AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE, AND THE EVOLUTION OF URBAN THEORY

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Analysis of interviews with 112 elected officials in 12 American cities indicates that their support for affirmative action is more strongly influenced by the justice principles they hold than by the contextual variables normally emphasized by leading urban paradigms. Allegiance to fair equal opportunity and blocking cumulative inequalities enhances support for affirmative action, whereas allegiance to maximizing aggregate utility and retaining market allocations reduces such support. These results suggest that urban paradigms should include the moral principles of participants as well as variables describing the interests that officials represent and the economic, social, political, and cultural contexts that constrain their decisions.

Urban analysis normally has been guided by paradigms that seek to describe and explain the policy processes of governing regimes with scientific rigor and objectivity while still recognizing that such analyses should speak to normative concerns about good government. For the most part, the inclusion of normative concerns in urban analysis has been evaluative rather than explanatory; after policy processes are described and explained by focusing on interests, these processes and their policy outcomes are evaluated for their conformity to ethical or normative considerations. Elite theorists described how business interests dominate urban life and then complained that these elites are unaccountable to the public, as required by normative democratic theory (Hunter 1953, 233). Early pluralists showed that modernization produces city governments that increasingly include many interests and thus conform to democratic ideals (Dahl 1961), but as pluralist theory was

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elaborated and modified, various deficiencies in urban democracy were highlighted (Dahl 1982; Waste 1986; Schumaker 1991). During the 1980s, Peterson's (1981) economistic paradigm moved to the center stage of urban analysis; when he argued that a city's interest in economic development is most likely to be realized if its citizens are quiet and complacent, proponents of strong democracy criticized the loss of public control over urban policies (Elkin 1987). In the 1990s, regime theory has emerged as the dominant urban paradigm; it explains processes and policies in terms of the informal cooperative arrangements among various interests and then evaluates these regimes in terms of their capacities to develop organized intelligence, exhibit representativeness, and deliver policies that are free of systemic bias (Stone 1989). In short, as urbanists have striven for scientific progress, they have integrated their theories and research findings into normative evaluations dealing with the often conflicting values of democracy and capitalism.

Although we believe such evaluations are an extremely important aspect of urban analysis, our argument here is that normative concerns also should be incorporated into urban theory as important causes of urban outcomes. Although humanists and philosophers assume that ethics matter in political and social life (Stoker 1992), urbanists have tended to exclude ethical considerations from their explanations. In elite theory, orthodox pluralism, and the initial formulations of regime theory, urban policies have largely been explained by the interests and power of various actors and groups.[1] These theories have differed in their assessments of how power is distributed and applied and whose interests are reflected in urban policy, but they share the assumption that broad political principles giving abstract expression to people's vision of a good and just community are insufficiently important explanations of policy to warrant attention.[2]

The leading theories of urban politics have included the economic, political, social, and cultural contexts of cities in their explanations of urban outcomes because contextual variables may affect the interests of various actors and groups and because they may facilitate or hinder people's ability to achieve their interests. By focusing on the importance of political culture, recent revisions in regime theory have introduced ethical concerns as explanations of urban outcomes. In these revisions of regime theory, political culture is defined as "the collective expectations of the population about the roles and behavior of their government" (Ferman 1996, 8) and as "a shared worldview that includes meanings, values, and expectations" (Ramsey 1996, 5). According to DeLeon (1992), political culture is important because progressive cultures (i.e., ones that value inclusiveness, participation, equity, and preservation of the use value of residential property) can produce progressive economic development policies (i.e., policies that limit the

prerogatives of capital through such things as zoning, linkage policies, environmental protection, and growth control legislation). Cultural values can influence policy outcomes in several ways. Ramsey (1996, 4) suggested that local cultures influence people's understanding of their interests and thus serve as root causes of developmental outcomes. Ferman (1996, 140-42) suggested that local cultures are intervening variables in urban policy making because progressive cultures can empower neighborhood groups to achieve some of their interests, whereas more "cynical" cultures empower "the growth machine." Although somewhat ambiguous on this point, Swanstrom's (1991, 1993) emphasis on the importance of "cultural loyalties" and "thoughtful commitments to a sense of justice and fairness" as influences on economic development suggest that local cultures embodying these loyalties and commitments affect urban outcomes directly, independent of interests.

These cultural modifications of regime theory encourage urban analysts to provide more complete explanations of urban outcomes, as they remind them that policies are affected not only by interests and power but by values and ethical considerations. However, we believe that political culture is not the only way in which "ethics matters" in urban outcomes. Analyses of culture permit consideration of the dominant and broad ethical concerns of a community or subcommunity; most citizens of San Francisco may have concerns about "equity" that result in progressive developmental policies (DeLeon 1992). But equity may mean different things to different people, especially to various participants in the governing regime. Within political cultures, there can be a diversity of ethical concerns, and the particular ethical concerns of particular people—especially those people empowered to make policy decisions—may have important effects on policy decisions (Eulau and Prewitt 1973; Schumaker 1991; Reeher 1996). In short, the specific ethical principles of policy makers, as well as the diffuse ethical concerns that comprise the political culture of the population, may affect urban outcomes.

