
Introduction

Fortuitously poised as a Sun Belt regional center, Atlanta grew faster than most metropolitan areas over the past twenty-five years. But the expansion of the economy and the increase in population exacerbated historical class and racial separations. Income inequality increased, particularly for African Americans. The end of legal segregation opened economic doors for segments of the black population, but few blacks entered the upper classes, and poor blacks' relative economic position deteriorated. The type of work people do is still largely determined by race and sex. White women increased their presence in better jobs, and black women moved into white-collar jobs (though mostly as clerical or administrative-support workers), but black men lost ground in terms of better-paying, more prestigious jobs. Black unemployment declined, but the ratio of black-to-white unemployment increased. National research has documented the increasing bifurcation of income between rich and poor as an inherent attribute of the American economy. The analyses of Atlanta in Chapter One will show that the region's exceptional economic development did not ameliorate previous inequalities; it deepened them.

Increasing inequality weighs more heavily on the African American population, whose historically restricted living conditions provide lower starting points. Increasing class inequality and persistent racial residential segregation,

combined with new forms of edge-city suburban development, exclusionary suburban land-use regulations, enduring discriminatory mortgage lending, institutionally segregated real-estate-brokerage systems, and weak fair-housing enforcement, reinforced class and racial separations. Timid regulation of office, commercial, manufacturing, warehousing, and research-and-development facilities resulted in their being located farther and farther from the city in the largely white northern suburbs, leaving the black population south of the old central business district more distant from jobs and commerce. Chapter Two examines how the housing market, real-estate development practices, and local governance exacerbate the negative effects of economic growth.

Examination of local governance will show that business-driven public policy plays an integral role in augmenting the disadvantages of the economy. Where local policy should attempt to rectify the damaging aspects of the economy, it compounds them. In spite of African American electoral ascension, Atlanta business still dominates local politics. That domination has pursued narrowly defined conceptions of public interests, and the resulting development initiatives have frequently undermined both the larger interests of the region and the pursuit of a fairer society. Governance that is responsible to all its citizens requires a firm basis in inclusively defined public interests. Instead of fostering development that enhances the lives of the people who live in Atlanta, public policy focuses on serving non-Atlantans: conventioners, tourists, national and international sports fans, and new middle- and upper-class residents. The limited focus of Atlanta's successive governing coalitions has produced a series of heavily subsidized development projects that have damaged both local and regional interests. At the same time, extensive political and financial resources and the participation of the mass media have protected these projects from the scrutiny that informed judgment and responsible public planning require. This anti-public-planning ideology is a major part of the basis of the city and the region's incapacity to translate a robustly expanding economy into closing historic gaps.

Chapters Three through Seven examine the history of development and development politics. From the late 1940s to the early '70s, city government was dominated by wealthy, white downtown business leaders.

Throughout most of this period the government depended on the support of a biracial coalition. In the '50s, while William Hartsfield was mayor, and the '60s, while Ivan Allen Jr. was mayor, the white downtown business elite managed to hold on to city hall by maintaining an informal political alliance with the city's middle-class African American political leadership. The white elite supported elements of desegregation and the civil-rights struggle, and expansion of housing for middle-class blacks. In return, black, middle-class political leaders secured the African American vote for Hartsfield and Allen, providing the electoral margin the white elite needed to stay in power. Cooperation between black and white leaders broke down briefly when blacks took control of city hall in the early '70s. But the partnership was quickly revived in a new form. Even though African Americans now controlled city government, black elected officials often cooperated with white business leaders outside government. For the next two decades, black-run city government was a frequent ally of major business interests.

The pursuit of narrowly defined objectives that were damaging to the interests of the broader community characterized the succession of development projects Atlanta's governing coalition promoted. Urban renewal forcibly removed lower-class white and black residents from many neighborhoods surrounding the core of the city, providing neither sufficient relocation payments nor replacement housing. The stadiums, civic centers, university buildings, and middle- and upper-income housing that replaced these neighborhoods were inaccessible to the former residents and provided only modest benefits to most Atlantans. Construction of a multibillion-dollar rapid-rail system might have helped structure land use in environmentally sustainable ways that would have allowed increased mobility, but an insistence on *laissez-faire* development inverted the role of the system from "growth shaping" to "growth chasing," with a concomitant reduction in public benefits. Restructuring the bus and rail systems to eliminate transit-passenger-based central-city retail establishments deprived the area of the commercial vitality it once had, and neither the heavily subsidized convention center nor an equally heavily subsidized and now defunct entertainment complex has replaced the lost activity. The redevelopment triggered by the Olympic Games initially promised a broader range of community

benefits, but reversion to narrow concepts of the public interest severely hurt the poor, insured that the original expectations would not be realized, and converted the public balance sheet from profit to loss.

Preoccupation with this succession of projects meant far less attention and resources for the basics of urban governance. The combined future bill to repair and upgrade water and sewage systems exceeds \$2 billion. Closed bridges dot the city. Atlanta has yet to adopt a comprehensive capital-improvements program and budget. Some of the largest costs for the concentration on glamorous but limited development will be paid by future residents.

