CAN REGIONALISM SAVE POOR CITIES? Politics, Institutions, and Interests in Glasgow

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Regional governmental intervention is frequently advocated as a solution to the problems of poor cities. The regional reform model is examined in light of Glasgow's experience. It suggests that this approach became a trap for Glasgow and contributed to the city's spiral of decline. The findings indicate that the reform model is seriously flawed by economic determinism and ignores regional political dynamics. In particular, it conflates abstract notions of regional economic interdependence with policy prescriptions to aid cities, and it neglects powerful institutional political pressures that bias regional officials against equity considerations that might favor central cities. These forces are not likely to be peculiar only to Glasgow.

Regional solutions attract increasing attention as a means of promoting the regeneration of poor cities in Western industrial economies. As the plight of these urban centers worsens, the wisdom of forging links within the region appears compelling. Regionalism figures most prominently in the United States, where governmental fragmentation and the decentralization of fiscal responsibilities create a glaring disparity of service burdens and resources. Reformers advocate things such as metropolitan-wide government, increasing regional political cooperation, fiscal burden sharing among governments in a metropolitan area, and the spinning off of specialized governmental functions to regional authorities (Savitch and Vogel 1996; Berkman et al. 1992; Pierce 1993; Downs 1994).

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In Britain and Western Europe, regional reforms have also proliferated. They are advocated as a means of decentralizing governmental systems, enhancing participation, and supporting area-based programs that strengthen local communities (Sharpe 1993; Walker 1991; Keating 1988; Putnam 1993; Meny and Wright 1985). There is little consensus about the meaning of *region*, but advocates imply that some intermediate subnational governmental authority should assume greater responsibilities for urban governance.

THE REGIONAL REFORM MODEL

Three arguments commonly are made by reformers in advancing the merits of regionalism for helping older central cities. First, regional governmental arrangements are supposed to give expression to economic interests that are shared by people throughout an urban region. Although the case for regional approaches has long been based on considerations of equity (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations [ACIR] 1967; Wood 1961), in recent years, scholars have emphasized the economic benefits of this approach (Meny 1986; Savitch and Vogel 1996, 2). There is no consensus about the ideal size of a region. Yet the functional interdependence of central cities with peripheries provides a rationale for governmental competencies of wide-ranging scope, from metropolitan districts to broad regions (Albrechts et al. 1989; Barnes and Ledebur 1998; Ledebur and Barnes 1999). In Britain, nine English regions were established in 1999 with the expectation that they could best stimulate urban regeneration (Great Britain, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions 1997). The economic welfare of suburbs and central cities is said to be linked despite the shrinking scale of economic activities that remain concentrated in many central cities (Savitch, Collins, and Sanders 1993; Ledebur and Barnes 1993; Barnes and Ledebur 1998; Voith 1992).

The extent to which the economic well-being of suburbs is dependent on the economic performance of nearby cities is a matter of considerable debate (Hill, Wolman, and Ford 1995). The causal linkage between the economic health of the central city and the suburban parts of metropolitan areas is unclear. Nevertheless, the interdependence found in regional economies compels attention to the economic welfare of central cities, even if the dynamics of interdependency are ambiguous (Downs 1994, 52; Barnes and Ledebur 1998). According to Barnes and Ledebur (1998, 98), interdependence means that "core cities play an important role that has not been supplanted by edge cities." They suggest that metropolitan areas with lower

disparities in income between central cities and suburbs tend to have higher rates of employment growth.

Others contend that economic globalization is making cities and suburbs more interdependent. Neither competes in isolation for capital investment in an age when business location decisions are based on regional considerations and assets (Savitch and Vogel 1996; Port Authority of New York and New Jersey 1986). As regional economic competition grows, the rationale for regional cooperation also does—in effect making manifest shared regional interests that deserve recognition by governments (Dunford and Kafkalas 1992; Mayer 1992; Rusk 1993, 74-75; Cisneros 1996; Downs 1994). As the Urban Summit of several years ago put it, "The American economy is, in reality, comprised of regional economies centered in America's cities, within which the fates of central cities, suburbs and rural areas are entwined" (Berkman et al. 1992, 7).

A second argument is that regional governmental systems can best overcome the political parochialism that strangles opportunities for central-city revitalization. In the United States, the political fragmentation of metropolitan areas forces local communities to compete against each other to bring in tax rateables and exclude tax burdens (Berg and Kantor 1996). In contrast, reformers believe that it is possible to create cooperative political structures that permit policy makers to overcome intergovernmental rivalries for the sake of the common interests of the region. There is little agreement about precisely which governmental arrangements are most appropriate. Yet reformers usually want policy makers to consider the territorial "big picture" and not simply reflect the territorial representation of extant local authorities (Keating 1988; Sharpe 1993; Pierce 1993; Swanstrom 1996; Harrigan 1996; Doig and Mitchell 1992; Downs 1994, 183; Friskin 1991).

Finally, regional governments are said to favor equity considerations in public policy. As Peterson (1981, 1995) has argued, higher-level governments are more capable of promoting redistributive endeavors compared to local governments. The more that governmental systems decentralize fiscal burdens, the greater the propensity for local governments to avoid the costs of shouldering programs for social equity (Kantor 1995). It follows that larger, regionwide governments that have access to large governmental resources and enjoy diverse economies will be more able to absorb the economic costs of programs that promote equity among communities with unequal resources (Downs 1994). This capacity for social equity is even greater when these governments can rely on national governments and bypass the private-sector bond market in carrying out their long-term investment activities. Thus Western European models of fiscal transfer, when local governments are able to obtain most tax resources and borrow from national governments, are held up

as models for supporting greater local social welfare activism in the United States (Kantor 1995, chap. 10; Peterson and Rom 1992, chap. 5; Sbragia 1996).

