BLACK POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICS OF EXCHANGE
1908 TO 1973

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, my father,

and my "other father": Doc Tom.

ABSTRACT

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BLACK POLITICAL BEHAVIOR IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICS OF EXCHANGE 1908-1973

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This thesis traces the electoral behavior of blacks in Atlanta, Georgia from their disfranchisement in the early years of this century through the election of the city's first black mayor. Organizational patterns are examined in an effort to test the appropriateness of the exchange model of group behavior. Data regarding demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, voting and leadership patterns, and policy decisions are analyzed to determine the extent to which black political power has been maximized in Atlanta.

Exchange theory provides a useful framework for the study of black political behavior as well as criteria for assessing the nature of political exchange among white leadership, black political brokers, and black voters. It is found that three stages of exchange did exist in Atlanta, managed by more than one black leadership group after World War Two. Further, the purported black-white voting coalition is concluded to have contributed little to the development of black political power.

Materials for this study were collected from published works discussing black politics in Atlanta and the South. Other data were gathered from reports, unpublished papers, and interviews of primary political actors and students of black political activity in Atlanta.

This study concludes that exchange patterns did exist in Atlanta which are useful for understanding the nature and potential of black electoral activity. However, impediments to the maximization of political power for blacks remained to impede the solution of problems and policies inimical to the welfare of the city's black citizens. With careful application and modification, exchange theory surpasses interest group theory in its usefulness for the study of black electoral behavior.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In political science literature it appears that the politics of the Southern region of the United States has been approached as distinct from the politics of the rest of the nation. Southern politics, no doubt, is different because it has been defined by the relationship between the races and the efforts on either side to maintain or to destroy the manifest structure of that relationship. With this distinction in mind several scholars have investigated the pattern of black political activity in the South. From a review of that literature one would find that distinctions are made between the "rim South" and the "Deep South" and further between urban and rural areas in each part of the South. One would also discover that the pattern of political activity of black people in Atlanta, Georgia has been at a level not generally found among urban black communities of the "Deep South."

A brief overview of the political activity of blacks in Atlanta would reveal that there has been some political activity in the black community since as far back as 1868. Before the white primary was adopted in 1891 and after it was repealed before being readopted in 1897 some black voters participated in municipal elections. Even after blacks in Georgia were disfranchised, citizenship schools were set up in Atlanta's black community in the early 1930s. Blacks could still vote in general, open and special elections and the citizenship schools

were conducted to acquaint blacks with the structure of local, state and national governments as well as to prepare the people for registration and voting in one of the above elections or in the event that the white primary was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.[1] Efforts were made to get blacks to register and to vote. Even so, black political activity in Atlanta was understandably minimal up to the end of World War Two.

In 1944 the Supreme Court ruled the white primary unconstitutional in the Texas case of Smith v. Allwright. Then in 1945 the Georgia poll tax was repealed. The most crucial event, however, was the Supreme Court decision in 1946 in the case of Chapman v. King which rendered the white primary in Georgia unconstitutional. After this ruling there was a significant and noticeable increase in political activity among Atlanta's black citizens. Since that escalation of activity in the late 1940s blacks have played an increasingly important role in municipal politics. Within this pattern of activity there has occurred the emergence and later the demise of black voting organizations, the development and maintenance of a purported interracial voting coalition, the emergence of at least two distinct black leadership groups, and the proliferation of black officeholding culminating in the election of a black mayor.

Given such a rich history of black political activity the question to be investigated in this study asks: What has been the nature of black electoral activity in Atlanta from disfranchisement to the election of a black mayor? Pursuing this question, the writer will

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[1]C. A. Bacote, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," Phylon 16 (Fourth Quarter 1955): 342-343.

have to investigate several factors: black voting behavior, the potential political power of blacks in the city, the pattern of black political leadership and political organization in the black community. After examining that question, an effort will be made to assess the significance of the last two mayoral elections during this period in terms of their impact on the pattern of black political activity in Atlanta. It was in these elections--in 1969 and 1973--that black candidates first made serious electoral bids for mayor.

Scholarly studies of black political activity in Atlanta have focused variously on descriptions of blacks' political history in Atlanta and throughout Georgia,[2] analyses of voting behavior,[3] and examinations of black political leadership.[4] While these works discuss various aspects of the political behavior of Atlanta's black citizens,

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[2]Augustus Alven Adair, "A Political History of the Negro in Atlanta 1908-1953" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1955); Rosetta Sangster McKissack, "Attitudes Toward Negro Political Participation in Georgia, 1940 to 1947" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1954); and Geraldine Perry, "The Negro as a Political Factor in Georgia 1896 to 1912" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1947). See also Bacote, "Atlanta Politics," pp. 343-50.

[3]Jack Walker, "Negro Voting in Atlanta: 1953 to 1961," Phylon 24 (Fourth Quarter 1963): 379-87; M. Kent Jennings and Harmon Zeigler, "Class, Party and Race in Four Types of Elections: The Case of Atlanta," Journal of Politics 28 (May 1966): 391-407; and Berdie Ricks Hardon, "A Statistical Analysis of the Black-White Voting Coalition in Atlanta 1949 to 1970" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1972).

[4]John Calhoun, "Significant Aspects of Some Negro Leaders' Contributions to the Progress of Atlanta, Georgia" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1975); Malcolm Suber, "The Internal Black Politics of Atlanta, Georgia 1944 to 1969: An Analytic Study of Black Political Leadership and Organization" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1975); and Theopia Johnson Tate, "Black Elected and Appointed Officials in Atlanta: An Exploratory Analysis" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1968).

the following study attempts to investigate the character of black electoral activity within an organizational context and to assess that activity in terms of its impact on the maximization of black political power. This study departs, furthermore, from the previous works in that it will employ the framework of exchange theory which permits a discussion of purposive behavior of voters, leaders and organizations and suggests developmental stages of group electoral behavior.

It is necessary at this point to turn to a discussion of that theoretical framework. Rather than employ the pluralist model of groups or its related model of ethnic group politics the attempt will be made here to apply the exchange theory of group politics to our study. In order to make the distinction it is necessary to review first the major propositions of the pluralist theory of groups. We refer here to David Truman's seminal statement of the pluralist theory of interest groups as discussed in his book The Governmental Process. To begin, one must understand that this theory assumes that groups form spontaneously given the social nature of man to join in pursuit of collective goals.[5] Second, as society becomes more complex the increasing division of labor contributes to a differentiation of interests and a proliferation of groups reflecting these differing interests.[6] Thus, groups can be identified in terms of shared interests. Further, these groups exist in a state of equilibrium; a disruption in this equilibrium by social, political or economic forces leads to the formation of new

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[5]David B. Truman, The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951), pp. 14-15.

[6]Ibid., p. 25.

groups.[7] Fourth, individuals may belong to several interest groups; these competing memberships serve to moderate group claims on their members. It is important to point out that Truman held that formal organization is not necessary for the existence of a group. There exist, in his concept, large latent groups which easily can be mobilized into collective action. Because of the size of such groups they "have the potential to exert considerable impact in the political arena."[8]

On the other hand, the exchange theory was first put in a political context in Mancur Olson's work entitled The Logic of Collective Action. According to Olson, departure from the pluralist theory of groups begins with the assertion that there is a distinction between public or "collective" goods which are inseparable benefits that accrue to all individuals in a group regardless of the individual members' contributions. Such goods can be consumed by all members of a group without regard to their individual contribution toward acquiring the collective benefits.[9] An example of a collective good is the fire-fighting protection provided by a city to its citizens. By contrast, there are private "selective" goods which can be given to or withheld from individual group members. Such private incentives may be either negative, designed to punish the individual for failing to bear a share of the costs of group action, or a positive inducement intended to

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[7] Ibid., pp. 26-32.

[8] Ibid., p. 43.

[9] Mancur Olson, The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), pp. 14-15.

reward a specific individual for his contribution to the group costs. Furthermore, Olson states that the only rational behavior for an individual to contribute to a group would be for a separate selective incentive which will stimulate him to act in a group-oriented way. It would not be rational for an individual to contribute to group action for collective benefits only because he would receive such collective goods without sharing the costs of group activity.[10]

Olson reasoned that individuals will contribute to group action only in the expectation that the benefits they receive from their action will outweigh the costs of membership; in other words, they expect there to be a favorable exchange of benefits. Collective benefits are insufficient incentives to group participation. Large groups find it particularly difficult to further their own interests because: 1) the larger the group, the smaller the fraction of benefit any individual member receives; 2) the larger the group, the less likely it will be that a small portion of the group will bear a large burden of the costs; and 3) the larger the group, the higher are the organizational costs and thus the greater the obstacle which must be overcome before any of the collective good can be obtained. Olson concluded, then, that the larger the group the less it will provide of the optimal supply of a collective good; and, thus "very large groups normally will not, in the absence of coercion, or separate, outside incentives, provide themselves with even minimal amounts of a collective good."[11]

We can see, then, that Olson's formulation of the exchange

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[10]Ibid., p. 51.

[11]Ibid., p. 48.

theory challenges some major tenets of the pluralist theory of groups. First, Olson's argument questions the pluralists' idea of the "natural proliferation of groups" suggesting that people participate in collective action not just because of shared interests or goals but because they expect to receive some benefits they would not otherwise have without group membership. Secondly, this author questions the organizational potential and power of Truman's latent group. Olson argued that because of the difficulties of providing a favorable exchange within the context of large groups, they would be very difficult to mobilize and thus hardly would be able to exert power in the political arena. Therefore, it can be concluded that the extent of organization and representation of interests in the political arena is very spotty, and where it does exist is dominated by small "privileged" groups that easily can be mobilized for action.[12]

In an article entitled "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups" Robert Salisbury enlarges and extends the ideas of the exchange theory. His major contribution is the conceptualization of four crucial terms: 1) entrepreneur/organizer, 2) benefits, 3) group member, and 4) exchange. Salisbury defines the entrepreneur or organizer as the initiator of an enterprise; that is, one who uses capital to generate a set of benefits--goods and services--which he offers to a market of potential customers at a price--group membership. It should be noted here that entrepreneurs may have their own capital to invest or just as likely,

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[12]Richard Murray and Arnold Vedlitz, "Political Organization in Deprived Communities: Black Electoral Groups in Houston, Dallas, and New Orleans," paper presented at the 1974 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Ill., 29 August-2 September, 1974, p. 3.

if not more so, may receive outside subsidization for investment. "If, and as long as, enough customers buy, i.e., join, to make a viable organization, the group is in business. If the benefits fail, or are inadequate to warrant the cost of membership, or the leaders get inadequate return, the group collapses."[13]

Further, there are three types of benefits: material, solidary and purposive or expressive benefits. Material benefits are, of course, tangible rewards of goods or services or the means by which these can be obtained (a job). Solidary benefits derive from interpersonal association among members and include status, socializing, a sense of group membership and identification, and so on. Purposive or expressive benefits consist of the "realization of suprapersonal goals, goals of the organization or group." Such purposive benefits are ordinarily collective indivisible benefits such as "good government" or civil rights which accrue even to those who made no effort to secure them. These benefits also are referred to as expressive because they can be derived, according to Salisbury, by the expression of certain values. For example, opposition to the Vietnam War and the desire for a foreign policy of peaceful non-intervention are examples of values whose public expression may be achieved by joining a group. "The point here is that benefits are derived from the expression itself."[14]

So, the entrepreneur/organizer invests capital to develop a set of benefits which may be any sort of combination of the three types.

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[13] Robert H. Salisbury, "An Exchange Theory of Interest Groups," Midwest Journal of Political Science 13 (February 1969): 11.

[14] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

These he offers at a price--group membership--to a market, that is, a range of people the entrepreneur wants to attract. The market consists of group members: the potential consumers of benefits offered by the entrepreneur. Group members have preferences that define them as part of a latent or potential group. A group is only identifiable if a set of benefits is offered by an entrepreneur/organizer to which the potential group members respond. Remember here that a group can be organized and sustained only if the group members' and entrepreneurs' benefits exceed the costs of membership and investment.[15]

Finally, Salisbury defines exchange as the flow of benefits to both members and organizers. There must be a mutually satisfactory exchange, that is, an adequate flow of benefits in order to be sufficient to sustain an organization. Furthermore, the author contends that entrepreneurs must have a return sufficient to pay the costs of benefits plus realize some profit.

Before moving to another aspect of this discussion, it seems important to note two additional points Salisbury makes in his article. First, the author equates the entrepreneur/organizer role with group leadership. He writes that: "It is, therefore, group leadership that we are discussing in a framework of benefit exchange. The entrepreneurial role is generically identical with that of leader: the leader is perforce an entrepreneur.[16] In discussing the entrepreneurial role Salisbury suggests that these initiators invest capital to create benefits, and that often this capital is derived as a subsidy or legacy

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[15]Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[16]Ibid., p. 29.

of other older organizations. Given this subsidization, Salisbury concludes that the emergence of organized groups will tend to be a gradual process dependent in part on the recruitment and development of organizers and will tend also to depend on the accumulation of "social capital sufficient to invest in the formation of durable organizations."[17]

It would be helpful to turn here to a discussion of exchange theory in a paper by Richard Murray and Arnold Vedlitz. Their work is instructive in that it contains two sections of particular interest here: 1) the discussion regarding the applicability of exchange theory to electoral organizations, and 2) their conclusion that three organizational phases occur in electoral organizations.

In approaching the question of the applicability of the exchange theory to black electoral groups in three southern cities, Murray and Vedlitz, in their paper entitled "Political Organization in Deprived Communities: Black Electoral Groups in Houston, Dallas, and New Orleans," examine the history of electoral organizations. The political machine was the first of such large scale organizations. Its emergence was confined primarily to northeast American cities. Murray and Vedlitz number several environmental factors which account for the preponderance of machines in this region. They were: 1) that industrialization and urbanization required large numbers of workers supplied by the large immigrant labor force; 2) that this industrialization was accompanied by the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a small number of businessmen; 3) that because of the large populations in cities there was a need for a municipal structure adequate to provide

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[17]Ibid., pp. 14-15.

services to the inhabitants; 4) that local government control depended on who obtained and controlled the votes; and 5) that the dominance of a materialistic culture provided an atmosphere in which tangible material benefits were "acceptable and effective incentives for promoting group political activity."[18]

The local political machine relied on the use of public resources in the exchange pattern among voters, public officials, businessmen, public employees and outside political authorities. Once a group controlled the governmental apparatus it could use public resources (i.e., public funds, jobs, contracts, etc.) to subsidize the group enterprise. There are several notable factors regarding the exchange pattern of the political machine. First, it depended on a large group of voters who were unfamiliar with the civic culture of the United States and who were relatively impoverished. Secondly, the machine dealt in tangible benefits using public resources and offering separate, selective incentives to individual participants. Many of the problems of mobilization and maintenance were solved by the access to and use of the large reserve of public resources. Third, the role of the entrepreneur was central to this exchange pattern. The entrepreneur was key in each exchange; he maintained tight control over the process, and, thus, was able to discourage independent relationships between others involved in the exchange. One might add that the benefits to the entrepreneurs in this situation were substantial tangible and solidary rewards--power, status, and, of course, wealth.[19]

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[18]Murray and Vedlitz, "Political Organization," p. 5.

[19]Ibid., pp. 5-8.

Since the heyday of political machines, "market" conditions have changed making such political organization as that maintained by machines unsustainable. One of these changes is evident in the fact that the immigration restrictions of the 1920s aborted the supply of immigrants needed by the machine. Secondly, Murray and Vedlitz point out that the electorate experienced an improved material status and began to acquire a "vote as civic duty ethic" thereby reducing the demand for and the effectiveness of the machines' offers of material incentives. These changes were accompanied by the development of a large federal bureaucracy which delivered tangible benefits to needy citizens. The machines could not hope to compete with this public bureaucracy that was subsidized by the resources of the federal government. Furthermore, the emergence of civil service reforms, legal restrictions (especially over such areas as contracts, for example) and state regulations of party organization also contributed to the demise of the political machine.

Because of such changed conditions in the political environment and new legal restrictions, electoral organizations now play a minimal role in most American cities. The exchange pattern of the modern electoral organization is markedly different from that of the political machine. The entrepreneurs no longer control interaction in the political arena; there are few material resources available and allegiance is fleeting. Murray and Vedlitz note that organizations depend heavily on solidary and purposive incentives to organizational participation. Because of the lack of selective benefits membership is highly transient. Further, without control of a large portion of the electorate

such associations have little exchange with candidates or with elected officials.[20]

Authors Murray and Vedlitz suggest that an exchange pattern exists that is characterized by a triangular exchange among organized interests, elected officials and public bureaucracies. Organized interests have the advantages of: 1) specified, highly focused interests, 2) sustained contact and thus enhanced influence with officials and bureaucracies, and 3) the fact that they provide resources required for the candidate-voter exchange enabling them to manipulate this interaction. Although voter contact with the three major elements in the exchange is enhanced because of these factors, voter control over the exchange is reduced. "The 'new machines' are relatively irresponsible in that public policies are shaped without control by a higher authority amenable to voter desires."[21]

In contrast to the demise of electoral organizations in American cities, black electoral organizations have emerged in cities in both the North and South since the end of World War Two. Murray and Vedlitz note that there has been considerable black organizational activity in the South since the conclusion of the Second World War. Several factors appear to have facilitated this development. They were: 1) the gradual elimination of legal barriers to voting by blacks; 2) the rapid urbanization of the black population in the South; 3) the lessening of organizational problems precipitated by lowered communication costs and less vulnerability to pressures discouraging black

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[20]Ibid., pp. 9-11.

[21]Ibid., p. 12.

political participation; and, finally 4) widespread racial consciousness among blacks. One of the crucial reasons for the emergence of black political organizations was the lack of communication between white political structures and black communities; there was very limited ability to initiate and maintain interaction between racial groups. Secondly, because of the lower social and economic status of blacks, there was the need for material, welfare benefits in the black community.[22]

This situation of mutual need was conducive to entrepreneurial initiative; organizers used the opportunity to establish electoral organizations and oversee an exchange of benefits between the interested groups. The promise of black voter support was exchanged for policies beneficial to the black community. The black entrepreneurial leadership negotiated with the white political structure for policies and provisions favorable to the interests of their community. On the other hand, the leadership offered cues to black voters as to what candidates or policies were most favorably disposed to black interests and, therefore, merited black support.