This business-dominated political coalition was first described and analyzed by Clarence Stone. The biracial partnership has been such a central force in the city's politics and has endured for so long that it has been accurately characterized by Stone as a regime. His analysis of Atlanta politics built on and extended the work of Floyd Hunter, who described the behavior and internal dynamics of Atlanta's white power structure from the late '40s through the mid-'50s.

Stone dissected Atlanta's political decisions to show that the most influential factor in local governance was the ability of a corporate elite to mobilize political and fiscal resources behind specific projects. Omnipotence in a socially non-cohesive and sometimes chaotic world is not attainable, but the capacity to marshal the political and fiscal capital to pursue particular projects is, and it is this capacity that has maintained business' political leadership.

These resources are of two types: rewards and deprivations for individuals, and institutional abilities to mobilize on particular issues.¹ Rewards and deprivations for individuals are both political and personal. Examples are familiar: campaign fund-raising support; introductions to important people; business opportunities, referrals, contacts, and contracts; and myriad forms of immediate and ongoing assistance. Institutional resources that allow mobilization on particular issues compose an extensive list in Atlanta. Central Atlanta Progress, an advocacy group for the central business district, maintains a professional staff of planners, researchers, and specialists in several areas. CAP has periodically organized funding for special-purpose subsidiaries to promote and implement such projects as Park Central Inc.; the organization that

fostered the development of the east-side Bedford Pine Urban Renewal Area; and the Centennial Olympic Park Authority, which performed a similar function on the west side of the central business district (CBD). Likewise, the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce maintains a staff of planners, researchers, and specialists. Corporate support funds Research Atlanta, a respected public-policy research operation that recently affiliated with Georgia State University. Integral to this network of analytical and public-opinion-molding organizations are the *Atlanta Journal* and *Atlanta Constitution*, both owned by Cox Enterprises. The two papers unapologetically promote the perspective of the business elite and ignore or marginalize opposing figures and issues.

Supplementing this formidable array of institutions are corporate-controlled philanthropic organizations, such as the Woodruff (Coca-Cola) family of foundations, the Metropolitan Community Foundation, and the Cousins Foundation. An example of the mobilization of these resources is the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, a foundation-supported “intermediary” between private financing and Atlanta’s fledgling nonprofit community-development corporations. At the behest of the Chamber of Commerce, the ANDP recently agreed to be the lead agency implementing the current phase of the business community’s long-standing program of developing middle- and upper-income housing around the CBD. This role distorts the organization’s primary purpose of fostering the development of lower-income housing, and will exacerbate the damaging effects on low-income people of publicly supported gentrification of central-city neighborhoods.

These institutions support the public policy and development objectives of the business elite more cohesively and effectively than the city’s less-well-endowed planning department or any of the much smaller environmental, homeless, community-development, and social-justice advocacy groups. Development of more broadly based, independent, competitive perspectives of public policy is limited by lack of resources. Advocacy groups and individual researchers occasionally capture attention and catalyze action on specific issues, but these are transitory exceptions.

Part of the reason for the absence of more effective countervailing institutions is that Atlanta has very few labor unions, and most of those

that exist are weak. For many years, Atlanta's economic-development strategies—like those of the South in general—were predicated on the supply of nonunion, low-wage labor. The legacy of these policies is an undereducated and weakly organized workforce that can marshal few institutional resources in support of public policies.

Although the formerly hegemonic capacity of the business elite to shape public policies and subsidies is still the dominant force in Atlanta politics, Atlanta is no longer the sole focus of local political activity. The surrounding suburbs, containing more than 80 percent of the regional population, enjoy more new economic development, better-funded governments, and political opportunities. Though still cohesive, the networks of corporate executives of Atlanta companies have weakened as the regional economy has internationalized. Ivan Allen Jr.'s office-supply company, from which he ran successfully for mayor in the 1960s, is now part of a national office-supply chain. Consolidation in the banking industry moved the regional financial capital from Atlanta to North Carolina. Both of Atlanta's major department-store chains are now owned by the same national conglomerate, which is based elsewhere. The electric utility is a subsidiary of a regional holding company. The city is still home to some of the wealthiest corporate executives, but many others live in affluent suburbs, their attachments to Atlanta softened not only by their political separation but by the fact that career advancement requires moves from the region. In the absence of new countervailing political institutions, the intricacies of mutually reinforcing business and political networks maintain the form but not all the substance of the public-policy hegemony of past years.

In addition, the power of business elites has been diminished by the regional nature of problems faced by governments. Within the city, neglect of basic infrastructure now requires amelioration that local businesses are not equipped to oversee or provide. The region has a history of narrowly defined premises for planning, leading to crises in mass transportation, highway construction, air quality, water supply, sewage disposal, environmental degradation, and development regulation; all these now require regional and intergovernmental resolution. Business and corporate perspectives are still potent influences on each of these policy areas, but less dominantly so.



