

# Governing the Regimeless City

## The Frank Zeidler Administration in Milwaukee, 1948–1960

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Recent literature on urban governance has focused predominantly on cities with effective partnerships between business and local government. Increased attention to the role played by such partnerships in the creation of local governing capacity has changed the way that most contemporary urban theorists understand community power. In place of the Weberian model emphasizing the use of power for social control purposes, urban-regime theorists view power in terms of its capacity to accomplish goals—*power to* instead of *power over*. This article examines development policy in postwar Milwaukee during a period in which a business-government partnership failed to materialize. I argue that the absence of business-government cooperation placed a distinctive imprint on local power relations. Power in postwar Milwaukee is best understood through a multidimensional approach that incorporates both Weberian and contemporary approaches to the study of community power.

**Keywords:** *regime theory; urban renewal; public housing; annexation*

It was Monday, November 26, 1956, and Milwaukee mayor Frank Zeidler was livid. Zeidler, in St. Louis on city business, had just been told that the nation's largest developer of urban renewal projects, William Zeckendorf, had decided not to invest in Milwaukee. Several months earlier, Zeidler had met with officials from Zeckendorf's firm, Webb & Knapp, to discuss development opportunities in Milwaukee. The meeting had gone well, with company officials expressing considerable interest in the city's urban-renewal program ("Aides of Big Realty Firm Visit Zeidler" 1956). After talking with Zeidler, however, the developers met with several of Milwaukee's top business leaders, who reportedly complained about the city's poor business climate and the

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mayor's Socialist Party affiliation. Told by a Zeckendorf associate in St. Louis that the firm lost interest in Milwaukee upon hearing these discouraging reports, Zeidler relayed the information to a local newspaper reporter traveling with him. The story made newspaper headlines for the next several days as outraged city urban-renewal officials called for an investigation of the incident while business leaders denied involvement (Farris 1956a, 1956b; "City Renewal Snub a Fact: Zeidler" 1956).

Such friction between city officials and downtown business elites distinguished Milwaukee from other postwar cities, in which cooperation rather than conflict was the norm. In city after city, business-government partnerships transformed the built environment during the postwar era. Downtowns and their immediate surroundings were revitalized as new skyscrapers, sports stadiums, convention centers, universities, and other large projects were erected in areas previously used for less profitable activities. Much scholarly attention has focused on the effectiveness of business-government partnerships in achieving land-use changes and facilitating new development. However, such partnerships were not equally successful everywhere, and in some instances, they failed to materialize altogether. Far less is known about cities in which effective business-government partnerships failed to emerge than about cities with strong partnerships.

This article considers the effects of a failed business-government partnership on a city's capacity to govern. It does so by examining development policy in Milwaukee during the administration of Mayor Frank P. Zeidler, the last of three Socialist mayors to govern Milwaukee during the twentieth century. Zeidler, mayor from 1948 to 1960, made public housing, urban renewal, and annexation the centerpiece of his administration's development policy. The city's business leadership advocated downtown redevelopment. A partnership failed to materialize. Instead, Milwaukee was governed through a series of ad hoc alliances built around public housing, urban renewal, annexation, and downtown redevelopment. The temporary, unstable character of these alliances compromised their effectiveness, yet civic progress was not extinguished altogether. This article examines how local governing capacity was shaped in the absence of a coherent business-government partnership.

## Urban Governance and Urban Regimes

For well more than a decade, the dominant paradigm for analyzing urban politics has been regime theory. Regime theory's key point of departure is the division of labor between state and market (Stone 1989; Elkin 1987).

The limited capacity of the local state, combined with private ownership of business, creates a powerful incentive for coalition building between government and nongovernmental actors. These coalitions, called regimes, may take different forms, but the predominant form in the postwar era has been the business-government partnership. Given the weakness of local government, regime theorists have paid greater attention to these informal arrangements than to formal governing mechanisms and institutions.

Regime theory is somewhat vague on the conditions that local governing arrangements must exhibit to be considered functioning regimes. Mossberger and Stoker (2001) have proposed that regimes have four core properties: partners that include both government and nongovernmental actors (including business); collaboration based on a mutual interest in accomplishing concrete tasks; identifiable policy agendas; and a longstanding pattern of cooperation as opposed to a temporary, ad hoc coalition. Governing arrangements must meet all four criteria to qualify as a regime.

Regime theory is rooted in part in the community-power debate of the 1960s and 1970s that pitted elite theorists such as Floyd Hunter against pluralists such as Robert Dahl (see Hunter 1953; Dahl 1961; Banfield 1961; Polsby 1980; Bachrach and Baratz 1970; Lukes 1974; Gaventa 1980). Pluralists and elite theorists both understood power largely in Weberian terms as a compliance problem—A getting B to do something that B would not have done otherwise. Elite theorists focused on the mobilization of resources by social and economic elites to achieve domination (command power). Pluralists pointed to the inability of elites to exercise comprehensive control, leading inevitably to bargaining among political actors from autonomous bases of strength (coalition power). Both paradigms viewed power largely as an exercise in social control, differing chiefly about the extent to which domination could be achieved successfully.

In contrast to pluralism and elite theory, regime theory examines power from a social-production standpoint—*power to* instead of *power over*. According to Stone (1989, 229), “What is at issue is not so much domination and subordination as a capacity to act and accomplish goals.” The power of a regime lies in its ability to create opportunities for achieving concrete objectives in a fragmented-policy environment. Once in place, regimes exert a kind of gravitational pull. Resistance to the regime becomes costly for the challenge group, not for members of the regime. As Stone (1989, 229) describes it, “Those who are results-oriented generally adjust their agendas to pursue the opportunities compatible with that situation; they ‘go along’ rather than sign up for a long-term struggle to reconstitute the regime.” This is what is meant by power as social production rather than social control.

The attraction of a regime minimizes the need to dominate and control potential opponents. In contrast to command power and coalition power, regime politics features “preemptive power,” defined by Stone (1988, 83) as “a capacity to occupy, hold, and make use of a strategic position.”

Although regime theory’s social-production model of power represents a significant theoretical advance, the model seems more appropriate for understanding cities with strong regimes than those with weak or nonexistent ones. A key difficulty with Stone’s notion of preemptive power is that it seems to assume the presence of a regime. Clearly, a strong, cohesive governing coalition is in a good position to preempt the city’s policy-setting function and withstand most challenges. However, the absence of such a coalition would seem to imply diminished capacity for exercising power in this way.

The limits of the social-production model of power for examining cities with failed regimes are underscored in DiGaetano and Klemanski’s (1999) comparative study of urban governance in the United States and the United Kingdom. Based on their analysis of political development in four cities, DiGaetano and Klemanski develop an expanded typology of urban power structures that identifies regimes as one of several possible governance structures. Preemptive power is associated with regimes, while nonregime governance structures feature both command and coalition power. The authors argue that a multidimensional model of power that recognizes the use of power for both social-production and social-control purposes is necessary to analyze urban governance in situations in which regimes have failed to materialize.