It should be pointed out that incentives for black voters were more often collective and purposive benefits rather than the selective material rewards of the old political machine. This was the case because whites did not have sufficient resources to offer selective benefits to large numbers of individual blacks and, further, because white elites faced heavy sanctions from the white community if they were considered too sympathetic to black demands. The black

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[22]Ibid., pp. 13-14.

entrepreneur/organizers, on the other hand, received any of a combination of the three kinds of rewards: material payoffs, solidary benefits of a sense of high status and a sense of power, and purposive rewards such as feeling that their efforts advanced the cause of their people.

However, as Murray and Vedlitz suggest, there were two outstanding problems in this exchange pattern. First, selective material benefits were not generally available for black voters; therefore, there was the problem not only of organizing the vote but of getting blacks to register and vote. This was usually solved when an issue clearly related to the interests of the black community was involved in a campaign. In this situation group consciousness could be activated to provide large black turnout and group consensus voting. A second problem threatened to emerge where the interests of the entrepreneurs might be opposed to that of the voters. Where the leadership accepted rewards from candidates or officials favorably disposed to black interests there was no conflict. But often those whites with the most power and better resources with which to offer incentives to black organizers were the most conservative and less likely to support the economic and social policies considered to be in the interests of the entire black community. Thus, the acceptance of benefits by the entrepreneurial leadership might have the possibility of directly conflicting with the general interest of the black community.[23]

As a conclusion to this discussion of the exchange theory as a theoretical framework for the present study we turn to Murray's and

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[23]Ibid., p. 16.

Vedlitz' conclusion that there are three organizational phases which can be discerned in an examination of black politics. They point out that their finding serves to confirm the propositions of the exchange theory of Olson and Salisbury and at the same time argue against the natural proliferation contention of the pluralist theory of groups.

The first organizational phase of black electoral politics in the South occurred after some of the legal barriers to black participation were removed and significant numbers of blacks began to register and vote. According to pluralist theory it would be expected that this disequilibrium in the political arena would produce a new proliferation of groups to represent new interests and restore balance to the political system. Exchange theory would suggest, on the other hand, that the new potential group--the black electorate--would have difficulty organizing because of its large size and lack of resources. Murray and Vedlitz observe that new voter organizations did emerge but were inefficiently organized and minimally maintained and, thus, were unable to "unite the potential group to secure favorable action."

The second phase occurred with the emergence of black organizations based on political exchange. Characteristic of these organizations was the outside subsidization required for their creation. The reward incentives for entrepreneurial organization and the payment for start-up costs came from resources outside of the black community. Phase three "occurs when the black electorate reaches a level of sophistication where it no longer needs organization-provided cues and/or when a substantial number of candidates arrive on the scene who can communicate directly with black voters." Such changes destroy the market utilized by the organizational leadership and undermine their

ability to continue to recruit resources needed to provide benefits within their operation.[24] It might also be added that these changes subvert the leadership role as key in the exchange process diminishing the need for its interjection and eliminating its control over the exchange.

The exchange theory will provide the theoretical framework for this study of black electoral behavior in Atlanta, Georgia since the decade of the 1940s. In addition to examining major trends in the development of black electoral activity in Atlanta, there will be an effort to analyze the exchange process that occurred between white candidates and elected officials, black entrepreneur/organizers, and black voters. We will observe the flow of benefits among the parties involved in this process noting particularly its effect on the interests of the black community, on its leadership structure, and on efforts to maximize black political power.

Having discussed the theoretical framework it seems pertinent to move to a brief discussion of the methodology and structure of this paper. The intent is that this paper will be a descriptive study of black electoral behavior in Atlanta. The major data for the paper will come from a review of literature concerning not only black political activity in Atlanta but also of literature regarding black political activity in the South. There are several articles examining Atlanta black politics in particular as well as studies dealing with black electoral behavior in recent elections. This material will be supplemented by information obtained from interviews with selected persons in

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[24]Ibid., p. 38.

the black community who can provide information regarding benefit exchange.

The text of this investigation will be presented in four chapters. Each of the following three chapters will discuss a particular time period in the history of black electoral behavior in Atlanta.

The second chapter will examine the period characterized by disfranchisement of black voters, from the beginning of this century until the 1946 judicial dissolution of "legal" barriers to black voting. The next period marks the beginning of large scale voter participation in this century and encompasses the emergence of organizations which relied on the black vote as its instrument for exchange. These years from 1946 through the 1960s will be examined in Chapter Three. Chapter Four provides a view of black efforts to capture political control of the city's highest elected offices and the impact of these efforts on the exchange process. This chapter culminates in an analysis of the election of a black mayor in 1973. The fifth and final chapter will put forth the writer's conclusions. It will attempt to assess the applicability of exchange theory to black political activity in Atlanta, Georgia and point to the impact of black electoral and organizational behavior on the maximization of black political power.

Each of the chapters dealing with a particular time period will include a review of the political atmosphere of the time and an assessment of the potential political power of the black community. In looking at potential power we will need to gather data on population, voting and voter registration, and socioeconomic status among blacks. Essential in each chapter will be an examination of the organizational and

leadership configurations that characterized the period under discussion. This will necessitate a recounting of the emergence and development of electoral organization as well as an analysis of the exchange pattern involved. Finally, each period will be assessed to determine the stage of organizational activity and the progress made toward maximizing black political power at that stage.

Finally, it seems appropriate at this point to offer definitions for key concepts to be used in this study. The notion of political power is generic to any discussion of electoral behavior. Here political power will mean the ability to influence or persuade some person(s) to do what they were not otherwise predisposed to do. This exercise of power is distinguished from potential political power which would include those characteristics of a community such as population distribution, voter registration, voting, office holding and socioeconomic status. These are merely potential sources of political power. Another concept, that of maximizing political power involves utilizing those resources to do three things: 1) obtain benefits for the community, 2) prevent the formulation of any policy inimical to the community, and 3) develop and include (or have included) in the policymaking process an agenda of items which are in the interests of the community.

In addition to these, we will define the concept of political leadership as the ability to influence and to represent a given group. Political leadership is so defined in this case to include those black political leaders in Atlanta who were designated as such because they had been perceived and designated by whites as leaders, particularly in the period prior to widespread black participation in political life.

This definition, of course, includes those black political leaders considered as such by the black community irrespective of white choices. It also should be pointed out that in our attempts to determine the significance of certain events on a pattern of black political activity, the term significance will indicate the impact of an event which causes a perceptible change in a pattern of activity. Having set forth the framework and having discussed the mechanics of this paper we now will turn to the text of the study.

CHAPTER II

DISFRANCHISEMENT ERA

As a first step in this descriptive study of black electoral behavior in Atlanta, this chapter will examine black political activity during the period of disfranchisement (1897 to 1946). The activity which took place during this period was a foundation upon which black political behavior developed once legal barriers to black voting were removed. Even though the period of disfranchisement was characterized by severely restricted black electoral activity, there existed elements of political exchange which were precedents for later patterns of black political behavior in Atlanta.

In the period just after the Civil War from 1868 to 1872, black political participation in Atlanta and in Georgia was exercised through the Republican Party. However, as the end of the Reconstruction Era drew near, the influence of the Republican Party began to wane. In order to take part effectively in the political life of the city, black Atlantans increasingly found it necessary to participate in politics within the framework of the Democratic Party. Black votes were sought only when white voters were divided.

On the state level, in 1877--the year that marks the end of Reconstruction--a new state constitution was adopted in Georgia. This new constitution levied a cumulative poll tax on voters and mandated rigid enforcement of residential requirements. The new law served to

restrict black voting. Even so, many eligible blacks continued to vote and to participate in the political life of the city.[1]

During the 1880s and 1890s, Atlanta's politics were rife with corruption and bitter political battles for which blacks were blamed. As a result of this strife and of resentment of black participation in these struggles, in 1891 the Executive Committee of Atlanta's Democratic Party adopted the white primary, prohibiting blacks from voting in election primaries. Since the Democratic Party was the only vehicle for effective voter participation, blacks virtually were denied the right to vote. In 1895, however, the Democratic Executive Committee reversed this decision, probably because the Democrats needed allies in the face of growing opposition to their machine which controlled city government.[2]

In spite of this reversal, black voting was not to continue for long. Black votes proved critical in electoral battles between the Democratic and Populist Parties, providing Democrats with the margin of victory. In the state elections of 1896, the Populists suffered a defeat which virtually destroyed their party. As a result, the black vote no longer was needed to maintain Democratic hegemony. The city Democratic Executive Committee, therefore, in 1897 readopted the white primary. Because there was no Republican or Populist opposition in general elections, the Democratic primary was the locus of victory or defeat. Victory in this primary was tantamount to election.

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[1]C. A. Bacote, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," Phylon 16 (Fourth Quarter 1955): 333.

[2]Ibid., p. 338-341.

Unable to vote in city Democratic primaries, blacks were denied participation in Atlanta politics.

As if this was not enough to prevent black voting, a bill revising the state constitution and designed to eliminate black voting altogether was passed by the Georgia General Assembly in 1907. This amendment to the state constitution was approved by Georgia voters in a referendum in the 1908 election. The amendment contained several qualifications for voting including education, character and property requirements as well as a grandfather clause.[3] These measures, together with the white primary, served to disfranchise black Georgians almost totally.

At the same time, there was a movement afoot within the Republican Party to purge blacks from its rolls. This "lily white movement" was precipitated by a 1908 ruling prohibiting blacks from voting in the Republican primary and in meetings selecting convention delegates. Such efforts were effective in eradicating most remnants of black voting in Georgia. Further, this movement took away federal patronage from blacks.[4] While the attempt to remove blacks from the Republican Party may have hampered black political participation in that party, it was not entirely successful because by 1912 the Republican Party membership in Georgia was mostly black.[5]

It should be pointed out that such moves to disfranchise black

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[3]Augustus Alven Adair, "A Political History of the Negro in Atlanta 1908-1953" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1955), pp. 4-6.

[4]Ibid., pp. 18-19.

[5]Geraldine Perry, "The Negro as a Political Factor in Georgia 1896 to 1912" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1947), p. 38.

Atlantans met with some resistance. Early protest was led by the Atlanta Independent, a newspaper owned and edited by Benjamin Davis, a prominent black Republican. Davis was joined by the Equal Rights League, a statewide organization formed in 1906 in which W. E. B. Dubois was a prominent leader. Together these forces attempted to organize black voters to defeat the constitutional amendment designed to disfranchise them.[6] When that move was unsuccessful, Ben Davis formed the Organization for Effective Party Work in 1909. This group, many of whose members were Republicans, attempted to revise the disfranchisement laws adopted the previous year. Such efforts were unsuccessful. Davis also was prominent in the fight against the "lily white movement" in the Republican Party.

Despite their inability to affect local decision-making via the vote, black Atlantans still expressed an interest in national politics. They were encouraged to do so by Davis through the Atlanta Independent newspaper. However, the protest against disfranchisement measures appears to have been "the only real attempt by the Negroes in Atlanta to take an active part in local politics between 1909 and 1916."[7]

Although black Georgians were denied the right to vote in party primaries, they were able to register freely and to vote in general, open and special elections. Black people in Atlanta did vote when such an opportunity was present. In most of these elections, the black vote proved significant, if not crucial, to the outcomes.

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[6] Ibid., p. 28.

[7] Adair, "A Political History," p. 21.

In 1921 two elections were held in an attempt by the school board to get voter approval for the issue of $4 million in bonds. Twice the measure was defeated with black voters opposing it. Prior to the third school bond referendum, the President of the Board of Education and the mayor met with black leaders. It is reported that in this meeting the white leaders promised that one and one-quarter to one and one-third million dollars of the bond total would be used to build new schools for black children and to improve the old equipment in schools in the city's black community. Subsequently, the school bond referendum was passed with the overwhelming support of Atlanta's black voters.[8]

Again in 1929, black Atlantans had an opportunity to vote. The Fifth District Congressional seat had been vacated by the death of Representative Leslie J. Steele. Because his replacement was to be selected in a special election, black people were allowed to vote. Although there were only 3,301 blacks registered to vote in Fulton County at the time, the black vote is considered critical in this election outcome because only about 9,400 people voted. The black vote percentage in that election is reported to have been rather large. Further, the election itself was significant because it was one of the few times during the period of disfranchisement when a white candidate appealed for black voter support.[9]

There was an effort to recall an incumbent mayor in 1932,

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[8]Paul Lewison, Race, Class and Party: A History of Negro Suffrage and White Politics in the South (New York: Grossett and Dunlap, 1932), pp. 150-151.

[9]Adair, "A Political History," p. 33.

giving black voters another opportunity to go to the polls. Mayor James L. Key had been accused of forgery and misrepresentation, and over 5,000 citizens petitioned to hold a recall election. Mayor Key was an outspoken political figure who had "insisted upon fair treatment of all citizens regardless of color." In addition, the fact that he had fought for better schools for black children was not lost upon Atlanta's black citizens. Under the leadership of the local chapter of the National Association of Colored People (NAACP), the Neighborhood Union, and the Atlanta Teachers' Union, several hundred previously unregistered black Atlantans registered to vote in this election. Black voters gave their unequivocal support to Mayor Key and, in doing so, helped defeat the recall effort.[10] It appears that the organizational effort used to maximize the black vote in this election was a deliberate effort to demonstrate the voting strength of Atlanta's black population.[11] The effort was successful in part because black voters contributed to retaining an elected official who had acted in their interest previously and had demonstrated a concern for the fair treatment of blacks. On the other hand, there were 6,000 blacks eligible to vote. Of that number, only 2,500 registered and less than one thousand voted in the recall election.

During this time there was a concern over what has been referred to as the "complete political apathy" of black people in Atlanta. The black vote was far from its maximum level in elections in which black Atlantans could vote. Under the stimulus of Attorney A. T. Walden,

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[10]Bacote, "Atlanta Politics," p. 342.

[11]Adair, "A Political History," p. 42.

president of the local NAACP, and of Mrs. John Hope, wife of the president of Morehouse College and Atlanta University, citizenship schools were established. The citizenship schools were conducted for six weeks for the purpose of instructing potential black voters on the structure of local, state and national governments, as well as on the procedures for registration and voting. The classes were held at churches in the community and at the Butler Street Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the only chapter of that national organization reserved for blacks in the city. Along with the NAACP, many pastors and members of the academic community were instrumental in developing and operating the citizenship schools. In particular, Dr. C. A. Bacote directed their operation in 1932, and from 1933 until 1938 Dr. Rayford Logan took over that task. Both were members of the Atlanta University faculty.

Although the restrictions against black voting were prohibitive, it was considered important for black voters to be prepared and registered for three reasons:

> 1) to be eligible to participate in open and special elections, 2) to be ready to vote in the general election in case an independent Democrat was dissatisfied with the results of the primary and decided to run in the general election, thereby seeking the Negro vote, 3) to be prepared in case the United States Supreme Court should ever decide that the white primary was unconstitutional.[12]

Hundreds of black Atlantans "graduated" from the citizenship schools from their inception in 1932 until 1938. Although the voter consciousness of many blacks had been raised, the statistics indicate that registration figures continued to lag far behind the numbers of

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[12]Bacote, "Atlanta Politics," p. 342.

blacks eligible to vote. In 1930, before the advent of the citizenship schools, there were only 500 blacks registered to vote although blacks comprised one-third of Atlanta's population. In 1932, over 2,500 blacks registered to vote, most probably as a result of the citizenship schools' work as well as of the recall election which presented an issue important to the community. It is reported, however, that registration figures fell by 1935 to 1,500[13] without a significant increase in city registration figures until 1940 when the number of registered black voters was recorded at 2,015.[14]

In 1934 an organization was established for the express purpose of "improving the economic, political and social conditions of the Negroes of Atlanta and Fulton County through the use of the ballot."[15] John Wesley Dobbs, a prominent black Republican, organized the Atlanta Civic and Political League (ACPL) whose immediate goal was to increase voter registration among Atlanta's black population. Mass rallies were held and several campaigns were launched by the ACPL between 1934 and 1946 to do just that. However, these campaigns met with dubious success since they did not result in registering large numbers of eligible blacks.

In a restatement of the Atlanta Civic and Political League's objectives in 1936, the leadership outlined several specific things it planned to achieve through maximizing the black vote. These included:

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[13] Adair, "A Political History," pp. 32, 33, 41, 47.

[14] Rosetta Sangster McKissack, "Attitudes Toward Negro Political Participation in Georgia, 1940 to 1947" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1954), p. 43.

[15] Atlanta Daily World, March 25, 1936, p. 6.

1) better parks and playgrounds in the black community; 2) gaining the right for black physicians to practice medicine at Grady Hospital (the major regional medical facility for Atlanta and Fulton County residents); 3) better schools and better conditions for teachers in terms of wages and general working conditions; and, 4) the hiring of black policemen and firemen.[16]

Membership in the ACPL was open to any black person in Atlanta or Fulton County who was a registered voter. At the same time leadership in the organization consisted of prominent community representatives, many of whom were active Republicans. Among the prominent members of the Atlanta Civic and Political League were W. J. Shaw, Secretary in the Republican Party; Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., pastor of Ebeneezer Baptist Church; H. W. Russell and W. H. Aiken, local contractors; C. L. Harper, principal of the Booker T. Washington High School; Mrs. Geneva Haugabrooks, owner of a funeral home; J. B. Blayton, owner of the black radio station, WERD; C. A. Scott, publisher of the black newspaper, the Atlanta Daily World; and A. T. Walden, a prominent lawyer and president of the local NAACP chapter.

Briefly, it is important to point out that while the president of the Atlanta Civic and Political League, John Wesley Dobbs, its organizer, also was Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons in Georgia. Dobbs used his position in that largely black fraternal order to promote registration and political education. His organizing was not confined to the city. He travelled throughout Georgia and, in doing so, was instrumental in the work of the Georgia Voters League, a statewide

[16]Ibid., p. 1.

organization designed to maximize the black vote. Further, Dobbs was a prominent black Republican. It has been reported that the "Negro Republican mantle" was passed from Benjamin Davis to Dobbs and W. J. Shaw.[17] Because of this, Dobbs is considered the leader of black Republicans in Atlanta from the 1930s until the time of his death.

In addition to the emergence of the ACPL, 1934 also spawned the Colored Voters League, the organizer of which was J. T. Carlton. The only discernible difference in purpose between this organization and the ACPL appears to be that the Colored Voters League attempted to broaden its scope to include registration of blacks throughout Fulton County. It seems, however, that the Colored Voters League was neither as prominent nor as effective in its efforts as the Atlanta Civic and Political League.