Race, Class, and the Atlanta Economy

Metropolitan Atlanta has grown rapidly since the end of World War II. Up until the 1990s, most of this growth occurred in the city's northern suburbs. Underwritten by subsidies for expressways, owner-occupied housing, and schools, this dramatic shift northward was overtly racial at first. Affluent whites moved to the northern suburbs to live at a distance from the city's blacks, whom segregation had concentrated in the near south side. Eventually this northward shift in the city's white population, though still heavily subsidized, became a self-reinforcing trend.

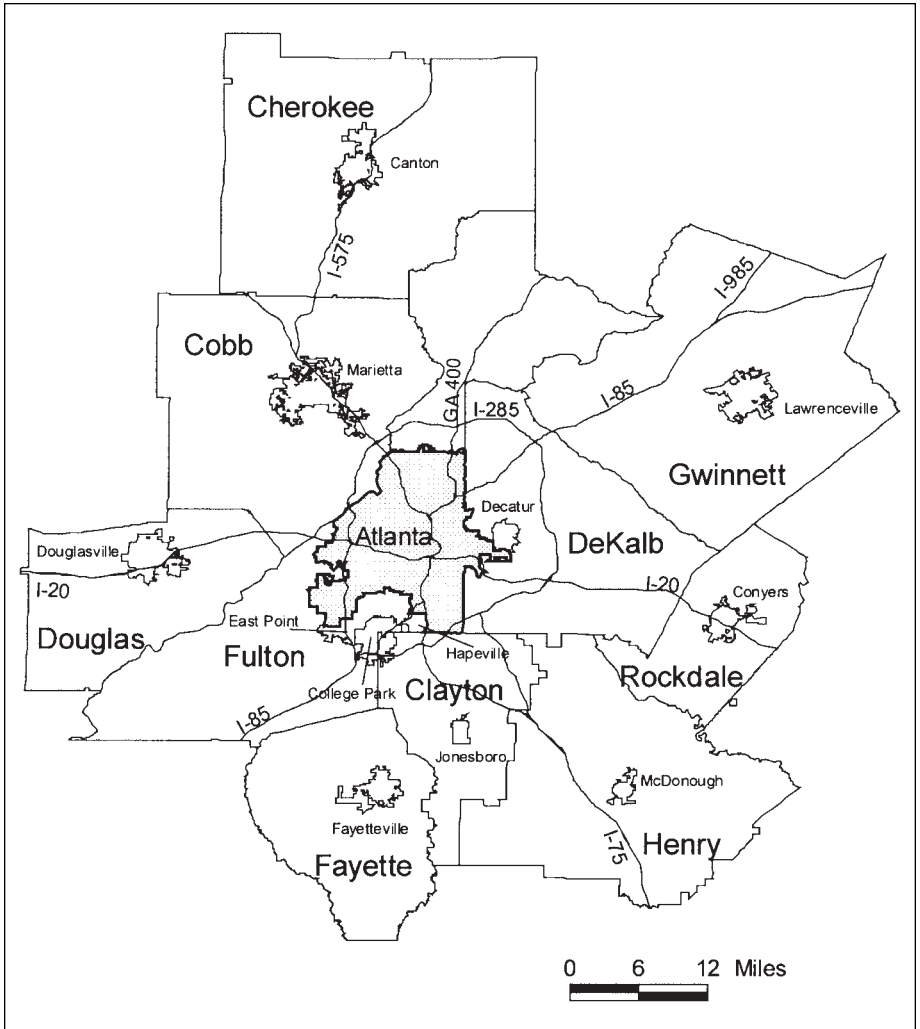
The expansive growth of residential development in the north metro area brought growth in retail and office space as well. In the '70s and '80s, six large shopping malls were built in this northern region, and there was a boom in office-tower construction, primarily along the interstates. Business parks and strip malls soon followed. After four decades of nonstop expansion, the north metro area has become the epitome of modern urban sprawl—a vast expanse of housing tracts and condominium and apartment complexes, with shopping centers, mini-malls, convenience stores, and office parks scattered chaotically across the landscape. The metropolitan area as defined by the Atlanta Regional Commission is shown in Map 1 (p. 9).

The growth of the north metro region has had a profound effect on the city. One of the main consequences has been the dispersal of employment. The northward shift of the metro region's white population and the rapid office, commercial, and retail development in the north metro area have absorbed most of the new growth over the past three decades (see Map 2, p. 10). One measure of this change is the extent to which the central business district's position in the regional office market has declined. In 1966, more than two-thirds of private office space was located in the CBD. In 1997 that figure was one-sixth. Proportionally, the central area's share had declined by 75 percent.