Of course, the importance of the specific ethical principles of policy makers to urban outcomes may vary depending on the type of policy under consideration and the arena in which it is made. Ferman (1996) has introduced the concept of "arena" as an important evolution in regime theory, suggesting that different regimes can coexist in various arenas of activity within cities. Although most economic development policies can be determined by the interests of those in the governing regime in the business arena, other policies might be strongly affected by the ethical principles of those in the governing regime of other arenas. Peterson (1981, 150-66) pointed out that distributive policies—those involving the allocation of governmental employment and contracts—are formulated in a policy arena principally composed of governmental officials and those groups (e.g., business, labor, and civil rights) that

interact with them. In this article, we examine the affirmative action policies that are generated within the distributional arena. We hope to show that, at least in explaining the outcomes of policies in this arena, moral principles are at least as important as interests and power. In other words, we hope to show that ethics matters in urban politics, as the ideals expressed by normative theorists resonate with the effective decision makers of the governing regimes of certain arenas of urban politics and influence policy outcomes in these arenas.[3]

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AS A CRUCIAL CASE

For purposes of this article, *affirmative action* is defined as a range of policies to enhance the prospects that various goods distributed by local governments, such as contracts or employee positions, will be provided to historically disadvantaged subpopulations. Although we focus on affirmative action to explore our theoretical concern about the impact of normative principles on policy making, an examination of affirmative action also may have practical and political significance. Despite the passage of Proposition 209 (banning preferential policies in California) and other recent setbacks, affirmative action policies are widely employed by local governments (Nay and Jones 1989). By upholding Proposition 209, the U.S. Supreme Court has left the resolution of affirmative action issues up to state and local governments.[4] It is thus likely that proposals to change local affirmative action policies will be widely introduced and debated in the near future. If our theoretical perspective is correct, the outcomes of these proposals and debates will depend on the moral principles that officials hold and apply to this policy area.

Affirmative action is an interesting and important policy area for exploring the impact of ethics and values because, in some respects, it resembles a "least likely case" when values should be irrelevant to outcomes; in other respects, it resembles a "most likely case" in which values should matter greatly (Eckstein 1975). Seen as a least likely case, affirmative action policies may be especially sensitive to economic, political, and social considerations that preclude officials acting on the basis of their moral values. For example, some policy makers whose values lead them to support affirmative action may be deterred from pursuing such policies because they believe that the economic interests of the city may preclude redistribution. Other policy makers whose values lead them to oppose affirmative action may believe that pressures from minority constituencies leave them little choice but to ignore their personal values and respond to broader influences. As a most likely

case, one might expect values to particularly affect affirmative action policies because this issue has generated an enormous amount of normative and moral debate. Proponents of affirmative action declare that the deepest justice principles require that one advances the opportunities of the least advantaged (Rawls 1971). When minorities and other disadvantaged groups have been harmed by historical injustices, compensatory policies are required (Boxill 1992). But opponents of affirmative action declare that justice requires that governmental opportunities go to the most deserving—understood as those who are most qualified and are most likely to best serve public interests (see Lichtenberg and Luban 1997). Such arguments are frequently made in political as well as philosophical debates, and it would be surprising if policy makers were unaware of them. Thus one might expect officials to enact legislation in the affirmative action area that reflects those normative principles they most strongly hold. In short, although the importance of officials' values as determinants of affirmative action policies remains an open question, affirmative action is a crucial case for studying the influence of values on policy making. If moral values were irrelevant to public policy in the area of affirmative action—which is so infected with normative argument—one would expect moral values to play an even lessor role in the resolution of other policy issues. If moral values were highly influential of affirmative action policies, one would be encouraged to examine other policy areas to determine the extent to which values and ideals matter there.

Although there has been extensive research on affirmative action by local governments (see, e.g., Eisinger 1982; Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Saltzstein 1986; Mladenka 1989; MacManus 1990; Santoro 1995), the impact on affirmative action policies played by the normative values of policy makers has been ignored. This is not surprising, given that the dominant paradigms of urban politics have focused almost exclusively on the power of various interests and contextual factors, as discussed previously. Although recognizing the importance of these factors on the policy preferences of urban officials, our hypothesis is that officials' deeply held values—expressed in the form of allegiance to various justice principles—have a greater impact on support for affirmative action than do those variables that are normally emphasized in urban research.

A STUDY OF OFFICIALS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Information regarding officials' attitudes about affirmative action was attained from interviews with 120 elected officials, conducted between

March and August 1993. The interviewers sought to understand officials' conceptions of justice and how they have applied various principles of justice to policy decisions. The interviews were conducted in 12 cities: Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Green Bay, Kansas City (Missouri), Minneapolis, Orlando, Pasadena, Providence, Salt Lake City, San Jose, and Seattle. The cities are generally in the 100,000 to 1 million population range—large enough to constitute major urban centers yet small enough to allow travel from one interview to another in a reasonable amount of time. These cities also were selected to try to capture the diversity of urban life in America. Beyond obvious regional variations, these cities differ greatly in their racial and ethnic composition—ranging from largely white communities (Green Bay and Salt Lake City) to cities that have strong black majorities (Baltimore and Atlanta), substantial Hispanic populations (Pasadena, San Jose, and Austin), and a large number of Asian-Americans (Seattle). Even the "white communities" have significant Native American and other minority citizens that make affirmative action issues salient to them.