The value of DiGaetano and Klemanski’s multidimensional model of power, in part, is that it provides a conceptual framework for a more thoroughgoing treatment of the impact of regimelessness or regime weakness on a city’s capacity to govern. Studies of cities with weak or failed regimes have tended to characterize the absence of preemptive power as a breakdown of local governing arrangements, resulting in hyperpluralism and ungovernability (see DeLeon 1992; Orr and Stoker 1994; Adams 1991; Vogel and Stowers 1991). Clearly, regimes play a key role in facilitating the exercise of power. The weakness or absence of a regime thus has a disempowering effect. To anticipate the findings of this article, however, the evidence from Milwaukee suggests that actors may compensate for the absence of preemptive power by deploying power in different ways. During the Frank Zeidler administration, power was exercised both informally through ad hoc coalitions and formally through legal channels. The absence of preemptive power led not to powerlessness but to greater emphasis on command power and coalition power. Power assumed both social-control and social-production dimensions. Because regime theorists are concerned

largely with the latter dimension of power, they have tended to view the absence of a regime as a situation of powerlessness. The Milwaukee case suggests that the picture is more complicated.

While use of the terms *command power* and *coalition power* may suggest a revisiting of the pluralist-elitist debate, this is not my intention. My understanding of power differs in two key respects from that both of pluralists and of elite theorists. First, I share regime theory's political-economy perspective on urban governance. Unlike pluralists, I assume that business occupies a privileged position among potential governing partners and that the absence of business participation in governing decisions is likely to compromise a city's governing arrangements significantly. Second, following DiGaetano and Klemanski's lead, I understand power from both a social-control and a social-production standpoint. Unlike pluralists and elite theorists (who emphasize the former) and regime theorists (who emphasize the latter), I suggest that both models of power are necessary to explain Milwaukee's governing arrangements during the Frank Zeidler administration.

## Urban Development in Postwar Milwaukee

The city of Milwaukee emerged from World War II much like other cities around the country. Manufacturing was beginning to decentralize, with new industrial facilities locating increasingly in suburban and rural locations (Sugrue 1996). The central business district, surrounded by blocks of low-income housing, was in decline. No significant private-investment activity had taken place in the central area since the 1920s. The downtown retail district was losing ground to suburban shopping centers, and by 1954, it no longer led the metropolitan area in retail sales (Norman 1989). Between 1930 and 1947, central-business-district property values depreciated by approximately 50% ("Outline Master Plan for Downtown Area" 1947).

Across the country, a new type of alliance emerged to confront the challenges faced by the postwar city. In what Salisbury (1964, 783) termed "the new convergence of power," activist mayors teamed with policy and planning experts and business leaders to plan and execute wide-ranging downtown redevelopment programs. In Pittsburgh, for example, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (ACCD) was created by Richard Mellon in 1943 to unite the city's business leadership around a common agenda for urban redevelopment. In partnership with Mayor David Lawrence, the ACCD spearheaded the redevelopment of Pittsburgh's 330-acre central business district (Lubove 1969). Similar alliances between business leaders and mayors

transformed the skylines of New Haven, Philadelphia, Chicago, New York, and many other cities during the postwar era (see Dahl 1961; Bartelt 1989; Rast 1999; Fainstein and Fainstein 1989).

Postwar growth coalitions were cemented in part by the availability of federal urban-renewal funds through the 1949 Housing Act and its successor, the 1954 Housing Act. Title I of the 1949 Housing Act provided federal subsidies to write down the cost of land assembly, clearance, and site preparation for private developers. Title III provided federal funding for the construction of public housing. Local business leaders were most interested in the opportunities provided by Title I and were generally less enthusiastic about federal support for public housing (Hirsch 1998; Bauman 1987, 1988). Big-city mayors—in alliance with labor leaders and other housing proponents—often had been strong supporters of public housing during the 1930s and 1940s. By the 1950s, however, many mayors abandoned the New Deal politics of class in favor of the postwar politics of progrowth liberalism (Flanagan 1997). Downtown redevelopment and economic growth would transcend class divisions by providing benefits for all city residents. Mayors often continued to support public housing but viewed it increasingly as an appendage to slum clearance and downtown redevelopment (Gelfand 1975).

For a brief period following World War II, it appeared that urban redevelopment in Milwaukee might conform to this pattern. In 1945, a small group of downtown business leaders formed the 1948 Corporation, a civic group modeled after Pittsburgh's ACCD.<sup>1</sup> Expressing concern about the absence of civic progress in Milwaukee, the 1948 Corporation sought to replace this perceived leadership vacuum with an activist redevelopment program focusing on the downtown area. In October 1947, the group released a plan for the central area that called for new highway construction and other transportation infrastructure, middle-class housing in the downtown area, a redeveloped civic center, a downtown entertainment center designed to attract tourists, and new sports and cultural facilities ("Outline Master Plan for Downtown Area" 1947).

The 1948 Corporation could not, of course, implement its agenda for the city single-handedly. The execution of large-scale redevelopment plans required close cooperation between city officials and downtown business leaders (Teaford 1990). Prospects for such a coalition dimmed, however, with the election of Socialist candidate Frank Zeidler as mayor in 1948. Milwaukee had a strong tradition of socialism dating back to the nineteenth century. Drawing support from German and Polish immigrant workers, Socialist mayors governed Milwaukee for 26 years between 1910 and 1940 (see Miller 1975; Booth 1985). Although frequently a minority in the common council, Socialists maintained a significant presence there as well.<sup>2</sup> During the early twentieth century, the party grew less radical,

emphasizing municipal government efficiency, sound city finances, and the provision of high-quality services.<sup>3</sup> Yet, the Socialist presence helped infuse Milwaukee politics with a strong class dimension well after class-based politics in other cities succumbed to the politics of progrowth liberalism.

In the 1948 election campaign, the Socialist Party joined forces with liberal Democrats, Progressives, and trade unions, nominating Frank Zeidler as the coalition's candidate.<sup>4</sup> Zeidler's platform was silent on the issue of downtown redevelopment, calling instead for public housing, slum clearance, public ownership of utilities, fiscal conservatism, and several other initiatives perceived by Socialists and their allies as beneficial to the city's low-income and working-class populations.<sup>5</sup> Zeidler's election produced competing development agendas for Milwaukee that mirrored the divide between housing and redevelopment in the 1949 Housing Act. On one side of this divide was the 1948 Corporation, whose vision for Milwaukee's future focused almost exclusively on the fate of downtown. On the other side was Mayor Zeidler, whose main interest was providing better housing for poor and working-class city residents. Assuming office in the midst of a severe housing shortage, Zeidler proposed an ambitious program of public-housing construction with a goal of 10,000 units to be completed during his first term. To ease overcrowding in the central city and provide land for new housing construction, Zeidler pursued an aggressive annexation program through which the city of Milwaukee more than doubled its size between 1948 and 1957 (Bernard 1990).

Although by the 1950s, the divide between housing and redevelopment in urban-renewal politics largely was resolved—both locally and nationally—in favor of the latter, Milwaukee was an exception. Downtown business leaders and Mayor Zeidler both dug in their heels and sought allies to pursue their own development agendas for the city. As a result, neither group was able to exercise preemptive power over the city's policy-setting function. Instead, a series of ad hoc coalitions was formed around key policy areas, including downtown redevelopment, public housing, and annexation. The standoff between the Zeidler administration and the downtown business community stymied progress in downtown redevelopment and public housing. The city's annexation policy, by contrast, experienced considerable success. The following sections describe development politics in each of these three policy areas.

