are especially attentive to the priorities of these interests. Indeed, such interests are often the key to governors' support for urban infrastructure projects, as we will see in the case of Illinois.

Governor-brokered coalitions are particularly important in Ohio, where urban interests have few other coalition strategies. They have become increasingly important for Detroit, as the city's declining population has diminished its influence. And although Chicago has retained substantial influence in state politics, governor-brokered coalitions have long been part of the Illinois political landscape.

Ohio governors, according to our informants, are aware of and responsive to the plight of the cities. This applies to Republican as well as Democratic governors. As one of Governor Bob Taft's policy aides observed, "the governor gets involved in urban issues. There is a natural tension between the governor as a statewide elected official and state legislators who are elected in a specific district. The governor understands that the vitality of the cities is important to the state."

The interest of Ohio governors in cities was evident in Republican Governor Taft's decision to create the Urban Revitalization Task Force in 1999 (Taft 2000). Composed of mayors, state legislators, and directors of several state agencies, the task force oversaw a series of focus groups around the state that discussed policies for urban redevelopment. The major accomplishment was the voter-approved Clean Ohio Fund. The new fund provides resources for cleanup of brownfields as well as for farmland preservation. The legislative coalition that approved the implementation legislation for the Clean Ohio Fund joined urban and rural interests, both of which stood to gain from the package.

In Michigan, Mayor Dennis Archer worked directly through the legislative leaders and, more important, with Republican Governor John Engler rather than depending upon the diminished Detroit delegation (many of whom were his political opponents) as previous mayors had. On several issues (e.g., brownfields, mayoral takeover of the city school district, the changed revenue-sharing formula) important to Detroit, Archer and Engler were able to work out an acceptable deal, and the governor then was able to convince enough Republicans to go along with it to create a majority.

Nearly all of the interviewees observed that Governor Engler was willing to listen to Detroit's needs and to negotiate with the mayor to meet them

(albeit on terms often far removed from the mayor's initial preferences), as long as the issue did not have obvious partisan implications and did not visibly move resources from other parts of the state to Detroit. In addition, as a close observer of the mayor stated, "the governor's tough attitude toward fiscal policy and support of privatization has allowed the mayor to do some things he believes needed to be done and then blame it on the governor." As another Democrat noted, "the governor takes these issues seriously. Most issues that affect Detroit affect the state. He knows that."

The state revenue-sharing program, which provides fiscally strapped Detroit with important discretionary revenues, illustrates the role of the governor. When the program came up for reauthorization in 1998, the Republican-controlled legislature suggested reforms that would have sharply reduced Detroit's payments and increased the payments to smaller cities and rural areas. However, Mayor Archer and Governor Engler brokered a compromise proposal that froze Detroit's current payments of \$334 million annually through 2007–2008. In return, the city agreed to reduce its municipal income tax from 3% to 2% for residents and from 1.5% to 1.0% for nonresidents who work in the city. This combined measure passed by a vote of 58 to 33 in the House, with 17 Republicans joining 41 Democrats in favor. Within the metropolitan area, all 10 city Democrats and 14 of the 16 suburban Democrats voted for the compromise; they were joined by 8 of the 13 suburban Republicans. Outside the Detroit metropolitan area, the vote split 27 against and 26 for the proposal. Newspaper reports and our interviews make clear that the energetic efforts of Governor Engler on behalf of the legislation were crucial to the affirmative votes of Republicans from the suburbs and from larger western Michigan cities.

For Chicago, cooperation with Republicans, always an element of the city's strategy in Springfield, became more important in the 1990s, when Republicans controlled the governor's office, the state Senate, and periodically, the Assembly. For example, the package of taxes and spending in Illinois First, a major transportation infrastructure bill passed in 1999, was negotiated informally between the mayor and the governor before it went to the legislature. Chicago's business community played a significant role in promoting the measure. With one-third of its spending dedicated to mass transit, the bill provided substantial benefits to Chicago at the same time that it boosted spending for roads throughout the state. The vote on the four bills that secured financing for the projects revealed strong support from the city and from Democrats all over the state: 24 of the 30 legislators from the city supported all four bills and 39 of the 62 Democrats supported all four bills. But reflecting the brokered bipartisan support, the bill also captured critical suburban Republican support: 19 of the 40 suburban representatives voted in

support of all four measures. This included 16 votes from suburban Republicans, including the minority leader of the state Assembly. Illinois First exhibited the hallmarks of governor-brokered coalitions: Such coalitions are most successful when organized around large spending programs that offer distributive benefits (and the patronage that comes with them) to Republicans and Democrats alike (Joens 2000).