Because the leadership of the Atlanta Civic and Political League was predominantly Republican, several Democrats broke away from that organization in 1937. Led by Attorney A. T. Walden and newspaper publisher C. A. Scott, these Democrats formed the Citizens Democratic Club of Fulton County.[18]

In 1938, black people in Fulton County, of which most of Atlanta is a part, participated in two county elections. One election was for sheriff of Fulton County. The other was a referendum which proposed to legalize the sale of liquor in Atlanta and the county.

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[17]John Calhoun, "Significant Aspects of Some Negro Leaders' Contributions to the Progress of Atlanta, Georgia (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1968), p. 82.

[18]Malcolm Suber, "The Internal Black Politics of Atlanta, Georgia 1944 to 1969: An Analytic Study of Black Political Leadership and Organization" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1975), p. 51.

Although some black voters did take part in these elections, neither one appears to hold any significance for the discussion at hand.

The year 1944 marked the beginning of a new era in Southern politics. In that year, the United States Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the white primary in the Texas case of Smith versus Allwright.[19] That decision had the potential for impacting all of the states where segregation ruled at the ballot box. White Georgians reacted with characteristic belligerence. They took the position that the Texas decision did not affect Georgia and steadfastly refused to allow black voters to participate in primaries. In fact, a subcommittee of the Georgia Democratic Party's Executive Committee adopted a resolution in June of that year affirming that only whites would be allowed to vote in the forthcoming July primary.[20]

As a result of the Supreme Court decision and the intransigence of white election officials, black Democrats decided to bring suit in Georgia in order "to ascertain if the United States Supreme Court decision on the Texas Democratic primary applies to the Democratic primary machinery in Georgia."[21] Twenty members of the Citizens Democratic Club's Executive Committee presented themselves to vote in the July 4th primary but were turned away. This denial provided grounds for the suit filed in U.S. District Court in the name of Reverend Primus King

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[19] U.S. Supreme Court Reports, Smith v. Allwright, 1943 (321 U.S. 649-670), p. 987.

[20] McKissack, "Attitudes," pp. 26-27.

[21] Atlanta Constitution, August 24, 1944, p. 11

alleging violation of civil rights.[22] Georgia Governor Ellis Arnall later offered assistance to county registrars fighting suits against denials of blacks' right to vote.

A significant event succeeding these court actions occurred in 1945. The Georgia State Legislature, reportedly under the leadership of Governor Arnall, repealed the poll tax and lowered the voting age to eighteen (18). At first glance the poll tax repeal appears to have been a liberal move with the potential of breaking down the barriers to black electoral participation. However, figures indicated that as a result of the poll tax, for every one black that was kept from voting, six (6) whites also were prohibited from using the ballot.[23] In the face of a Supreme Court mandate allowing blacks to vote, it appears that Georgia legislators seized the opportunity--through repeal of the poll tax--to encourage as many whites as possible to vote.

Thus, in September 1945, in spite of the Supreme Court decision regarding the Texas primary, black Atlantans were not allowed to vote in the Democratic Party primary election that selected candidates for mayor and thirty-nine (39) other posts. As it happened, just after this election the Federal District Court announced its decision declaring Georgia's white primary unconstitutional. Even so, white resistance to black voting remained high, and the case was appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The year 1946 presented an opportunity for black Atlantans to vote. The incumbent Fifth District Congressman Robert Ramspeck

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[22]McKissack, "Attitudes," pp. 28-29.

[23]Ibid., pp. 21-22.

resigned from office. Because his replacement had to be selected in a special election, blacks could vote. Several black organizations spearheaded a drive to register large numbers of blacks. It appeared that the effort might be more successful in light of the poll tax repeal. The local NAACP, the Atlanta Civic and Political League, black ministers and clubs, and the Atlanta Daily World newspaper led the drive to register blacks to vote in this election. Registered black voters numbered only 3,000 in 1945. By the end of this campaign in the first months of 1946, 6,876 blacks had qualified to vote.[24]

In the special Congressional election for a Fifth District Representative, the black vote was critical. Although nineteen (19) candidates announced for this election, only five (5) or six (6) made an open appeal for black support. The record of former state legislator Helen Douglas Mankin, together with her "willingness to seek the Negro vote" garnered for her the support of the black community. On election day, February 12, 1946, with all precincts--except the black Precinct B in the Third Ward--reporting, Tom Camp held the lead over Mrs. Mankin by 156 votes. Of the more than one thousand votes cast in that black precinct, Mankin received 956 votes, giving her an 800 vote victory margin over Camp. Again, the black vote had proved critical to the outcome of an Atlanta election.[25]

On April 1, 1946, the U.S. Supreme Court--in the case of Chapman v. King[26]--refused to review the decision rendered by the

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[24] Bacote, "Atlanta Politics," p. 344.

[25] Ibid.

[26] 154F. (2d) 460 (1946).

Federal District Court and reaffirmed by the U.S. Court of Appeals. In doing so, the Supreme Court upheld the lower courts' rulings that declared Georgia's white primary unconstitutional. There were demands made from many quarters that the governor convene a special session of the state legislature in order that some way might be created to circumvent the ruling. Governor Arnall refused such appeals.[27] Although under the gubernatorial leadership of Herman Talmadge--appointed at the death of his father Eugene--the white primary later was readopted, this court ruling effectively eliminated the all-white party primary from Atlanta politics.

The anticipation by blacks of a favorable decision was seen in the mobilization of black Atlantans in a city-wide registration campaign aimed at organizing black voters for the 1946 gubernatorial election. This race provided incentive for black participation because the leading contender was ex-governor Eugene Talmadge who was running on a white-supremacist platform. By his previous record and by his promises to pursue racist policies, Talmadge defined himself as unalterably opposed to black interests and, thus, provided the momentum for a large black turnout.

A small group of black community leaders recognized the need for a large black vote and, at the same time, acknowledged that previous efforts had not been successful in reaching the masses of potential black voters. A coalition of organizations, under the leadership of the local NAACP chapter, formed the All-Citizens Registration

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[27]Bacote, "Atlanta Politics," p. 344.

Committee designed to canvass and register blacks wherever they resided in the city.

The campaign began on March 6, 1946, prior to the Supreme Court decision. It employed the support and energies of several groups in addition to the NAACP, including the Atlanta Civic and Political League, the organization of black Democrats, the Atlanta Urban League, Butler Street YMCA, fraternities and clubs, as well as individual ministers, businessmen and the hundreds of workers who walked mile after mile registering blacks from block to block. The All-Citizens Registration Committee campaign was a vigorous one that attempted to reach every voting age black person in the city. When the campaign closed in May 1946--after the Supreme Court ruling had been rendered--24,137 blacks were registered to vote in Fulton County, 21,244 of whom were registered voters living within the city limits of Atlanta.[28] Furthermore, between the time of this campaign in 1946 and 1948, approximately 25,000 blacks were registered to vote under the impetus of the All-Citizens Registration Committee.

In an effort to encourage these newly registered voters to use the ballot, the local NAACP reactivated the citizenship schools. These sessions, held throughout the black community, informed blacks about government structure, procedures for using voting machines, prominent issues, and the records of the various candidates in the 1946 gubernatorial campaign. Although blacks voted heavily in this election, Talmadge won the governor's race.

It should be noted also that there were widespread attempts to

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[28]Ibid., pp. 346-48.

purge black voters from the registration lists throughout the state. Such moves were fought by the black State Association of Citizens' Democratic Clubs including the local Citizens Democratic Club of Fulton County. A federal investigation forced many names to be put back on the lists.[29] At any rate, this appears not to have been a significant problem for black voters in Atlanta.

In summary, black Atlantans clearly were denied the right to vote in major elections for nearly a half-century. In spite of such prohibitions, however, black voters made the most of the few opportunities to vote that presented themselves, such as special elections and referenda. In several of these, the black vote proved decisive in the election outcome. While this vote was critical in many circumstances, it must be pointed out that those blacks who did vote in these elections never numbered more than a few thousand or more than a very small percentage of the potential black electorate. On the other hand, a cross-section of community, business, and religious leaders, on several occasions, attempted to raise and maintain the community's consciousness of voting. Until 1946, however, such efforts failed to reach the masses of black citizens. In light of such activities, it is important to turn now to an analysis of black electoral behavior in Atlanta during this period of disfranchisement.

First, the potential political power of the black community in Atlanta must be assessed. To do so, this discussion will focus on population and voter registration data and socioeconomic status indicators. In 1910, Atlanta's black population comprised about forty

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[29]McKissack, "Attitudes," pp. 65-67.

percent (40%) of its total population. In the census years following, the city's black population is recorded at about one-third of the total population (see Table One). This trend continued through the period of disfranchisement.

Voter registration figures for these years are scarce and sometimes not easily verifiable. Yet, it is possible to get some idea of the voting potential of the black population from data available in the literature. One source stated that toward the beginning of this period of disfranchisement, in 1908, of a potential 16,661 black voters only 1,500 were registered.[30] Previously discussed figures reveal that registration fluctuated from raised levels in 1929 and 1932--special election years in which blacks voted heavily--to a low of 1,500 in 1935. Not until 1940 are well documented figures available again regarding registered voters. Only 2,015 blacks were recorded as registered in that year. Considering the fact that the black voting-age population stood at 67,908, only a tiny percentage of voting-age blacks were registered (see Table Two). This is characteristic of the disfranchisement years. Further, in 1945, approximately 3,000 blacks were registered. This figure represented only four percent (4%) of all registered voters, a figure far too low to include all voting-age blacks.

The 1946 special Congressional election boosted black registration figures by February to total 6,876 or 8.3 percent of the population registered to vote. At the conclusion of the All-Citizens Registration Committee campaign in May 1946, 21,244 blacks had

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[30]Bacote, "Atlanta Politics," p. 341.

TABLE 1

POPULATION OF ATLANTA 1900-1970

Year	Total Population	White Population	Whites as Per-cent of Total Population	Black Population	Blacks as Per-cent of Total Population
1900	89,872	54,145	60.2	35,727	39.8
1910	154,839	102,937	66.5	51,902	33.5
1920	200,616	137,820	68.7	62,796	31.3
1930	270,366	180,291	66.7	90,075	33.3
1940	302,288	197,686	65.4	104,533	34.6
1950	331,314	209,898	63.4	121,285	36.6
1960	487,455	300,635	61.7	186,464	38.3
1970	496,973	240,503	48.7	255,051	51.3

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

TABLE 2

VOTING AGE POPULATION IN ATLANTA BY RACE
18 Years and Older

Year	Total Population	White Population	Whites as Percent of Total Population	Black Population	Blacks as Percent of Total Population
1940	202,762	131,958	65.1	67,908	34.9
1950	225,481	146,992	65.2	78,489	34.8
1960	302,564	197,381	65.2	105,183	34.8
1970	306,175	166,788	54.8	138,330	45.2

SOURCE: Office of the Registrar, Fulton County.

registered to vote, representing 27.2 percent of the voting-age population registered to vote (see Table Three). It is clear from these data that throughout the period of disfranchisement in Georgia, few black Atlantans--as a percentage of those eligible--were registered to vote. Obstacles to registration included the barriers contained in the 1908 constitutional amendment, the poll tax, and in the apathy engendered by blacks' inability to vote in primary elections where policy-making elected officials were chosen. Thus, the potential power of blacks at the ballot box was minimal during the decades of disfranchisement in Georgia.

There were no blacks holding elective office from the turn of the century through 1946. Although two blacks ran for office in 1934--one for the Board of Aldermen and the other for the Board of Education--neither was elected in spite of receiving the support of the two voter leagues and the overwhelming majority of black votes in their own wards. Thus, black office-holding as a source of potential political power is neither a significant nor a viable indicator during this period.

Furthermore, it is important to review socioeconomic characteristics of Atlanta's black population in assessing its potential political power. Education is considered a factor in socioeconomic status either because of the direct influence education might have in the political arena or, most probably, because of the income-earning potential it might command. From 1900 through 1930, education was measured by the Census Bureau in terms of illiteracy which was defined as the inability to write in any language. As shown in Table Four, more than one-third of Atlanta's black population was illiterate at the

TABLE 3

BLACK REGISTERED VOTERS IN ATLANTA
FULTON COUNTY PORTION

Year	Blacks Registered to Vote	Percent of Registered Voters
1908	1,500	
1929	3,301*	
1930	500	
1932	2,500	
1935	1,500	
1940	2,015	
1945	3,000	4.0
1946 (February)	6,876	8.3
After Supreme Court Ruling against White Primary in Georgia:		
1946 (June)	21,244	27.2
1952	22,300	25.8
1956	23,440	27.0
1958	27,440	25.3
1960	34,393	29.5
1961	41,469	28.6
1962	44,846	31.5
1963	43,722	31.5
1964	59,084	34.0
1965	57,068	34.5
1966	63,807	36.0
1967	64,390	36.8
1968	75,361	38.0
1969	81,354	40.7
1970	87,541	41.7

SOURCE: Augustus Alven Adair, "A Political History of the Negro in Atlanta 1908-1953" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1955); C. A. Bacote, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," Phylon 16 (Fourth Quarter 1955); Rosetta Sangster McKissack, "Attitudes Toward Negro Political Participation in Georgia, 1940-1947" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1954); Office of the Registrar, Fulton County.

*This figure is the total for Fulton County; the figure for Atlanta only was not available.

TABLE 4

EDUCATION AMONG THE ATLANTA POPULATION BY MEASURE OF ILLITERACY*
1900-1930

Year	Total Number of Illiterate Persons	Illiterates as Percent of Total Population	Number of Whites Illiterate	White Illiterates as Percent of Total Population	Number of Blacks Illiterate	Black Illiterates as Percent of Total Population
1900	NA		NA		NA	35.1
1910	NA	8.6	NA		NA	
1920	11,031	6.6	1,339	1.2	9,465	17.8
1930	9,283	4.1	1,478**	0.98**	7,801	10.4

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

*Illiteracy was defined in the Census as the inability to write in any language.

**These figures include those persons designated as native white and foreign-born white.

beginning of the century. By the 1940 census, education was measured in school years completed. Black Atlanta's median education in that year was 5.9 years, not quite the complete equivalent of a primary school education (see Table Five). From both tables it is clear that black Atlantans never were as well educated as the white population of the city.

Economic status is measured by income. Unfortunately, the data regarding income are not available by race for Atlanta prior to the 1950 census. However, because black median income has never been less than forty-seven (47) percent of white income in any census in which it was recorded, it is reasonable to assume that the median income of black Atlantans always has been substantially less than that of the white population (see Table Six). Furthermore, a review of black occupations reveals that, prior to 1940, blacks engaged in professional and managerial occupations comprised only 4.3 percent of the black labor force. Again, it appears reasonable to assume that the numbers of blacks engaged in such higher status occupations prior to 1940 did not exceed the levels in that year.

Given these factors, the socioeconomic characteristics of the black population in Atlanta reveal that it was--as a whole--at a relative disadvantage to the white population. Thus, if there is a direct relationship between affluence and political power--the ability to influence the political process--then, blacks had a considerably smaller degree of influence in the decision-making process than white Atlantans. This powerlessness is compounded when the legislated barriers--the poll tax, grandfather clause, white primary and other restrictions--to black electoral participation are considered. Given that blacks comprised at

TABLE 5

YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED FOR NON-WHITE POPULATION OF ATLANTA AND MEDIAN SCHOOL YEARS COMPLETED FOR PERSONS 25 YEARS AND OLDER 1940-1970

Year	Years of School Completed							Median for Blacks	Median for Total Population
				High School		College			
	None	1-4	5-8	1-3	4	1-3	4 or more		
1940	3,776	18,308	26,346	4,898	2,611	1,724	1,211	5.9	8.6
	6.4%	30.8%	44.3%	8.2%	4.4%	2.9%	2.0%		
1950	3,615	17,955	27,180	9,210	5,415	2,765	2,330	6.8	9.5
	5.1%	25.6%	38.7%	13.1%	7.7%	3.9%	3.3%		
1960	3,847	18,616	33,425	18,423	12,330	3,833	3,613	7.9	10.5
	3.7%	19.8%	35.5%	19.6%	13.1%	4.1%	3.8%		
1970	3,374	13,938	29,365	25,571	25,571	6,994	7,989	10.1 (9.9)*	11.6 (11.2)*
	2.8%	11.7%	26.7%	24.7%	21.5%	5.9%	6.7%	9.6	10.7

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

*These figures are for Atlanta in Fulton and DeKalb Counties. No median figures were given for the city as a whole. The top figure is for Atlanta in Fulton County; the bottom figure is for Atlanta in DeKalb County. The figure in parentheses is the average median for Atlanta in both counties.

TABLE 6

BLACK FAMILY INCOME AND MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME
1950-1970

	Number and Percent of Black Families					
	1950		1960		1970	
Family Income	N	%	N	%	N	%
$0-1,999	NA		10,435	25.5	7,460	13.1
$2,000-3,999	NA		16,712	40.8	9,068	15.9
$4,000-5,999	NA		8,092	19.8	10,004	17.6
$6,000-7,999	NA		3,251	7.9	8,883	15.6
$8,000-9,999	NA		1,435	3.5	7,421	13.0
$10,000 and over	NA		1,046	2.5	14,102	24.8
Median Income for Total Population	$2,664		$6,042		$8,399	
Median Black Family Income	$1,427		$3,108		$6,363** $7,019	($6,691)

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

*Family income for Blacks was not reported in the 1950 Census.

**Median income for Atlanta's non-white population was divided by county. The top figure is for Atlanta in Fulton County; the bottom figure is for Atlanta in DeKalb County. The figure in parentheses is the average of these two.

least one-third of Atlanta's population between 1900 and 1946, the black community had a potentially strong power base. However, because of limited voter registration and participation, lack of black elected officials, and relatively low socioeconomic status, black Atlantans did not maximize the potential power of their community during the years of disfranchisement.

The inability to exercise the vote was a major obstacle in maximizing the potential power of blacks in Atlanta. Unable to elect public officials disposed to protect or foster the interests of their community, blacks could neither obtain substantial benefits, prevent the adoption of public policies inimical to their interests, nor ensure that the needs of the community were met. The vote, then, although the only leverage available to blacks, was severely restricted and, thus, of little utility in efforts to use it as an instrument of exchange.

In a review of the nature of black political behavior in Atlanta during this period, it is important to consider the nature of the leadership of the community. Atlanta's black leadership appears to emerge from the major civic, educational, religious, social and social service organizations in the black community. The roster of affiliations includes black churches, businesses, schools, fraternities and other social organizations, and service organizations such as the NAACP, Urban League and the Butler Street "Y." Some black leaders were active participants in the major political parties, such as Benjamin Davis, John Wesley Dobbs, and W. J. Shaw with the Republican Party, and A. T. Walden and Warren Cochrane with the Democrats. It seems that such party activists emerged as leaders aside from their party affiliations, not because of them.