Although the "regional reform model" appears logical, it is based on false assumptions. Reformers believe that regional officials will be motivated by economic interdependence and their expansive policy capabilities to correct imbalances in development. A "polity-focused" view of the matter suggests that the interests of these officials are more complicated (Steinmo and Longstreeth 1992; Skocpol 1985, 1995; Skowronek 1982; Pierson 1996). As Hall (1986, 19) suggested, "Organizational position also influences an actor's definition of his own interests, by establishing his institutional responsibilities and relationship to other actors." From this perspective, the institutional political dynamics of regional players marginalize poor cities. First, regional economic interdependence does not compel an investment strategy that benefits the cities. The dynamics of regional growth are only vaguely understood, as even the debate over city-suburban links suggests. Slack in the economy makes it difficult to trace causes and effects in a complex regional system; this makes it difficult to prescribe precisely how to promote economic health (Amin and Robins 1990; Swanstrom 1988). Accordingly, the fate of central cities turns on how the "interests of the region" get defined by politicians—not on the degree of regional economic interdependence. In effect, there is an element of economic determinism in the reform model.

Will regional officials see investing in central cities as identical with the economic interests of the territory? Not necessarily. All other things equal, regional political institutions have a stake in promoting growth to meet the challenges of interregional economic competition. But this can be achieved by promoting growth anywhere within the region, rather than within any particular communities. As long as regional economic expansion is the priority, regional agencies are likely to simply follow private-sector investment preferences because these point to locations where it is easiest to obtain economic growth. Authorities are unlikely to support the economic status of central cities unless private-market forces indicate otherwise—an unlikely scenario given the higher costs of these locations.

Second, the superior political capabilities of regional authorities may not be used to enhance long-run economic interests due to political pressures that discourage this. As Downs (1994) has suggested, the costs to the region's economy of neglecting central cities and their populations appear greater when viewed from a long-term perspective. Yet why should officials maintain a long-range view of regional economic interests? The propensity of private-sector capital markets to avoid short-run losses is legendary. Even if regional authorities are relatively independent of capital markets, outside

benefactors who provide resources and impose oversight are likely to favor short-run measures of success. Members of Parliament and other national overseers are likely to measure regional economic performance on a year-to-year basis because that is their relevant time frame for political survival. Regional officials cannot ignore this reality. Furthermore, political constituencies within regional development agencies are likely to oppose concentrating resources on part of a region in anticipation of diffuse long-term benefits. Like other governments in democratic contexts, regional officials face pressures to spread benefits (Tullock 1970; Skocpol 1992). Left to their own devices, powerful institutional forces can induce even independent regional governments to ignore their poor cities.

Testing the regional reform model is difficult, however. There are virtually no well-developed regional governments in the United States. Modern regional governmental systems that promote urban development are a recent development in many Western European nations. Nevertheless, in the United Kingdom, regional intervention to assist Glasgow provides some relevant experience. During the past three decades, Glasgow's welfare has become closely linked to a network of regional agencies that has achieved an ascendant position in urban development. On balance, however, Glasgow's regional gamble is suggestive of the pitfalls of this approach.[1]

REGIONALISM, GLASGOW, AND SCOTTISH DEVELOPMENT

Although Glasgow's experience is not representative of all regional approaches, many political circumstances were highly favorable to using regional institutions to assist Glasgow. For one thing, Glasgow lacks the conflicts over race, ethnicity, or partisanship that have often undermined the activities of regional governments elsewhere. The city has not absorbed very significant numbers of immigrants of different racial or ethnic groups (the Irish are a partial exception). Partisan divisions have been limited. The Labour Party's domination of Scottish politics in cities, suburbs, and even in rural areas has usually been uncontested, although the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, and Scottish Nationalists have won some representation in various parts of the region. With rare exception, Glasgow and its nearby suburbs and towns have remained as reliable Labour stongholds for decades, however.

Since the 1970s, economic development in Glasgow has been dominated by a powerful regional development institution—the Scottish Development Agency (SDA), an authority that was reorganized in 1991 and renamed Scottish Enterprise (SE).[2] Launched by the national government in 1975 as an

explicitly regional development authority that covers most of urban Scotland (a separate agency promotes Scotland's highland and island areas), the agency has never been structured to represent the interests of particular elected local governments. SE did not have to undertake coalition building among governments within the region to govern and plan. Thus, Scotland has avoided jurisdictional competition among governments in metropolitan areas that has often defeated regional intervention in other cities (Harrigan 1996). Although an elected Strathclyde regional council played a role in the Glasgow metropolitan area until recently, the city's economic development has mainly moved in counterpoint to SE. The agency also is more independent of the national government than most other government departments. It is responsible to the Scottish Office, which effectively is a special regional ministry that permits Scotland to enjoy greater autonomy from the national departments that oversee the affairs of other regions and cities in the United Kingdom. As described below, Scottish economic development politics also has been more independent of national politics and partisanship compared to other parts of urban Britain.

Finally, Scottish regional development has enjoyed considerable economic independence from private-sector decision makers. SE's operating expenses are almost entirely funded by the national government. This enables the authority to promote reinvestment programs that are not contingent on raising its own capital in the commercial market, as public development authorities in the United States normally do.

Altogether, the agency's relative independence from local political pressures, private capital, and its special position in national politics afforded a good opportunity for the regional reform model to receive ample play over a period of nearly 25 years. Glasgow is suggestive of what can happen when regional intervention decisively shapes urban policy in a major poor central city.

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF REGIONALISM: GLASGOW AS A DECLINING CITY

Glasgow is one of Britain's major old industrial centers that has been unable to stem its economic decline as global and regional restructuring have taken place (Gomez 1998; Robertson 1998). Historically, the Glasgow economy has been a center of resource-based industries, especially shipbuilding, engineering, and other manufacturing activities. The city and neighboring industrial communities on the Clyde managed to replace some of these industries after World War II, but Glasgow's decay became precipitous by the 1960s. The city's population shrunk to 623,000 in 1996 from more than a

million people in 1960. Unemployment hovered at 20% during the 1990s. Like many older Western industrial cities, Glasgow has witnessed years of plant closures and relocations. Growth in service employment has been almost the only significant area of job growth, and the city is highly dependent on public-sector employment.

In many respects, Glasgow's decline is surprisingly similar to that found in many older metropolitan areas in the United States. Yet this happened despite considerable investment and planning by public-sector institutions. As in many U.S. metropolitan areas, most employment growth in the Glasgow region has taken place in the suburbs, especially in the new towns that were built several decades ago to absorb the planned deconcentration of postwar populations. In 1952, the outer-city areas contained only about one-third of the conurbation's employment, whereas Glasgow held more than two-thirds; by the mid-1980s, the suburban areas contained almost 45% of all the jobs, but Glasgow city's share shrank to about 55%. Although suburban job growth has slowed in more recent years, improving Glasgow's share of jobs slightly, the new towns have continued disproportionately to attract most of the new employment in the region (Lever 1993, 279).