Yet in all cases, reliance on governor-brokered coalitions contains significant drawbacks for cities. The final terms of the legislative bargains that governors strike may be far from ideal from the city's perspective, as was the case with revenue sharing in Michigan. Moreover, the growing independence of state legislative leaders limits the governors' ability to cement such coalitions so that this strategy is far from reliable.

Sharp geographic differences make it more difficult for the governor to play the role of broker. In Illinois, city-suburban conflicts over education finance have eluded gubernatorial efforts at compromise. In 1997, Republican Governor Jim Edgar proposed an educational finance package designed to reduce the state's heavy reliance on local property taxes to finance schools. The bill proposed an increase in the state income tax and the state's share of school finance. The new finance scheme would have benefited districts where lower property values mean less money for schools—primarily downstate rural areas and Chicago. But affluent suburban residents saw the proposal as a Robin Hood plan that would take money from educationally minded affluent areas and redistribute it elsewhere in the state (Doubek 1997). The governor's proposal had the strong backing of Chicago's mayor and of the Democratic leadership in the legislature. However, the legislative leaders, both suburban Republicans, worked hard to defeat the bill. The bill narrowly passed the Democratic-controlled House, despite the all-out opposition of the Republican leadership. It died when the Senate leader, Pate Philip, refused to allow a vote on the measure. The governor's most important legislative initiative fell victim to the city-suburban divide and the extraordinary power of legislative leaders to control the legislative agenda in Illinois (McDermott and Rogers 1997).

Another limitation of governor-brokered compromises is that governors may not support many initiatives that cities view as key priorities. For example, as Chicago's major airport, O'Hare, became congested, the city sought first to build a new airport within city boundaries and later to expand the capacity at O'Hare. In this decade-long battle over airport expansion, Republican governors have generally opposed Chicago's plans in an effort to defend suburban Republican interests (Lindstrom and Peterson 2003).

In all four of our cases, then, cities face new challenges in building stable alliances in state legislatures. In Ohio, cities were always relatively weak but

now face a potent new challenge from the mobilizing rural and suburban townships. In Michigan, heavy population loss and weakening ties with the rural Upper Peninsula have left Detroit struggling with political isolation. Reliance on the governor has emerged as an important but inadequate political strategy. In New York, the change from interest-based coalitions to party-driven logrolls to ad hoc logrolls represents a general decline in the power of New York City to achieve its will in the state legislature. Chicago, with its relatively large population and still-effective organization politics, is best positioned to rely on traditional forms of coalition building in the state legislature. The election of a Democratic governor and Democratic control of the legislature 2003 further enhanced Chicago's power. Even Chicago, however, has exhibited new vulnerabilities in state politics during the past decade.

### **INSTITUTIONS AND URBAN-SUBURBAN LEGISLATIVE PREFERENCES**

Despite the atrophy of traditional forms of coalition building, city and suburban representatives put little effort into building alternative coalitions uniting city and suburban interests on the basis of common interests. The immediate pressing needs of the city have led urban leaders to adopt narrow definitions of their own interest, focusing on securing funding and maintaining autonomy. For many suburban political leaders coming to power during this period, an anti-urban message was central to their political careers. The ability of these leaders to monopolize resources and restrict the legislative agenda left little room for less senior legislators who wished to explore city-suburban commonalities.

#### **CITY LEADERS AND URBAN PRIORITIES**

What was most striking in our interviews was the narrow and defensive nature of the major goals of urban leaders in the state legislature.<sup>4</sup> City lobbying efforts focused on the institution of city government, not on the people who live in the city or the region. Two main themes stood out: (1) Cities want legal autonomy from state interference, and (2) cities want more money from the state either directly in the form of state grants or indirectly in the form of state-funded capital projects that will enhance local tax collections. Often, the objectives of the city were reactive—designed to fend off threats from state legislation that would undermine their autonomy or cost them money.