## **Downtown Redevelopment**

The formation of the 1948 Corporation following World War II marked a changing of the guard among Milwaukee's business leadership. For years, the city's business elite consisted of a small group of German industrialists

and bankers who avoided active involvement in civic affairs (Orum 1995). With the publication of its Central Area Plan in 1947, the 1948 Corporation called for “a new trend of thinking, away from ultra conservatism and toward a positive planned action campaign of modern civic aggressiveness” (“Outline Master Plan for Downtown Area” 1947, 1). Leaders of the 1948 Corporation proposed to finance the implementation of the Central Area Plan in part by reversing Milwaukee’s debt-free status. During the 1930s, Milwaukee had implemented a pay-as-you-go policy for public capital improvements that eliminated the city’s bond obligations by 1943 (Still 1948). A legacy of the city’s previous Socialist governments, this fiscal conservatism represented a major roadblock to the realization of the 1948 Corporation’s downtown-redevelopment agenda. In 1947, the organization threw its support behind a referendum that asked voters, “Shall the city issue bonds for a program of public improvements?” (Zeidler 2005, 8).

The municipal-debt referendum was divisive. During the Depression, Milwaukee’s fiscal soundness had made it possible for the city to forgive unpaid property taxes and keep city workers employed (Still 1948). Opponents of the debt referendum portrayed the initiative as a ploy by the banking industry to gain greater control of city finances and limit the city’s ability to pursue redistributive policies (Fure-Slocum 2001). Initially, the prodebt forces consisted of downtown business groups, including the 1948 Corporation, and the city’s two major newspapers. However, the coalition eventually was broadened when backers of the referendum agreed that the issuance of municipal bonds should be delayed until the city’s housing crisis had passed (“Housing First, Bond Promise” 1947). This concession to housing advocates resulted in an expansion of the prodebt coalition to include public-housing supporters, labor organizations, and civil-rights groups (Fure-Slocum 2001). In April 1947, voters approved the referendum by a thin margin.

A nascent regime had emerged. Its consummation would require city-government participation. However, any hopes on the part of business leaders for such a partnership were dashed by the election of Frank Zeidler as mayor in 1948. As chairman of the Keep Milwaukee Debt-Free Committee, Zeidler had led the opposition to the debt referendum. He expressed little interest in downtown redevelopment, calling instead for a moratorium on commercial development until the city’s housing shortage had been addressed (Zeidler 1948a). With Zeidler’s election victory, the prodebt coalition unraveled as housing advocates looked optimistically toward city hall for new leadership.

Increasingly isolated, the 1948 Corporation plodded ahead with its efforts to remake downtown.<sup>6</sup> Progress was slow, however. By the time Zeidler stepped down as mayor in 1960, the organization’s principal accomplishments

consisted of several public brick-and-mortar projects, including a new county sports stadium, an indoor sports arena, and a war memorial on the lakefront. Private investors largely had failed to step forward. Given Mayor Zeidler's lack of enthusiasm for the Central Area Plan, leaders of the 1948 Corporation frequently worked with Milwaukee County government and the Milwaukee common council, where the 1948 Corporation enjoyed some support (Murphy 2003).<sup>7</sup> Such ad hoc alliances were sufficient to execute individual, publicly funded projects, but they could not accomplish the organization's broader goals for downtown revitalization.

The consequences of Milwaukee's failed regime-building efforts for downtown redevelopment perhaps are revealed best through the city's urban-renewal program. Zeidler's campaign platform in the 1948 mayor's race called for the clearing of 160 acres of blight during his first term in office (Zeidler 1962). Following his election victory, the new mayor eagerly sought allies to help him pursue his urban-renewal agenda. Milwaukee's weak-mayor, strong-council system of government meant that little could be done without council approval. Fortunately for Zeidler, aldermen were generally supportive of slum clearance. Also supporting urban renewal was a coalition of civic groups that included the NAACP, labor unions, and several women's organizations, including the League of Women Voters, the United Church Women of the Milwaukee Area, the Milwaukee Women's Club, and the Women's Court and Civic Conference (see "Women Back Urban Plans" 1956; "NAACP Vows to Help Push Renewal Drive" 1958; "Building Trades Unions Criticize McGuire's Slum Clearance Stand" 1956).<sup>8</sup>

In 1950, the federal government earmarked \$2.5 million for Milwaukee to initiate a slum-clearance program under Title I of the 1949 Housing Act ("Designate 82 Blocks in Blight Flight Study" 1950). Using a \$35,000 advance on these funds, the city initiated planning for three project areas in October 1951 ("Blight Studies Started in City" 1951). One of the project areas was a 31-acre tract of land in the city's Lower Third Ward, located at the eastern end of the central business district. In other cities, near-downtown areas such as this had been targeted aggressively for urban renewal by downtown business leaders. Title I became the preferred vehicle for rearranging land-use patterns to foster development that better complemented the central business district. Preferred uses included middle-class housing, back office space, and institutional development (Mollenkopf 1983; Rast 1999).

Developers long had expressed interest in constructing middle-class housing in Milwaukee's Lower Third Ward. In 1948, a development firm wrote to Mayor Zeidler proposing to build 1,500 units of housing in the Lower Third Ward if the city would agree to make land available through condemnation

proceedings (Allen and Tetting 1948). However, the city's redevelopment plan for the area, released in February 1952, called for light industrial use ("Planners Pick Two Areas for Slum Clearing" 1952). Developers continued to make inquiries about residential-development possibilities in the Third Ward but were rebuffed by city officials (Siewert 1955; Krieger 1955). Similarly, officials from Marquette University received a chilly reception from the city when they expressed interest in using the city's urban-renewal program to help expand their downtown campus. In a memorandum to Mayor Zeidler, the city's urban-renewal coordinator argued against the proposal, recommending instead that the city "concentrate [its] redevelopment efforts in providing industrial sites for purposes of increasing the tax base" (Ackerman 1957).

City officials, undaunted by the absence of business participation, pushed ahead with their plans for light industry in the Lower Third Ward. However, they quickly encountered opposition. Although urban renewal disproportionately affected the city's African-American neighborhoods, the Lower Third Ward was a White ethnic community of Italian immigrants with strong ties to the area. A group of politically powerful tavern operators located in the ward was influential in the common council. Community residents and businesses formed an organization, the Citizens Taxpayers Committee of the Lower Third Ward, to fight the project. A March 1955 meeting was attended by 400 people, and emotional speakers denounced the city's plans (Zeidler 1962). Citizen opposition undermined support for the project in the common council, whose approval was necessary to obtain federal funds. However, the council ultimately gave the go-ahead when the Third Ward alderman, a strong proponent of slum clearance, expressed his support for the project (Zeidler 1962).

In November 1955, the Federal Urban Renewal Administration approved Milwaukee's plan for the Lower Third Ward, enabling the city to begin acquiring property. Not surprisingly, many property owners refused to sell. By 1957, the city had been able to purchase only 65 of the 195 parcels of land in the project area ("Plan Redevelopment, Not a Building Erected" 1957). In April 1957, the common council authorized the city to initiate condemnation proceedings for the remaining parcels. Under Wisconsin law, however, property owners facing eminent-domain proceedings initiated by municipal governments were entitled to jury trials. A lawsuit was filed on behalf of the remaining landowners in the area, and a decision rendered in April 1958 eliminated 20 parcels that the jury ruled were unnecessary to the project.<sup>9</sup>

Unable to rally the support of top business leaders for its urban-renewal plans, the city became mired in protracted legal struggles that threatened to bring the entire program to a halt. Under the 1954 Housing Act, cities were

required to have a workable program for urban renewal in place as a condition for receiving federal funds. In a May 1958 letter to Milwaukee Congressman Henry Reuss, Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA) administrator Albert Cole indicated that the workability of Milwaukee's urban-renewal program would require a change in Wisconsin's eminent-domain law (Cole 1958). Noting the city's failure to gain control of 20 parcels of land within the Lower Third Ward urban-renewal area, Cole wrote,

It appears clear that some change in the statutory basis for urban renewal in Wisconsin would be necessary to permit full federal participation in local projects. . . . We do not feel that we would be justified in approving survey and planning applications for additional projects under the present circumstances.