Like many frostbelt U.S. cities, service employment growth within Glasgow has been concentrated in the central business district (CBD). Yet the revitalization of the commercial CBD has not worked to regenerate the city to the benefit of many residents. The pace of growth has been slow. Since 1978, there has been only an increase of 2.6% in services in Glasgow, mostly in the CBD. From 1981 to 1991, this type of employment declined everywhere in Glasgow, including in the city center, as business shifted out of the city. Commuters take up a huge share of city's jobs; 41.8% of all city center jobs were held by people resident outside the city, especially holders of better-paid senior white-collar jobs (in 1991, 53% of them lived in the suburbs) (Glasgow City Housing 1996, 16). Employment growth outside the city was of little value to Glasgow residents due to transportation barriers and job skill mismatch (Webster 1994a, 1994b).

The city's economic decline has also been accompanied by social polarization. Although the absence of territorial segregation based on race makes it less visible compared to U.S. cities (Boyle 1990), Glasgow is essentially a poor city surrounded by mostly more prosperous suburbs. Although there are some poor suburban public housing estates, suburban-city differences in income are great. Median household income in Glasgow is only 78% of that of the suburbs. Furthermore, poverty in Glasgow is substantial; 30% of the city's families are on income support, and 80% of tenants receive housing benefit (Webster 1994a, 1994b; *The Herald*, 2 March 1996). Half of all households have no wage earner—the worst figure for any city in the United

Kingdom—leaving only 180,000 council taxpayers in a population of 623,000 (*Sunday Times*, 6 February 1996, 1).

Social deprivation tends to be concentrated around the main council housing estates. These are located away from the city center and lack access to the jobs in the new towns. The peripheral housing estates have the highest unemployment rates in the city—in 1989, it ranged from 39% to 46% long-term unemployment (Glasgow Regeneration Alliance n.d., 9). Here are found high concentrations of drug use, child abuse, alcoholism, and illegitimacy. In contrast, prosperous parts of the city have experienced recent increases in owner occupation and gentrification; they are among the few signs of the benefits of downtown revival outside of the central business district.

Apart from the absence of racial segregation, what most distinguishes Glasgow from comparable declining industrial cities in the United States is the huge (by American standards) safety net of public social programs and housing investments that do much to maintain the local public sector and support the poor. The national government and, until local government reform in 1996, the regional council provided the district council with most of its revenues, enabling it to maintain substantial programs in income assistance, job training, housing, and other social services despite increasing poverty and a shrinking tax base. For example, 54% of Glasgow's housing remains in the social rented sector even after years of housing fund cuts and privatization measures (Glasgow City Housing 1996, 22). These programs have enabled the city to limit some of the most adverse social consequences of economic decline.

That Glasgow's spiral of decline has not departed far from patterns of inequality experienced by many U.S. cities is a matter of considerable irony. Unlike U.S. cities, Glasgow's economic development has been the subject of massive planning and public intervention for decades. Let us scrutinize this.

REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Since the 1930s, U.K. urban policy has emphasized regional planning of industry through policies that have sought to bring jobs to worse-off areas (Boyle 1993). Postwar programs continued this policy and supported it through sponsorship of new town development and planning efforts to deconcentrate jobs and populations from major urban centers. Until the 1960s, the prevailing wisdom in Whitehall was that older industrial centers were too crowded and should be depopulated through slum clearance, new town building, and policies to promote industrial dispersal while safeguarding greenbelt areas around urban conurbations. Following the Toothill report

in 1961, the national government adopted these goals as the centerpiece of Scottish urban policy in a 1963 white paper. By the early 1970s, however, the national government saw the need to alter course, partly due to rising unemployment in older urban centers, including Glasgow. In Scotland, the national government created extraordinary machinery for regional economic development to promote urban regeneration and assist the relatively poor Scottish economy more generally.

Key decisions were made in 1974 to launch an ambitious regional approach that favored inner-city revitalization. Local government was reorganized, providing for a system of elected regional authorities that took over structural (general) land-use planning and some other services, such as roads and transportation, leaving the district councils as major housing authorities and providers of common services. In Glasgow, the local district council was expected to work closely with the Strathclyde Regional Council to coordinate its development programs.

Yet the lion's share of power and resources over urban development in Scotland was given to a new Scottish Development Agency (SDA). Directly accountable to the Scottish Office, this agency had access to huge resources supplied by the national government and was empowered to use them in a variety of programs to improve infrastructure, resuscitate declining industries, subsidize industrial location, and promote economic competitiveness throughout most of Scotland. Most important, SDA was explicitly expected to find a way to stimulate growth in the region while assisting the development of needy urban areas, especially Glasgow. For this purpose, it had authority to override planning decisions of local and regional councils to realize its objectives, although it was expected to consult with local authorities and build a network of cooperative planning in the region. Many of the large industries in Scotland, such as mining, steel manufacturing, railways, and other transportation, already were in public ownership, and housing was dominated by public provision in larger cities. SDA planning was supported by the Industrial Department in the Scottish Office that existed to oversee the system of regional development grants. A special agency in the Scottish Office, Locate in Scotland (LIS), was charged with promoting inward investment throughout Scotland by means of advertising, subsidies, loans, and other business incentives.

Although the SDA was reorganized in 1991 and renamed, its powers were by no means diminished. Most recently, SE assumed even greater importance as a result of the reorganization of Scottish local government in 1996. This reform abolished the regional councils, including Strathclyde, and turned over most of their powers to larger district councils in a single-tier system. In effect, during the past three decades, Glasgow's economic development has

occurred in counterpoint with a network of resourceful regional development institutions.

REGIONAL POLITICS AND URBAN STRATEGY: FROM EQUITY TO GROWTH

Nevertheless, the politics of regional development worked in unexpected ways for Glasgow. Rather than providing greater benefits and strategic options, regional intervention became more of a trap for Glasgow. Scottish regionalism initially favored economic reinvestment in Glasgow, much as the reform model suggests. Over time, however, this pattern dissipated, leaving Glasgow increasingly dependent on its own resources and the vicissitudes of the private marketplace. This has caused Glasgow's local government to increasingly adopt U.S.-style urban development strategies that favor downtown progrowth interests and to diminish attention to considerations of social equity in development. Yet unlike many U.S. cities that have relatively extensive powers and considerable resources for playing the game of progrowth politics, Glasgow remains highly dependent on regional authorities that use public measures to promote private-sector-led patterns of regional development.