Not surprising, the goal of increasing state aid was a prominent feature on the urban policy agenda. Cities constantly lobby to avoid cuts in state general

aid. This was the case in Detroit's effort to block a change in the revenue-sharing formula that would have hurt Detroit and in Cincinnati's efforts to block a state freeze in the local government fund. For the most part, cities have been fighting a losing battle on revenue sharing. In New York, the proportion of state revenues shared with localities fell by more than three-quarters between 1979 and 1994 (Fiscal Policy Institute 1994).

Nearly all our cities lobbied for state infrastructure and other projects. Thus, Cincinnati lobbied to keep a post office in the city, for park improvements, and for museum funding; Chicago pressed for renovation to a convention center and stadium. Chicago also threw its weight behind a state transportation infrastructure initiative. Ohio cities lobbied actively for a share of the biennial state capital budget allocated to local projects. Detroit and Cincinnati identified brownfields legislation designed to boost the local economy as a high priority.

The quest for city legal autonomy is closely tied to fiscal concerns. In Ohio, for example, cities have the legal authority to impose a commuter tax. Ohio cities regularly lobby to block legislation that would eliminate this tax. As we saw above, New York City failed in 1999, losing its right to impose an income tax on commuters (a loss of \$475 million in 2000). In the face of severe fiscal pressures, Mayor Bloomberg has made restoring the commuter tax a high priority.

Not only do cities want autonomy to impose taxes as they see fit; they also want freedom from state-mandated expenditures. New York and Chicago mayors have lobbied to prevent states from mandating additional spending on city pensions, for example. In other cases, cities have sought legal autonomy to increase the powers of the city and, by implication, the mayor. For example, the mayor of Detroit opposed an effort by a regional water board to take over the city water authority. In Detroit, Chicago, and New York, mayors were not just fending off threats to their autonomy but seeking substantial new authority over city public schools.

It is worth noting some of the plausible priorities that were absent from the mayors' lobbying agendas. First, the mayors did not make state legislation to address poverty and unemployment a high priority. The main exception is New York City, which as a city/county, has responsibility for administering many social welfare programs. Efforts to directly help the poor were largely missing from the top policy agendas of the other cities. The second large hole in city priorities was any effort to promote regional development or to establish a common agenda between the city and mature suburbs facing similar issues. Instead, mayors focused on the immediate fiscal well-being of city government. They did not make the policies of regional authorities, such as transit and sewer and water, high priority in their dealings with the state

legislature. Addressing state and regional policies that might harm the city by subsidizing suburban sprawl did not capture significant policy attention. In this respect, our research supports the findings of David Rusk, who concluded that big city mayors, with few exceptions, were “missing in action” in leading regional coalition building (Rusk 1999).

#### **SUBURBAN LEADERS AND STATE POLITICS**

Suburban representatives in state legislatures have likewise shown little inclination to prioritize new forms of coalition building. One reason is the traditional city-suburban distrust that appears to be shared both by political elites and by many voters. A second barrier is the dominance of the legislature by legislative leaders and the limited capacity for individual legislators to launch new or independent policy initiatives.

#### **City-Suburban Distrust and State Legislative Politics**

Linked both with racial animosity and with fear of urban power, suburban-urban mistrust was pervasive in our cases. In Illinois, for example, the traditional animosity of Chicago’s suburbs to the city is legendary. One interviewee described former state Senate leader James “Pate” Philip, a Republican vociferously opposed to all things Chicago, as “straight out of central casting” in his anti-urban, antiminority views. A long-time member of the Senate, Philip became leader when Republicans won control in 1992. His generation of DuPage County Republicans came to power as whites were fleeing Chicago for the suburbs. Philip used his new power as an opportunity for payback, routinely challenging Chicago’s priorities in the legislature (Pearson 1997). As one Republican legislator from an inner suburb put it, “if Democrats propose something, the Republican Party is against it for strictly political reasons. Things they [legislators from districts like his] need to support, they can’t.” Philip blocked key Chicago initiatives, beginning with the city’s bid to construct a third airport within its boundaries. As we have already noted, Philip also defied the Republican governor when he thought the governor was insufficiently attentive to the interests of the suburbs, as on the 1997 education finance measure.