For the remainder of Frank Zeidler's tenure as mayor, the principal decision-making arenas for the city's urban-renewal program were the courts and the state legislature, where the city engaged in a series of largely unsuccessful legal maneuvers to try to secure stronger powers of eminent domain.<sup>10</sup> In contrast to the informal governing arrangements emphasized by regime theory, power was exercised formally through legal contests between the city and urban-renewal opponents. This was *power over*, not *power to*. Without a regime in place to create a reward structure for cooperation, opposition to urban renewal was largely unchecked. Opponents sought to escalate the costs of compliance, as pluralism anticipates, and city officials were forced on the defensive. As legal battles were waged about the city's powers to seize land, little progress in renewing the central city was made. By 1960, the sum total of city land cleared through Title I was 10 blocks, all in the Lower Third Ward.

Legal challenges to urban renewal might have been less an obstacle had the city's business leaders seen eye to eye with the Zeidler administration on urban-renewal policy. However, unlike other postwar cities in which downtown business elites used their political muscle to secure favorable urban-renewal laws and policies, Milwaukee's business leadership was conspicuously absent from the urban-renewal policy debate. Newspaper editorials repeatedly criticized the absence of leadership on urban renewal from the downtown business community, blaming business rather than city officials for the lack of progress ("Chicago Attacks Blight on a Broad Basis" 1954; "It's Not the Mayor Who Holds Back Urban Renewal Drive" 1956). In reality, however, there was little basis for business participation in the program. Put simply, the Zeidler administration and the downtown business community had different agendas for urban redevelopment. Convinced that city officials would

not support their plans for downtown redevelopment and largely indifferent to the administration's own redevelopment objectives, business leaders had little incentive to engage in urban-renewal politics.

## Public Housing

The absence of a business-government partnership during the Zeidler years dealt a similar blow to the prospects for Milwaukee's public-housing program. Veterans returning from World War II were confronted with an acute housing shortage. By 1949, the local chapter of the Red Cross had more than 17,000 unplaced applications on file for housing for veterans' families (Manley 1949). Despite more than 2,500 units of temporary housing erected by the city, overcrowding was still widespread (Gurda 1999).

Mayor Zeidler used the housing emergency to call for a major expansion of the city's public-housing program. Under Zeidler's plans, public housing would be made available both to low-income and to working-class city residents unable to find affordable housing through the private housing market (Zeidler 1962). At a November 1948 meeting with members of the common council's committee on housing, Zeidler proposed a program of 10,000 units of new housing and an increase in staffing for the city's housing authority (Zeidler 1948b). Following the passage of the 1949 Housing Act several months later, Milwaukee was one of the first cities to file an application for a share of the 810,000 units of public housing authorized under Title III of the new bill (Anderson 1949).

Mayor Zeidler was joined by a loose coalition of public-housing supporters that included labor unions, veterans groups, housing reformers, civil-rights organizations, religious leaders, and certain public officials (Fure-Slocum 2001).<sup>11</sup> One of the city's two major newspapers supported public housing; the other was opposed. As with the city's urban-renewal coalition, resources held by housing supporters were primarily organizational. Prohousing groups concentrated their efforts on mobilizing organization members, city officials, and the general public around policies and initiatives favorable to public housing. Given the size and diversity of the prohousing coalition, the resource-mobilization task was a substantial one.

Despite what seemed a promising start, little public housing actually was built in Milwaukee during Zeidler's tenure as mayor. By 1959, Milwaukee had constructed only 1,128 units of Title III housing (Department of City Development 1966). By contrast, St. Louis had 6,200 units, Baltimore had 10,000 units, and Philadelphia had nearly 11,000 units (Davis 1958; Bauman 1987). Of the nation's 15 largest cities, Milwaukee ranked last in the provision

of public housing, with 3.14 units per 1,000 population (Milwaukee Housing Authority 1959).

Why did Milwaukee's public-housing program fare so poorly? As in other cities, public housing faced stiff opposition. Developers and realtors were particularly vocal critics, arguing that public housing competed with the private housing market. Led by a group of organizations representing the building and real estate industries, opponents of public housing launched an anti-public-housing publicity campaign in April 1949 in an effort to preempt the city's response to the 1949 Housing Act (Zeidler 1962). The key members of this coalition—which included the Milwaukee Property Owners Association, the Milwaukee Board of Realtors, and the Milwaukee Builders Association—represented primarily small businesses. This group was far more reactionary than the downtown-oriented 1948 Corporation. Using radio programs and other mass media, coalition leaders criticized public housing as a wasteful use of tax dollars driven by the Socialist presence in city hall (Fure-Slocum 2001).<sup>12</sup>

The prohousing coalition responded to this attack by distributing postcards, making telephone calls, placing newspaper ads and radio spots, and writing articles for neighborhood newspapers in support of public housing (Fure-Slocum 2001). Organizations such as the American Veterans Committee, the Women's Trade Union League, and the Milwaukee CIO Council cautioned their members against signing antihousing petitions. However, the anti-public-housing campaign had a chilling effect on support for public housing in the common council, which held final approval over the construction of new housing units. Although many aldermen, under pressure from organized labor, had supported public housing cautiously in the past, council support now softened considerably (Zeidler 1962). As a result, the city's housing authority found it increasingly difficult to win council approval for its housing proposals (Perrin 1952; Zeidler 1962).

Antihousing forces followed up their propaganda campaign with a series of legal roadblocks that kept housing proponents on the defensive for the duration of Zeidler's tenure as mayor. In August 1949, the antihousing coalition called for a referendum that would require voters to approve all new public-housing developments ("City Housing Vote Is Asked" 1949). Following several unsuccessful attempts, the referendum was approved by voters in April 1951 ("Milwaukee" 1951). Public-housing proponents responded with a counter-referendum that asked voters, Shall slum-clearance housing projects be built with federal funds under the 1949 Federal Housing Act irrespective of any other resolution or act? This referendum also was approved. The passage of two seemingly contradictory housing referenda placed the city's

public-housing program in legal limbo for several years, preventing the start of any new public housing until a court test could be made (“Housing Mixup Seems Headed for Courts” 1951).

After construction of public housing resumed once again in 1954, housing opponents expanded the scope of conflict, seeking relief this time from the Republican-controlled state legislature. In October 1955, Bill 828-A was introduced in the state assembly, giving city councils the power to order housing authorities to liquidate public-housing projects and sell them to the highest bidders (“Bill Gives City Power in Housing” 1955). Republican lawmakers pushed the bill through the state assembly and state senate, and Republican governor Walter Kohler signed the bill the following month. Shortly afterward, Mayor Zeidler wrote to HHFA administrator Albert Cole informing him of the bill’s passage and its likely impact on the workability of Milwaukee’s urban-renewal program. Zeidler warned that “the prospect of the housing authority and the city government now constantly having to fight off the demands of the organized realtors to sell the housing projects we presently possess, while at the same time we are asked to provide relocation housing for slum clearance projects, in my opinion may seriously impair our ability to proceed” (Zeidler 1955). As expected, the HHFA responded by once again halting the flow of federal funds for public-housing construction in Milwaukee (Zeidler 1962).