Interviews were sought with five or six city council members and another five or six school board members in each city. Persons who had served in these capacities since 1980 were randomly called and asked if they would be willing to participate in two-hour interviews concerning the distributive aspects of policy making. Depending on the availability of potential interviewees and the logistics of getting from one interview to another, between 10 and 12 interviews were scheduled in each city. Thus the sample is composed of the first 10 to 12 people in each city who agreed to the interviews. The resulting sample contained 59 persons who had served on city councils, 56 who had served on school boards, and 5 who had served in both capacities. Of the participants, 94 (78%) were white, 21 black, 2 Hispanic, and 3 Asian-American. Women constituted 47% of the sample.[5]

Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were employed. The relatively open-ended format of the interviews yielded extensive qualitative information regarding understandings of justice principles and affirmative action among urban elected officials in a way that was minimally guided by the preconceptions of the researchers. The quantitative data that were derived from such interviews do not meet all of the criteria that are ideal for statistical analysis—for example, neither the cities in our survey nor the officials interviewed in each city constitute true random samples, and our scales are ordinal rather than interval. Thus the results must be considered exploratory rather than scientifically verified generalizations. However, this combined qualitative-quantitative methodology yields important information that is not available from standard sources and has been collected in a manner to enhance its representativeness and validity. Its 12-city database improves

on the single-city case studies that dominate the field, and the quantitative statistics summarize the range and general tendencies of how urban officials think about affirmative action.

To attain a measure of urban officials' support for affirmative action, transcripts from all components of the interviews were inspected and coded. One source of information was the stories officials provided at the beginning of the interview about issues, policy areas, or cases that arose while they were in office that exemplified ideas about fairness, as they understood that term. Such stories were requested because they provide rich research material reflective of human cognitive abilities (Schank 1990) and because respondents are less likely to be influenced by the conceptual frameworks and perceived values of the researcher when they provide open-ended stories than when they respond to highly structured questions (Van Maanen 1979). By telling stories, officials usually provide fairly accurate accounts of their own beliefs and activities, without distortions intended to make attitudes and actions seem more socially acceptable. Respondents usually offered one or two stories at the beginning of the interview; overall, they told 221 stories during this portion of the interview. Some of these stories dealt with affirmative action in a peripheral manner. For example, 5 stories dealt with increasing racial diversity on city councils and boards as the key to increasing minority opportunities in other areas, and 8 stories dealt with increasing educational opportunities for minorities to improve minority qualifications for municipal jobs and contracts. Only 10 stories dealt directly with preferential policies in municipal employment and contracting. Overall, we deemed 31 stories relevant to assessing officials' attitudes regarding affirmative action.

A second source of information regarding officials' attitudes about affirmative action was their open-ended responses to a probe at the end of the interview about their recurrent concerns while in public office and/or those things that others attributed to them as the central things they stood for while in office of the respondents, 7 officials expressly discussed affirmative action, with only 1 official claiming to stand in opposition to it. Another 16 officials provided responses relevant to affirmative action—such as claiming to be champions of diversity, civil rights, or victims of past discrimination.

A third source of information regarding officials' attitudes about affirmative action was their open-ended responses to 21 principles of justice, presented to them during the middle of the interview. Officials were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each principle, their interpretation of each principle, the reasons they supported or opposed each one, and the kinds of cases in which they thought the principle might be appropriately (or inappropriately) applied. Although officials discussed affirmative action

TABLE 1: Overall Support for Affirmative Action among 112 Urban Officials

Levels of Support	*Indications*	*Number of Officials*
1. Strong opposition	Opposes antidiscrimination laws and affirmative action programs	0 (0%)
2. Moderate opposition	Supports antidiscrimination laws but expresses no interest in enhancing economic opportunities of minorities or women; emphasizes problems of affirmative action	4 (3.6%)
3. Weak opposition	Emphasizes the importance of "colorblind" equal opportunity; acknowledges difficulties confronting minorities and women but believes that qualifications are more important than providing preferences	16 (14.3%)
4. Neutral	Sees positives and negatives of preferential policies; seeks to balance achieving more diversity and retaining sufficient qualifications	6 (5.4%)
5. Weak support	Supports weaker affirmative action policies such as efforts to increase the pool of minority candidates and guarding against subtle biases in selection processes	5 (4.5%)
6. Moderate support	Supports establishing goals for greater minority participation and voluntary programs for achieving diversity; supports giving preferences to minorities and/or women, if everything else is equal	57 (50.9%)
7. Strong support	Supports greater opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups such as job quotas or contract setasides that enhance the likelihood of minorities and women getting proportionate shares of economic benefits	24 (21.4%)

in connection with many of these principles, they most frequently did so when reacting to the equal opportunity principle, which was defined as the following: "Public officials should pursue equal opportunity policies to eliminate barriers that prevent minorities, women, and other historically disadvantaged groups from competing fairly with whites, men, and other historically advantaged groups for the most desired positions in society."