Black leadership is identified primarily by its efforts to organize the black electorate. Contact with the white power structure appears to have been limited; so, it can be assumed that the leadership was not appointed or designated by whites. Malcolm Suber, in his Master's Thesis study entitled "The Internal Black Politics of Atlanta, Georgia 1944 to 1969," suggests that some blacks "announced" their leadership, setting themselves up as leaders, rather than emerging as leaders at the behest of the community.[31] As a modification of this notion, it is assumed here that leadership status came with organizational position. In reviewing the organizations and institutions which spearheaded electoral efforts, the leadership of these organizations emerge as the political leadership of the times. In the cases of primarily social organizations, the leaders were chosen by the membership. For example, John Wesley Dobbs was elected Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons. On the other hand, leaders that emerge from other organizations or institutions were not selected by a membership representative of the larger black community, such as those from the black college campuses, businesses, the Urban League or the Butler Street "Y." Therefore, the conclusion is that black political leadership initially emerged from the community's organizational leadership and further solidified its leadership status through activism primarily designed to maximize the black vote.

The function performed by black political leaders in Atlanta was development of the black vote for use in special elections or in the event that the white primary would be declared unconstitutional.

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[31] Suber, "Internal Black Politics," p. 54.

Because the black electorate was not organized, there was not--in most cases--a bloc of votes with which black leaders could negotiate with the power structure for benefits. One exception to this is the 1921 school bond referendum which initially suffered two defeats with the aid of black voters. Subsequent to a meeting between black leaders--who were not identified--and the white mayor and school board president in which the black community was promised tangible benefits--a portion of the bond issue for improvement of black schools--the measure passed with the overwhelming support of black voters. In other elections, however, although blacks voted for candidates least opposed to the community's interests, there is no evidence indicating that black leaders negotiated the exchange of black electoral support for any benefits from these candidates. Black leaders appear to have directed their efforts toward developing that vote so that later it could be used in the exchange process.

Another element pertinent to black political behavior is organizational development. As the reader will recall, three organizations emerged in the 1930s: the Atlanta Civic and Political League (1934), the Colored Voters League (1934), and the Citizens Democratic Club of Fulton County (1937). Included in the purpose of the ACPL was the acquisition of improvements in the quality of life in the black community "through the use of the ballot." The other organizations' purposes were the same although their target population or party preference was different. The literature indicates that these groups, particularly the Atlanta Civic and Political League, focused their energies on maximizing and organizing the black vote. As Dr. C. A. Bacote acknowledges, in the article "The Negro in Atlanta Politics,"

the groups and the leadership were not successful in registering the masses of black Atlantans until 1946.[32]

What becomes clear in a review of the period is that black leaders and organizations had little in the way of benefits to offer blacks in exchange for their vote or for their membership in an organization. Purposive rewards, such as the feeling that their efforts advanced the struggle of black people, were virtually the only benefit black leaders or groups could offer the community. Tangible or material benefits were unavailable because the white power structure was not disposed to offer such as long as the black vote was not critical to its maintenance of power.

In spite of this, some elements of exchange did exist in this situation. First, there was a large potential black electorate. Secondly, the black electorate was in need of, according to socio-economic indicators, material or welfare benefits. Further, an element of exchange noted by Murray and Vedlitz in their discussion of exchange theory--a lack of communication between the black electorate and the white power structure--existed, presenting the leadership an opportunity to develop a link for communication and, thus, an exchange pattern. The obstacle to the development of a clear-cut exchange pattern, then, appears to be in the "legal" barriers to black voting. The element of leverage which the black community could use for exchange--the vote--was not organized or even available to blacks in circumstances where it most effectively could be used--the primary election.

Thus, at the close of the period of disfranchisement in Georgia,

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[32]Bacote, "Atlanta Politics," p. 346.

in 1946, black Atlanta had significant potential power but lacked the ability to use the vote in an exchange process to maximize that power. Once the barriers to black voting were dismantled, black Atlantans did register to vote, but the vote remained unorganized initially and not fully developed (only twenty-seven percent (27%) of blacks in Atlanta registered in 1946). The stage of political development in terms of exchange, then, conforms to the expectations postulated in exchange theory: that the black electorate had difficulty organizing because of its lack of resources (and large size) and, further, that voter organizations were unable to unite the black electorate in order to secure benefits or to maximize its political power.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL EXCHANGE

This chapter will review black political activity in Atlanta from 1946 up to 1969. The year 1946 ushered in a new era of black political history in Atlanta, for in this year legal barriers to black voting were dismantled. Black voters began participating in the electoral life of the city in significant numbers for the first time in the twentieth century. Before recounting the events which mark that history, however, it is necessary to assess the potential political power of Atlanta's black community during this period.

The first factor of importance in this assessment involves population statistics. In 1940 blacks comprised one-third of Atlanta's total population. By 1950, this proportion grew to thirty-six percent (36%) and by 1960 the black portion of Atlanta's population was thirty-eight percent (38%). This last figure slightly under-represents the growth of the black population because during this decade some outlying areas were annexed to Atlanta adding white residents--and voters--to the city's population. The 1970 census numbers Atlanta's population at nearly one-half of one million with blacks constituting a majority--fifty-one percent (51%)--for the first time (Table One).

For the first two (2) decades of this period--1940 through 1960--the black voting age population was about thirty-five percent (35%) of the total population eighteen (18) years of age or older. Not

until 1970 did blacks show gains in potential voting power. In that year, although comprising a majority of the general population, blacks made up a minority of those eligible to vote--forty-five percent (45%)--while whites retained a voting majority comprising fifty-five percent (55%) of the voting age population (Table Two).

More important in an assessment of potential political power, however, are voter registration figures. One can see from Table Three that in 1940 the two thousand blacks registered to vote comprised a miniscule portion of Atlanta's voting population. The critical year during this decade is 1946. Prior to that year's Supreme Court decision outlawing state legislated barriers to black voting, black registered voters made up only eight percent (8%) of Atlanta's voting population. A massive voter registration drive launched after this ruling increased the numbers of black voters in the city from 6,876 to 21,244 or twenty-seven percent (27%) of registered voters. The data for black voter registration in 1952 reflect that year's annexation effects. The percent of black registered voters dropped to twenty-five (25) even though the number had increased to 22,300. In 1960 voter registration figures reflect some growth in the proportion of Atlanta's black registered voters; they accounted for thirty percent (30%) of registered voters. For the mayoral elections of 1961 and 1965, the number of black voters registered jumped from 41,469 to 57,068, an increase from twenty-eight percent (28%) to thirty-four percent (34%) of registered voters. Toward the end of this period, though constituting a population majority, registered black voters were numbered at 81,354 or forty percent (40%) of those registered in Atlanta.

Statistics revealing socioeconomic characteristics of Atlanta's

black population are considered to be indicative of its potential power because it appears that more affluent people tend to have disproportionate influence within the political process. In 1940, blacks' educational attainment--measured in median school years completed--lagged more than two (2) years behind that of whites and remained so until 1970 when the difference in school years completed was about one and one-half (Table Five). It should be pointed out that in 1940 eighty percent (80%) of black Atlantans had not attained a primary school education and by 1970 sixty-five percent (65%) of blacks had not completed high school. Comparatively, black Atlantans' educational levels never equalled those of the white population during this period.

A significant indicator of economic status is income. In 1950, the first year figures are available, although black family income was not reported, the median black family income was $1,427 compared to the total population's median income of $2,664--a level measuring little more than half of the income of families in the general population (Table Six). By 1960, family income more than doubled but for the black family dropped relative to median family income for the total population. In that year black family income in Atlanta was $3,108, only fifty-one percent (51%) of median family income for Atlanta's total population ($6,042). In 1970 black earnings made significant gains, measuring nearly eighty percent (80%) of median family income for the total population. In order to keep these figures in perspective, it must be remembered that in 1960 eighty-five percent (85%) of black Atlanta families earned less than $6,000 and by 1970 sixty percent (60%) of these families still earned incomes below that figure. Thus,

the overwhelming majority of Atlanta's black families had relatively low income levels.

A further indicator of socioeconomic status is occupation. Table Seven reveals that in the census years 1940, 1950 and 1960 more than one-half of Atlanta's employed blacks worked as laborers, service and household workers. During these decades, barely six percent (6%) of blacks worked at professional and managerial occupations. By 1970 more blacks had moved into higher status occupations as skilled workers. Still, forty percent (40%) of employed blacks worked as unskilled laborers while at the other end of the occupational status scale eleven percent (11%) of blacks held professional jobs.

Finally, one factor which comes into play for the first time during this period must be noted. Black office-holding contributes to the potential political power of black Atlantans. For the first time in this century, there was one black person elected to the nine (9) member Board of Education in 1953. Although black candidates sought election to the City's Board of Aldermen for several years, it was not until 1965 that a black person was elected to that eighteen (18) member body. In county government (Fulton County, in which the majority of Atlanta lies) no blacks held elective office. It was not until the early 1960s that blacks were elected to the state legislature--mentioned here because they were elected from Atlanta districts although they served in elective offices at the state government level.

In assessing the potential political power of blacks in Atlanta, population statistics indicate that blacks have comprised, since 1940, a significant portion of the general population as well as of the voting age population, thus constituting a potentially powerful

TABLE 7

OCCUPATIONS OF BLACKS IN ATLANTA 16 YEARS AND OLDER
1940-1970

Occupation	Number and Percent of Blacks Employed in Each Category							
	1940		1950		1960		1970	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Professional and Managerial	1,954	4.3	2,929	5.6	3,971	5.7	11,308	11.4
Sales and Clerical	1,243	2.8	2,675	5.1	4,699	6.8	18,983	19.1
Craftsmen and Operatives	9,655	21.5	13,755	26.2	17,396	25.2	30,528	30.8
Laborers, Service Workers and Household Workers	31,837	71.0	32,610	62.0	38,002	55.0	38,564	38.8
Total Employed	44,879		52,552		69,049		99,383	

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

force. The significance of the population size increases as Atlanta's black population grows approaching the end of the period under study. Unfortunately, blacks have not maximized this potential as reflected in voter registration data. These show that although able to cast thirty-five percent (35%) of the votes in Atlanta through the 1940s and 1950s, blacks did not register to vote at that level until the mid-1960s (by which time the potential probably had increased). Even so, registration figures for blacks reflected significant potential black voting power.

On the other hand, income, educational and occupational characteristics reveal that black Atlantans have been socioeconomically subordinate to the white population, possessing little affluence and, thus, having had a considerably smaller degree of influence, deriving from these factors, in the political process. Finally, the relative dearth of black elected officials and their minority position vis-à-vis the size of the legislative, consensus-run bodies to which they belonged minimized the effectiveness of black office-holding on the potential political power of blacks in Atlanta.

Given all these factors, it can be concluded that black potential political power in the city during this period had an increasing significance. More than any other indicators, potential voting strength contributed to this potential for influence in the political process while socioeconomic conditions reduced it. No doubt, however, there was significant potential for blacks to exercise political power from 1946 up through the 1960s. The history of this period will reveal the extent to which this potential was translated into actual power.

The year 1946 ushered in a new political era for the black

citizens of Atlanta. Blacks registered to vote in such numbers--following that year's Supreme Court invalidation of Georgia's white primary--that they held a potential twenty-seven percent (27%) of the city's votes. For the first time blacks could have a significant bargaining position in city elections--if the black vote had been organized. In fact, it is reported that the Republican-oriented Atlanta Civic and Political League clashed with Black Democrats during the 1948 election for Fulton County Solicitor.[1]

These two groupings, Democrat and Republican, represented the organizational division in the black community. In an effort to maintain and unify the black vote, black Republicans, under the leadership of John Wesley Dobbs, and black Democrats, under the direction of A. T. Walden, joined together to form the Atlanta Negro Voters League in 1949. The League was a membership organization designed to register blacks to vote and to endorse candidates, thus, providing a strengthened and organized black vote in local elections.

This year also marked the nascent emergence of an interracial coalition which successfully supported mayoral candidates through two decades of elections. Black voters, under the leadership of the Atlanta Negro Voters League, along with white voters from Atlanta's affluent north side supported William B. Hartsfield in his 1949 re-election bid for mayor. That Democratic primary--which still was the vehicle that produced the city's elected officials--was the first in which white candidates no longer risked political suicide by openly seeking black votes. White candidates began to appear at meetings and

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[1]John H. Calhoun, "Significant Aspects of Some Negro Leaders' Contributions to the Progress of Atlanta, Georgia" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1968), p. 93.

rallies in wards with large numbers of black voters soliciting their support. City leaders also recognized the strength of the black vote which provided the margin of victory to Hartsfield in the mayoral elections of 1949, 1953 and 1957.[2]

The Atlanta Negro Voters League (ANVL) provided the leadership that is credited for organizing the black vote in these elections. Black voters generally supported League-endorsed candidates at the polls to the extent that the ANVL was recognized as the vehicle for soliciting the black vote.[3] A review of the League's activities will demonstrate its effectiveness throughout the decade of the 1950s.

The purpose of the Atlanta Negro Voters League was to organize Atlanta's black voters. In discussing the purpose of the League, C. A. Bacote suggests that in the organization of black voters, the strength of the black vote would be maximized.[4] Thus, early efforts by the ANVL included registering more blacks to vote. The All-Citizens Registration Committee, which had registered almost 18,000 black voters in 1946, operated under the auspices of the ANVL in order to accomplish this task. A primary purpose of the Atlanta Negro Voters League was to unify the black community in supporting "the most desirable" candidates in local elections. Members were free to vote for any candidate of their choice in national elections but were expected to vote for League-endorsed candidates in city and county elections.

The endorsement of candidates was a major function of the ANVL;

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[2]Ibid., p. 95.

[3]Interview with John H. Calhoun, October 17, 1978.

[4]Interview with C. A. Bacote, Ph.D., Chairman, Department of History, Atlanta University, March 29, 1976.

in order to do this, a Screening Committee was formed consisting primarily of the group's Executive Committee. These officers, committee chairpersons, ward and precinct leaders along with "pastors and other civic leaders" would hear the presentations of candidates invited to speak and would question them on critical issues. A secret ballot would be taken in committee a few days before the election and the results made known to a group of officers who then would prepare a "ticket" of recommendations by the League.[5] Tens of thousands of copies of the "ticket" bearing instructions on the use of voting machines, the name of the organization and the signatures of its chairman would be distributed throughout the black community.

The ANVL succeeded in its efforts to turn out the black vote in the municipal elections of 1949, 1953 and 1957 and those voters supported, in overwhelming numbers, League-endorsed candidates at the polls. As a result, the ANVL developed the reputation for being able to "deliver" black votes, a factor which hastened its recognition by the white power structure in Atlanta.

League membership was open to individuals as well as organizations in the black community but was "comprised mainly of (community) leaders" in the estimate of Dr. Robert Brisbane, Chairman of the Morehouse College Department of Political Science.[6] The leadership of the ANVL included John Wesley Dobbs and A. T. Walden, its first co-chairmen, as well as others active in the business and political life of the black community including Warren Cochrane, director of the

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[5]Calhoun, "Negro Leaders' Contributions," pp. 99-100.

[6]Interview with Robert Brisbane, Ph.D., Chairman, Department of Political Science, Morehouse College, March 26, 1976.

Butler Street YMCA; C. A. Scott, editor of the black daily newspaper; W. J. Shaw, secretary in the Republican party organization; J. R. Henderson, manager of a public housing project; Walter H. Aiken, contractor; John Calhoun, businessman; C. R. Yates, operator of a drug store chain; high school principal, Professor C. L. Harper; Reverend Martin Luther King, Sr., pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church; director of the Atlanta Urban League, Grace T. Hamilton; and others including J. C. Long, J. D. Whitaker, R. A. Thompson, Charles Greenlea, V. W. Hodges, and W. S. Holloman.

The leadership of the ANVL remained in the hands of a small group, limiting the ability for young aspiring politicos to rise within the organization. Membership, however, remained sufficiently open so that most community leaders could feel as if they "had a part in determining how blacks would vote."[7] Furthermore, most of the leadership of the League held leadership positions in other institutions, from political organizations to social and civic groups as well as schools and churches. They comprised, therefore, the leadership of black Atlanta's institutional as well as political life.

The Atlanta Negro Voters League operated to register blacks to vote, educate those voters and get them to the polls on election day to vote for candidates screened by community leaders and selected as "the lesser of two evils."[8] It was important that the ANVL support those candidates that were perceived by blacks as responsible to--or

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[7]Malcolm Suber, "The Internal Black Politics of Atlanta, Georgia 1944 to 1969: An Analytic Study of Black Political Leadership and Organization" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1975), p. 62.

[8]Interview with Brisbane.

minimally, least opposed to--the interests of black Atlantans. Evidently, through the 1950s the League succeeded in this effort because black voters continued to support League choices, indicating that it retained a significant degree of trust from the black community.

Able to "deliver" black votes, the Atlanta Negro Voters League was recognized as a political force to be reckoned with by elements within the white power structure, particularly elected officials. This recognition enabled the black leadership of the ANVL to maintain communications with the city's leadership. As a result of black acknowledgement of and trust in its leadership, its access to white leadership, its ability to command a significant portion of the city's votes, the Atlanta Negro Voters League became the link between the black community and the white power structure, a clearinghouse for black problems.

This raises the question about the existence and nature of the exchange process accompanying the activities of the Voters League. From a review of the literature and from interviews with persons having knowledge of this period of black political activity, it can be assumed that the black political leadership made requests that were implicit suggestions for benefits rather than explicit demands. In the "screening" process, where candidates for public office responded to the questions of the ANVL Screening Committee members, electoral support was implied in exchange for attention to concerns expressed by the black leadership in those sessions.[9] Although the elements of exchange were alluded to rather than made explicit, this in no way alters the

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[9]Interview with Calhoun.

character of the exchange process. The participants in the interchange knew clearly that the votes of black citizens were brokered by the Atlanta Negro Voters League in exchange for benefits to be delivered by white elected officials.

Direct demands appear to have been put to city officials. In this case, the League leadership requested benefits of Mayor Hartsfield's administration. Hartsfield already had received the critical support of black voters in the 1949 city election. No doubt, the implication of future votes was implied in the requests for city attention to black community needs.