By the early 1950s, the discourse about public housing became increasingly intertwined with political contests about the city’s changing racial boundaries. Milwaukee’s African-American population more than doubled during the 1950s, growing from 3.4% of the city’s population in 1950 to 8.4% in 1960 (Gurda 1999). Blacks were lured to Milwaukee by the promise of economic opportunity, particularly in the city’s substantial manufacturing sector. However, like other older industrial cities at the time, manufacturing employment already was beginning to decentralize (Sugrue 1996). Moreover, Blacks faced intense discrimination in the industrial-labor market, where typically only the lowest paying and least desirable jobs were available to them. Many companies refused to hire Blacks at all (Orum 1995).

The combined effects of Black immigration, racial discrimination, and limited opportunities for economic advancement fueled the growth of a largely Black urban ghetto in the city’s Sixth Ward northwest of downtown (City of Milwaukee 1960). Already Milwaukee’s most densely populated residential area, the Sixth Ward could not contain the influx of new residents. As the city’s African-American population spilled over into the all-White neighborhoods north and west of the existing Black belt, public-housing opponents played on the racial fears of White residents by identifying public housing as

a principal cause of the city's changing racial demographics. In a 1952 letter to Mayor Zeidler, the vice-president of the Milwaukee Board of Realtors asked rhetorically, "Has there been an abrupt increase in the immigration of southern Negroes during the past several months? If so, to what extent has [sic] the public housing projects of Hillside and Westlawn been an inducement to such immigration?" (Roache 1952). The president of the Milwaukee County Property Owners Association was equally blunt: "The only thing that has kept 10,000—aye, 20,000—Negroes from coming up here is the lack of housing" (quoted in Gurda 1999, 363).

With public housing increasingly identified with the city's growing African-American population, fissures emerged in the prohousing coalition. Labor leaders continued to favor public housing, but support weakened among the rank-and-file (Zeidler 1954). Support by religious groups also softened in some cases as parish leaders observed their neighborhoods transitioning from all-White to all-Black (Zeidler 1954). Meanwhile, Zeidler's efforts to expand public housing fueled a whispering campaign in which the mayor was said to have placed billboards throughout the South inviting Blacks to Milwaukee ("The Shame of Milwaukee" 1956). The weakening of support for public housing, together with the city's rising racial tensions, placed Zeidler on the defensive in his third and final race for mayor in 1956.<sup>13</sup> Sensing the political winds, Milwaukee aldermen grew increasingly hostile toward the Milwaukee Housing Authority and refused to approve additional public-housing projects (Zeidler 1962).

These challenges to Milwaukee's public-housing program forced housing officials to operate largely from a defensive posture. Instead of building public housing, officials grew increasingly preoccupied with fending off attacks that threatened the very existence of the program (see Perrin 1952). Like the city's urban-renewal program, key decisions about public housing increasingly were made not through the public-private partnerships of regime politics but in the formal decision-making arenas of the courts and the state legislature. Here again, opposition groups escalated the costs of compliance, forcing city officials to invest substantial resources in efforts to dominate and control their opponents. These efforts were only marginally successful.

Although attacks on public housing were not unusual in the years following World War II, other cities responded to them more effectively than did Milwaukee. Federal urban-renewal legislation required cities to submit plans for the relocation of residents displaced through slum-clearance programs (Bauman 1987). Downtown business leaders, fearful that displacement might jeopardize their urban-renewal plans, became strong backers of public housing. In Chicago, for example, business leaders lobbied aggressively for the

inclusion of public housing in the state's urban-redevelopment program. When a bill was introduced in the state legislature proposing local referenda as a condition for the approval of public-housing developments, business leaders successfully lobbied the governor to veto the bill (Hirsch 1998).

No such leadership on public housing was forthcoming from the ranks of Milwaukee's business elite. Milwaukee carried out two slum-clearance projects during the 1950s—one in the Lower Third Ward and the other in the Sixth Ward. Neither featured business participation. Because the downtown business community had no significant involvement in the city's slum-clearance program, questions about how displaced residents would be rehoused had little relevance for business leaders. Consequently, organizations such as the 1948 Corporation were largely silent on the issue of public housing. Lacking the support of the city's downtown business leadership and facing a substantial resource-mobilization challenge, the prohousing coalition was too weak to save public housing from the well-orchestrated attacks spearheaded by builders, realtors, and their allies.

## Annexation

Annexation was the third component—together with public housing and slum clearance—of Mayor Zeidler's strategy to renew the central city. Convinced that central-city building densities were already excessive, Zeidler called for an expansion of Milwaukee's boundaries into the largely rural, unincorporated areas that still surrounded portions of the city ("Zeidler Seeks Annex Policy" 1949). Annexation would provide land for the construction of new housing, both public and private. It also would allow the city to recapture a portion of the tax base lost through the decentralization of middle-class residents and industries (Zeidler 1957; Bernard 1990).<sup>14</sup>

Milwaukee's annexation program experienced far greater success than either public housing or downtown redevelopment. When Zeidler became mayor in 1948, the city of Milwaukee covered 46 square miles. By the time annexations came to a halt in 1957, the city had grown to 96 square miles, more than doubling its size (Bernard 1990). The magnitude of this territorial expansion during the postwar years made Milwaukee an anomaly among older industrial cities. From 1950 to 1975, only Kansas City experienced a greater percentage increase in city land area (Norton 1979).

The city of Milwaukee's annexation policies were supported through a coalition of city officials, builders, and realtors and through the creation of an annexation bureaucracy within city government (Fleischmann 1988). Here, once again, the preemptive power of regime politics was not in evidence.

Instead, the annexation coalition was temporary, ad hoc, and exceedingly fragile. Relations between the city and the builders and realtors were particularly strained because builders and realtors led the opposition to the city's public-housing policies, while the city made public housing a key land-use priority for annexed property.

Despite their differences on public housing, administration officials and real-estate interests eventually forged a successful working relationship around annexation. This was possible both because their annexation goals were in certain respects complementary and because neither group could make significant progress without the cooperation of the other. Although annexation bureaucrats initially sought to work independently of builders and realtors, this strategy did not experience long-term success.<sup>15</sup> Builders and realtors supported annexation because the city was willing to provide services such as water and sewer connections at low prices, which opened up new land for development (Werba 1948a). Annexation also made it possible to build at higher densities than town governments permitted, reducing home prices (Cutler 2001). Eager to capitalize on these incentives, the builders association established a committee to work with the city on annexations. Under Wisconsin law, annexations required signatures of a majority of the voters and the owners of one-half of the real estate in the area to be annexed. Builders and realtors helped obtain the necessary signatures, both signing and circulating petitions for annexation (Fleischmann 1988).<sup>16</sup>

The common council also played an important role in the annexation coalition. In 1947, the council issued a declaration of policy encouraging annexation as a means of providing sites for housing development (Zeidler 1962). To facilitate this goal, the council established a new Department of Abstracting and Annexation, increasing its budget steadily from \$55,417 in 1947 to roughly \$100,000 in 1956 (Fleischmann 1988).<sup>17</sup> The annexation department reported directly to the common council. However, council oversight was weak, and the department developed close ties to the mayor's office (Hirsch 1948). This posed few conflicts, since the annexation goals of the common council and the administration were aligned substantially with one another.

The annexation coalition differed in key respects from the coalitions that formed around urban renewal and public housing. Resources held by pro-housing, prorenewal civic groups such as the League of Women Voters, the Milwaukee Urban League, and the American Veterans Committee were primarily organizational. These groups could play a role in mobilizing public opinion, but they did not have the means to help execute projects. The annexation coalition, by contrast, consisted of business and government actors holding resources necessary to accomplish key tasks. Builders and

realtors worked with the city to initiate annexation petitions and to construct new housing and commercial projects on annexed land, while the city provided infrastructure to annexed property. Because cooperation was empowering, city officials and builders and realtors were motivated to overcome their differences and work together.