After reading the relevant stories offered by all respondents, the open-ended comments regarding their most significant concerns, and respondents' reactions to the various principles presented, we coded each official's attitude toward affirmative action using the 7-point scale described in Table 1. We agreed that 8 officials did not address the issue of affirmative action sufficiently to permit coding their attitudes regarding it. The scores assigned to the

other 112 officials by each researcher were then compared, and any discrepancies were discussed. In some cases, the scores were reconciled, but not in others. When discrepancies remained, the coders' estimates were averaged and rounded toward the extreme values. Thus, if one researcher coded a respondent as a 7 (*strongly supportive*) and the other researcher coded that respondent as a 6 (*moderately supportive*), the respondent was scored as a 7. Such averaging and rounding were seldom required, however, as the coders normally agreed in their assessments of officials' attitudes toward affirmative action. The overall level of intercoder reliability was .96.

As shown in Table 1, there was considerably more support than opposition for affirmative action among these officials. Although no officials expressed opposition to ordinances banning discrimination against women and minorities in various employment or contracting decisions, 20 officials were coded as being either moderately or weakly opposed to preferential policies. In contrast, 81 officials were coded as being moderately or strongly supportive of affirmative action policies.[6]

To assess the impact of moral principles on the policy orientations of officials, we correlated their support for each of the 21 principles presented to them with their attitude toward affirmative action. Some of these principles had neither theoretical nor empirical relationships with affirmative action and thus are omitted here. The following principles were found relevant:[7]

Reward ability. Recognizing that individuals differ in their natural talents, public officials should encourage their most able citizens to develop fully their capacities and avoid policies that constrain the most talented.

Reward effort. Recognizing that individuals and groups differ in the efforts and initiatives they put forth, public officials should reward those who make the most effort, regardless of the effectiveness of their efforts.

Target probable success. Recognizing that the recipients of various benefits and resources do not make equally effective use of these goods, officials should target public resources to those people who are most likely to use these goods effectively and successfully.

Reward social merit. Recognizing that individuals make different contributions to the good of society, public officials should reward those who have made the greatest contribution to social improvement.

Focus on the disadvantaged. Public officials should adopt policies that improve the conditions of the least-advantaged citizens, and they should reject policies that make relatively disadvantaged citizens worse off—even if such policies are otherwise useful, effective, and generally in the interest of society.

Provide rights. Public officials should pursue policies that provide everyone certain basic rights, such as the right to vote, the right to worship as one pleases, the right to essential food and shelter, and the right to basic health care.

Distribute based on needs. Public officials should adopt policies and programs that distribute goods and services to people based on their needs.

Establish floors. Public officials should adopt polices that ensure all citizens a minimal level of the goods they need.

Block cumulative inequalities. Public officials should try to prevent the accumulation of inequalities across a variety of goods. Thus they should seek to prevent those with the most of good X from using that good to acquire unequal shares of goods Y and Z.

Retain market allocations. Public officials should avoid redistributing those allocations of goods that have been made by the free choices of individuals, often through the free market.

Maximize aggregate utility. Public officials should adopt those policies and programs that serve the overall public interest, providing the greatest good for most citizens, and not be overly concerned about who is most benefited and who is most hurt by policies that best serve the public good.

After reading the justice principle on each card, we asked respondents to first indicate their degree of support on a 5-point scale. Because officials often offered intermediate responses on this scale (e.g., "I'm between strongly supportive and moderately supportive of this idea!"), we ultimately employed a 9-point scale for coding allegiance to each principle, with 9 being *highly supportive*, 5 indicating *neutrality*, and 1 indicating *highly opposed*.

When first presented the equal opportunity principle discussed earlier, almost all officials' immediate reaction was to be supportive of it. No official opposed the principle in the terms presented, and only two professed neutrality about it. However, as officials discussed the principle, it became apparent that they had different interpretations of it. Some claimed that the principle called for them to create "a level playing field" for everyone, but slightly more claimed that it called for them to "tilt the playing field" in favor of the disadvantaged to rectify historical and social injustices. Such an analogy seems to capture the basic differences between the ideas of formal equal opportunity (i.e., the removal of discriminatory barriers) and fair equal opportunity (i.e., providing all applicants with equal prospects for attaining desirable goods and offices) discussed by scholars such as Rawls (1971) and Rae (1981). After this distinction was discussed, officials were asked to indicate their degree of opposition or support for "fair equal opportunity," now defined as the following:

> Public officials should pursue policies that not only eliminate discrimination as a barrier to the advancement of minorities, women, and other historically disadvantaged groups but that also provide certain advantages to such groups, tilting the playing field in their direction so that their prospects of succeeding in

competition with whites, men, and other historically advantaged groups are more equal.

Like the other jusitce principles, support for fair equal opportunity was ultimately coded on a 9-point scale.