Benefits accruing to the black community during this period include new and improved facilities such as lights, streets, garbage collection, sidewalks and school buildings. Blacks were hired as policemen and police brutality against blacks was reduced. Treatment of black citizens by city officials was improved while discriminatory courtroom behavior and treatment were minimized. A less tangible benefit lay in the fact that by defeating staunch segregationists at the polls, black voters kept "racial moderates" in office and, thus, "committed the city's leadership to moderation."[10]

Asked whether individual black leaders received anything specifically beneficial, persons interviewed did not denote that any leader received something in exchange for black support. However, the probability that individual benefits may have accrued to several leaders was not discounted.

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[10]Harry Holloway, The Politics of the Southern Negro: From Exclusion to Big City Organization (New York: Random House, 1969), p. 201.

The question of whether the Atlanta Negro Voters League received any direct benefits was addressed by John Calhoun, a political leader of several years experience in Atlanta. In his thesis discussing black leaders' contributions to Atlanta's progress, Calhoun recounts the process whereby the ANVL treasurer would "suggest confidentially" a contribution from candidates appearing before the Screening Committee. The transaction took place so that only the treasurer knew how much money each candidate contributed to pay "for expenses." Calhoun adds that:

> the amount of money has nothing to do with the recommendations . . . Although the charges of 'vote buying' and 'fraud' have been made, none have been proven and after the 1961 election, the Fulton County Grand Jury investigated but gave the League a clean bill of health.[11]

The benefits derived from the exchange brokered by the Atlanta Negro Voters League were significant gains and of importance to the black community. However, these benefits for the most part, did not accrue to the vast majority of Atlanta's black population. The masses of poor blacks benefited little from these concessions.[12] Further, it must be pointed out that in spite of black voter registration and organization, segregation remained intact, a fact which overshadows the benefits achieved.

Even so, the Atlanta Negro Voters League was without viable competition from 1949 until the 1960s. The West Side Voters League was organized in 1949 by J. C. Long, the ANVL's Republican co-vice-chairman who resigned after an altercation with co-chairman Dobbs.

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[11]Calhoun, "Negro Leaders' Contributions," p. 100.

[12]Holloway, Politics of the Southern Negro, p. 202.

This group is reported to have been composed of west side leaders, who "resisted the influence of the 'Auburn Avenue' politicians" and never developed the grass roots organization which characterized the ANVL.[13] Another group organized outside of the ANVL was the South Atlanta Civic League started by L. D. Simon purportedly "in protest against the neglect" of Atlanta's south side. Calhoun goes on to report that other organizations emerged during this period but none has "prevailed against the campaigns of the Atlanta Negro Voters League."[14] Brisbane further characterizes these splinter groups as narrowly focused on neighborhood issues.[15] At any rate, none successfully challenged the leadership of ANVL.

A review of the activities and operation of the League must conclude that the organization was effective in meeting its goals of registering blacks to vote, turning out the black vote on election day, "delivering" the vote to endorsed candidates, and securing benefits for the black community. There is no doubt that the ANVL served as the channel for communications and for benefits between the white power structure and the black community. At the same time, however, the League did not incorporate channels for sustained contact with the bulk of black voters, thereby losing input from the masses of black Atlantans. The leadership of the League was small and remained relatively closed, allowing no opportunity for the development of new, young leadership.

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[13]Calhoun, "Negro Leaders' Contributions," pp. 97-98.

[14]Ibid., p. 100.

[15]Interview with Brisbane.

Finally, the League appears to have succeeded in establishing black voters as a significant political force in city politics but did not maximize black political power to an extent that elevated blacks from "second class citizenship." As noted above, the Atlanta Negro Voters League did secure some benefits but these were selective and did not affect the masses of black voters. Secondly, a measure of black political power is its ability to prevent policy inimical to the interests of the community. The fact alone that segregation remained intact suggests failure in this regard. Finally, it is clear that no black agenda--items of interest to the welfare of the black community--was developed or included in the policy-making process. Rather, issues appear to have emerged in an ad hoc fashion with no systematic input from the community and no design for improving qualitatively the welfare of Atlanta's black citizens.

The Atlanta Negro Voters League, despite its weaknesses and significant but limited successes, was a critical force in the political development of black Atlantans. It served important functions, particularly in organizing the black vote to develop its strength. Perhaps the limitations of its successes caught up with the League and were made more prominent by the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement, its new leadership style and demands. The activities of the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta in the early 1960s caused a disruption in black leadership and the emergence of a new leadership group within the black community. It is important to turn to a discussion of the 1960s and their attendant changes in black political history in Atlanta.

On February 1, 1960, black students held the first sit-in at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. Within one week, similar

groups were sitting down, refusing to leave in protest of segregated facilities across the South. In response to this movement and in anticipation of its spread to Georgia, the state's legislature enacted an anti-trespass law on February 17, 1960.

On March 15, 1960 seventy-seven (77) students were arrested for demonstrating in the first sit-in in Atlanta. From this action, protest escalated to include picket lines, mass meetings and a march on the state capitol. After summer vacation, sit-ins resumed in October when large numbers of students were arrested once again. This time the students refused to leave on bail and, with the city jail fast becoming overcrowded, Mayor Hartsfield called for a thirty (30) day truce during which he hoped to reach a settlement.

It is important to understand that the participants in the movement at this point were by far young black men and women, many of them students. In part, their frustration with "what seemed to them to be acquiescence to the status quo on the part of the established Negro leaders"[16] motivated them to direct action. Disagreements over tactics as well as other issues fostered mutual distrust and recriminations between the "young turks" and the "old guard."[17]

Such discord contributed to the failure of several attempts to negotiate a settlement. The established, conservative black leaders were hard pressed to work out an agreement between the young demonstrators and the white downtown businessmen. Thus, the efforts to

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[16]Jack L. Walker, "Protest and Negotiation: A Case Study of Negro Leadership in Atlanta, Georgia," Midwest Journal of Political Science 7 (May 1963), p. 102.

[17]Ibid., pp. 104-05.

negotiate a settlement during the "truce" in the fall of 1960 proved unsuccessful.

Students resumed demonstrations in November and organized a boycott of downtown stores as well. For three months the sit-ins continued without incident. However, on February 7, 1961, students were arrested at one lunch counter and for three days arrests continued. Again, students refused to leave the city jail.

At that time, tension was at a fever pitch and there was a general fear that violence soon might erupt. Student leaders approached an established black leader who successfully started negotiations that resulted in a proposed settlement.[18] That settlement was accepted by both sides in the spring of 1961. It called for desegregation of lunch counters after the completion of school desegregation slated for fall of that year. Lunch counter desegregation actually occurred in Atlanta on September 27, 1961.

These events marked the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta. For the first time, black demands could not be negotiated through the established black leadership. Communication between the white power structure and the black community were unsuccessful and there existed competing leadership groups within Atlanta's black community.

This was the first substantial challenge to the traditional black leadership and especially to the unilateral leadership of the

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[18] The established black leader referred to here was not identified in the source material from which this account largely is drawn; Walker, "Protest and Negotiation," pp. 99-124. A subsequent review of Mr. Walker's references failed to disclose the identity of the leader in question.

Atlanta Negro Voters League. The civil rights demonstrations emphasized the weaknesses of this leadership. First, the support of demonstrators by the community exposed the resentment of the limited, individualized benefits gained by the League leadership and its failure to secure concessions beneficial to the entire community. It delineated the frustration of the masses of blacks with gains wrested within a continuing structure of segregation and inequality. Secondly, the confrontation of the student leadership exemplified the inadequacies of the old leadership style. League leaders were accustomed to negotiating with whites amenable to black requests, making unobtrusive appeals for material benefits whose concession would not threaten the existing structure of black-white relationships, and working in ways acceptable to the white leadership. The third weakness pointed out by the challenge of new leadership was the old leadership's closed circle that frustrated the attempts of younger men to attain leadership positions within the organization and within the community. Young politicos worked and allied themselves with the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta. They emerged as a new leadership group that owed no allegiance to the Atlanta Negro Voters League. Some of them forged new organizations which were basically civil rights groups that did not challenge the electoral leadership of the ANVL. One of these was the Atlanta Committee for Cooperative Action formed in 1960 by younger business and professional men. Another was the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights, a student organization set up in 1960.[19]

The most powerful new group to emerge, however, was the Atlanta

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[19]Suber, "Internal Black Politics," p. 73; and Walker, "Protest and Negotiation," p. 105.

Summit Leadership Conference (ASLC) proposed in 1963 to address the problems of the black community. All community, civic, religious and civil rights organizations were invited to participate and the ASLC idea was endorsed by organizations including the ANVL, the NAACP (whose leadership had become more militant in recent years), the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (both more nationally than locally oriented groups), the Atlanta Committee for Cooperative Action and the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights.

The organizing meeting of the Conference, called by newly-elected State Senator Leroy Johnson and Atlanta Life Insurance Executive Jesse Hill, was held in October 1963 where the goal to desegregate all of Atlanta's public facilities was set.[20] It was decided that a steering committee of fifteen (15) members would provide the ASLC leadership. This committee would include one (1) representative of each sponsoring group with the remainder of the members elected at large. The steering committee was charged with the responsibility of designing a plan to address and solve community problems in the areas of public accommodations, voter registration, education and school desegregation, employment, health, housing, law and politics.[21] Co-chairmen were elected. One represented new leadership: Clarence Coleman. The other was a member of the city's established black leadership: A. T. Walden.

The Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference appears to have been a "tactical alliance" between an old leadership trying to retain its

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[20] Atlanta Journal and Constitution, October 20, 1963.

[21] Atlanta Daily World, October 20, 1963, p. 1.

power within the black community and an emergent leadership trying to secure power within the community without causing an open rift. Suber suggests that the absence of stated methods by which to pursue its goals was evidence of the ASLC's effort not to disrupt the community.[22] A newspaper account of the group's beginnings suggests further that the ASLC did not seek to "usurp the authority" of any other group, thus avoiding destruction of the old leadership's organization, the Atlanta Negro Voters League.[23]

The Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference was considered the most powerful black organization in Atlanta from its inception in 1963 through the late 1960s. It provided the leadership of local efforts to desegregate facilities throughout the city. While it served as a vehicle for the development of a new leadership group, it did not replace the electoral functions of the Atlanta Negro Voters League. In fact, some of the young leaders in ASLC still helped the ANVL put out a "ticket" at election time.[24]

The emergence of the Summit Leadership Conference as the political broker for the black community did dislodge the Atlanta Negro Voters League as the clearinghouse for black problems. Other factors directly related to the League's leadership displacement included a partisan split within its ranks;[25] the emergence of nationalism;[26] but,

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[22] Suber, "Internal Black Politics," p. 82.

[23] Atlanta Daily World, October 20, 1963.

[24] Interview with Leroy Johnson, October 19, 1978.

[25] Interview with Robert Brisbane.

[26] Interview with C. A. Bacote.

most especially, the death, in 1964, of A. T. Walden, a founder, leader and cornerstone of its existence.

Thus, the early 1960s decade witnessed the emergence of a new organization encompassing Atlanta's new black leadership. But the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference was an organization designed to include the community's leaders, not voters like the Atlanta Negro Voters League. There appears also to have been little evidence of the formalized exchange process of the past. Demands were made, concessions were negotiated and direct action, more than the black vote, appears to have been the method as well as the medium of exchange in these negotiations. That is not to suggest that the voting strength of the black community was not used. Rather, the black vote was no longer the sole medium of exchange. Black leadership had available other sanctions in its direct action tactics.

The new leadership differed also in the fact that it no longer strived to present a unified front. The leadership operated in an "informal consortium of elected and appointed leaders" serving as the political broker in the black community.[27] Within this informal structure, however, there was competition among leaders attempting to emerge as "individual political brokers."[28] The men identified as the ascendant political leaders of this new group include, most prominently, then-State Senator Leroy Johnson and business executive Jesse Hill. Both men were groomed in the Voters League but emerged as leaders in their own right as a result of their activities in the Civil Rights

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[27]Suber, "Internal Black Politics," p. 89.

[28]Ibid., p. 83; and Interview with Leroy Johnson.

Movement in Atlanta. Hill, along with contractor Herman Russell, put up the capital to transform the student-devised flier reporting civil rights demonstrations into the Atlanta Inquirer newspaper. It has been suggested that after these two men solidified their leadership position, they "began promoting social worker types" including Lyndon Wade, director of the Atlanta Urban League; John Cox, head of the Butler Street "Y"; and realtor and later Alderman, Q. V. Williamson. These members of the "power elite" were reported to have been joined by local NAACP president, Lonnie King; new financial leaders: Charles Reynolds, president of the black Citizens Trust Bank; and Fletcher Coombs, his counterpart at the black Mutual Federal Savings and Loan.[29] Among all these, most observers agree that Senator Johnson was the leader and most powerful member of the group.

As a final point in the discussion of the new leadership group and its vehicle, the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference, it is important to note its efforts toward maximizing black political power. First, the group was able to acquire benefits from the city's leadership structure in the form of desegregation of facilities. While upgrading the status of black Atlantans, the fact remains that these benefits did not alter the subordinate position--relative to the position and power of the white community--of the city's black citizens. Policy decisions still were made within the priorities demanded by this structure. Finally the fact that this organization's leadership, after the direct action campaigns, functioned on an "issue by issue" basis,[30]

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[29]Peter Ross Range, "Making It in Atlanta: Capitol of Black-Is-Beautiful," New York Times Magazine, 7 April 1974, p. 74.

[30]Interview with David Franklin.

indicated a reactive style lacking an agenda of items for pursuit in meeting the needs of the black community.

No discussion of the years from 1949 to 1969 would be complete without a review of Atlanta's much-touted interracial coalition of voters that prevailed in the election of Atlanta's mayors from 1949 to 1965. In 1949, the first city election following the invalidation of Georgia's white primary, black voters provided the margin of victory allowing incumbent Mayor William B. Hartsfield to remain in office. In that election, black voters joined with affluent northside whites to support the more racially moderate Hartsfield. Since then, these two groups of voters have successfully supported the winning candidates at the polls in the mayoral elections of 1953, 1957, 1961 and 1965.

Black votes in the coalition were organized and solicited by the Atlanta Negro Voters League whose leadership entered into this partnership in order to prevent staunch segregationists from being elected to city posts. White leadership in the coalition consisted of the city's business and commercial elite as well as their political functionaries aware that a winning coalition could sustain their power and allow them to pursue their policies. This leadership is considered to have developed the support of Atlanta's upper and middle income white residents whose interests they appear to share; thus, the white power structure merged its votes with the black vote to develop the winning coalition.

In his analysis of this coalition, Harry Holloway suggests several factors pre-disposing these groups to form a coalition. They are: that the black leadership was moderate and middle class; early black demands for exchange were minimal; white business leaders had

contempt for poor whites and preferred to deal with educated blacks; white leaders were eager to sustain their power; and that middle and upper class whites tended to be more tolerant and less devoted to segregationist policies than poor whites.[31]

It is agreed that black leadership during that time was moderate, perhaps even conservative and hardly inclined to demand concessions of the white power structure which would alter the relationship between the black and white communities. This moderation on the part of the black leadership made the coalition more comfortable for the white leadership because it was unlikely to risk white voter displeasure by conceding to "unreasonable" black demands. On the other hand, rather than offer white elite contempt of poor whites, white upper class tolerance or decreased need for segregation, it seems more likely that the interests of sustaining their own power would be sufficient to dispose white leadership toward coalition formation.

The coalition, in its early years, was paternalistic in character: whites set the conditions and objectives and then merely expected black support. Within this arrangement, both white and black observers have noted that black leaders demanded little in exchange for black votes, taking the role of "junior," "silent" partners. Even Mayor Ivan Allen characterized black involvement in the coalition as such:

> For nearly two decades the black community had been a silent partner in the election of city officials in Atlanta, generally going along with whatever moderate candidate the business and civic fathers endorsed.[32]

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[31] Holloway, Politics of the Southern Negro, p. 196.

[32] Ivan Allen, Mayor: Notes on the Sixties (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), p. 222.

In this manner, black voters participated in a coalition to re-elect Mayor Hartsfield in 1949, 1953 and 1957. It appears that even though black leadership changed hands in the 1960s, there was little change in the style of participation by black voters in the city's interracial coalition. Black support for Ivan Allen's mayoral candidacy in 1961 and 1965 was expected and received.

A statistical study of black and white--both northside and other--voting patterns concludes that the black-white coalition exists, if at all, only in races for mayor and for these is not statistically verifiable because there have been so few of them.[33] The critical point to be made here is that although blacks voted for white candidates--even over black candidates in some campaigns--the white community, including white coalition members, failed to provide large amounts of support for black candidates. Given that all city posts, including ward representation on the Boards of Aldermen and Education, had to be voted on city-wide, black voters lacked the numerical strength to elect candidates without white support.

In all too few city elections during this period did a black candidate receive sufficiently large amounts of white votes to defeat his white opponent; Dr. Rufus Clement, president of Atlanta University and a Voters League candidate, defeated the white incumbent Board of Education Third Ward representative in 1953. Clement was re-elected in 1957. In 1957 and 1961, the Atlanta Negro Voters League ran blacks in races for Board of Alderman posts. T. M. Alexander was defeated in a

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[33]Berdie Ricks Hardon, "A Statistical Analysis of the Black-White Voting Coalition in Atlanta 1949-1970" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1972), p. x.

run-off against the white candidate, Jack Summers, in 1957. Again in 1961, the ANVL candidate, Q. V. Williams, failed to receive enough white support to be elected. However, in the 1965 election Williamson maximized his black support and garnered enough white votes to become the first black man elected to the Board of Aldermen.

Finally, it appears that the benefits derived from black participation in this coalition were extremely limited. During Mayor Ivan Allen's administration, blacks received more visible, tangible rewards. Some jobs in city government were opened to blacks in addition to the fact that black policemen were allowed to arrest whites for the first time and that school desegregation supposedly was begun. The quality of benefits derived from black coalition participation varied little from that of other kinds of black political behavior during the 1960s.

In summary, the years from 1946 to 1969 were marked by the emergence of two black leadership groupings having different organizational bases, styles and goals. The first organization nurtured the slow but steady development of the black electorate while other factors affecting maximization of black political power--population and voter registration growth, socioeconomic characteristics--barely improved. Given these conditions, an exchange process was forged through which limited benefits were received. Despite this, maximization of black political power barely was initiated.

The second leadership group emerged during a period of more rapid growth and progress toward improved socioeconomic conditions. With new emphasis on goals and methods, different benefits were garnered. While these improved the status of black Atlantans, they did not alter the superordinate-subordinate structure of racial

relationships. Black political power, though strengthened, was not maximized sufficiently to meet the needs and solve the problems of inequity for the black community.