Cooperation was also important because efforts by Milwaukee to acquire territory were not always embraced eagerly by residents of areas targeted for annexation. Town officials and their attorneys, whose positions were threatened by annexation, were key opponents. In addition, the Zeidler administration's plans to use annexed land for the construction of public housing were unsettling to many White residents, who feared an influx of African-Americans. Some of these individuals were themselves former Milwaukee residents who had fled the city to escape Milwaukee's growing African-American population. Their experiences with racial transition—which, for some, included blockbusting and panic selling induced by realtors—provoked defensive, reactionary responses to proposals for public housing on annexed land. Aldermen from newly annexed wards were insistent that public housing not become an entry point for Blacks to outlying areas of the city (Fure-Slocum 2001).

Like public housing and urban renewal, opposition to annexation ultimately forced decision making into the courts and the state legislature (Zolik 2001). For a time, at least, such legal challenges were less cumbersome to the city than in the cases of public housing and urban renewal. Township attorneys filed lawsuits challenging the validity of signatures and adherence to other procedural requirements (Fleischmann 1988). They also introduced a series of bills in the state legislature designed to make annexation more difficult ("Zeidler Seeks Annex Policy" 1949). In April 1951, the Wisconsin Supreme Court voided two of Milwaukee's recent annexations, ruling that state law required a referendum of voters in the territory to be annexed ("Bills Drafted for Aiding City in Annexation" 1951). However, several months later, the state assembly passed a compromise bill that eliminated the referendum requirement while imposing a less burdensome rule that cities post notices of intent to annex before circulating petitions ("Bill Is Passed on Annexation" 1951). Uncertainties about the legal context for annexation slowed Milwaukee's annexation drive during the early 1950s, but only temporarily (Zeidler 1962).

Milwaukee's principal source of leverage in disputes about annexation was its control of the regional water supply. Unlike its landlocked suburbs, Milwaukee had unlimited access to water by virtue of its location along the shores of Lake Michigan. Suburbs and townships were forced to dig deep wells, an expensive and often unreliable means of supplying water. As an

alternative, some suburbs sought to purchase water directly from Milwaukee. However, the city's position, which dated back to a 1922 common council resolution, was that Milwaukee's water service would be extended only to those suburbs and unincorporated areas that had petitioned to be annexed by the city (Foss-Mollan 2001).

The use of water service to compel annexation was largely successful. As Department of Abstracting and Annexation supervisor Arthur Werba wrote in a 1948 letter to Mayor Zeidler, "Water is the one city facility that we are able to promise that really persuades people to annex. The average individual does not like to spend over \$1,000 for an inadequate well water supply" (Werba 1948b). Milwaukee's control of the regional water supply enabled the city to exercise command power over suburban and unincorporated areas, which it did frequently and successfully.<sup>18</sup> For example, when the town of Lake announced plans in 1952 to build a new school, it received this response from Milwaukee's water works superintendent:

May I remind your body that the City of Milwaukee has gone on record as opposing the granting of a water supply to any property located outside the City of Milwaukee. . . . Kindly inform me whether I am correct in my understanding that you are contemplating the building of this school outside the City of Milwaukee as I am interested in knowing where you expect to get your water supply. (Tanghe 1952)

The following year, town residents approved a town-board resolution to negotiate a consolidation with Milwaukee (Fleischmann 1988).

Such tactics by Milwaukee forced many annexations to the city (Zeidler 1962). However, efforts by Milwaukee County suburbs to expand the scope of conflict to take advantage of sympathetic state lawmakers and regulators eventually bore fruit. In 1958, the Republican-dominated Wisconsin Public Service Commission ruled favorably on a petition by the suburb of Wauwatosa that Milwaukee be required to sell water to the community (Gladfelter 1961). In a precedent-setting decision, the commission instructed Milwaukee to sell water to Wauwatosa and any other suburb contiguous to the city that requested it. This decision, together with a 1955 state law allowing townships with as few as 5,000 residents to incorporate, effectively ended Milwaukee's annexation program.<sup>19</sup>

Although the annexation coalition was, in the end, too weak to defeat entrenched suburban interests, Milwaukee's annexation program contributed vastly to Mayor Zeidler's housing agenda. Two of the three Title III housing projects initiated by the Zeidler administration were built on land

annexed by the city. Equally important, annexation provided land for the development of affordable housing by private builders. When the city annexed territory, minimum lot sizes were reduced from one-half acre or more to as low as 6,000 square feet (Cutler 2001). Builders responded by constructing thousands of units of middle-income housing, the prices of which compared favorably with those of the remainder of the city (Fleischmann 1988). Without annexation, the Milwaukee area's supply of affordable housing would have been far smaller.

## Discussion

In *Regime Politics* (1989), Clarence Stone references Thomas Kuhn's book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* to draw attention to the way in which paradigms shape the process of scientific investigation. Stone (p. 222) observes,

As Thomas Kuhn has shown, we view the world in terms of implicit models of how it works. The questions we ask grow out of these paradigms, not out of unmediated reactions to "the facts". Indeed, we may even ignore certain facts or discount them as anomalies rather than take them as disconfirming evidence for implicit but cherished models.

In this passage, Stone draws upon Kuhn's work to challenge the understanding of power by pluralists and elite theorists, which he argues is the product of a deficient paradigm. By viewing power in terms of social control (power over) rather than social production (power to), both schools of thought are said to misunderstand the character of power in contemporary cities.

Like most regime theorists, Stone applies the social-production model of power to the analysis of a city with a well-functioning regime. In Atlanta, downtown business leaders, city officials, and the Black middle class came together around a set of plans for redeveloping the city's central area (Stone 1989). The coalition's unifying agenda, symbolized by the slogan "the city too busy to hate," consisted of racial tolerance as well as economic growth. Downtown redevelopment created extensive opportunities for profit, which were steered in part toward Black-owned businesses and Black-led organizations. African-American leaders, in turn, supported urban renewal despite its disruptive impacts on the city's low-income African-American population. Repeated interactions among the members of Atlanta's biracial alliance helped to cement the coalition and foster biracial cooperation.

Milwaukee's experience with urban redevelopment produced a much different set of dynamics. Unlike Atlanta, no unifying development agenda materialized. Ad hoc alliances that formed around downtown redevelopment, slum clearance, and public housing did not control the resources necessary to accomplish goals. Because progress was slow, opportunities for profit were limited, and opponents of redevelopment could not be bought off easily through selective incentives and other small opportunities (see Stone 1989).

The Milwaukee experience can be understood in part as an example of weak social-production capacity. The failure of the Zeidler administration, the common council, and the city's downtown business leadership to unite around a common agenda for redevelopment placed limits on the power to accomplish goals. Yet, the Milwaukee narrative dictates that our analysis of local power relations not stop with this observation. Weak social-production capacity did more than simply slow the pace of redevelopment. It made the opposition a force to contend with. As opponents of urban renewal and public housing expanded the scope of conflict by turning to the courts and the state legislature, development plans were put on hold. Resources were shifted from development efforts to defensive measures necessary to preserve programs in the face of organized community opposition.