Because of the theoretical importance of fair equal opportunity as a normative principle, we examine its impact on affirmative action attitudes in what follows, even though we are aware that such a relationship may be "contaminated" (Hyman 1955, 179-83). In brief, the problem is that when presented with the distinction between a level and tilted playing field, some officials said of the tilted field things such as, "Oh, that means quotas! Because I oppose quotas, I must oppose equal opportunity when defined in these terms." To the limited extent that this contamination occurred, the strong linkages we present between fair equal opportunity and support for affirmative action policies must be regarded as suspect. In some cases, officials supported (or opposed) both fair equal opportunity and affirmative action because they meant the same thing to them. However, we have tried to minimize such contamination by measuring support for affirmative action and support for fair equal opportunity in distinctly different ways. When coding officials for their allegiance to fair equal opportunity, we have focused on their responses to the abstract ideas and broad value orientations emphasized in that principle. When coding officials' support for affirmative action policies, we have looked beyond their responses to this principle to their comments about affirmative action provided in the stories, the assessments of their primary goals as officials, and their reactions to other principles—especially the more neutral equal opportunity principle that was initially presented to them.

To complete our analysis, we attained measures of the social, economic, and political context in which officials formed their attitudes regarding affirmative action. For this part of the analysis, officials in our sample were matched to the city in which they held office, and the characteristics of the city were attributed to them as possible influences on policy preferences. Our measures of the various population characteristics reported in Table 2 are drawn from the 1990 U.S. Bureau of the Census and related studies, as reported in the *County and City Extra* (Slater and Hall 1993). Our measures of black organizations were drawn from the *Black American Information Directory* (1994-1995), which lists the names of black organizations and newspapers in American cities. The number of black groups in each city is simply a count of all black organizations having addresses in our sample cities. The number of racial equality groups is our count of that subset of such groups with national organizations that are known for promoting black eco-

nomic and social interests or with titles that suggest an interest in advancing the economic interests of blacks and other minorities. The number of black newspapers is simply a count of all newspapers listed in the *Black American Information Directory* having addresses in the sample cities. Our measures of minority and female representation are based on materials collected from city halls and school districts in each city while attaining lists of officials to interview. They indicate the levels of minority and female representation in 1993.

EXPLAINING OFFICIALS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

In this section, we examine the factors that might affect the variance in support for affirmative action presented in Table 1. First, we report in Table 2 the effects of contextual variables emphasized by the most prominent paradigms of urban politics. The first column shows the zero-order Pearson correlation coefficients between each contextual variable and support for affirmative action. In the second column, we report the results of an ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression analysis that included those contextual variables (or indices of interrelated contextual variables) having significant zero-order correlations with support for affirmative action. In the third column, we report the results of a stepwise multiple regression analysis that included the same variables.[8] The table reveals that support for affirmative action is little affected by contextual variables, and models ascertaining their combined predictive powers can explain only 5% to 6% of the variance in support for affirmative action.

Indicators of economic affluence and stress—such as measures of the median incomes of citizens, changes in income, the value of homes, poverty, and unemployment—usually have positive but weak and statistically insignificant correlations with officials' attitudes regarding affirmative action. If economic stress influences affirmative action policy, it does so in ways other than by affecting officials' attitudes about such policies.[9]

Officials are more supportive of affirmative action when their cities have larger black populations, as found by Mladenka (1989) and revealed by our zero-order correlations. However, the effect of the racial composition of cities is insignificant in multiple regression models. Support for affirmative action is unrelated to U.S. Bureau of the Census statistics regarding Hispanics and female subpopulations.

Officials are also more supportive of affirmative action when blacks are highly organized in their cities, as found by Santoro (1995) and indicated by

TABLE 2: Relationships between Urban Context and Support of Urban Officials for Affirmative Action

Contextual Variables	*Pearson Correlation*	*Beta Regression Coefficients*	
		Ordinary Least Squares	*Stepwise*
Population education and affluence			
% ≥ 16 years of education	.02		
Median income	.11		
% change in median income, 1979-1989	.17		
Median value of owner-occupied homes	.06		
Population poverty and economic stress			
% below poverty line	.16		
% increase in poverty, 1979-1989	–.06		
% unemployed, 1994	.17		
Race and gender of population			
% black	.23*		
% Hispanic	–.02		
% white	–.26*		
% female	.11		
Index of constituency benefit[a]	.24	.04	—
Black organizations			
Number of black groups	.23*		
Number of racial equality groups	.15		
Number of black newspapers	.23*		
Index of black group pressure[b]	.24*	.08	—
Minority and female representation			
Presence of black mayor	.13		
% minorities on city council	.23*		
% women on city council	.20*		
% minorities on school board	.28*		
% women on school board	.05		
Index of representation[c]	.22*		
Index of black incorporation[d]	.27*	.17	.27*
Adjusted coefficients of determination		.05	.06

a. To create this index, the percentages of blacks, whites, and women in each city were standardized, and then the standardized scores of whites in each city were subtracted from the sum of the standardized scores of blacks and women in each city. Hispanics were not included in this index because the measure of Hispanics is unrelated to support for affirmative action.
b. The three measures of black organizations were strongly intercorrelated. The summary index was derived by standardizing each indicator and summing them.
c. These five measures of minority and female representation were strongly and significantly intercorrelated. The summary index of representation is the sum of the five indicators after they were standardized.
d. This index is the sum of the standardized scores of minority representation on the city council and school board.
* Significant at the .05 level.

our zero-order correlations. However, our multiple regression models cannot confirm the independent impact of black organizations on officials' attitudes.