Atlanta's central business district did not lose office space; it actually gained a small amount. But almost all of the new growth was on the north side. Parallel reductions of the city's share of retail, service, manufacturing, and other jobs have intensified racial and class divisions. Many whites do not have to go to the city to work, shop, or play; they can stay in the racially homogeneous north side. The city's blacks, increasingly isolated on the city's south side, find that jobs and stores are moving farther and farther away. Adequate public transportation does not extend to the northern suburbs, so many poor blacks who do not own cars find it difficult to reach jobs in these outlying districts. This is a significant but indeterminate number of people: According to the 1990 Census, 39.2 percent of all black households in Atlanta did not have access to cars.¹

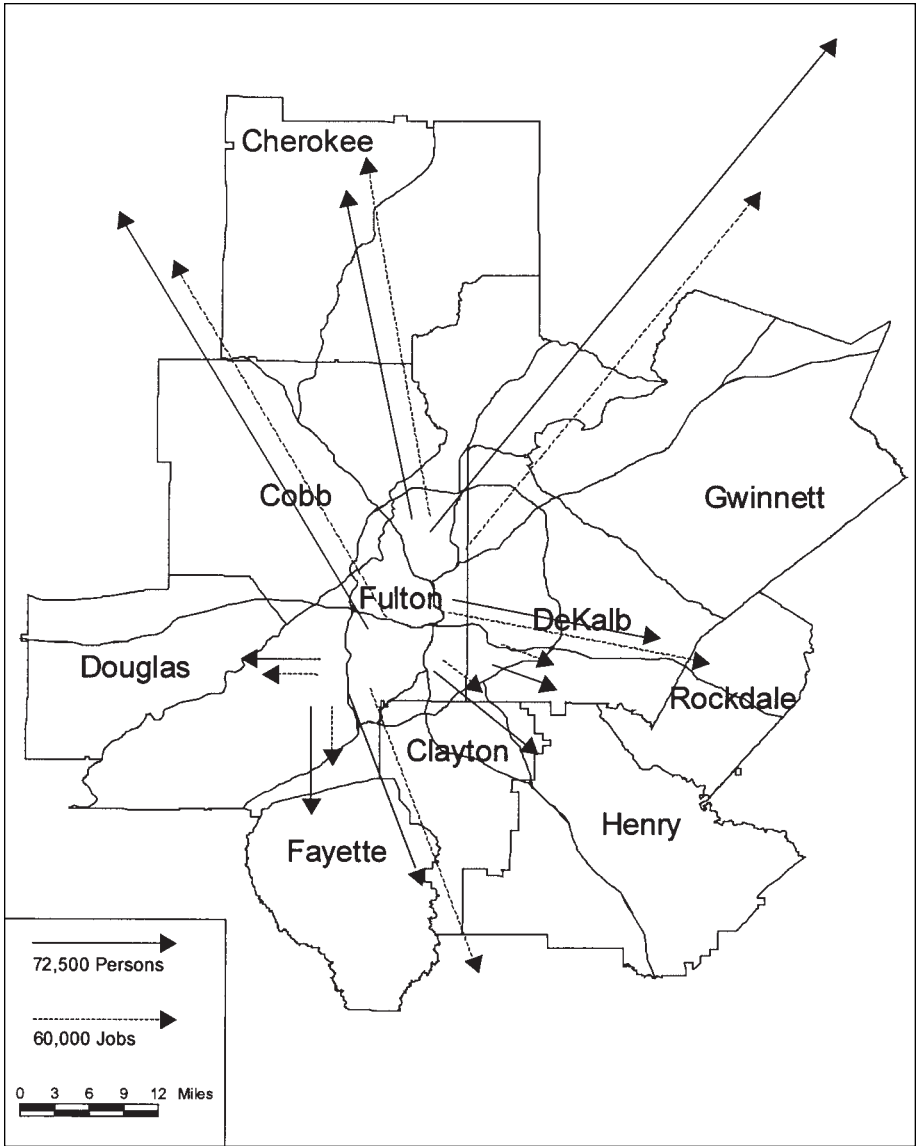
After fifty years of increasingly segregated growth, Atlanta has become two largely separate cities: a mostly white north side of town, where economic activity is vigorous and expanding, and a mostly black south side, where the economy lags badly. It is true that many blacks have prospered in Atlanta's growing economy, but blacks as a whole are still far behind whites economically. In fact, according to every measure of economic strength, inequality between the city's blacks and whites has actually increased over the past forty years.

Not only are there a white north Atlanta and a mostly black south Atlanta, there are also two black Atlantas. Not only is there growing economic inequality between blacks and whites, there is also growing economic inequality between middle-class blacks and poor blacks. Like many major American cities, Atlanta has a growing black underclass, and



Brad Calvert

Map 1. Atlanta Metropolitan Region



Brad Calvert

Map 2. Directions of Growth, Atlanta Metropolitan Region, 1980-1998

the city suffers from all the problems that attend persistent urban poverty. The standard of living of a sizable minority of the city's blacks is much closer to that of middle-class whites than to that of poor blacks. Race and class fracture the Atlanta community along several different fault lines.