THE POLITICS OF REGIONAL EQUITY, 1970 TO 1985

As noted earlier, the failure of postwar programs to arrest the economic decay of Britain's inner cities led to major shifts in urban policy during the 1970s. Policy makers decided to direct investment away from the regional periphery, encourage the regeneration of older industrial centers, and involve local government, as well as regional agencies, in the task of urban development. All of these policy changes were articulated in the West Central Scotland Plan in 1974, the centerpiece of Scottish urban policy until the 1980s. The Scottish Office moved quickly to set up the SDA, empower it to become the region's key program coordinator, and undertake other changes of direction, including the cancellation of a new town (Stonehouse) and the creation of regional councils, including the Strathclyde Regional Council that served Glasgow and its extensive periphery in western Scotland.

Although the SDA was saddled with ambiguous social priorities, the Scottish Office made it clear that SDA programs were to limit the social effects of the private marketplace in promoting Scottish development. The agency was expected to use compensatory means of making older industrial centers more competitive and to involve district and the new regional councils closely in its

programs (Boyle 1993; Keating 1989, 514-15; Lever 1993, 281). Indeed, the SDA moved to set up a number of area-based projects, prevent plant closings, and organize local authorities for developing a whole new series of projects that could "develop new economic foundations for settlements that had lost their economic raison d'être" (Hayton 1993, 275).

In Glasgow, the major SDA-sponsored program was the Glasgow Eastern Area Renewal program (GEAR). Started in 1976, it eventually became the largest urban renewal program in all of Western Europe. It dramatically represents the high point of the SDA's progressive urban policy. First, unlike conventional progrowth programs that focus on CBD development, GEAR sought to target assistance to one of the most impoverished urban areas in Scotland. The program had the explicit objective of attempting to regenerate the area economically as well as socially. Following the West Central Scotland Plan, it was assumed that extant urban areas could be made more economically promising, and its people could be reintegrated into the mainstream development of the region. Consequently, the program involved new spending on job training, subsidies for industrial business relocation, new transportation infrastructure, new public facilities as well as upgrading housing, social services, and neighborhood facilities.

Second, the use of public resources to achieve GEAR's objectives was considerable. The program absorbed more than £550 million, more than three-fifths of this from public sources. The Scottish Office spent more than £375 million on GEAR in a city with fewer than a million people (Brindley, Rydin, and Stoker 1989, 127-32), making GEAR a very large public-led reinvestment program. Third, GEAR's political structure reflected the high priority placed on making regional policy serve Glasgow's needs. GEAR was created, overseen, and promoted by the Scottish Office itself, which, in turn, provided a unique regional agency (SDA) to implement it. Finally, GEAR was carried out by a corporatist-style political structure. Although led by SDA officials, the political thrust of program decision making was to closely involve local elected officials in planning and implementation. To this end, legislation in the late 1970s provided local government with authority to intervene in the local economy for the first time (Wannop and LeClerc 1987, 67).

In essence, GEAR represented a reversal of policy for Glasgow. Rejecting the old regional policy that accepted the obsolescence of older urban centers, the new strategy placed emphasis on inner-city projects. In fact, during the years up to 1987, SDA expenditures on inner-city projects more than equaled what it spent on projects in the periphery (Lever 1992, 941).

Although these SDA policies still failed to check the movement of many jobs to Glasgow's periphery, they acted as something of a counterbalance.

Furthermore, the new Strathclyde Regional Council provided some check on industrial and residential relocation to new suburban centers. During the 1970s and 1980s, the regional council limited the supply of greenfield sites for industry in the periphery and attempted to preserve established office and retail centers. Before the regional council was formed in 1975, more than 84% of land with planning consent was in agricultural use; in contrast, during the next 10 years, 90% of the permissions granted by the council were on redevelopment or infill sites (Hayton 1993, 273). Although it is uncertain how much this effort steered business investment to Glasgow, at least planning policies did not contradict the overall strategy of revitalizing Glasgow as a means of promoting regional development (Turok 1996, 1).[3]

CHANGING COURSE: THE POLITICS OF REGIONAL GROWTH

The years since the mid-1980s have witnessed a shift away from equity-based development in favor of promoting economic growth almost anywhere within the region. As this new strategy stimulates intraregional economic competition, Glasgow has adopted progrowth practices and programs that often characterize cities that lack regional governmental involvement.

During the 1980s, the SDA began to abandon placing emphasis on regenerating old inner-city areas as a means of boosting the Scottish economy on virtually all fronts. When the GEAR project ended in 1986, the Scottish Office did not replace this program. Instead, the SDA and Scottish Office set up area-based programs that were dedicated mainly to promoting better service delivery to some neighborhoods that were suffering social decay. Although these programs certainly targeted social assistance, they were divorced from the major economic initiatives of the regional planners.

The Scottish Office elaborated its new policy strategy in 1988 in *New Life for Urban Scotland* (Great Britain, Scottish Office 1988). It called attention to neglected areas of social deprivation located on the periphery of Glasgow in the public housing estates but did not advocate large public undertakings to stimulate new private investment to these areas. SDA economic policies gave priority to stimulating growth in areas that appeared to have the greatest growth potential and seemed most attractive to private-sector investors—generally in the new towns and in the downtowns of major Scottish cities. The SDA specifically turned away from its earlier practice of preventing factory closures in industrial areas that relied on manufacturing. In Glasgow, SDA programs had already played an important role in subsidizing and organizing the regeneration of the city's historic city center. During the late 1980s and 1990s, such projects assumed highest priority among Scottish Office

officials who saw revitalization of the center city as the focus of its development strategy and, in *New Life*, proclaimed the CBD-centered approach a success.