As suggested by Browning, Marshall, and Tabb (1984), black representation on city councils and school boards—which we have combined into an index of "black incorporation"—seems to be the contextual variable with the greatest impact on officials' attitudes. The presence of a black mayor and the inclusion of women on governing bodies have no significant impact in terms of increasing support for affirmative action. But as racial minorities gain greater representation on these governing bodies, support for affirmative action significantly increases. This finding suggests that the presence of minorities in governing bodies (and regimes) heightens the sensitivity of all officials to minority interests and concerns. It is likely that (at least informal) biracial coalitions of blacks and white liberals form in these communities that are supportive of various redistributive policies, including affirmative action. On the basis of evidence presented to this point, we cannot, however, reach judgments about the basis for such biracial support. Perhaps blacks and white liberals support affirmative action because of constituency pressures. This interpretation is supported by the observations that these policy makers tend to live in communities with large black populations and a larger number of black organizations, and the black incorporation variable subsumes the effects of these variables on officials' attitudes. In other words, there seems to be a developmental sequence in which communities having more black residents and groups elect more black (and white liberal) representatives whose affirmative action support is a reaction to the need to serve black constituents and to respond to demands from black organizations. However, we have not yet considered the justice principles of policy makers. Perhaps members of this biracial coalition simply hold justice principles that make them supportive of affirmative action.

Table 3 reports relationships between holding various justice principles and supporting affirmative action. Our data suggest that affirmative action attitudes are significantly affected by four justice principles (those calling for officials to promote fair equal opportunity, to block cumulative inequalities, to retain market allocations, and to maximize aggregate utility). The data indicate that these principles are much stronger determinants of support for affirmative action than are contextual variables. Together, they explain about 42% of the variation in support for affirmative action, compared to the mere 6% that is explained by the contextual variables.[10]

Before discussing these relationships, however, let us note some null findings. Most interesting in this regard is the absence of relationships between *desert principles* of justice and support for affirmative action. Desert principles assert that social goods—presumably including governmental offices

TABLE 3: Relationships between Principles of Justice and Support for Affirmative Action

Contextual Variables	*Pearson Correlation*	*Beta Regression Coefficients*	
		Ordinary Least Squares	*Stepwise*
Desert principles			
Reward ability	–.18	—	—
Reward effort	–.02	—	—
Reward social merit	.02	—	—
Target probable success	.04	—	—
Redistributive principles			
Focus on the disadvantaged	.27*	.10	—
Provide rights	.24*	–.07	—
Distribute based on need	.20*	–.02	—
Establish floors	.25*	—	—
Promote fair equal opportunity	.57*	.48*	.47*
Block cumulative inequalities	.38*	.23*	.23*
Neutral principles			
Maximize aggregate utility	–.31*	–.14*	–.15*
Retain market allocations	–.38*	–.15	–.15*
Adjusted coefficients of determination		.42	.42

* Significant at the .05 level.

and contracts—should be distributed to those who are most deserving of them, and different desert principles point to different definitions of the most deserving. In some interpretations, the most deserving are those with the most ability; in others, the most deserving are those who have made the most effort; in others, they are those who have made the greatest prior contribution; and in still others, they are those who have qualities that predict they will make the greatest contribution in the future. Because critics of affirmative action complain that such policies deprive more deserving applicants from achieving offices and more efficient and productive contractors from winning contracts, one might suppose that holding desert principles of justice would reduce support for affirmative action. However, Table 3 shows that there are no significant relationships in this regard.

Several redistributive principles of justice show significant zero-order correlations with support for affirmative action, but these relationships become insignificant in the multivariate regression models reported in the second and third columns of Table 3. Most noteworthy in this regard is the principle of focusing on the disadvantaged, which represents our attempt to recast the theory of "justice as fairness" by Rawls (1971) in a simplified manner that urban officials might readily understand. Officials who are most

supportive of "improving the conditions of the least advantaged" were usually supportive of affirmative action, but other justice principles are apparently more relevant to their affirmative action attitudes, as this principle has no significant link to officials' attitudes when other justice principles are taken into account. The same can be said for several other redistributive principles— providing certain goods to all as rights, allocating on the basis of needs, and establishing minimal floors on the goods that people receive.

Allegiance to two principles seems most important in enhancing officials' support for affirmative action. First, officials are most supportive of extensive affirmative action policies such as establishing quotas and providing set-asides in contracting when they give a fair, rather than formal, interpretation to the concept of equal opportunity. Many officials believe that historically, disadvantaged people will only have equal opportunity when efforts are made to compensate them for their historical disadvantages, so that their prospects for success are more equal with those of their competitors. More than half of our officials supported such a redistributive interpretation of the equal opportunity principle, and belief in such a principle was the most important influence on support for affirmative action.