The Regional Economy

Atlanta is the dominant wholesale and retail trade center of the Southeast. The metro area is the regional center for markets in furniture, textiles, and other products, and it is a shipping and distribution center for a wide variety of goods. The metro area has fourteen high-priced regional shopping malls, the most exclusive and expensive of which draw up to 40 percent of their customers from outside the area. Atlanta has also been part of a nationwide expansion in service employment. Service jobs now account for a larger percentage of Atlanta-area jobs than any other employment sector.

Transportation is another major sector of the Atlanta economy. It accounts for a larger proportion of jobs in the Atlanta metro region than in any other metropolitan area in the nation. The city's location makes it a natural transportation hub. Indeed, rail transportation was Atlanta's original *raison d'être*. After the Cherokee Indians were forced to vacate the northern quarter of Georgia between the 1830s and 1850s, the state built railroads through the Appalachian Mountains to the Tennessee River. Atlanta provided rail connections between the Gulf and Atlantic coastal regions and the Midwest. It remains a substantial rail connection today, and has become a major trucking and air hub as well.

In recent years the Atlanta economy has experienced especially robust growth. Table 1 describes this growth by industry. Between 1980 and 1998, the Atlanta regional economy grew by 906,928 jobs, a rate of increase of 99 percent.² Much of this growth occurred in the service sector, which between 1980 and 1998 recorded both the largest absolute increase in jobs of any sector, 283,425, and the second-largest proportional increase, 112 percent (after government employment). In both 1980 and 1998, the service sector was by far the largest sector in the Atlanta economy; in 1998 it accounted for nearly three in ten jobs (29.4 percent).

Table 1. Number of Jobs by Industry, Atlanta Region,^a 1980 and 1998

Industry	1980		1998		Number Change 1980–1998	Percentage Change 1980–1998
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Construction	47,108	5.1	88,194	4.8	41,086	87.2
Manufacturing	133,287	14.5	171,732	9.4	38,445	28.8
Transportation and utilities	91,312	10.0	164,725	9.0	73,413	80.4
Wholesale trade	100,739	11.0	165,190	9.1	64,451	64.0
Retail trade	163,092	17.8	329,059	18.0	165,967	101.8
Finance, investment, and real estate	67,734	7.4	128,425	7.0	60,691	89.6
Services	252,990	27.6	536,415	29.4	283,425	112.0
Government ^b	55,092	6.0	225,860	12.4	170,768	310.0
Miscellaneous	5,122	0.6	13,804	0.8	8,682	169.5
Total nongovernment	861,384	94.0	1,597,544	87.6	736,160	85.5
Total	916,476	100.0	1,823,404	100.0	906,928	99.0

^aIncludes Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties.

^bFederal, state, and local.

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Average Monthly Employment by Year.

Retail employment has grown almost as quickly as service employment, adding 165,967 workers over the eighteen-year period, an increase of 101.8 percent. Retail in 1998 accounted for 18 percent of the jobs in the Atlanta metro region, up slightly from 17.8 percent in 1980.

The transportation and public-utilities sector also showed significant growth during this period. Between 1980 and 1998, it added 73,413 jobs to the area's economy, an 80.4 percent increase. The growth in this sector is due in part to the prominence of the airport—the world's busiest, by some measures—and the area's increasing role as a distribution center for the Southeast.