This shift toward progrowth policy was reinforced by other intervention that promoted job growth in newer towns and suburban areas while neglecting older urban areas. Because there is no program for resettling the unemployed closer to where the jobs are, the programs for subsidizing the relocation of jobs assume great importance in Scottish regional policy. By the 1980s, the program to attract inward investment was shifted to the SDA's Locate in Scotland (LIS) arm. LIS was not charged with any obligation to help Glasgow but to compete for foreign investment with other countries and regions.[4]

Consequently, LIS activities pulled inward investment away from Glasgow and older parts of the outer ring in favor of new towns in the region and in exurban areas. For instance, in respect to manufacturing employment in 1987 that is attributable to foreign investment, the Strathclyde region as a whole, with about half of Scotland's population and employment, attracted 43% of the foreign-owned employment. The core city of Glasgow, with 33% of Strathclyde's population and 40% of its employment, attracted only 5.5% of foreign-owned jobs. This suburban bias in LIS programs continued during succeeding years (*Sunday Times*, 6 February 1996, B-1; Lever n.d., 19-20).

Similarly, the administration of regional assistance grants by the Industry Department of the Scottish Office strongly favored job growth in newer suburban areas, rather than in Glasgow. Regional assistance grants are no small program. In 1994-1995, they exceeded the £70 million allocated for the Urban Programme (Webster 1994a, 63). Yet in the six years from 1988 to 1993, more than three times as many regional selective assistance grants per unemployed worker were given to the outer conurbation than to Glasgow (Webster 1994a, 8-9). In sum, the cluster of regional business programs tends to subsidize a pattern of private-led investment that favors the movement of jobs into newer suburban centers and away from Glasgow.

As the SDA's support for city-centered economic regeneration ebbed during the 1980s, its interest in using small-area programs to stimulate urban reinvestment as an employment measure also waned. By 1988, when the Scottish Office set up four urban partnerships as the start of a new area-based strategy to transform peripheral housing estates, its policies on neighborhoods became thoroughly redefined. *New Life for Urban Scotland* (Great Britain, Scottish Office 1988) indicated that the specific political objective for these areas included the ending of the monopoly of public housing, encouraging greater personal responsibility, stimulating private home

ownership and alternative housing tenures, and placing a higher priority on resident involvement. Thus regional officials saw their role more in terms of getting residents to change, rather than questioning the need to alter its regionwide programs to improve job opportunities for the residents.

Changes in political organization that limited Glasgow's voice in regional policy were also undertaken. Under prodding by the Scottish Office during the 1980s, the SDA and the district council attempted to give business a larger role in the city's development planning by organizing Glasgow Action, a business booster group that was expected to advise and promote downtown development. Most important, in 1991, the SDA was merged with Scotland's Job Training Agency to create Scottish Enterprise. Although this new agency was governed by a board responsible to the Scottish Office as before, it no longer relied very much on local governments to help plan and implement local projects. Instead, 13 local enterprise companies (LECs)—incorporated enterprises with private boards of directors that work under contract with SE—were set up for all of the major regions in urban Scotland. The Glasgow Development Agency (GDA) assumed control of SE planning as the LEC for Glasgow.

In effect, the reorganization in 1991 fragmented regional policy making, stimulating economic competition among the various Scottish regional areas by the creation of the LECs. Placing the district and regional councils outside of SE programs further decentralized regional development policy. When regional councils were abolished in 1996, Glasgow's boundaries were redefined and reduced. All this brought Glasgow closer to the kind of governmental environment found in cities without a regional policy (although SE does not tolerate LECs pirating jobs from each other).

THE FALLOUT OF REGIONALISM: DUAL URBAN POLICY

These changes in policy have forced Glasgow's local development advocates—the GDA and the city government—to assume a dual urban strategy. They compete for private investment and Scottish Office funds by promoting downtown growth while casting about for programs that deal with the social fallout of this strategy. Although the GDA is a private company that is dependent on SE for its funds and programs, the city's massive social problems temper strict business efficiency leanings. Most of the agency's activities gravitate to promoting services and corporate investment schemes that will expand employment in Glasgow's city center. On the other hand, it has also taken on an advocacy role that attempts to respond to its constituencies in Glasgow. For example, in recent years, the agency has become an advocate

for local demands (especially by the district council) that SE give greater weight to improve brownfield sites and attract manufacturing in Glasgow's industrial areas and to support upgrading social services in poor neighborhoods. In 1993, downtown business-oriented Glasgow Action was abolished and replaced by a GDA-led coalition of governments that included the district and regional councils, Scottish Homes (a regional housing agency), named the Glasgow Regeneration Alliance. The alliance is dedicated to promoting greater attention to eight social deprivation areas outside the city center. Nevertheless, the downtown-oriented GDA has been unable to shift much money in the direction of its social equity activities. In 1996-1997, the agency's allocation to all eight regeneration areas was less than £9 million out of its £62 million budget (GDA n.d., 6). This has left the other alliance governments to provide meager assistance in various small-area programs that mostly focus on improving the social resources of residents via training, counseling, improved coordination of social services, and housing reinvestment. In aggregate, these small-area programs reflect a clear division in current strategy between economic and social policies for assisting deprived areas (McCarthur 1995, 870).

FROM REGIONALISM TO BOOSTERISM

The dual policy has left the district government with few alternatives. Given its tiny budget for economic development activities, limited legal authority, and the fact that it is forbidden by law from using business incentive programs to attract inward investment, local politicians conform to the regional agency's strategy—boosting the downtown as a cultural capital while attending to the social miseries of decline through neighborhood social programs.

Alongside image remaking have been big physical reinvestment projects that have transformed the central business district since the 1980s. With SDA backing, the district council undertook a number of major downtown renewal projects to boost the city center as a place of culture and attract corporate white-collar workers. This included the building of the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Center (1985), building of the giant St. Enoch Shopping Galleria (1986), and revitalization of the Merchant City (central historic commercial area). There have been almost continuous promotional campaigns and investments in cultural institutions in the city, including new art galleries, museums, theaters, design centers, concert halls, and high-end downtown fashion malls and office developments encouraged by public subsidies from SE (Boyle 1995, 5). In 1999, Glasgow was celebrated as the "City of Architecture" in the European Union. Tourism has come to play a large role in

Glasgow's downtown renewal. It is now 10% of the city's workforce. Around £350 million is to be invested in tourist projects from 1996 to 2001 (*Financial Times*, 1 October, 1996).