As we probe more deeply into the nature of local power relations in post-war Milwaukee, the use of power seems to bear as much resemblance to the pluralism of Robert Dahl and his contemporaries as it does to Stone's regime politics. For pluralists such as Dahl, community opposition (or the potential for opposition) circumscribes the actions of elites (see Dahl 1982; Banfield 1961). Efforts to dominate opponents are costly, and opponents may escalate such costs to the point where domination can no longer be achieved. Dahl takes this line of argument too far by concluding that the high costs of social control result in democratically governed communities and societies. However, the pluralist view of the dynamics of community power does appear, in many ways, consistent with the exercise of power in the regimeless city.

Operating with this expanded conception of community power, we can begin to understand why Milwaukee's annexation program fared so much better than downtown redevelopment or public housing. Here again, the social-production model is useful only to a point. From a social-production standpoint, the partnership that developed around annexation was empowering. Coalition partners controlled resources necessary to achieve the program's objectives despite the absence of a functioning regime. This distinguished annexation from other policy areas in which the mobilization of resources proved to be far more problematic. In urban renewal and public housing, the citizens groups that supported the administration's policies held useful

organizational resources but little else. In downtown development, business elites mobilizing around the 1948 Corporation's redevelopment plans controlled both economic and organizational resources, but without the cooperation of city hall, they could make little progress. Only in the case of annexation did the resources held by coalition partners align with the coalition's objectives to produce an effective capacity to act.

While the social-production model of power provides important insights into the success of annexation in Milwaukee, it would be misleading to view annexation exclusively through this lens. Power in this case was not simply a question of mobilizing resources. It was also a matter of domination and control, as observed in the city's use of water resources as a negotiating tool in its dealings with neighboring towns. Absent its control of the regional water supply and the command power that control of water resources facilitated, Milwaukee no doubt would have encountered more entrenched opposition from the surrounding communities it sought to incorporate. Annexation succeeded through a combination of effective command power and coalition power, observable only by viewing power from a multidimensional perspective that recognizes its use both for social-production and social-control purposes.

In sum, a multidimensional view of power appears to provide valuable insights into development politics in postwar Milwaukee. Are these insights limited to the Milwaukee case, or does this perspective on power have a broader application? Since viewing power in this way is presumed to be useful principally for examining city politics under conditions of regimelessness or regime weakness, the answer to this question depends in part on how prevalent such conditions have been. Evidence suggests that the absence of viable regimes has been an unusual but not isolated phenomenon among postwar cities. San Francisco, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Miami, and New Orleans all have experienced episodes of regimelessness or regime weakness since World War II (see DeLeon 1992; Orr and Stoker 1994; Swanstrom 1985; Adams 1991; Vogel and Stowers 1991; Burns and Thomas 2006). Moreover, in certain of these cases, the exercise of power appears to bear a close resemblance to Milwaukee. San Francisco is a case in point. As DeLeon (1992) describes it, the San Francisco regime's social-production capacity deteriorated during the 1980s, in part because of the overbuilding of downtown. The weakening of the regime was accompanied by the rise of a powerful slow-growth coalition. Regime politics and the power of social production gave way to conflict about development as slow-growth proponents filed lawsuits against developers and introduced a series of growth-control ballot initiatives with which downtown business leaders were forced to contend. As in

Milwaukee, power increasingly took the form of efforts to dominate and control the opposition.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, while regime weakness remains more the exception than the rule among contemporary cities, there is some evidence of a growing tendency in this direction. Observers of such cities as Atlanta, Chicago, New Haven, and Milwaukee have noted a decline in civic engagement among business leaders in recent decades (see Stone 2001; Hinz 1999; Rae 2003; Murphy 2003). Several factors are to blame. First, the crisis of downtown, which stimulated business engagement in downtown redevelopment efforts following World War II, largely has passed. Redevelopment continues but at a more modest pace and under less of a siege mentality. Second, capital mobility and the decline of locally owned corporations have weakened the ties between business firms and the cities in which they operate. Finally, corporate leaders today have become increasingly concerned with regional issues such as urban sprawl and its side effects. The broader set of alliances necessary to address regional concerns has diminished the importance of central-city officials in the eyes of some civic-minded business leaders (Stone 2001).

While such evidence suggests that the Milwaukee case is not an isolated one, more research is necessary before firm conclusions about the nature of power under conditions of regimelessness or regime weakness can be drawn. Based on the Milwaukee example, three hypotheses can be advanced that future case studies might either confirm or disconfirm. First, there is an inverse relationship between social-production power and social conflict. As social-production power weakens, social conflict is likely to increase, particularly in cities with active redevelopment programs. Development coalitions (regimes or otherwise) that fail to assemble resources necessary to accomplish goals will have fewer selective incentives and other small opportunities to distribute. Achieving consensus will become more challenging. As the opportunity costs of opposition are lowered, groups that otherwise might have become participants in a larger endeavor may splinter off and ultimately play an obstructionist role. As a result, resources may need to be shifted from productive tasks to defensive measures necessary to minimize and contain opposition, further undermining the social-production powers of the coalition.

Second, in cities without viable regimes, formal decision-making arenas such as the courts and state legislatures are likely to become increasingly important venues for exercising power. In regime politics, such institutions are not unimportant, but they are not the principal locus of power. Emphasis is placed instead on the exercise of power through informal governing arrangements created when government and nongovernmental actors mobilize around a shared set of goals. When conflict rather than consensus prevails, however,

decision making increasingly becomes a matter of dispute resolution. Under such circumstances, the locus of power is likely to change accordingly.

Finally, regimelessness is not inherently synonymous with powerlessness and ungovernability. Resources held by ad hoc coalitions may be sufficient to execute complex tasks and overcome opposition, as Milwaukee's annexation program appears to suggest. In cases such as this, in which city officials are able to make effective use of command and coalition power, the relationship between the strength of a city's governing coalition and a city's capacity to govern is not necessarily a linear one.

## Conclusion

Regime theory has contributed immensely to the understanding of political power in cities. By reconceptualizing power from a social-production perspective, regime theory helped break the pluralist-elitist impasse of the 1970s, ushering in a promising new research tradition that reenergized the field of urban politics. At the same time, the regime-theory literature has focused far more on exploring the dynamics of regimes than on asking whether or not regimes are present in a given setting. Because regimes typically are assumed to exist, power is understood in regime terms, and debate about the nature of power largely has ceased.

This article does not question the utility of the social-production model of power for understanding the dynamics of power in viable urban regimes. Rather, it suggests that not all cities have viable regimes and that assumptions about power that hold where successful regimes exist may not hold where they do not. Clarence Stone (2005) has suggested recently that a city's governing arrangements may be thought of as falling somewhere along a spectrum, with strong and durable regimes at one end and weak and unstable ones at the other. It may prove useful to expand this perspective by conceptualizing power in a similar fashion. In cities with strong regimes capable of executing complex projects that generate ample material rewards, power may be understood best through the social-production model. In cities with weak or nonexistent regimes, the social-control model may be equally appropriate. Operating with a multidimensional understanding of power, we can better comprehend anomalies such as Milwaukee's annexation program, in which effective governing capacity was created and sustained in the absence of a functioning regime.

Regimelessness in postwar Milwaukee placed a distinctive imprint on the shaping of local governing capacity. Viewing local power relations through

regime theory's social-production model reveals only part of the story. Additional case studies examining the nature of power in cities with weak or nonexistent regimes would represent a useful contribution to the regime-theory literature. Particularly if the disengagement of business from civic affairs proves to be a widespread and lasting trend, we will need more information about the full range of challenges such developments present for local governing capacity.