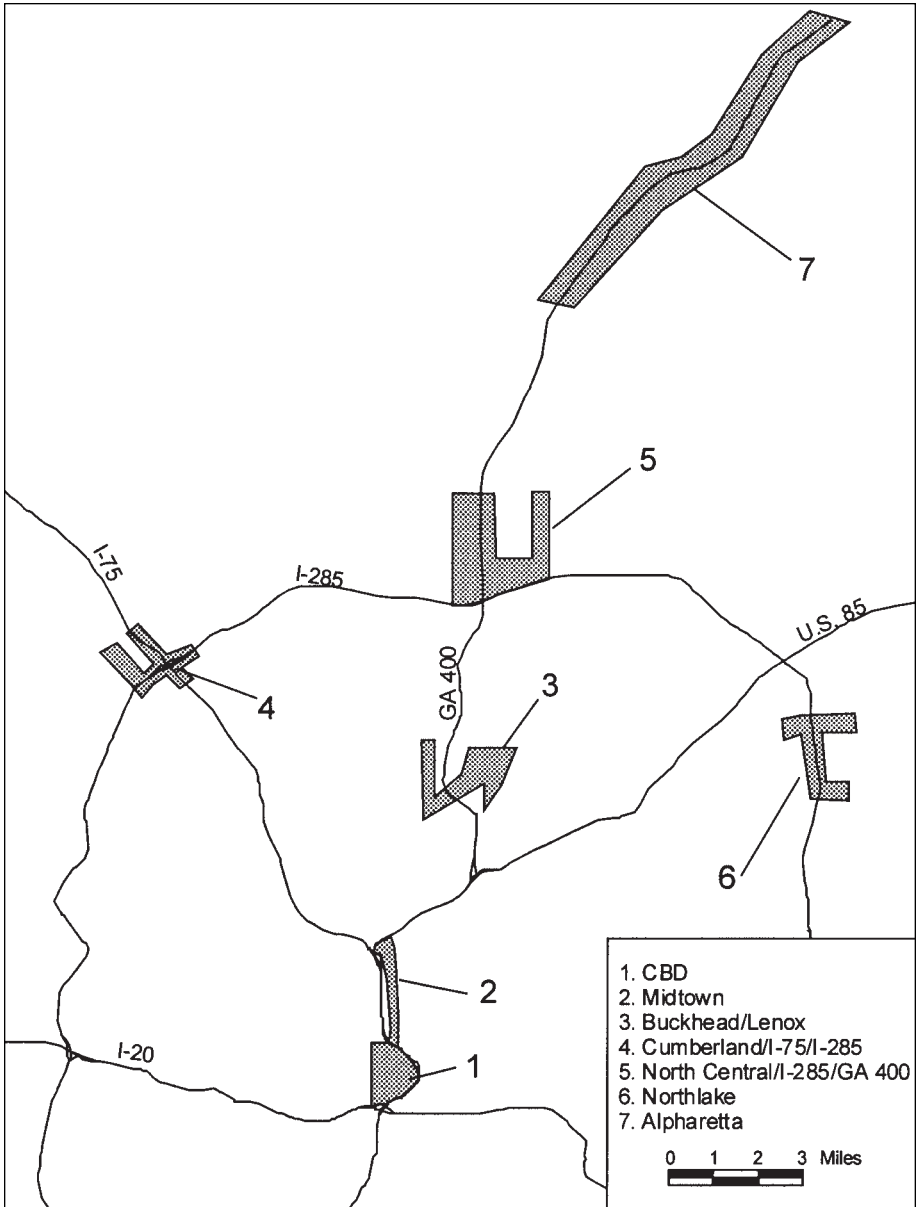
In 1998, the finance, insurance, and real-estate sector accounted for only 7 percent of the region's employment, down from 7.4 percent in 1980. The total number of jobs in this sector grew by 60,691, an 89.6 percent rate of increase—lower than the 99 percent rate of increase in total jobs. Part of the reason that this sector did not grow at a faster rate

is that during this period Atlanta ceased to be the financial capital of the Southeast. National and international consolidation of firms in the finance industry manifested itself in the external acquisition of formerly major local banks, with consequent reductions in employment.

Despite the presence of two automobile plants in the region, manufacturing has never been a major part of Atlanta's economy. In 1980, manufacturing accounted for 14.5 percent of the jobs in the metro area. By 1998 that percentage had dropped considerably, to 9.4 percent. During this period, manufacturing added 38,445 jobs to the regional economy, a growth rate of 28.8 percent. This is by far the lowest growth rate recorded by any sector of the Atlanta economy. The manufacturing sector is relatively small in all Sun Belt cities, partly because in recent years, manufacturing companies throughout the South have been locating new plants outside urban areas to take advantage of lower wage rates. Companies typically locate within fifty to 200 miles of urban centers to retain access to metropolitan markets and distribution networks. In the Atlanta area economy, the manufacturing sector is smaller than it was in other large metropolitan areas in the Sun Belt, such as Los Angeles (20 percent), Dallas–Fort Worth (17 percent), and Houston (17 percent). The smaller size of Atlanta's manufacturing sector is typical of relatively smaller Sun Belt cities such as Tampa–St. Petersburg (10 percent), Phoenix (14 percent), and Miami (8 percent).³

By far the largest growth rate experienced by any sector of the Atlanta economy between 1980 and 1998 was that of government. Atlanta is the state capital and one of eight regional headquarters of the federal government, and the surrounding suburban region is home to a plethora of city and county governments. In 1998, government at all levels employed 170,768 people, a 310 percent increase over the 1980 total of 55,092. Government's share of employment over the period more than doubled, from 6 percent in 1980 to 12.4 percent in 1998.⁴

Driven largely by an average annual addition of 50,385 jobs, the region's economy increased by 1,220,159 people over the same period. Table 2 (p. 16) documents the metro area's population growth over the past two decades. As forthcoming sections will show, much of this growth occurred in the northern counties of Gwinnett, Cobb, and Cherokee, and the northern sections of Fulton and DeKalb counties.



Brad Calvert

Map 3. Atlanta Edge Cities

Office and Commercial Development in the North Metro Area

The rapid residential expansion on the city's north side stimulated the subsequent construction of nine large shopping malls throughout this northern region. And this rapid growth of retail space was matched by an equally rapid growth of office space. As the northern suburbs grew, there was extensive, ongoing construction of office buildings throughout the north metro area. Most of this intensive office development occurred around shopping malls; some of it occurred around major highway intersections.