In essence, the regional model in Glasgow has not worked as reformers had expected. Although regional intervention once concentrated resources to assist Glasgow and espoused equity considerations, the long-term trend has been to reverse course. Glasgow is following a trajectory of economic and social development that increasingly resembles patterns associated with metropolitan areas that lack a regional policy.

WHY REGIONAL POLICY LOST ITS PROGRESSIVE EDGE

Why has regional intervention not enabled Glasgow to break very far away from U.S.-style development? It is possible that it has little to do with the dynamics of regional governance. One explanation is that probusiness interests that are hostile to equity-driven urban policies have asserted their power. Alternatively, Glasgow could be a victim of the Conservative neoliberal tide in national politics. Let us examine these possibilities.

THE BUSINESS POWER HYPOTHESIS

Did business interests capture regional development institutions and then promote more private-sector-led development? There is evidence that business assumed greater importance in Glasgow's development programs over time. In particular, after 1991, the reorganization of Scottish Enterprise into a network of privately incorporated LECs with mostly private-sector boards was a boost to business participation in the city's development programs.

This capture theory can be easily discounted, however. The Scottish regional authorities were always dominated by decision makers—many with private-sector experience—appointed by the Scottish Office. The national offices of SDA and SE are essentially agencies of the Industry Department that are accountable to the secretary of state for Scotland. There is little sign of active involvement in agency decision making by business because there is only a feeble industrial lobby in Scotland (Keating and Boyle 1986, 19-21). The 1991 reorganization of Scottish Enterprise never changed that.

Although the 13 LECs, including the GDA, are private companies dominated by business appointments, they have not done much to increase business power. Business in Glasgow has little tradition of civic involvement; the power of the Labour Party in organizing the city's politics is overwhelming (Keating and Boyle 1986, 187). In fact, both Glasgow Action and the GDA

represent attempts by public officials to organize an apathetic local business community to play some role in Glasgow's planning. If anything, the reorganization of the SDA simply redistributed power within the agency; it did not shift it from public- to private-sector players.

THE NATIONAL POLITICS BECAME LOCAL POLITICS ARGUMENT

Did policies change as a result of decisions taken at the national level, rather than as a result of regional policy makers? It is certainly true that the progrowth policies of the Scottish Office followed the 1979 Conservative electoral victory and the rise of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, whose commitments to neoliberal directions in public policy are well known. Conservative governments aimed to limit government regulation of the economy, reduce the power and autonomy of local government, and favor private-sector solutions to public problems. Tory neoliberalism clearly favored the idea of placing greater emphasis on using commercial efficiency, rather than social equity, in revitalizing urban economies. To some extent, this rhetoric of commercialism found its way into the Scottish Office, which issued new guidelines for promoting development in the post-1979 period.

Yet the "national politics became local politics" argument offers an incomplete explanation, at best. In critical respects, Scottish regional programs were not forced into a neoliberal mold during the 1980s and 1990s. In England, changes at Westminster after 1979 led to major shifts in urban policy that undermined elected local authorities, stripped them of important authority, and led to the establishment of private-sector-dominated urban development authorities to manage revitalization projects (Lawless 1991). Nevertheless, the Scottish system of public-led regional development planning was left for almost 12 years following Thatcher's election and then was reorganized with a more private-like veneer to continue its work.

Most important, major SDA policies never shifted in a very neoliberal direction. From the beginning, the SDA saw itself as an agency that would seek to stimulate competition and employ commercial criteria in its decisions whenever possible (Keating 1989, 523). This was even expected by the Labour government that created the SDA and required a specified return on the agency's investments (Keating and Boyle 1986, 23). Detailed study of SDA policies (Halkier 1992) during the years following the Conservative victory in 1979 shows continuity in public-sector activism and planning by the agency, rather than significant shifts toward neoliberalism. SDA industrial investments were not reduced from their earlier levels of the 1970s. Furthermore, they remained directed at pursuing modernization of the regional economy as a whole by giving great support to indigenous firms in traditional

industries, such as engineering, textiles, and food, as well as in more competitive business sectors, such as high technology. SDA even continued to invest heavily in ailing firms as a means of promoting employment, leaving only very modest improvement in the overall profitability of SDA firm investments at the end of the 1980s. Although the importance of new firm investments rose from about 20% to 50% of SDA investments since the late 1970s when Labour was in power, investments that merely refinanced existing industrial capacity continuously accounted for more than 40% of investment SDA activity during the 1980s. In effect, the agency did not suddenly turn into a market-driven venture capitalist banker during years of Tory governments.

Finally, after 1979, many forms of intervention in the private sector by SDA actually increased. This included greater subsidy of inward investment as a lever for industrial policy, sectoral initiatives aimed at nurturing new firms via public sponsorship, greater emphasis on selectivity in SDA investment (thus increasing the importance of public decision making), and a huge 700% increase in advisory services for private businesses (Halkier 1992, 16-21). Although data on the later 1990s are fragmentary, SE mostly appears to continue the patterns of intervention established by SDA during the earlier period. For example, SE investments in private-sector companies grew, and the number of companies in SE's portfolio increased from 772 in 1985 to an estimated 1,000 in 1992-1993. The provision of business advice to firms continued to climb throughout the 1990s to 15,000 in 1995 (Great Britain, Her Majesty's Treasury 1990, 10; Great Britain, Departments of the Secretary of State 1996, appendix 7). Judged by various areas of policy, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that SDA was guided "less by central government than by the agency's own opportunistic principles" (Halkier 1992, 23).

Scottish regional politics simply do not conform to changes in national partisanship because of important bipartisan considerations about Scotland in national politics. Although Tory governments had little partisan political stake in a region that is dominated by Labour, Conservative politicians at Westminster are wary of Scottish demands for greater independence through constitutional changes. As a result, Scotland has been able to maintain political privileges, including its own ministry, a separate legal system, a distinctive schools system, and special housing agencies and programs, among other forms of autonomy. Scottish regional policy has acquired a bipartisan importance that limits the impact of national politics in Scottish affairs. For instance, the huge GEAR program was launched and funded when major inner-city development projects elsewhere in Britain were being rejected or abandoned (Lawless 1991; Brindley, Rydin, and Stoker 1989, 7). Not until urban riots in 1981 did the national government give similar attention to

English cities (Wannop and LeClerc 1987, 69). The rise of Scottish nationalist sentiment in recent years has made Tory as well as Labour leaders reluctant to antagonize Scottish advocates and anxious to find ways of giving Scots a sense of autonomy within the extant constitutional order (McCrone 1993). In 1999, a Scottish parliament with some taxing power was instituted by Labour in response to demands for autonomy.