Second, support for affirmative action was significantly enhanced by allegiance to the principle of "blocking cumulative inequalities" (Dahl 1961; Walzer 1983). This concept is rather complex, and almost 20% of the sample dismissed the idea as something that simply did not reflect their thinking about justice. But the rest of the sample was fairly evenly divided in supporting and opposing the idea, and supporters turned out to be among the strongest supporters of affirmative action, and opponents of blocked exchanges were among the strongest opponents of it. In brief, the idea of blocking cumulative inequalities means that people who are advantaged in the possession of certain goods and traits should be prohibited from converting these advantages into greater shares of other goods. In the area of affirmative action in hiring, officials who supported blocking cumulative inequalities questioned the fairness of giving prized governmental positions to those who already had a variety of social goods and resources. Conversely, those who opposed blocking cumulative inequalities thought there was nothing unfair if those already having various advantages also received governmental jobs. Indeed, having "advantaged" people in such offices might best serve the public because their advantages serve as crude indicators of their greater qualifications to serve effectively. In the area of affirmative action in contracting, officials who supported blocking cumulative inequalities thought that conventional bidding practices gave unfair advantages to those more established firms with track records and other resources (such as access to capital and ability to meet bonding requirements); for them, strong affirmative action

policies, such as setasides, were necessary to break through the cumulative advantages that facilitated the receipt of governmental contracts by older, more established white-owned and male-operated firms. Thus support for the principle of blocking cumulative inequalities is a fairly strong influence on support for affirmative action.[11]

We are not arguing that support for affirmative action is dependent on officials holding justice principles. What matters is which justice principles they hold most firmly. A minority of the officials in our sample (13%) supported retaining market allocations, and such libertarians were normally opposed to affirmative action. For such officials, governmental positions and contracts should be distributed according to market forces, like other goods. Governmental personnel offices should obey the laws of the market and hire those they think will be most effective and productive, ignoring social (racial and gender) considerations. Governmental vendors also should obey the laws of the market, accepting the lowest bid on contracts, again ignoring social considerations. In their view, following market procedures is basically a fair and impartial way of allocating goods in a way that stimulates people to become maximally qualified in the labor market and to offer their products and services at competitive prices.

Utilitarianism addresses other justice concerns that influence officials' attitudes on affirmative action. The idea that officials should maximize aggregate utility or pursue "the greatest good for the greatest number" is attractive to almost all urban officials, until one adds the proviso "even if that means ignoring who is most benefited and who is most hurt by policies that serve the public good." When such a proviso is added, 28% declare their opposition to utilitarianism, and another 32% become neutral. The officials who oppose utilitarianism (given that proviso) are the most supportive of affirmative action. Such officials declare that it is their duty to pay particular attention to those who are hurt by policies, and they are the first to see that minorities and women historically have been hurt by traditional policies in hiring and contracting. Thus they are relatively supportive of affirmative action. The officials who maintain their allegiance to utilitarianism despite the proviso are usually opponents of affirmative action. They see affirmative action as serving narrow and parochial interests while ignoring the public interest in hiring the most qualified applicants for jobs and maximizing economic efficiency in awarding contracts.

Table 3 shows that the principles of promoting fair equal opportunity, blocking cumulative inequalities, retaining market allocations, and maximizing aggregated utility each have significant independent impacts on support for affirmative action. But perhaps these values are just masks for political (and economic) considerations. Perhaps officials who serve constituencies

TABLE 4: Urban Context, Justice Principles, and Support for Affirmative Action: A Summary Analysis of Significant Factors

Contextual Variables	*Pearson Correlation*	*Beta Regression Coefficients*	
		Ordinary Least Squares	*Stepwise*
Contextual variables			
Index of constituency benefit	.24*	.01	—
Index of black group pressure	.24*	.04	—
Index of black incorporation	.27*	.10	.15*
Justice principles			
Promote fair equal opportunity	.57*	.43*	.43*
Block cumulative inequalities	.38*	.22*	.23*
Retain market allocations	–.35*	–.16*	–.16*
Maximize aggregate utility	–.31*	–.16*	–.16*
Adjusted coefficients of determination		.43	.44

* Significant at the .05 level.

that are benefited by affirmative action policies and who are subject to pressures from groups that represent minority interests are influenced to develop justice principles that lead, in turn, to support for affirmative action. To paraphrase the problem in quasi-marxist terms, perhaps the values and ideologies that people hold are merely a reflection of a political (rather than economic) superstructure. In this view, the contextual variables that dominate most urban paradigms are the infrastructure that determines values, with values having no independent effect on outcomes. To examine such a possibility, we examined contextual and ideological variables simultaneously through the regression models reported in Table 4. These models show that the justice principles held by officials continue to have an independent effect on policy preferences, even when political influences are introduced and controlled. Indeed, in the OLS regression model, the influence of all contextual variables become insignificant, but the four justice principles each continue to have significant impacts on officials' attitudes. However, in the stepwise regression model, black incorporation continues to have an impact along with the justice principles.