Throughout this period, accompanying these organizational and leadership changes, an interracial voting coalition existed which did little more than exploit the black vote without providing commensurate benefits.

In applying the analysis of exchange theory, it is clear that the anticipated difficulty of potential black voters to organize occurred from 1946 until 1949. However, with the offer of increased voter strength and subsequent potential benefits, a black organization based on exchange emerged as the Atlanta Negro Voters League. Reward incentives--primarily material benefits trickling down from city government--came from outside the organization. Solidary benefits derived from group association and leadership status. Purposive benefits accrued from white recognition of the ANVL and solicitation of its support. As long as the ANVL served as the clearinghouse for black problems and broker for the black vote, its leadership prevailed. Though not identified specifically, it has been suggested that the group's entrepreneurs--its leadership--received individual material benefits sufficient to pay for their organizing initiative. At the same time, the benefit incentives for black voter participation remained largely collective--new and better facilities--and purposive--moderate, as opposed to rabidly racist, white elected officials. Predictably, whites did not control sufficient resources to distribute selective benefits through the black community. Even if they had,

heavy sanctions would have been imposed if white elites had made too many concessions to blacks.

The exchange theory's phase three, in which black voters reach a level of sophistication where they no longer need organization-provided cues or when a substantial number of candidates arrive who communicate directly with black voters, still had not developed in Atlanta's political environment. Despite this, there was a breakdown in the exchange structure established by the Atlanta Negro Voters League. This writer suggests that the breakdown of the League's dominance occurred because: 1) the ANVL lost control of communications between demonstrators and the white leadership; 2) black voters, who supported the demands of the Civil Rights Movement, were no longer satisfied with the limited benefits offered by the League; 3) new leaders, with their own organizational operations, were better able to negotiate between the black masses and the leadership structure; and 4) these new leaders made available sanctions--specifically direct action: boycotts, sit-ins, and demonstrations--beyond the scope of the old leadership style of the ANVL.

As a result, the new black leadership group assumed the entrepreneurial role in the exchange process. Though the goals and methods of the exchange pattern were escalated to meet the increased expectations of the black masses, the need--or at the least, the desire--for organization-provided cues remained and candidates did not undertake to communicate directly with black voters. Avenues of communications increased, especially with the publication of the Atlanta Inquirer and with the expansion of the mass media, eliminating the need for "ticket" mass distribution; but, the cues still were given and followed by black

voters. Therefore, the organizational development of black political activity in Atlanta advanced; yet, the conditions for exchange remained qualitatively unaltered.

CHAPTER 4

BLACK POLITICAL POWER MATURES?

As the decade of the 1970s approached Atlanta--unlike many northern cities beset by declining population, decreasing revenues, racial polarization and insidious decay--enjoyed a period of prosperity and growth heralded across the nation. Atlanta's population increased from 1960 to 1970. Although there was a decrease in the city's white population, the white business and commercial elite continued to invest in and build on to the central business district to the extent that Atlanta nearly bypassed the recessive slump of the early 1970s. Having desegregated its facilities in the 1960s relatively early and having avoided the community-rending rebellions of that decade, Atlanta reveled in her reputation for harmonious race relations.[1]

The black community experienced growth also, for its population increased by more than 68,000 raising the proportion of Atlanta's black population to fifty-one percent (51%) of the total by 1970 (see Table One). Despite this majority, blacks comprised only forty-five percent (45%) of those eligible to vote and a minority--forty-one percent (41%)--of those registered in 1970. By the time of the 1973 election blacks remained, though barely, a minority of registered voters comprising

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[1]See Douglass Cater, "Atlanta: Smart Politics and Good Race Relations," Reporter, 11 July 1957, pp. 18-21; Claude Sitton, "Atlanta's Example: Good Sense and Dignity," New York Times Magazine, 6 May 1962, p. 22; Peter Ross Range, "Making It in Atlanta: Capital of Black-Is-Beautiful," New York Times Magazine, 7 April 1974, p. 28.

forty-nine percent (49%) of the registrants (see Tables Two and Three).

Recalling the earlier discussion of socioeconomic status, it is clear that black Atlantans shared neither educational levels nor income parity with whites. Closer examination will reveal, however, that during the 1960 decade those gaps were reduced markedly. In 1960, the median school years completed by blacks was two and one-half years less than that of whites. By 1970, this gap was reduced to one and one-half years, the largest gain since such census measurements were recorded first in 1940 (see Table Five). Reported family income levels reveal that while more than eighty-five percent (85%) of black families earned incomes less than $6,000 in 1960, that proportion of low income families was reduced to forty-six percent (46%) by 1970. Black median family income was barely one-half of the total population's median income in 1960. While the total population's median income increased by forty percent (40%) from 1960 to 1970, median black family income more than doubled. Yet it still averaged only three-fourths that of all Atlanta families (see Table Six).

Another socioeconomic indicator reveals more about the status of blacks. In 1960, more than eighty percent (80%) of the 69,049 black workers over 16 years old were employed in semi-skilled and unskilled occupations, the bulk--fifty-five percent (55%)--working as laborers, service and household workers. In ten years, though the number of blacks employed increased to almost 100,000, the proportion of blacks in lower status jobs decreased to sixty-eight percent (68%)--still a distressingly high figure. At the other end of the occupational spectrum, the proportion of blacks employed in professional and managerial jobs ranged from six percent (6%) in 1960 to eleven percent (11%) in

1970, the largest growth occurring up to then (see Table Seven). While the period shows progress, there is an important factor that colors its implications. Unemployment levels for blacks were more than double those of whites. In 1970, the unemployment rate for white Atlantans was 3.4 percent but for black workers was 7.3 percent.[2]

A review of black-owned businesses reveals even more about affluence among black Atlantans. This factor is important because it is the economic elite--black and white--that is said to exercise disproportionate influence in Atlanta politics. In his analysis of black political empowerment in the city, Mack Jones concludes that Atlanta's black business sector, in 1972, appeared prosperous compared to that of other cities.[3] Yet, in perspective, black business nationally earned a miniscule one-third of one percent of the income of all U.S. firms. Jones states that:

> the most telling statistic is the fact that only 4,222 persons (other than the self-employed) are employed by black firms in Atlanta. This is not the most auspicious base upon which to build political power.[4]

From this review of socioeconomic characteristics, it can be concluded that although the 1960 to 1970 decade witnessed a greater increase in several status indicators for blacks than for whites, black Atlantans did not share the relative affluence of the white population in 1970. If, as some suggest, political power accompanies affluence,

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[2]Research Atlanta, Which Way Atlanta? (Atlanta: Atlanta Research, Inc., 1973), p. 44.

[3]Mack H. Jones, "Black Political Empowerment in Atlanta: Myth and Reality," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, V. 439 (September 1978), p. 96.

[4]Ibid.

then it must be concluded that black Atlantans had considerably less influence over the policy-making process than whites. This holds true for black business persons as well.

Finally, a source of empowerment for blacks lay in the influence of black officeholders. On the eve of the 1969 elections, there were three black elected officials holding city positions: one alderman and two Atlanta school board members. As stated before, their number--relative to the size of the consensus-run bodies to which they belonged--limited the ability of these black officeholders to influence the decision-making process in Atlanta politics.

An assessment of potential political power among blacks at the dawn of the 1970s must stress, in light of the foregoing data, the fact that blacks in 1969 comprised a critical voting minority in city politics and in 1973 shared, almost equally, voting potential with whites. Clearly, population majority and electorate size were the black community's strongest assets in its efforts to develop political power. The 1970s offered a new opportunity to maximize black political power in Atlanta. The events of this period will reveal the success of these efforts.

As the 1969 elections approached, Mayor Ivan Allen declined a bid for re-election and later, as head of the white leadership structure, endorsed white alderman Rodney Cook for mayor. Black leaders refused to support Cook, rejecting--for the first time in the twenty year alliance of the coalition--the white power structure's dictate. This rupture seriously disturbed Atlanta's white leaders for there was wide acknowledgement of the potential strength of the black vote. Black leaders, aware of this potential power, still doubted the ability

of a black candidate to be elected mayor or vice-mayor. They were confident, on the other hand, that a number of blacks could secure seats on the Board of Aldermen in the next election. In spite of the rejection of the white power structure's candidate, the strategy of the black leadership continued to rest in a coalition with white voters to elect a white mayor.

This brokering of the black vote persisted despite the absence of an organizational structure in the black community. Since the demise of the Atlanta Negro Voters League in the early 1960s, there had been no effective efforts to register and organize black voters, to develop policy items in the interests of the black community, or systematically to elect officials committed to implementing such policy alternatives.

Attempts to develop political power were limited to a "static" coalition of black business and civic leaders with the few black elected officials and, on the other hand, the city's white power structure, consisting of the business and commercial elite together with its elected operatives.

State Senator Leroy Johnson dominated the black leadership group at that point, and it was believed that he was the most likely black candidate for mayor or vice-mayor. While Johnson hesitated, a political newcomer, Maynard Jackson announced that he was entering the race for vice-mayor. Jackson was not completely new to Atlanta's political scene; he had run for a U.S. Senate seat against incumbent Herman Talmadge in 1968. In that race, Jackson lost but, most importantly, carried the city with 6,000 votes. This was done without the approval or support of Atlanta's black leadership. Shortly after

Jackson's announcement, Horace Tate, the black associate director of the Georgia Association of Educators entered the race for mayor. These two early candidates thus usurped the initiative of black office holders considering candidacies in these races.[5]

As for leadership endorsement, support for Tate from the white power structure was out of the question. Black leaders thought he would divide the black vote.[6] So, they gave their support to Sam Massell, a Jewish realtor who had served as vice-mayor during the eight years of Ivan Allen's administration. The black leadership group felt that by electing Massell with a majority of black votes he would be "beholden" to the black community.

Jackson, on the other hand, had angered black leaders by entering the campaign without first consulting them. He had no organizational base in the community. Most black leaders were certain Jackson could not be elected vice-mayor especially in light of the fact that blacks comprised only forty percent (40%) of the registered voters. The only other major contender in that race was Alderman Milton Farris, the white power structure's candidate for vice-mayor. Jackson recounts that the black leadership was divided over his candidacy. Many did not support him but did not oppose his candidacy and, thus, "were effectively neutralized."[7]

In the October 7th general election for mayor, Sam Massell received 31 percent of the votes cast; Cook received 26.9 percent; and

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[5]Interview with David Franklin, 23 October 1978.

[6]Interview with Leroy Johnson, 19 October 1978.

[7]Interview with Mayor Maynard Jackson, 10 March 1975.

Tate won 22.9 percent. The black vote was split almost evenly: Tate received 49 percent and Massell 44.2 percent. White voters cast their ballots for white candidates almost exclusively, giving them to the more "acceptable" aspirants, Cook and Everett Millican, a conservative "law and order" candidate. A small portion--only 21 percent--of the white electorate cast their ballots for Massell. Northside voters, the black electorate's traditional coalition ally in mayoral elections, gave a majority of their support to Cook and only 22 percent of their votes to blacks' favored white candidate, Massell.[8] In the October 21st run-off election, Massell won with 55 percent of the vote. Massell became mayor with the overwhelming majority of black votes--92.2 percent; he received only 27 percent of the white votes. Northside whites cast only 25.8 percent of their ballots for Massell.[9]

Atlanta voters elected Maynard Jackson vice-mayor in the October 7th general election--without a run-off. Jackson garnered 58.2 percent of the total vote, with 97.8 percent black support. His total white support added up to 15,000 votes or 27.7 percent; one-third of northside voters supported Jackson. Black voters summarily trounced the white power structure's candidate.[10]

In both the mayoral and vice-mayoral elections black voters determined the outcome. The turnout of black voters was higher than white voters' turnout in each of these elections. The strength of the

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[8] Charles S. Rooks, The Atlanta Elections of 1969 (Atlanta: Voter Education Project, Inc., 1970), p. 13.

[9] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[10] Ibid., p. 34.

black vote has been attributed to its solidarity and to the higher rates of participation by blacks.[11]

In the campaigns for aldermanic posts, twenty black candidates sought election to the eighteen seats decided in city-wide contests. Black membership increased from one to five in this election. Of the four newcomers, three defeated white candidates with the support of large black majorities and some whites.[12] This same combination of voters elected three blacks to the Board of Education; two newly-elected winners defeated white candidates.[13]

Charles Rooks, in an analysis of the 1969 elections, points out that in more than half of these twenty-nine campaigns the majority of white voters opposed the majority of black voters. Further, white voters were less likely to cast substantial numbers of ballots for black candidates than vice versa.[14] This reflects one conclusion of a statistical analysis of several elections: that the white electorate has failed to provide large amounts of support to black candidates.[15]

The results of the 1969 municipal elections were significant for several reasons. First, the number of black elected officials increased to nine. Secondly, the black community played a decisive role in the outcomes of several races including the top two. Blacks

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[11]Ibid., pp. 31-32.

[12]Ibid., p. 43.

[13]Ibid., p. 52.

[14]Ibid., pp. 58-63.

[15]Berdie Ricks Hardon, "A Statistical Analysis of the Black-White Voting Coalition in Atlanta 1949-1970" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1972), p. 18.

effectively had elected Atlanta's mayor and vice-mayor in 1969, a fact--especially in the case of the mayor--not to be forgotten in the ensuing four years.

Finally, and most importantly, these elections had a substantial impact on Atlanta's coalition and its black leadership especially. Massell's victory signalled the rupture of the black-white voting coalition which had selected the city's mayors since 1949. Blacks clearly rejected the candidate endorsed by the city's white power structure. The break was not complete, however, because black voters--on the whole--failed to support the black candidate instead. Moreover, in the general election for mayor and in the election for vice-mayor to a lesser extent, a substantial number of black voters did not follow the cues of the black leadership. Almost half of black voters cast ballots for Horace Tate, a candidate rejected by black leaders attempting to broker the community's vote. In the vice-mayoral race, the black electorate again rejected the white leadership designee and voted for Maynard Jackson, a candidate not supported meaningfully by black leaders. All in all, the 1969 elections provided a greater opportunity--through more black elected officials and through an increasingly stronger and more independent black vote--for maximizing black political power in Atlanta.

In the ensuing years, those blacks elected to city government offices manifested no efforts to develop a platform of issues to be addressed in order to meet the needs and solve the problems of the black community. While no black agenda was pursued, neither did black elected officials succeed in altering the existing priorities of policy-making--priorities which, in and of themselves, precluded the

solution of fundamental problems faced by black Atlantans. Rather, the efforts of black officeholders were limited to securing an equitable share of benefits and services within established priorities.

Efforts by black aldermen illustrate these attempts. The Board of Aldermen, under Atlanta's weak mayor-strong council form of government, was divided into committees which monitored the operations of departments within city government. Committee membership was determined by mayoral appointment. In addition, the mayor and vice-mayor were ex officio members of all committees. Since the vice-mayor participated in committees--and the mayor did not--the vice-mayor became, in effect, "a de facto permanent voting member of every committee."[16]

In the first year of his administration, Mayor Massell appointed at least one black to each of the fifteen aldermanic committees. Ten of these committees consisted of only three members, permitting blacks, with the black vice-mayor's participation, to deadlock a committee vote or, in the event of a split vote between white aldermen, to determine a policy.

Black aldermen used this leverage to attack racial discrimination in a number of city departments. Segregation of facilities in the Water Department was eradicated by the efforts of the vice-mayor and the black alderman on the committee overseeing that department. Subsequently, discrimination in the department was revealed in a report commissioned by black officials and prepared by the city's race-relations agency. Again, discrimination was the focus of concern in the Police and Fire Departments. Black Alderman H. D. Dodson ordered Fire

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[16] Jones, "Black Political Empowerment," p. 100.

Department administrators to eradicate discrimination and double the number of black firemen. Another black alderman chaired the Police Committee which logged complaints of discrimination by black policemen. In response, the vice-mayor exhorted city administrators to "prove" the absence of discrimination in their departments or "face firing."[17] Black officeholders hardly were successful, however, in placing blacks in administrative positions that might have improved employment prospects for blacks who primarily comprised the lowest ranks of city employees.[18] Furthermore, black aldermen attempted to secure a more equitable share of benefits for blacks, working to ensure that blacks received city contracts, that contractors were equal opportunity employers, that programs operated without discrimination--guaranteeing, for the most part, that black constituents received "a piece of the pie."

Such efforts were met with stiff opposition, especially from the mayor. When time came for aldermanic committee re-appointments the following year, Massell shuffled assignments so that four critical committees--finance; legislation, planning and development; ordinance; and zoning--had no black members. Further, the size of these bodies was changed to eliminate the possibility of black dominance.

Other actions by Massell provide evidence that he honored no debt to the black community, despite the importance of its vote in his election. In 1971, for example, Massell made a speech to the Hungry Club, a traditional black forum, in which he lamented the exodus of

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[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., pp. 100-101.

whites from Atlanta. He argued that blacks were obliged to "make the city more attractive" so that whites would stay and, further, urged that blacks "think white."[19] In December of that year, Massell announced that he planned to have introduced to the state General Assembly legislation designed to annex outlying areas to the city's boundaries. This move would include about 50,000 whites who would be eligible to vote in the 1973 elections. The mayor argued that his plan was not racially motivated, but the telling fact was that almost half of his speech addressed the racial implications of the proposal.[20] The annexation legislation never passed the legislature, but not because of the efforts of black elected officials. In his capacity as presiding officer in the State Senate, Lieutenant Governor Lester Maddox, a blatant segregationist refused to call the proposal from the calendar. The measure died there.

On other issues, Massell opposed the interests of blacks. When in 1970 sanitation workers--most of whom were black--went on strike for improved pay and benefits, the Mayor resisted their demands. In fact, he secured passage of legislation eliminating the dues check-off privilege of the strikers' union. Massell and vice-mayor Jackson divided sharply over this issue when Jackson publicly supported the workers.[21]

As late as September 1973, Massell ignored black citizens' concerns. Following several questionable police shootings of blacks and charges of brutality, the mayor continued to defend Police Chief John

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[19] Address by Sam Massell, Mayor, City of Atlanta, before the Hungry Club, 6 October 1971.

[20] Jones, "Black Political Empowerment," p. 102.

[21] Interview with David Franklin.

Inman. Inman, having taken a "law and order" attitude, presided over a force which had killed thirteen blacks in a nine month period. Massell not only defended Inman but walked out of a meeting with blacks who had protested the brutalization of a fifteen year old girl.[22]

During his tenure as mayor, Massell sought to strengthen his support in the white community, disregarding and often opposing the interests of black Atlantans. The mayor surmised that he would not have their vote in 1973 anyway. A black candidate--probably Jackson--was expected to oppose him and to receive the bulk of black votes.