Over the past three decades, the office market in metro Atlanta as a whole has undergone rapid expansion. In 1970 Atlanta had slightly more than 23 million square feet of office space. By the end of 1999 this figure had grown sevenfold, to 161,391,352 square feet.⁵ By far the largest portion of this growth has occurred in the city's northern suburbs. Eight of the area's eleven largest office submarkets are in the north metro area: Cumberland, Buckhead/Lenox Square, North Central, Roswell/Alpharetta, Northeast Expressway, I-285/85 Gwinnett, Northlake, and Peachtree Corners. In 1998, these eight major office areas accounted for 72.7 percent of all the Class A and Class B office space in the metro area.⁶

The rapid expansion of economic activity and commercial development in the northern suburbs has cost downtown Atlanta its pre-eminence as the city's business center. Over the past twenty years, banks, law firms, real-estate developers, stockbrokers, accounting firms, and retail stores have all left the downtown area. The central city's share of retail sales, which includes shopping centers within the city, declined by more than a third between 1982 and 1992, from 20.2 percent to 12.3 percent.⁷ In 1966, more than two-thirds of the public, corporate, and private office space in the metro area was located in the CBD; by 1999 less than one-sixth (13.3 percent) was. The higher rents, occupancies, and amounts of higher-quality space commanded by other submarkets are indicative of the diminished esteem in which private businesses hold the CBD. In submarkets with significant amounts of Class A space, the Cumberland, North Central, Buckhead/Lenox, and

Table 2. Population, Atlanta Region,^a 1980 and 1998

County	Year		Number Change 1980–1998	Percentage Change 1980–1998
	1980	1998		
Cherokee	51,699	134,498	82,799	160.2
Clayton	150,357	208,999	58,642	39.0
Cobb	297,718	566,203	268,485	90.2
DeKalb	483,024	593,850	110,826	22.9
Douglas	54,573	89,843	35,270	64.6
Fayette	29,043	88,609	59,566	205.1
Fulton	589,904	739,367	149,463	25.3
Gwinnett	166,903	522,095	355,192	212.8
Henry	36,309	104,667	68,358	188.3
Rockdale	36,747	68,305	31,558	85.9
Total	1,896,277	3,116,436	1,220,159	64.3

^aIncludes Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties.

Source: U.S. Census.

Midtown submarkets command both higher Class A rents and occupancies than the central business district. By 1999 the CBD was only the third-largest Class A and Class B office submarket, behind Cumberland and North Central.

The exodus of businesses from the downtown area was marked by two particularly significant departures. One of these was when Rich's Department Stores closed its downtown location on July 13, 1991. To Atlantans, the downtown Rich's was more than just a store; it was a local institution. Although owned by a national department-store conglomerate, the company had been founded by an Atlanta family and had flourished as an integral part of the life of the city. The downtown store had long since ceased to carry the broadest selection of goods, first falling behind the Lenox Square store and eventually trailing all the suburban stores. The closing of the store was a dramatic reminder to Atlantans that the downtown area had lost preeminence as a retail center. Another departure with special meaning came in the same year, when the Citizens and Southern National Bank vacated its downtown office, donating the building to Georgia State University, which is

located in the area. It was in this building that Mayor Ivan Allen Jr. had first spoken with Mills Lane, president of the bank, about arranging financing for the city's first major-league baseball stadium. The stadium was pivotal in the attempt to boost the downtown economy, and when the bank that thirty years earlier had tried to reinvigorate the economy departed, Atlantans could not help but recognize the irony.

But the growing dominance of the northern suburbs in private office markets tells only a partial story. To get a complete picture of how the CBD compares with the office districts north of the city, two other categories of property must be considered: owner-occupied space and government-occupied space. Corporate owner-occupied space—primarily Coca-Cola and Georgia Pacific—still has a presence in the CBD. Government is a strong presence in the downtown area, occupying almost 10 million square feet of space. The federal government occupies almost 2.5 million square feet; the state government occupies nearly 4 million; and Fulton County and the City of Atlanta, which have their central offices downtown, occupy approximately 3 million.

When all categories of office space are considered together, the CBD still has the largest concentration in the region—a total of 32.9 million square feet. This is 20.4 percent of regional office space, but only 1.2 million more than in the North Central area, the largest metro-area office center for private leases, and only 9.1 million more than in the Cumberland area, the second-largest. Furthermore, the CBD still has the largest concentration of jobs in the metro region. Due not only to the concentration of multiple kinds of office space but also to the presence of the convention industry, the CBD was the locus of 110,440 jobs in 1998. The northern spine ranked second, third, and fourth, with North Central accounting for 77,494 jobs, Alpharetta/North Point for 66,474, and Buckhead for 60,545.⁸

Even though the CBD is no longer the primary market for higher-quality, privately brokered office leases, it still plays an important role in the economic life of the city. But the trend toward decentralization is clear. Atlanta resembles most large American cities in the growing suburbanization of both its retail and its office space. A common theme in much of the recent literature is that suburban shopping centers and suburban office developments are the centers of new urban forms that

have sprung up naturally in response to new living patterns. In the popular press, terms such as “urban villages” and “edge cities” are currently in vogue to describe these autonomous suburban aggregations. Academics have devised more unwieldy terms: “suburban activity centers,” “polynucleated cities,” “non-monocentric cities.”