WHY GLASGOW LOSES: THE POLITICAL DYNAMICS OF REGIONALISM

The most compelling explanation for the changes is found in the dynamics of regional politics itself. The idea that governmental institutions for promoting the interests of a region will assist central cities is based on a flawed understanding of regional economics and politics. The Glasgow experience suggests that regional agencies set in motion powerful institutional interests that define "regional interests" in ways that view assistance to central cities more as a liability than an asset. Pressures for this derive from the very structure of regionally based public intervention.

To begin, regional economic interdependence does not automatically lead to a policy of assisting older cities. Interdependence among cities, suburbs, and rural areas for the economic health of the area economy is highly ambiguous, as the flurry of academic debate over this issue can attest. The mere fact of interdependency does not suggest any particular policy prescription. It is unclear that assisting one part of the region will be the best way of aiding the rest as long as there is slack in the economy, and causes and effects of particular policy measures are difficult to detect (Edelman 1964; Bartik 1991; Swanstrom 1988). More than a score of policy makers and policy experts in Scotland were interviewed by this investigator during the mid-1990s; there was virtually no consensus about Glasgow's role in supporting long-term economic growth in the region even after almost 25 years of urban policy. Lack of agreement about how to manage regional interdependency suggests that the meaning of regional interests is overwhelmingly a matter of political definition—that is, a by-product of regional political competition in the development game.

In Glasgow, political competition over the prevailing interpretation of regional interests was at the heart of its changing development politics. Initially, the Scottish Office, prompted by Labour government, expected its newly created regional authority to adopt a view that favored helping blackspot industrial centers (Lever 1993; Boyle 1993). At the same time, Labour's own ambivalence over what the SDA was to actually do left the agency with

substantial scope for charting its own direction. As regional officials began to gain experience with program building and implementation, it became clear to them that reinvesting in declining Glasgow would produce economic revitalization only over the long run, if at all. They also saw that promoting growth anywhere offered clear advantages.

Crucial reevaluation began with the SDA's assessment of its huge GEAR project during the early 1980s. GEAR's lack of success in directly stimulating many new jobs or retaining many old ones was recognized by SDA officials and by groups of consultants in a major outside evaluation of the project in the mid-1980s (Boyle 1993, 312-13). The latter concluded that local job creation efforts produced meager results and that, in any case, two-thirds of the new jobs in GEAR went to people from outside the area (Scottish Development Agency 1988). Furthermore, even though the GEAR program created 2,000 new jobs during 1976 to 1985, the area lost around 17,000 jobs during the same period (Brindley, Rydin, and Stoker 1989, 128).

Some critics have argued that these conclusions were based on inappropriate assumptions (Webster 1994a, 49-50). Nevertheless, the Scottish Office and SDA saw things differently. Throughout the 1980s, the story within the SDA is one of gradual redefinition of regional economic interests in favor of limiting reinvestment in old industrial areas in favor of using public investment almost anywhere in the region to maximize job growth.

This redefinition of interests occurred in part because regional economic competition assumed greater political importance once the SDA was established. A regional agency ultimately measures itself against its performance vis-à-vis other regions, not its success in aiding parts of the region, such as Glasgow. The need to achieve regional growth regardless of where it takes place becomes a powerful constraint on policy makers. Even if regional officials are successful in revitalizing particular urban black spots, if this happens without achieving significant improvements in overall economic performance, the agency risks the appearance of failure. Consequently, there were powerful economic inducements for SDA, SE, and other Scottish Office players to promote regional economic growth wherever they could, rather than dealing with how this growth might be distributed. As one SE official put it, "We have a larger responsibility. That precludes our looking at matters from the perspective of only one area, no matter how needy."

In this respect, planners were merely conforming to the practices of the Scottish Office agencies that managed business incentive programs for luring inward investment—programs that overwhelmingly rewarded private investments in greenfield and new town investments. As long as private investors are believed to prefer sites outside of Glasgow, regional officials find it

difficult to work against this market bias, for it would mean choking off job growth or watching jobs shift to some other region in Europe or the United Kingdom. In effect, the "regional state" is organized to promote itself first; its officials interpret their economic interests accordingly.

This political bias might have been counterbalanced by a commitment to favor older urban areas such as Glasgow in the expectation that better regional economic performance would materialize over the long run, as some urban theorists believe can happen. Yet Scottish policy makers found it difficult to sustain this priority due to pressures from powerful political constituencies outside and inside the agency.

As an intermediate political manager, SE and even the Scottish Office must be responsive to the short-term time horizons imposed on them from above. Although SE is largely independent of capital markets and does not simply reflect national party politics, it is highly sensitive to national officials and parliamentary committees who scrutinize their performance. Unless SE can demonstrate achievements on a regionwide basis, both the agency's financial support and even its political survival are in question. In fact, the 1991 agency reorganization was precipitated in part by criticism that the SDA was lagging in this respect. After reorganization, it was prodded to quickly demonstrate its new performance capabilities. A Select Committee in Parliament, reviewing it in 1993, took it to task for not being able to demonstrate very precise annual job creation and job retention results, among other matters. It specifically rejected SE's efforts to stress the importance of its longer-term contributions to the Scottish economy and its argument that job creation is an inappropriate measure for evaluating a return on investment (Great Britain, House of Commons, Scottish Affairs Committee 1995, xxxv-xxxvi). In effect, SE's freedom from having to raise capital on its own in bond markets did not mean that it was free of short-term investor demands; the latter were perfectly well expressed by the agency's public-sector benefactors in Westminster. Ironically, pressures for political survival may have placed the agency on a shorter leash than a development agency dependent on private financing.

Political demands that discourage long-term performance were also articulated by the Scottish Office officials, whose interests in the region are not identical with Glasgow. As a ministry with regionwide responsibilities, the Scottish Office is always under pressure to spread benefits all over the region. This discourages concentrating resources in hopes of eventually stimulating long-term diffuse benefits. This compelling institutional interest does not change easily. During the 1960s, Scottish Office policy favored the decentralization of people and jobs to achieve regional balance. It continued to support

this policy through regional grant assistance and new town development, even as it embarked on the inner-city-oriented programs of the 1970s and 1980s. Its prime measuring stick invariably is how well the region as a whole is doing because that is central to its political enhancement.