## Notes

1. The founders of the 1948 Corporation consisted of roughly 12 local businessmen. The group's leadership included Irwin Maier, chairman of the Journal Co., Edmund Fitzgerald, chief executive officer of Northwestern Mutual Life, and attorney Clifford Randall. The group's roster eventually was expanded to include 150 members, but decision making remained concentrated among a small group of organization leaders (see McNally 1980; Elving and McNally 1980; Norman and Marchione 1991).

2. In Milwaukee, city council is known as the common council. By the time Frank Zeidler became mayor in 1948, the city's aldermen were elected on a ward rather than at-large basis.

3. The reformist orientation of Milwaukee Socialists during this period led critics on the Left to dismiss Milwaukee socialism as "sewer socialism" (see Beck 1982; Miller 1975). Milwaukee Socialists countered that their critics were "impossibilists who could not win any elections" (Zeidler 2005, ii).

4. Municipal elections in Milwaukee were nonpartisan, but Zeidler's affiliation with the Socialist Party was well known and became a significant campaign issue. In an editorial endorsing Zeidler's opponent, Henry Reuss, the *Milwaukee Sentinel* stated, "Zeidler's Marxist ideology places him close to the thin dividing line between radical, leftwing democracy, and Communist dictatorship. By the very nature of his socialist theories, Zeidler is closer to Communism than is Reuss" ("Russia and Our Race for Mayor" 1948, B1). Zeidler responded to such red-baiting by downplaying the distinction between his socialist ideology and liberalism. As he later described, "No matter how hard the press attacked me, I could not desert the principles and values of liberalism I had acquired in the previous years, and my campaign was unique only in that I was a member of the Socialist party running on a liberal platform" (Zeidler 2005, 36).

5. As described in the following section, the fiscal conservatism of Milwaukee Socialists was motivated by a mistrust of financial institutions and a desire to reduce the city's borrowing costs. Zeidler's platform called for financing capital improvements as much as possible on a cash basis to avoid the need for interest payments to banks.

6. The 1948 Corporation was renamed the Greater Milwaukee Committee in 1948.

7. The common council was dominated by conservative Democrats during Zeidler's tenure as mayor. By the time Zeidler first was elected mayor in 1948, there were no Socialists remaining in the council. Zeidler did, however, develop alliances with the liberal Democratic minority in the common council.

8. The support of women's organizations was particularly important in mobilizing public support for urban renewal. Women's groups organized programs of public education on urban renewal and conducted tours of urban-renewal areas that highlighted conditions in these areas of the city (see Pilarsky 1956; "Church Women Plan Tour of Blight Areas" 1956; "League to Air Urban Renewal" 1958).

9. The requirement for a jury verdict was contained in the Wisconsin Constitution (Article XI, Section 2). This provision left municipal governments in Wisconsin with unusually weak eminent-domain powers. State constitutions elsewhere had jury-trial provisions, but unlike Wisconsin, required juries to return a single verdict for all contested properties in a project area (Downing 1959).

10. In 1961, the Wisconsin Constitution was amended to allow municipalities to exercise eminent-domain powers without obtaining jury verdicts on individual parcels of land. This amendment was approved after Zeidler had stepped down as mayor.

11. The prohousing coalition included such organizations as the Joint Action Committee for Better Housing, the American Veterans Committee, the American Legion, the Milwaukee Urban League, the League of Women Voters, the Milwaukee Women's Club, the AFL, the CIO, and several individual labor unions (Fure-Slocum 2001).

12. Mayor Zeidler tried unsuccessfully to build support for public housing within the development community. Early in his first term, he met with the Milwaukee Builders Association, encouraging members of the organization to form a cooperative to bid on the larger housing projects the city anticipated constructing ("Builders Talk Housing Plan" 1948). However, Zeidler's suggestions never were acted upon.

13. Worn down by 12 years as mayor and anxious to pursue other opportunities, Zeidler chose not to seek a fourth term in 1960 (Gurda 1999).

14. Zeidler's approach to annexation was influenced by the ideas of prominent urban planners and social critics such as Lewis Mumford and Catherine Bauer, both of whom favored decentralization. These ideas were given shape in the New Deal greenbelt towns, suburban communities established by the United States Resettlement Administration to demonstrate the advantages of community planning (Gelfand 1975). Zeidler had worked as a surveyor during the planning of Greendale, a greenbelt town located near Milwaukee. Drawing in part on this experience, Zeidler envisioned the construction of planned satellite communities separated by large expanses of green space (Zeidler 1949, 1951). Instead of suburbs, however, these communities would become part of the city through annexation. Zeidler also believed that decentralization would make the city less vulnerable to a nuclear attack.

15. Mayor Zeidler's interest in the development of planned satellite communities required that annexations be carried out in conformance with comprehensive plans for the acquisition of territory. By contrast, annexations conducted at the request of builders, realtors, or other interested citizens caused land to be acquired in a piecemeal fashion. Growing obstacles to comprehensive annexation planning during Zeidler's tenure as mayor largely frustrated Zeidler's goals for the creation of planned communities and led annexation bureaucrats to work more closely with societal actors (Goff 1952; Rast 2006).

16. Mayor Zeidler attempted to use the administration's support for annexation to diffuse the opposition of builders and realtors to the city's public-housing policies. In February 1950, Zeidler called a meeting with the builders association to discuss the city's response to the 1949 Housing Act. In a letter to the association, he pointed out the expense to the city of providing infrastructure to newly annexed properties, hinting that the city's annexation program might have to be reconsidered if builders kept up their opposition to public housing (Zeidler 1950). However, the opposition of builders to public housing never softened. As Zeidler recalled in his memoirs, "The more that was done for [builders] in annexation and provision of utilities, the less appreciative they were, the more hostile they became and, of course, the wealthier they became" (Zeidler 1962, ch. 4, p. 117).

17. To coordinate its activities with builders, the department assigned a senior staff person to oversee and expedite the installation of sewers, water, and other utilities on annexed land (Sheehan 1949).

18. While the use of water and other services to build support for annexation was frequently effective, lawsuits challenging annexations compromised this strategy somewhat by delaying the provision of city services until the litigation was resolved. In cases in which annexation was contested, the city of Milwaukee was unwilling to provide infrastructure until the courts had ruled on the legality of the annexation. Builders and landowners who had signed annexation petitions grew frustrated when water and other city services were not immediately forthcoming (Crowley 1949; Antczak 1950). Werba warned Zeidler repeatedly that the failure to provide services promptly jeopardized the city's annexation program (Werba 1948c, 1949). Despite such concerns, the pace of annexations quickened after a temporary lull during the early 1950s. The provision of services on a delayed basis was apparently preferable to the absence of services altogether.

19. Although the Public Service Commission ruling applied only to suburbs, the 1955 state law liberalizing incorporation requirements (commonly known as the Oak Creek Law) accelerated the process of incorporation in Milwaukee County. By 1957, Milwaukee was completely encircled by an iron ring of suburbs (Bernard 1990; Gurda 1999).

20. It could be argued that Milwaukee differs from other cities such as San Francisco because of its socialist tradition. While Mayor Zeidler's socialist politics clearly helped estrange the administration from the downtown business community, the contribution of socialism to Milwaukee's regimelessness during this period should not be overstated. By the 1940s, the city's Socialist leaders had distanced themselves considerably from the radicalism of their predecessors. Mayor Zeidler's efforts on behalf of the city's low-income and working-class residents reflected his socialist politics, but the policies he pursued fell well within the parameters of New Deal liberalism. Zeidler developed close working relationships with liberal Democrats in the common council and was reelected twice despite dwindling membership in the Socialist Party.

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