The city's white business and commercial elite, on the other hand, developed a different relationship with blacks. In pursuing its policy initiatives, the power structure maintained a "coalition" of sorts. It functioned not so much to operationalize black political power but to garner the support of black leadership to insure its own objectives. Jones states that the politics of paternalism succumbed to the pressure of Atlanta's substantial black population. The old coalition style--in which policy was dictated by whites and support from blacks expected--gave way to negotiation for black backing.[23]

The approval of a rapid transit system is a specific example of this alteration. A proposal to develop the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) was put to the voters in a 1968 referendum. It would have authorized the system with federal and local funding; the latter financed through an ad valorem property tax. The black

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[22]The Great Speckled Bird (Atlanta), 17 September 1973, p. 8; Atlanta Voice, 29 September 1973, p. 2.

[23]Ibid.; "Black Political Empowerment," p. 102.

community was not consulted in the process of developing this proposal. The measure was defeated with an overwhelming rejection by black voters.

Before resubmission in 1970, a task force of blacks had negotiated for specific concessions to the community including a seven-year 15 cents fare, a rail line linking a large and poor black neighborhood to the transportation system, and vigorous affirmative action goals for hiring and contracting.[24] The black task force, headed by Vice-Mayor Jackson and State Senator Johnson, in turn agreed to support the new financing plan which would rely on a sales tax increase. Such a tax is more regressive and strains already limited incomes, thus affecting masses of blacks. In spite of this, black leadership rallied the support of the black community. Those not favoring the measure were characterized as "opposed to economic growth and civic progress." As one writer suggests: "Black politicians aspiring to higher office could not afford such a label."[25] The second MARTA referendum was passed with substantial black support.

A second issue pursued by Atlanta's white leadership had more extensive implications. The adoption of a new city charter would change election procedures and redistrict the entire city; change the type of government procedure, altering the relationship of the mayor and council, and limiting council's administrative powers; and give

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[24]Ben Brown, "Black Coalition Bargains, Supports MARTA," Southern Journal 2 (Winter 1972): 8; Ray Abernathy, "Atlanta's Rapid Transit: How Did It Pass," Southern Journal 2 (Winter 1972): 1-5.

[25]Jones, "Black Political Empowerment," p. 103.

responsibility for reorganizing the city's administrative apparatus to the city officials elected in 1973.

The charter function, of course, was the responsibility of the state legislature. Even so, legislation applying to a particular county must have the approval of state legislators representing that jurisdiction. Thus, the black members of the Fulton County delegation had to pass on the charter proposal. A charter commission was appointed, ten of whose twenty-six members were black. The vice-chairman also was black.

Under the old charter, eighteen aldermen--though each resided in a specific district--were elected by a city-wide vote. Within this system, as the city's population became increasingly black, more black aldermen were elected. Projections of a majority-black population harbored the possibility that all aldermen elected at-large would be black. The new charter redistricted the city and provided for twelve single-member districts with six at-large positions for council persons elected from paired districts. The projection for a 1973 election with whites still holding a small voting majority ensured the election of council persons from at least four majority-white districts and one at-large district. In this manner, whites were guaranteed minimal representation on the City Council.

Another change in the charter converted the city to a "strong mayor" form of government from the previous system. Administrative oversight shifted from aldermanic committees to the mayor. This change significantly altered the ability of black aldermen to monitor operations with respect to black interests.

Further, the charter substituted the presidency of City Council

for the vice-mayoral position, an office which had held little substantive power. The City Council President was to have the responsibility of appointing council committees, supervising the newly-created council staff, conducting council meetings and exercising a tie-breaking vote there. The council presidency became city government's second most powerful position.

Other charter revisions mandated a nine-member Board of Education with six single-member districts and three paired-district, at-large seats. Again, minimal white representation was assured, at least for the near future. The charter was signed into law in 1973 and slated to take effect with the 1974 inauguration of city officials chosen in the previous year's elections.

Through these years there was no evidence of organizational development within Atlanta's black community. Certainly there was no group forged to organize or register black voters in order to maximize their electoral potential. One writer suggests that: "the opening of public offices (to blacks) accompanied the demise of general black political organizations."[26]

There had been some attempts by black leaders to organize, but these groups did not take in black voters on a community-wide basis. As mentioned earlier, the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference (ASLC) was comprised mainly of the black leadership. This group, though instrumental in desegregation, did not develop a black electoral organization. Instead, it negotiated with the city's white business and commercial

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[26] Malcolm Suber, "The Internal Black Politics of Atlanta, Georgia 1944-1969: An Analytic Study of Black Political Leadership and Organization" (Master's thesis, Atlanta University, 1975), p. 88.

leaders on an issue by issue basis. ASLC emerged in the early 1960s and functioned as late as 1970, presenting concerns about discrimination in city government, but without benefit of the backing of black voters.[27]

In 1971, there was an organization formed which was designed as a federation of black community groups and individual leaders. The Atlanta Consortium, as it was called, divided into committees covering areas of concern such as education, employment, local government, etc. Each committee had the task of investigating its issue, then recommending solutions to problems. The Consortium, however, appears to have made little progress toward developing as a mechanism to resolve the problems of Atlanta's black community.

Finally, black leaders made another separate attempt to join with certain influential whites to address community-wide issues. This group of twelve whites and twelve blacks met as the Atlanta Action Forum and has been described as a "shadow cabinet that represents the new integrated power structure of the city."[28] The Action Forum functioned in the early 1970s in addition to any efforts by black leadership alone. It appears to have been a forum for negotiation but, again, seems not to have developed into an ongoing mechanism for problem resolution between the white and black communities. Thus, by the eve of the 1973 elections, there had been no community-wide efforts to organize the black electorate. Black leaders formed structures but

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[27] Atlanta Constitution, 15 May 1970, p. 5c.

[28] Range, "Making It," p. 78.

without the backing of a systematically developed constituency of black voters.

At this point, Atlanta's leadership was comprised of those influential blacks who had emerged during the early 1960s as well as a few black elected officials who had taken office in later years. They continued to negotiate with the white power structure on issues initiated by that structure. Black leaders functioned in a coalition in which whites continued to dictate the terms of issues within existing priorities. Although in a few instances there were attempts by the black leadership to redress problems or to obtain a share of benefits, these efforts were not successful in altering either the superordinate-subordinate structure of power relationship between blacks and whites or the fundamental problems of the black community. The issue of a rapid transit system was the single instance of leverage of the black vote; the benefits realized from this were limited at best. The political power of black Atlantans had not been maximized, and their most potent weapon--the vote--was not used to wrest meaningful concessions to benefit the masses of blacks.

The 1973 elections, however, presented an opportunity for blacks to flex their electoral muscle. Black voters comprised 49 percent of registered voters in 1973 even though only 59 percent of eligible blacks were registered.[29] There was a general assumption that a black mayor would be elected.

Again without consulting the black leadership group, Maynard Jackson entered the race for mayor. This time he had the support of

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[29]Rooks, The 1973 Atlanta Elections, p. 7.

the black leadership. It is reported that when they presented Jackson's candidacy to white leaders in the Atlanta Action Forum, the white power structure balked, incensed that blacks would initiate an agenda item and present it for their support.[30] A number of white business and commercial elites did support Jackson, but their leadership was split. On the other hand, they did not support Massell, who was running for re-election. Some of them backed Charles Weltner, a white liberal who was a former U.S. Congressman. The white leadership structure, however, was unable to unite behind a single white candidate and, as a result, did not invest their resources in a cogent effort to prevent the election of a black mayor.

The other significant black mayoral candidate was Leroy Johnson who, for years, had been considered one of the most powerful blacks in Atlanta politics. But Johnson's power was on the wane, superceded by Jesse Hill, considered foremost among the black leadership group at this time. The reasons for Johnson's candidacy may be several, including the fact that he doubted Jackson's ability to defeat Massell. Further, the mayor's office was considered the only powerful office left attainable by blacks. Perhaps, too, Johnson misjudged his strength. Or, as some suggest, he was encouraged by some whites to run in order to force Jackson into a run-off where--some thought--he could be defeated. In spite of Johnson's candidacy, black leaders supported Maynard Jackson for mayor.

In the mayoral race, there appeared to be one quasi-organizational effort in the black community to unite. A mock election

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[30]Interview with Maynard Jackson.

to select one black mayoral candidate was held at Atlanta University. Students, faculty and staff overwhelmingly supported Jackson. There was no effort, however, to organize black candidates to run as a team in several races, though the usual tickets were distributed in the black community.

There appears to have been an effort to prevent the election of a black candidate in the vice-mayoral race. Reports that the black leadership organized to dissuade a serious black candidacy in this race have not been verified. Such rumors suggested that black leaders had agreed to support white vice-mayoral candidate Wade Mitchell, a banker and former alderman, in exchange for white support of Jackson. Maynard Jackson denies having participated in such a deal, although admitting it may have existed.

At any rate, no serious black candidate had entered the race at that point. Angered by the rumors, Hosea Williams, a civil rights activist announced his candidacy for vice-mayor, intending to "bust the deal." He opposed Mitchell, the white power structure's candidate and Wyche Fowler, a less conservative white alderman.

In the October 2nd general election, Maynard Jackson received 47 percent of the votes cast; Massell received 20 percent; Weltner got 19 percent; and Leroy Johnson had just under 4 percent of the votes.[31] In this race, Jackson received approximately 95 percent of votes cast by blacks and 17 percent of white votes. Massell's support came from 82 percent of white voters and a tiny percentage of black voters. The most surprising result of this election was Leroy Johnson's low vote:

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[31]Rooks, The 1973 Atlanta Elections, p. 12.

3.8 percent--just enough to prevent Maynard Jackson from winning without a run-off.

In the race for President of City Council, both the white and black leadership opposed Hosea Williams' candidacy. There was, moreover, an attitude that since Atlantans surely were to elect a black mayor, there should be a white vice-mayor, to "balance" the complexion of city government. However, black votes--Williams had virtually no white votes--put Williams in a run-off with Wyche Fowler. The vote totals were Fowler, 31 percent; Williams, 29 percent; and Mitchell, 26 percent. Blacks gave about 40 percent of their votes to Fowler and a majority--51 percent--to Williams; a minimal number of black voters supported Mitchell who had been endorsed by black leaders.

The campaign between the general election and the run-off election was turned into an obviously racist one by Sam Massell. Prior to the general election, race was not injected into campaign politics as a result of a "gentleman's agreement" among the candidates. However, with Massell facing Jackson in a run-off, the incumbent mayor played on white fears, campaigning as if Atlanta would be destroyed if it was governed by blacks. Massell focused his racial attacks on Jackson and Williams as a team but singled out Williams as a racist. He attempted to get more whites to vote than before, assuming they would vote for him.

The Atlanta newspapers and elements in its business establishment appeared to be tacit, if not overt, supporters of this tactic. Advertisements stating that Atlanta was "too young to die" and admonishing white voters that it was "cheaper to vote than to move" appealed to white racist sentiment. The campaign was so blatant that the

newspapers reluctantly endorsed Jackson, whom they previously had suggested was racist during his tenure as vice-mayor.

Massell's efforts to elicit the white vote appear to have backfired. While white turnout increased from 45 to 55 percent, black turnout increased even more--from 55 to 66.8 percent. Jackson's white vote surged 14 points to 31 percent. Even without white support, Jackson received 54,867 votes from predominantly black districts to Massell's 51,237 total votes. Jackson won the run-off with 59 percent of the vote to Massell's 41 percent.[32]

In the run-off election for President of City Council, Wyche Fowler won with 64 percent of the vote to Williams 36 percent. Though 66 percent of blacks voted for Williams, Fowler increased his black support and won the race with black votes. Though blacks did not cast ballots for President of City Council in the same numbers as they voted for mayor, the white turnout did not make the expected drop--55.2 percent of white voters cast ballots in both top races. Whites thus determinedly made a point to vote against Hosea Williams. It was black voters however, who in voting for Fowler, made clear their intention to elect a racially balanced administration.

Racial balance was the result of the City Council races as well. Nine blacks and an equal number of whites were elected to Council posts. However, in each of eleven council districts the elected candidate was of the same race as the majority of voters. Blacks were successful in only two city-wide council races despite the fact that seven districts were predominantly black. Further, in five interracial council races

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[32]Ibid., p. 15.

no blacks were elected. Voting was lower in Council races; blacks voted at lower levels than whites in council elections than in contests for mayor or vice-mayor.

In elections for Board of Education posts, the results reflected the same voting patterns. In each of the six school board districts, the majority of voters elected a candidate of the same race. There were two contests with candidates of both races; one black succeeded in these races. The total number of blacks elected to the Board of Education was five.

The election results indicated clearly that voters generally cast ballots for a candidate of their own race. However, blacks supported white candidates in greater numbers than whites supported black hopefuls. This contributed to the failure of blacks to elect more black officials, along with the lower turnout rates of blacks in council and school board races.

Several significant conclusions emerge from these election results. First, the white power structure no longer commanded Atlanta's biracial voting coalition. The city's white leaders were unable to unite white voters behind a single candidate; nor were they able to dictate where black leadership or voter support should go. Secondly, the black leadership group appears to have lost a significant degree of influence over black votes. In the general election, blacks failed to support the leadership-endorsed candidate for President of City Council. Two-thirds of the black electorate cast ballots in the run-off for the vice-mayoral candidate opposed by black leaders. Furthermore, it is doubtful that black leadership support increased Maynard Jackson's black votes by any significant number. In addition,

Jackson's black votes swept him to victory; he did not need white votes to win. Nevertheless, the black electorate did not maximize its voting potential because not as many black candidates in City Council or Board of Education races were elected as there could have been elected. Black voters cast their ballots in a clear commitment to biracial government in Atlanta.

During the years between the 1969 city elections and the 1973 municipal races which produced Atlanta's first black mayor, black Atlantans held more potential for operationalizing their political power than ever before. Yet, in the behavior of the black electorate and of the black leadership, there was evident no organized, systematic attempt to develop and have adopted an agenda of items designed to solve the fundamental problems of their community. Black elected officials' efforts were limited to decrying the existence of discrimination within city government and to securing a share of benefits within the established priorities of that structure, benefits which did not accrue to the masses of black Atlantans. There lacked the initiative to alter those priorities in a way which would meet the needs of the city's black citizens. It becomes painfully clear that--black officeholders and black leadership notwithstanding--policies were initiated, adopted and pursued which proved harmful and sometimes inimical to the black community.

Moreover, this period witnessed the demise of organizational exchange between the black community and the city's white power structure, its business and commercial elite. Black voters in 1969 began to vote independently for candidates and departed from their leadership-sponsored biracial voting coalition. By 1973, blacks no longer needed

the cues of black leadership in order to cast their ballots. The leadership had demonstrated repeatedly its inability to secure community-wide benefits for the masses of black Atlantans. Leadership groups went unheeded generally as they sought to broker black voter support over which they had increasingly diminished control.

That is not to say that black leadership was eliminated in the 1973 elections. The old leadership of the 1960s was seriously undercut; their constituency having defected. With the election of several more black officeholders, there appeared to be in 1973 the potential for additions to the existing leadership group or, perhaps, an emerging new black leadership. At any rate, this period witnessed the death of organizational exchange and the decimation of the established black leadership exchange in Atlanta, Georgia.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

As stated in the introductory chapter, this study attempts to investigate the nature of black electoral behavior in Atlanta, Georgia. The foregoing discussion has been a review of the potential political power of blacks in the city during several periods, their voting behavior in municipal elections, the configurations of political leadership in the community and the development of political organization among black citizens. Having examined the history of black political activity from the period of disfranchisement through to the election of Atlanta's first black mayor, it is important to turn now to an assessment of that political behavior. This will be undertaken in view of the criteria for operationalizing or maximizing black political power and of the applicability of the exchange theory of groups to the history of black political activity in Atlanta.

First, it must be remembered that black political life is characterized by the relationship between black and white Americans and the concomitant efforts of each group either to maintain or to eradicate the structure of this superordinate-subordinate relationship. Black politics, unlike that of other groups, is distinguished by the institutionalized subordination of blacks by whites. As argued by Mack H. Jones in his discussion of black empowerment, it, consequently:

> is theoretically useful to conceptualize black politics as a power struggle between whites bent on maintaining their

position of dominance and blacks struggling to escape this dominance.[1]

In this context, it is pertinent to recall the criteria outlined for use in evaluating the operationalization or maximization of black political power. These are: 1) securing benefits for people in the community; 2) preventing the formation of policy which is adverse to the interests of blacks; and 3) developing and including (or having included) in the policy-making process an agenda of items designed to ameliorate the fundamental social, economic and political problems of black people. Such actions represent the essential tools for blacks--elected officials in particular--to devise and augment political power on behalf of their constituent community.

Furthermore, it is important to recollect those major tenets of exchange theory. Critical to the exchange process are the entrepreneurial role of leadership in group formation, the benefits which make possible the exchange between groups, and the satisfactory flow of such benefits without which the exchange formation breaks down. Central to this process are a large group which is impoverished relatively, a dominant group that controls sufficient resources, and limited channels of communication between the two. Finally, this analysis will examine the applicability of black political activity in Atlanta to the three stages of exchange group formation. The first stage is characterized by the lack of group formation due to the potential group's large size and lack of resources. The second phase includes the operation of organization(s) based on political exchange. The breakdown of the

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[1]Mack H. Jones, "Black Political Empowerment in Atlanta: Myth and Reality," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, V. 439 (September 1978), p. 92.

exchange process, resulting from increased voter sophistication or large numbers of candidates able to communicate directly with voters, marks the third stage. The only other point that remains to be stressed is that organizations depend heavily on solidary and purposive benefits because of a scarcity of selective material benefits.

For the first half of the twentieth century, blacks were unable to vote in those elections where policy-making officials were selected. Though effectively disfranchised, black Atlantans were not politically dormant. There were efforts to register, educate and organize black voters. Able to vote only in general, open and special elections--though not in the decisive party primaries--black electoral participation was severely circumscribed. Also during this period, black socio-economic status was depressed; the bulk of black citizens had low levels of education and income and worked in menial occupations.

Communications between black and white societies was almost nil; blacks were consulted seldom and only in situations where their vote would be critical to the outcome of an election. Due in part to legally mandated segregation and the "legitimacy" of separate-and-unequal facilities, there was a pervasive pressure against the allocation of benefits and services to the black community. Thus, reward incentives for black political participation were scarce and, consequently, the barriers to political organization were mammoth.