Detroit has faced even sharper suburban animosity than has Chicago. One interviewee noted that it was toughest to get support for Detroit from legislators representing Macomb County, a working-class suburban county northeast of Detroit. As another explained, “in Macomb County, any hint of support for Detroit is used against them in elections.” Another observed,

“suburban legislators—even the Democratic ones—are a harder nut to crack than outstate legislators, although sometimes the suburban Democrats will support Detroit if the caucus takes a position.” Behind this antipathy to supporting Detroit on high-profile issues of interest to the city, even when they do not appear to conflict with suburban interests, is the obvious, but often unarticulated, racial animosity, concerns and fears that suburban legislators often believe their constituents hold for Detroit. In areas such as Detroit, racial concerns are never too far below the surface, despite whatever objective interests that city and suburbs share. The difficulty the Detroit area has experienced in passing a referendum establishing a regional tax to fund area cultural institutions, even with the support of many area political leaders, indicates the public animosity that exists between city and suburbs.

Although New York City and its suburbs share many interests, forming solid coalitions around these interests has proven difficult. The commuter tax was defended partly on the grounds that suburbanites should be concerned with the fiscal well-being of New York City, the economic engine of the region. However, the connection between the tax and the well-being of the region seemed remote to voters, especially when New York City appeared to be awash in money. When Giuliani first became mayor, he tried to form a coalition with the suburbs of New York City—Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties—whose county executives at the time were all Republicans. The effort never got off the ground, however. Suburban politicians were reluctant to appear too close to New York City. After all, many of their supporters had moved to the suburbs to flee the crime and corruption of the city. In addition, New York City was perceived as the 800-pound gorilla. According to a former city budget director, other local governments feared that in any regional coalition, their interests would be subordinated to the interests of the city.

Term limits have exacerbated city-suburban distrust in Michigan and Ohio. As we noted above, urban legislators benefited from the long-standing ties with legislators from other regions. The trust built up over time helped to overcome some of the regional jealousies and racial animosity that can undermine broader coalitions. Because those personal ties are much harder to build in term-limited legislatures, cities in Michigan and Ohio have found it harder to win support for their goals.

### **Barriers to State Legislative Entrepreneurship**

New coalitions require a critical legislative mover—a political/policy entrepreneur—in the legislature to frame issues in a way that makes clear the common city-suburban interests and to structure coalitions around those

common interests. This is a role that Orfield, as a state legislator, played in Minnesota. But it is unusual for a state legislator to play this role. Most individual legislators do not have the resources to engage in innovative policy research necessary to support alternative approaches to metropolitan problems.

Moreover, in many states, legislators' dependence on the legislative leadership for political support and campaign funds makes it difficult for them to introduce new ideas that are at odds with the leadership's agenda. The tremendous power of the legislative leaders to control the state agenda—a power described as “papal in its dimensions” by one of our interviewees—greatly magnified city-suburb conflict in Illinois. By limiting the ability of individual legislators to explore common ground and hold hearings to promote alternative perspectives on issues, legislative leaders hostile to the city actively worked against potential coalition building between city and suburbs. One Chicago legislator complained that the tight control of the legislative process made it difficult to launch debates that would educate the public and promote new ways of looking at problems. The power of legislative leaders was reinforced by their control over campaign funds, so critical in swing districts.

### **OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO CITY-SUBURB COALITIONS**

Old-style regionalists appealed for support for their metropolitan agenda by arguing that regions needed to rationalize and modernize their fragmented systems of governance. Often, this implied that parts of the region would have to sacrifice their interests to further the long-term interests of the region as a whole. Not surprisingly, many suburbs were unwilling to submerge their interests under new regional governments, and the first wave of regionalism, with important exceptions, largely failed to win political support for its metropolitan agenda.

The new regionalists, typified by advocates such as Orfield, have rooted their appeals more firmly in self-interest, arguing that cities and suburbs should coalesce around a metropolitan agenda because they have shared interests in regional solutions. Although coalitions around shared interests make sense, how cities and suburbs define their interests is not given by their objective situation; ideas and institutions shape interests. For city-suburban coalitions to succeed in state legislatures, policy entrepreneurs will need to push new ideas and institutions that will shape interests and incentives in ways that are compatible with the metropolitan agenda.