A long-term view of regional interests also is not strongly represented within SE despite its relative political independence. Because the agency does not represent governmental jurisdictions, policy makers do not have to cobble together coalitions from communities in the region to carry out their programs—a political process that might force officials to spread the benefits of intervention and preclude "patient" reinvestment in older central cities. Nevertheless, this does not mean that SE is free from parochial interests of another kind. These emanate from within the agency. In 1990-1991 business appointments constituted 60% of the SE national board and 73% of the LEC's steering groups (Hayton and Mearns 1991, 311). The presence of such a huge group of corporate business players in an agency that relies heavily on professional economists forms a source of bias that favors private-sector solutions to public problems (Wilson 1989, 50-71). These individuals do not necessarily represent corporate power. Rather, these business professionals and academic economists are trained to value private-sector market signals in making decisions. Their notions of regional interest are apt to be shaped by inward investors and the corporate business world unless there is opportunity for other kinds of interests to voice claims and grievances. The problem with SE is that it is not structured to hear the other voices very well. Consequently, when one former high SE official was asked about his view of the region, he said that "Scottish Enterprise seeks to exploit opportunities presented by the market." In essence, the creation of a regional power broker tended to replicate, not challenge, the views of the investment community.

Doubts about the wisdom of targeting resources in Glasgow and older industrial areas were voiced by officials in the SDA from the very birth of the agency. The political obligation of the SDA to assist declining areas was unaccompanied by any broad policy statement by Scottish Office officials that supplied an officially sanctioned theoretical rationale that could frame the agency's activities in favor of Glasgow and older urban centers. Thus the agency's expert managers and consultants were free to have a large impact as experience with programs accumulated (Lever 1992; Boyle 1993).

By the time of the GEAR evaluation in 1986, the dominant view within the agency supported the so-called "characteristics" approach to regional development. Briefly, this view claims that in large urban areas, concentrations of unemployment are due to concentrations of unskilled or disadvantaged people, rather than the spatial relationship of homes to workplace. Accordingly, SDA economists took the view that the greater Glasgow region really could

be treated as an integrated labor market; people who were qualified should usually be able to travel to available jobs. It follows that there is little reason to move jobs to where the unemployed reside, and there is little reason to enhance the competitive ability of central cities as long other parts of the region can attract new jobs anyway.

This view was reinforced by the outside consultant's report that evaluated GEAR and found that the experience demonstrated the reality of the characteristics approach. It concluded that "economic development measures should be framed in terms of stimulating employment growth at the 'regional' or, at least, at the 'labor market area level'" (Scottish Development Agency 1988, 45). Eventually, this view provided the economic rationale for the SDA's major policy shift away from large reinvestment in Glasgow and other older urban centers, as well as the retreat from economic development in favor of social services and housing in the agency's small-area programs (Webster 1994a, 3-5). In effect, Scottish officials chose to pursue by public means what other cities without a regional policy were doing by private means.

THE LIMITS OF REGIONALISM

Glasgow's experience should give pause to reformers who believe that regional solutions are the answer to the problems of poor central cities. Glasgow has been spared the worst fate suffered by some declining U.S. cities, with their lopsided fiscal deficits, poor housing, and disorderly inner-city neighborhoods. It is doubtful how much this is a result of regionalism, however. Glasgow's containment of economic and social ills mostly is a result of national safety net programs in health, housing, income maintenance, and national systems of fiscal support for local governments. Although the creation of powerful regional development machinery could have built on these advantages in Glasgow, the evidence suggests that it did so only very modestly.

Specifically, the Scottish experience suggests that governmental intervention by even independent regional agencies does not necessarily facilitate assistance to needy central cities. The flaw in the reform model is that it conflates abstract notions of regional economic interdependence with prescriptions to aid cities. It neglects the reality that regional interests are a matter of political choice, not economic determinism. Finally, the reform model ignores the fact that powerful economic and political forces tend to bias regional officials to favor growth anywhere in the region rather than helping poor central cities.

Constrained by the pressures of economic competition from regions all over the global economy, Scottish officials place a high value on obtaining

growth alone, rather than dealing with its distribution within the region. They respond much like other governmental jurisdictions that seek growth as a means of managing their economic dependency (Kantor 1995). This bias in economic policy might have been checked by national political mandates. But the need to please central government benefactors and the absence of local voices that could challenge the agency's bureaucratic parochialism discouraged long-term thinking about the future of Glasgow and its region.

Consequently, regional intervention evolved steadily in the direction of promoting market-driven patterns of regional growth and placing lower priority on considerations of equity. Glasgow is constrained to pursue growth strategies that are characteristic of cities without a regional policy. Ironically, a private market-driven regional economy is emerging through public planning. It may be possible to devise regional approaches that avoid this kind of outcome. For example, a smaller scale region in which a single central city attracted the focus of policy makers might display different tendencies. Yet the Glasgow experience presents sobering evidence that regional approaches can shortchange central cities. As Ledebur and Barnes (1999, 13) also concluded, there is a need "to identify regional stakeholders and to describe the nature of their stake in the performance of the economic region."

NOTES

1. The "region" in this case conforms to the political boundaries of the Scottish Development Authority that are described below.

2. Hereafter, this agency is referred to as Scottish Enterprise unless use of the earlier name is necessary for clarity.

3. Nevertheless, the Scottish Office backed off from fully adopting an inner-city economic strategy. Grants for regional assistance of capital development seemed to disregard inner-city priorities. Managed by the central government, these policies were insensitive to local need. The number and size of the areas to receive assistance were so large that businesses looking to relocate could choose places away from labor markets with high unemployment and social problems (Lever 1992, 938). Furthermore, the expansion of extant new towns was excluded from planning control by regional councils. On balance, however, the 1970s witnessed a considerable reversal of urban policy.

4. Locate in Scotland (LIS) could not exceed financial limits on business assistance imposed by European Community legislation, making environmental and labor market factors of great importance in attracting jobs. However, it is, at best, unclear if these limits would be violated if LIS sought to direct investment to Glasgow and other older urban centers.

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