Yet, there was a degree of racial consciousness among blacks which was evident in the few instances where they could vote. In the 1921 school bond referendum, blacks were instrumental in its success on the second ballot, after having been promised a portion of the revenues for facilities for black children. Again in 1932, blacks voted in

their interests by casting ballots against an effort to recall an incumbent mayor who--at least--had expressed a concern for the "fair treatment of all citizens regardless of color." In an age when it was anathema to solicit black support, black voters provided voting margins to winning candidates who campaigned among them in 1929 and in 1946.

Despite these efforts, the benefits available to blacks and their electorate size--it was minimal relative to the numbers of white voters--were vastly restricted. Accompanied by legislated barriers to black voting as well as other factors, the elements necessary for organizational exchange were not sufficient for its establishment.

Even so, there were efforts to organize black voters. This was most evident in the formation of the Atlanta Civic and Political League and the Citizens Democratic Club of Fulton County. Though designed to encourage blacks to secure concessions for meeting community needs, these groups had few benefits to offer blacks for their membership costs, that is, participation in the group. Resources were controlled by whites in Atlanta's power structure--those who had little inclination or need to avail these resources to blacks.

Black Atlantans constituted a large latent group unable to organize. They were powerless to levy sanctions in order to promote their interests largely because the most effective instrument--the vote--was generally unavailable. The period from the early 1900s up to 1946, thus, reflects a phase prior to the possibility of political exchange based on electoral organization.

With the 1946 judicial decision invalidating Georgia's white primary, blacks registered to vote in larger numbers than ever before. By the eve of that year's gubernatorial election, enough blacks had

registered to vote to comprise twenty-seven percent of Atlanta's voting population. However, black voters remained essentially unorganized for the next three years. There were no municipal elections during this time and few opportunities in which votes could be exchanged for benefits.

Contrary to traditional interest group theory, new groups hoping to represent this fresh bloc of voters did not emerge. Rather, the period between 1946 and 1949 conforms to exchange theory and, more specifically, to the first stage as predicted by Murray and Vedlitz. The voter organizations of the past--the Atlanta Civic and Political League and the Fulton County Citizens Democratic Club--continued to exist and were maintained minimally. Yet, the voters remained largely disunited as evidenced in the clash between black Democrats and black Republicans.

In 1949, however, black partisans merged to form the Atlanta Negro Voters League (ANVL). Designed as a voters' organization, the ANVL emerged in the ensuing years as the leadership group which facilitated exchange between the black community and the white power elite that controlled the city's government and commerce.

Facing re-election in 1949, Mayor William Hartsfield campaigned against a popular candidate. He won re-election largely because of the overwhelming black vote in his behalf. This event probably marks the beginning of the black-white exchange in Atlanta. At the same time, other white candidates began campaigning among blacks, something hitherto rarely done and previously akin to political suicide. Subsequent to this election, blacks began requesting services and concessions from city government. Many benefits were granted in exchange for

black voter support at the polls. This exchange process became the pattern in mayoral elections after 1949--those re-electing Hartsfield in 1953 and 1957 and the elections that carried Ivan Allen to the mayoral seat in 1961 and 1965.

The conditions facilitating this exchange included the facts that: 1) blacks remained largely poor and at the bottom of the socio-economic scale, putting them in a position where they lacked and needed resources; 2) blacks constituted a sizeable voting bloc--enough to influence the outcome of an election--and black votes were needed by the white business and commercial elite in order to retain their control of city government; 3) because of this need, the power structure was less vulnerable to pressures inhibiting them from making small concessions to blacks; 4) also because of their need for votes, the white power ascendants were more willing to communicate with blacks--though not with the entire community directly--in order to obtain their support; and 5) in a number of these elections, there were conservative candidates supported by more reactionary elements whose bids for office threatened the interests of black voters more than the retention of moderate, white-elite-supported candidates.

The black leadership which brokered the exchange between black voters and the white leadership was provided by the Voters League. Largely through their Screening Committee and the use of mass-distributed "tickets"--slates of recommended candidates--the League controlled exchange. While "delivering" the black vote to the power structure's candidates, this group served to secure benefits for the black community. In addition to making requests of the city administrations, these black leaders would express concern for issues to white

candidates in Screening Committee presentations. In this manner, the interests of the black community were communicated to whites as support was implied for those white candidates. Furthermore, because these black leaders controlled access by blacks to whites in power, the ANVL was known as the clearinghouse for black problems. Blacks knew that going through the League was the most auspicious method to solve a problem with or get a concession from the white community.[2]

Of the benefits garnered by the Atlanta Negro Voters League leadership, few were individual, material benefits. It has been intimated that these were reserved largely for the black leaders.[3] The black community as a whole, rather, shared the material benefits of paved streets, improved school facilities, lights, sewers and sidewalks. Purposive benefits--those which accrue indivisibly to a group--included the first hirings of black policemen and firemen, reduction of police brutality, abatement of discriminatory treatment at the hands of city and courtroom officials, as well as the reported suppression of some white supremacist groups.[4] The solidary benefits, deriving from group association such as status and group identification, were available and enjoyed by those blacks who joined and participated in League activities and even more so by those members whose status was enhanced by inclusion in the organization's leadership.

Throughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s, the Atlanta

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[2]Interview with Robert Brisbane, Ph.D., Chairman, Political Science Department, Morehouse College, March 26, 1976.

[3]Ibid; also interview with David Franklin, October 23, 1978.

[4]C. A. Bacote, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," Phylon 16 (Fourth Quarter 1955): 349-50.

Negro Voters League facilitated black-white organizational voter exchange. Evidently, for several years there was a mutually satisfactory flow between the two communities because black voters continued to follow the League's cues at election time and because the white power elite acknowledged--through their use of the League as a conduit to the black community--the influence of that organization.

In assessing the extent to which power was operationalized during these years, it is important to note that in addition to the benefits outlined above, the black leadership neither formulated and operationalized a black agenda nor was able to prevent the development or sustenance of policy adverse to the interests of the black community. The fact that segregation persisted is evidence of their inability to influence policy either in City Hall or in the larger community.

It may be that by the decade of the 1960s, the black citizenry became dissatisfied with the inability or unwillingness of the League leadership to attack segregation or with its ineffectiveness in securing more substantial benefits for the broader community. With the advent of the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta, blacks began to support the efforts of new, emerging leaders who confronted the white business and commercial elite with demands to dismantle Jim Crow policies of racial separation. The influence of the Atlanta Negro Voters League waned and a younger generation of influential blacks commanded the attention of the white power structure and the votes of black citizens. League leaders could no longer articulate the desires of blacks or direct the sanctions blacks levied against uncompromising white establishments. The unobtrusive appeals of the old black leaders gave way to the integrationist demands supported by the majority of black

Atlantans. Thus, the Civil Rights Movement precipitated a shift of influence from the Atlanta Negro Voters League to the leadership of a new group, the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference (ASLC).

The Conference was not a voter organization as the League had been. Further, the organization per se did not assume the screening and recommendation function of the older group. The individuals who were at the helm of the ASLC, however, did assume on an informal basis the broker function performed previously by the ANVL. By the mid-1960s, this "New Guard" was interacting with the city's white leaders on behalf of the black community and was providing cues for the black electorate to follow at election time. Though the new black leadership group was less conservative in its style and its requests for benefits, the exchange process largely remained intact. They still were described as "junior" partners in the black-white coalition, suggesting that once integration was achieved the "New Guard" followed the initiatives of the white power elite and provided black support where and when it was expected.

The benefits obtained by this new leadership remained qualitatively unchanged. That is, blacks received few individual, material benefits and some purposive concessions for the community; yet, the superordinate-subordinate structure of socioeconomic and political relationships remained intact. No black agenda was initiated or operationalized; neither was policy inimical to black interests thwarted by black leaders through the 1960s.

In toto, the years from 1949 up to the 1969 elections conform to the second stage predicted by exchange theorists where organizational--black voters are organized as a group united behind a particular

leadership--political exchange occurs based on a mutually satisfactory flow of benefits and votes. Outside subsidization, in the form of resources and benefits supplied by the white power structure, did provide start-up costs with which black leadership organized its troops. There were two phases to this exchange process--one with formal organization of black voters and the second with informal cohesion of blacks as a voting bloc. Despite the differences in formal organization, the process remained essentially the same. The different leadership groups performed the same functions with respect to the political exchange process. Only the style and, perhaps, the degree of demands were different. Qualitatively, vis-a-vis the power relationships between whites and blacks, the benefits sought were alike.

On the eve of the 1969 municipal elections, black voters controlled a significant share of electoral power in Atlanta. Both the black and white leadership groups were aware of this fact. For the first time in the history of the black-white coalition, whose merger had been formulated by black and white leaders to elect white-designated city administrations, black leaders rejected the white power structure's mayoral candidate and supported, instead, another white hopeful rather than the black aspirant to the mayor's post.

The ballot counts from the city's black precincts attested to an even more meaningful split. The black electorate not only repudiated the white leadership candidate, but almost half of the blacks casting ballots--in the general election--did so on the behalf of the black mayoral candidate, rejecting the black leadership's choice for mayor as well. Furthermore, in the race for vice-mayor, black voters supported overwhelmingly a candidate not backed by black leaders. In the run-off

election for mayor, the black electorate opposed the white power structure's anointee for mayor, providing the victory for the black leadership's candidate choice.

The long-established voters' exchange with the city's white business and commercial elite had broken down in both races for Atlanta's top governmental posts. The generation-long coalition had ruptured. Large numbers of black voters, for the first time since being enfranchised meaningfully, ignored the cues which for so long had made them partners in political exchange.

Even so, the break was not complete. In the intervening years between the 1969 and 1973 municipal elections, some political exchange did occur among black voters and the white power structure which continued to command substantial resources and control the city's economic life. This exchange was negotiated by black leaders among whom were those who had ascended to power on the wave of the Civil Rights Movement as well as newly-elected black officials who had emerged since then. Benefits for blacks were negotiated and, in turn, black voters supported the referendum authorizing a rapid transit system. Blacks, because of black representation in the county delegation to the state legislature, were able to secure representation on the city charter commission.

Yet, in spite of the electoral strength of the black community, benefits for blacks remained limited. The kinds of concessions which would produce more equitable socioeconomic conditions between the races still were not forthcoming from whites who controlled vast resources. What is worse is that in the deliberations for the rapid transit system and for a new city charter, blacks participated in the policy-making

which proved inimical to black interests. In the case of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, the system was financed by a most regressive sales tax increase for which black leaders campaigned. The new city charter--resulting in redistricting that reduced the potential number and scope of black elected city legislators--was adopted with the approval of black officeholders and political leaders.

Furthermore, black elected officials appeared ineffective in instances where policy-making and implementation could have been or, in fact, was harmful to the black community. Their inability to halt police brutality against blacks and their failure to impede the annexation proposal--designed to dilute black voting strength--are witnesses to the fact that maximization of black political power in Atlanta by the early 1970s was minimal.

The efforts by black leaders during these years were not totally ineffectual. Some successes had been scored in attacks against discrimination in city government and in efforts to secure some contracts for blacks. Nevertheless, these concessions hardly constituted an equitable share of benefits for blacks. Neither did they alter, in any way, the subordination of blacks to the power or ascendance of Atlanta's white population.

Furthermore, though making a nascent effort at forging an organization with the potential for developing a black agenda, black leaders showed no progress in this regard. The city's most influential blacks lacked a cogent slate of policy alternatives for solving the fundamental and critical social and economic problems of their own community. Therefore, while the potential for maximizing black political power had increased--as evidenced in the increased black population and

electorate size, in the reduction of gaps in educational attainment and income between whites and blacks, and in the election of more blacks to city government posts--this potential had not been realized in the years between 1969 and 1973.

The results of the municipal elections held in 1973 evidenced a culmination of the rupture in the political exchange which first appeared in the 1969 campaigns. None of the traditional elements for exchange were negotiated in the race for mayor. In fact, roles were interchanged somewhat when black leaders presented their choice for the chief executive position to the white business and commercial elite for white support. Yet, the roles were not exactly reversed, for blacks controlled no resources to offer whites except, perhaps, for the patronage which might come with the mayor's office. Even so, Maynard Jackson appeared unwilling to commit anything in exchange for voter support from the white leadership group.[5] Jackson, moreover, won the mayoral race on the strength of the black vote even though he did receive significant--though not quite one-third--white voter support and grudging white leadership backing.

The most telling data, however, come from the election for City Council President. In this race, the black leadership may have attempted to broker white support for mayoral hopeful Jackson while, in return, discouraging a serious black candidacy for council president and delivering black votes to the white designee. The "deal," as it was referred to, apparently was repudiated by more than half of the blacks casting ballots for this race in both the general and run-off elections.

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[5]Interview with Mayor Maynard Jackson, 10 March 1975.

They cast a majority of their votes in the first contest and two-thirds in the second for a black candidate who entered the campaign after the "deal" was made public and who was opposed by black political brokers. In fact, even among those blacks who did not vote for the black candidate, most of them voted for a white aspirant who also was not either leadership group's choice. Thus, at least ninety percent of blacks voting in the general election for President of the City Council rejected the cues given by black leaders.

Moreover, statistics from the 1969 and 1973 elections for Board of Aldermen and City Council posts show that black and white voters generally opposed each other. In these races, there was little evidence of a coalition or of political exchange. Statistical studies of city elections by Hardon and Rooks as well as an analysis of voting patterns in the Fifth District Congressional races disprove the myth of mutuality in the so-called coalition. The absence of significant white support for black candidates persists over time and in different types of elections extending beyond municipal posts to include congressional and county elections as well.[6]

Evidence from these elections--especially the 1973 council presidency--suggests a dismantling of the political exchange among Atlanta's business and commercial elite, black leaders and the black

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[6]Statistical analyses of voting patterns in municipal elections include Berdie Ricks Hardon, "A Statistical Analysis of the Black-White Voting Coalition in Atlanta 1949 to 1970" (Master's thesis, Georgia State University, 1972); and Charles S. Rooks, <u>The Atlanta Elections of 1969</u> (Atlanta: Voter Education Project, Inc., 1970), pp. 58-63, 70. Evidence for refuting the claim of white voter support for black candidates in coalition style also can be found in Marilyn Ann Davis, "Political Participation in Georgia's Fifth Congressional District: An Analysis of Racial and Socioeconomic Voting Patterns, 1946 to 1978" (Ph.D. dissertation, Atlanta University, 1979), pp. 195, 227.

electorate. Few cues given by black influentials attempting to broker black votes were heeded by the black electorate. It appears that in the races for the two most powerful positions candidates were able to communicate directly with and secure the votes of blacks.

One might suggest that black voters had reached a level of sophistication at which they no longer needed the cues of black leaders to vote for candidates disposed to act on their behalf or for candidates least opposed to their interests. While that may hold some truth, it must be remembered that black voters did not exercise their maximum electoral strength by carrying as many blacks to office as possible. Had they voted in sufficient numbers or voted more heavily for black aspirants than for whites, more blacks could have won City Council and Board of Education seats. Black voters heeded the urgings of the white-controlled media and some black leaders for biracial government. The whites elected with black votes over black hopefuls may have had, at best, questionable intent to pursue the interests of their black constituency. Therefore, the sophistication premise is arguable.

It can be concluded, however, that the political exchange forged decades before the election of Atlanta's first black mayor had succumbed by 1973. As exchange theory predicts, whether because of large numbers of candidates who appealed directly to voters or because of a new level of sophistication, black leaders no longer were able to control and command the black electorate. Black voters demonstrated the ability, independent of black leaders, to support substantially a number of candidates who appeared to be inclined to promote black interests.

Whether these officials will be disposed to or able to maximize

black Atlantans' potential for political power remains to be seen. For years, black efforts and potential strength yielded few resources capable of ameliorating the problems manifested by the depressed black socioeconomic status. Yet, more than an equitable share of benefits is needed. Clearly, where one group suffers at the superordination of another group, the power relationships must be altered in order to relieve the fundamental problems of the subordinate group. Black Atlantans, at the close of the 1973 municipal elections, had some potential for developing the power needed to shift priorities to meet their needs.

This potential suggests, moreover, a critical consideration of the applicability of the exchange theory of group behavior. The exchange theory provides an appropriate framework for the study of rational and purposive group electoral behavior in pursuit of benefits. However, this analysis of black electoral behavior in Atlanta suggests an element that is not adequately addressed in exchange theory. That element is the group's pursuit, maximization and consolidation of political power.

What is more, this element is critical where it involves a group whose political, economic, social and cultural status has been conditioned by deliberate and systematic oppression. In this case, group electoral behavior is directed not only at the acquisition of benefits; it encompasses a drive toward participation in the decision-making process that controls the distribution of benefits. In other words, the pursuit of political power seeks not only a piece of the pie but requires a role in dividing and distributing the pie.

Furthermore, such a modification is even more important because

of the nature and consequences of the superordinate-subordinate relationship between the races. Because this relationship is a fundamental characteristic of American politics, efforts by the oppressed to acquire power and to reorder equitably society's priorities must be identified as a specific, overarching goal that challenges the very nature of current power relationships.

The question, then, for exchange theory is whether it is limited to explaining political behavior that is assumed to be pluralist or whether it can account for political activity that seeks to reorder power relationships. That question will remain unanswered here. Its consideration requires an extensive explication and rigorous examination of exchange theory which is not appropriate for this analysis.

What this study does suggest is the expansion and development of exchange theory and a systematic analysis of its applicability to political behavior. Exchange theory, in this instance, proved useful for understanding patterns of black electoral behavior in Atlanta but remains limited in its explanation of long-range goals designed to maximize power as well as acquire benefits.

This discussion seeks to clarify one's understanding of the nature of black politics in Atlanta. Its purpose does not presume to suggest prescriptions for the utility of the electoral process for solving the problems of blacks. The conclusions, it is hoped, raise questions rather than prescribe action. These questions involve the capacity and limitations of electoral politics for providing not just benefits but the means of reordering priorities so that the distribution of society's resources will be equitable.

The needs of the black community require more than reordered

priorities, however. They demand a qualitative change in the nature of power relationships. More specifically, power suggests control of economic as well as political resources. The electoral process appears limited in its access to resources generated outside of the political institutions served by voting.

If the black community is to acquire the power that will permit a solution to its fundamental problems, it is critical to understand the sources of that power and the utility of any political behavior for maximizing that power. The successes and failures of electoral politics pose these questions. The task of answering them belongs to black leaders, black elected officials and, most importantly, to black voters.

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