Baumgartner and Jones (1993) argue that to move beyond incremental change within policy subsystems, advocates of change must redefine the issues to broaden the scope of conflict and tie more interests and actors to their agenda.<sup>5</sup> Opponents of nuclear power, for example, were able to redefine nuclear power as an environmental issue, thus broadening the coalition and expanding the venues in which they could be heard. Similarly, the new wave of metropolitan reformers has tried to add concerns about the environmental and economic inequality to the traditional appeal of greater regional economic growth. If suburbanites come to see metropolitan collaboration as a solution to their concerns about environmental deterioration and economic inequality, then new coalitions will be possible to support the metropolitan agenda (Dreier, Mollenkopf, and Swanstrom 2005).

Just as important as the way issues are framed is the way institutions shape interests. As the “new institutionalists” in political science argue, political institutions do not just reflect interests; they shape those interests (March and Olsen 1989). In our study of state legislative behavior, we documented how central cities have been overwhelmingly concerned with their fiscal viability, overlooking for the most part opportunities for regional collaboration with suburban governments. For their part, suburbs have often constructed their identity and their interests in opposition to central cities and have been reluctant to coalesce with them for fear of being politically overwhelmed (the 800-pound-gorilla problem). New venues and institutions need to be constructed where regional issues can be raised that cut across the fragmented institutional structures of local government.

In Table 2, we sum up our typology of coalitions used by cities in state legislatures, including the barriers that have typically thwarted the success of these efforts. Now we go on to examine intrametropolitan, interest-based coalitions that could overcome the barriers to the success of the metropolitan agenda in state legislatures.

#### LEGISLATIVE RULES TO PROMOTE COOPERATION

One mechanism for promoting new coalitions is legislative rules. Rules can discourage or promote coalitions in different ways. As we have seen in the case of Illinois, rules that restrict the number of hearings that legislators may hold reduce their ability to reframe issues in ways designed to attract new allies. Rules can also promote or enforce cooperation. For example, in Ohio, legislative rules have engendered interest-based coalitions between central cities and their suburbs around the biennial state capital budget. When legislative decision making became bogged down in intraregional squabbles over the siting of big projects such as the baseball stadium and basketball

**TABLE 2: A Typology of Urban Coalitions**

<i>Urban Coalition Strategy in State Politics</i>	<i>Underlying Coalition Mechanisms</i>	<i>Constraints on Coalition Strategy</i>
Party-imposed coalition	Party enforced legislative logroll, frequently involving legislative logrolling; distributive benefits	Reduced urban power in party due to declining urban population; weakness of party discipline; increased independence of party legislative leaders from city political leaders; largely dependent upon Democratic control of legislature
Economic interest-based coalition, sometimes across parties	Common economic interests with depressed areas or other cities outside metro area	Term limits reduce trust among state legislators from different areas; diverging economic interests of large cities and depressed areas due to economic and demographic changes
Governor-brokered cross-party coalition	Governor's interest in statewide economic prosperity; governor's responsiveness to urban-based business interests; governor's concern for votes in cities	Governor's limited power over legislative leaders makes strategy unreliable; diverging interests of governor and city limit terms of compromise; partisanship if governor is Republican and city is controlled by Democrats
Intrametropolitan interest-based coalitions	Recognition of common interests among city and at least some of its suburbs; policy or political entrepreneurs to promote new perspectives on interests (issue redefinition); increased trust generated by city and suburban political elites through formal and informal interaction and generational change; long-term perspective on interests; legislative rules that promote compromise or discussion of new policy approaches	Powerful anti-urban suburban leaders in state legislatures; dominance of legislative leaders reduces scope for new policy ideas; racial politics divides city and suburb; suburban fears of being dominated by big cities; partisan differences between city and suburban legislators

arena in Cleveland and the new baseball and football stadia in Cincinnati, the governor's office and legislative leaders demanded that each region come to the legislative process with an agreed-upon set of priorities for capital projects.