Because we doubt that political pressures are irrelevant to the views that officials have on policy concerns, we find the results of the stepwise analysis more plausible than the results of the OLS model. Our concern is not to deny the importance of political constraints on officials' thinking and actions but to show the need for greater attention to their value systems. As a consequence, we think that the results of the stepwise model in Table 4 provide the most plausible account of officials' attitudes on affirmative action. These data

suggest that communities in which minority interests and pressures are strong tend to elect black and white liberals to governing bodies. Such officials come to support stronger affirmative action policies because political and moral considerations converge and reinforce each other. Throughout our interviews, we were impressed with the extent to which officials thought and talked in moral terms. Urban analysts should not ignore the moral thinking and moral arguments that constitute the "real world of politics," just as economic and political considerations are part of that world.

NORMATIVE THEORIES AND SCIENTIFIC PARADIGMS

The ideas expressed by normative political thinkers are relevant to the preferences held by elected officials and therefore are also potentially relevant to explaining the actual policies adopted by urban officials. Normative theories, such as Nozick's (1974) *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* and Walzer's (1983) *Spheres of Justice*, are relevant to urban politics because they describe and prescribe principles held and acted on by many urban officials. We are not arguing, of course, that the affirmative action policies pursued by urban governments are solely determined by the justice perceptions of governmental officials. We have not attempted to link the values held by elected officials to the actual and specific policies pursued by their respective cities. Whether or not strong support for affirmative action is linked to strong affirmative action policies or strong opposition leads to weak affirmative action policies should be the subject of future studies. However, what this study does demonstrate is the relevance of justice principles to such studies. To explore the determinants of affirmative action policies without taking into consideration the values held by officials would be to preclude what might turn out to be one of the most (if not the most) significant determinants.

The findings discussed in this article suggest that the relevance of the values held by elected officials to other types of policy preferences also should be explored. If officials' allegiance to various justice principles is significantly linked to their support for affirmative action, then various justice principles may be important determinants of other urban policies. Paradigms of urban research that directly incorporate public officials' values into their approach will help to answer such questions, providing a more complete picture of the dynamics of urban politics.

NOTES

1. In his economist paradigm, Peterson (1981) saw the economic interests of the city as a whole as the key determinant of developmental policies. Walzer (1983) has developed an unorthodox pluralist theory in which political distributions are viewed as more influenced by normative concerns than by interests and power, and the larger research project from which this article is drawn can be seen as extending Walzer's version of pluralism.

2. Perhaps the economistic paradigm is exceptional in this regard, as it suggests that policy makers equate economic growth with the common good. However, within this paradigm researchers have failed to map the normative principles of urban policy makers, demonstrate that the principle of maximizing aggregate community wealth is a priority for officials, and show that such principles play important roles in urban policy making. Indeed, Peterson (1981, 142) suggested that growth-oriented leaders are motivated by personal benefits (such as enhancing their reputations), not by their broader political principles.

3. In the research we present here, we focus on the relationship between the ethical concerns of elected officials and their attitudes regarding affirmative action. Because policy makers' attitudes have been found to be related strongly to policy decisions elsewhere (Schumaker 1991), we infer that ethical concerns that affect policy attitudes also affect actual outcomes. However, recognizing this limitation in our analysis, we are currently developing a research design that will allow us to examine the link between ethical concerns and policy outcomes.

4. On 3 November 1997, the Supreme Court rejected without comment an appeal by civil rights groups to overturn Proposition 209. In so doing, it upheld lower court rulings that bans on preferential policies were permissible. It did not, however, rule that preferential policies violated the U.S. Constitution.

5. See Schumaker and Kelly (1998) for additional information about this sample.

6. See Schumaker and Kelly (1998) for a more detailed description of the attitudes of officials regarding affirmative action, as summarized in Table 1.

7. See Schumaker and Kelly (1994) for a discussion of the philosophical and theoretical literature addressing these principles. Had the initial focus of this research been affirmative action, these principles would have been reworded to make them more relevant to this issue. More appropriate phrasing would likely increase the relationships observed between these principles and officials' attitudes concerning affirmative action.

8. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression examines the effects of each independent variable in the model while controlling for the effects of all other independent variables. In contrast, stepwise regression first includes the best predictor in the model in a way that does not control for other independent variables; subsequent predictors are introduced, controlling for the effects of previously included variables but not for the effects of other variables. Variables that have no independent predictive effects are ignored in the stepwise model; such variables are indicated by the "—" notation. The OLS and stepwise models yield results that are the same theoretically.

9. As suggested by Eisinger (1982), economic stresses may force officials to limit their affirmative action policies, despite their supportive attitudes.

10. To ensure that our results are not unduly inflated by any contamination problem, we also conducted a parallel regression model but omitted our measure of the fair equal opportunity principle. In this analysis, the other three principles still explain 24% of the variation in support for affirmative action.

11. The zero-order correlation of .38 here is based on only those cases ($n = 96$) in which officials indicated they understood the idea and provided a reasonable interpretation of it. Multiple regression normally deletes from analysis all cases with "missing values" on any variable. We

were reluctant to omit from the multiple regression models the cases of officials for whom the "blocking cumulative inequalities" idea was meaningless, and thus we assigned these individuals the mean value on this variable. This mean substitution strategy has the effect of producing associated regression coefficients that underestimate the impact of the variable that contains the means as missing values.

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