This legislative requirement formed the basis for regional processes of informally forced consensus. Regional growth associations and chambers of commerce play a central role in brokering and facilitating agreements among the local governments. As one interviewee noted, the local growth association typically convenes the powers that be—the mayor, city council, county executives, and commissioners and the business power structure—to make decisions about regional capital expenditures. In Cincinnati, the regional growth associations involved are the Cincinnati Business Committee (CEOs only) and the chamber of commerce. In Columbus, the chamber of commerce and a loose-knit group of CEOs is key.

#### **POSSIBILITIES FOR NEW SUBURBAN VOICES**

A second possibility for new coalitions lies in promoting alternative voices within the suburbs. One source of change is generational replacement in state legislatures. The strong racial animosity and anti-urban sentiment of some suburban areas may attenuate with time. Some legislators we interviewed described a generational split among suburban Republicans in Illinois. The older generation, exemplified by former Senate president Pate Philip, not only was reflexively anti-Chicago but also had a limited suburban agenda that emphasized suburban development, highways, and the patronage associated with it. The newer generation from affluent suburbs is more concerned with quality-of-life issues such as congestion and open space, issues that Orfield identifies as points of city-suburb coalition building. These younger Republicans are also less likely to view Chicago-suburban issues as zero-sum conflicts. As one interviewee noted, the new generation of suburban Republicans is not “running away from the city; their attitude toward the city is not inherently negative.” The recent failure of Republicans to retain control of the state government may pave the way for this newer generation of suburban Republicans to compromise with the city.

The development of suburban consortia may also facilitate new coalitional possibilities. Joined together, suburbs will no longer feel politically overwhelmed in alliances with central cities. The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, first convened by Mayor Daley in 1997, has received much attention. The caucus provides a regular venue for city and suburbs to meet. The caucus mainly pursues efforts at voluntary cooperation on relatively consensual issues, although it has recently ventured into the area of reforming the way

the state funds public schools as well as efforts to address the concentration of subsidized housing (Hamilton 2002).

Ohio has organized “first suburbs” consortiums in three metropolitan areas: Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus. Altogether, they join more than 34 inner suburban municipalities, representing a total population of about 750,000, making them a formidable force the state legislature cannot afford to ignore. The Northeast Ohio (Cleveland) First Suburbs Consortium, with 14 communities representing 449,000 people, is the largest and most active. Created in 1997, the Northeast Ohio First Suburbs Consortium was formally organized in 2000 as a Council of Government under Ohio law. Besides lobbying county and state governments for policies more favorable to mature suburbs, the Northeast Ohio First Suburbs Consortium also administers programs for housing and economic development. In 2000, the consortium retained a part-time lobbyist in Columbus to push its issues in the state legislature. Many of the issues pushed by the consortium overlap with the concerns of central cities such as Cleveland. These include protecting and enhancing Ohio’s Local Government Fund (revenue sharing with cities) and its historic preservation tax-credit program.

#### **NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITION BUILDING**

The difficulties in creating city-suburban alliances in state legislatures and the importance of entrepreneurs where such coalitions have emerged suggest that groups outside the legislature must play a central role in fashioning a new agenda that finds common ground between the city and some of its suburbs. In each of our states, such groups have already played important roles in promoting legislative alliances between city and suburb. They are currently actively working to frame regional issues in new terms designed to find common ground.

The importance of groups outside the legislature in facilitating city-suburb alliances was evident in the transportation measure Illinois First and in the effort to create the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority. Although the governor played a key role in promoting the cross-region alliance around transportation spending in Illinois, he received crucial support from metropolitan business leaders. Business support helped broker the compromise and bring along suburban Republicans. In Chicago, business leaders have played a central role in provoking new interest in regionalism with the far-reaching report “Chicago Metropolis 2020,” issued in 1999, and the subsequent creation of an organization whose mission is to promote a regional agenda (Johnson 1999; Hamilton 2002). The Metropolitan Planning

Council in Chicago initiated a campaign for sensible growth that resulted in the appointment of the Illinois Growth Task Force, composed of members of the legislature and a range of civic groups and interest groups from around the state. Holding hearings around the state, the task force highlighted public concern about existing patterns of growth and served as a sounding board for possible policy solutions. In 2002, the legislature passed the Local Planning Technical Assistance Act, which updates the state's 1920s planning statutes and provides technical assistance to localities (American Planning Association 2002). In addition, the task force served an important educational function, especially for the many legislators who had little background on growth issues.

The Detroit interfaith organization Metropolitan Organization Strategy for Mobilizing Strength (MOSES) is a particularly interesting example because it was spawned at the grass roots and went on to build a city-suburban coalition that achieved its goals in the state legislature. MOSES is part of the Gamaliel Foundation's network of faith-based community organizations that has formally adopted "regional equity" as one of its organizing principles.

MOSES chose as its first issue the creation of the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority. The Detroit area has two separate transportation systems, one serving the city and one serving the suburbs, with minimal coordination. Metropolitan Organization Strategy for Mobilizing Strength proposed creation of a single regional transportation authority. The Detroit area chamber of commerce soon lent its support, and the Detroit mayor and elected political leaders of the three major counties (both Democrat and Republican) worked out a plan for the creation of such an authority, with start-up funding of \$500,000 from the state and with a mandate, once the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority was created, to work out a permanent funding source. The plan was presented to the state legislature, which approved it with strong bipartisan support from the legislative delegations of the city and the three counties. In virtually his last act as governor, John Engler vetoed the legislation, apparently in retaliation for the legislature's refusal to approve the creation of 15 additional charter schools in Detroit (Dickerson 2003). New Governor Jennifer M. Granholm then approved an intergovernmental agreement that created the Detroit Area Regional Transportation Authority.

## CONCLUSION

At a time when central cities are more dependent on their states than ever, there is considerable evidence that their clout in state legislatures is continuing to erode. The declining number of state representatives from cities means

that cities have less power within the Democratic Party caucuses in the state legislature, historically the main protector of city interests. Increasingly, the Democratic Party aims to please the swing districts in the suburbs, figuring, usually correctly, that central city Democratic seats are secure. In addition, the weakening of party cohesion has hurt cities. County party organizations, with their patronage ties to city government, are not as important as they used to be for winning races for the state legislature.

The declining political power of cities in state legislatures suggests the need for new coalitional strategies and partners. Proponents of regionalism suggest that cities can form coalitions with some of their suburbs around shared interests. Objectively, fiscally stressed cities and mature suburbs share an interest in needs-based state aid and in smart growth policies to slow suburban sprawl. Yet new coalitions require innovative leadership. This article has shown that big city mayors, preoccupied with autonomy and the immediate fiscal condition of city government, are unlikely to lead the way in metropolitan reform. The mayors we studied were preoccupied with the immediate fiscal condition of city government. Moreover, when mayors did reach out politically to suburbs, the suburbs were often reluctant to join for fear of being dominated by city interests.

Our research shows only inklings of the city-suburban legislative coalitions based on objective common interests. We do not conclude from this that such coalitions are impossible but rather that they are difficult and will require new leadership and strategies for mobilization. Because the dynamics of state legislatures limit creative coalition building, venues outside the legislature are needed to promote regional perspectives. This includes efforts at coalition building both by local political elites (organizations such as the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus in Chicago may provide a forum for promoting regional perspectives) and by grassroots organizations within the region to encourage and induce local elites to come to agreement. These new efforts by groups that have a regional approach to inequities and that cross jurisdictional boundaries in their organizing are most likely to provide impetus to new forms of coalition building.

## NOTES

1. An important exception to this is the work of a group of political scientists at the University of Michigan who have examined bills affecting cities introduced into the lower houses of legislatures in seven states between 1870 and 1997 (Burns and Gamm 1997; Allard, Burns, and Gamm 1998; Burns et al. 2002).

2. Until their elimination in 1983, Illinois had multimember districts that ensured Republican representation from the city.

3. New York City was ranked as the 10th largest lobbying operation in Albany (Roy 2001), but that is deceptive because New York City cannot make campaign contributions like the other lobbying groups. It is important to note, however, that New York City can do favors for legislators, such as paving a street, that can help them politically.

4. To determine the policy agenda or chief goals of central cities in their state legislatures, we interviewed top staff of the mayor, interviewed chief lobbyists for the city, and consulted public pronouncements of city goals.

5. We rely heavily in this section on Henig (2002).

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