One of the basic concepts behind these terms is that suburban business districts are physically analogous, or at least comparable, to downtown business districts in being compact nodes, or concentrated centers of interdependent activity. But in Atlanta’s north metro area, shopping areas consist of conventional suburban malls separated from surrounding office and commercial areas by a sea of surface parking. Instead of being concentrated centers of activity accessible to pedestrians, the office districts are dispersed and accessible only by automobile. The only one of the eight office developments on the north side that is concentrated and therefore functions something like a true traditional downtown district is the Buckhead/Lenox area. In all the others, office buildings are physically separate, located in long stretches of development along major thoroughfares—expressways, major arterials, or new internal roads. Map 3 (p. 14) illustrates the close proximity of Atlanta’s edge cities to major thoroughfares.

The Cumberland district stretches for six miles along two parallel highways, I-75 and U.S. 41. It also includes four and a half miles of development along I-285, the Perimeter Highway, which bisects the other two highways. So the overall district consists of three linear strands of development, with a regional mall surrounded by strip malls off to one side.

The North Central submarket, the largest of these north-metro-area office submarkets, extends a mile and three-quarters along the Perimeter Highway (I-285) and two miles up the Georgia 400 expressway. A few more buildings are scattered along nearby major arterial roads. The area’s nearly square shape suggests that it might be a node, an actual community, but it is actually a pattern of linear segments that connect only at their intersections. Automobile traffic is extremely heavy, and there is very little pedestrian traffic between buildings. The regional Perimeter Mall sits at the southwest corner of the square.

The Northeast Expressway district, an 80 percent Class B office submarket, has one of the most pronounced linear forms of all these

suburban developments. It stretches for seven and a half miles along both sides of Interstate 85 inside the Perimeter Highway. Composed primarily of office parks and detached single-occupant buildings along expressway frontage roads, this submarket contains only three Class A buildings and 140 Class B structures. Unlike the other suburban office developments, the Northeast Expressway district has attracted very limited office development along intersecting arterial roads. Development remains confined to a long, very narrow strip.

The Northlake district is clustered around Northlake Mall, which lies just inside the Perimeter Highway several miles east of the North Central district. Chaos accurately describes development in this area. It is crisscrossed by four intersecting arterials. Fifty-nine Class B office buildings are interspersed randomly among strip shopping centers, a regional and several subregional malls, discount stores, apartments, jails, and five Class A buildings.

The Roswell/Alpharetta or Georgia 400/North Fulton County submarket is one of the most striking suburban office developments. Built entirely within the past decade, it now totals more than 9 million square feet of space, strung along ten miles of the six-lane Georgia 400 expressway. The expressway splits the residential area, which real-estate professionals refer to as the “favored quarter,” the home of “executive housing.” Most homes in this area sell for between \$440,000 and \$760,000.⁹

In spite of its affluent locale, the office buildings reflect cautious capital markets bruised by the late 1980s real-estate recession, during which they were constructed: smaller, cheaper structures, which are less risky than large towers and more likely to attract financing. Buildings are low- to mid-rise, four to seven stories high, and contained within campus-style developments accessed through internal roadways. Bland, windowed exteriors are frequently encircled by landscaped green space.

The North Point regional mall, located two miles from the south end of the submarket, is the largest of the twelve shopping centers scattered throughout the district. The Buckhead/Lenox area is the only aggregation of mixed uses whose form approximates a node. In part because it evolved from the first regional mall located in a previously developed area, but more because the two adjacent malls anchor more

than 3.4 million square feet of retail and commercial space¹⁰ serving the most affluent neighborhoods in Georgia, development has attained a density and intensity with some contiguity and centrality. Frequent expansions and rehabilitations of the primary mall have increased its vertical profile to four stories; the constraints of a limited site and the highest demand in the region have dictated decking the parking, one of the consequences of which is that pedestrians can reach the mall from adjacent residential areas.

The affluence of the mall and its market has driven proximate development to include a much broader range of land use than in its more suburban counterparts. Owned and rented high-rise housing is interspersed with increasingly dense street-oriented retail stores, hotels, restaurants, bars, dance clubs, and offices. Stations on two different rail lines and the only bus in the city that operates at six-minute intervals help shoppers who can't or don't want to drive reach the city's largest and most fashionable selection of goods.

In spite of the diversity in land use and patronage, and in spite of the intensity of development immediately around the malls, Buckhead's building density rapidly declines to linear, physically separated, automobile-oriented office buildings interrupted by strip malls and entertainment nodes along the district's multiple arterial roadways. Although Buckhead has the highest concentration of high-rise housing in the city, single-family, detached homes on ample lots predominate.

Given the comparatively low levels of retail and housing units in the old city center, Buckhead has clearly supplanted the CBD as "Atlanta's white downtown." White dominance in Buckhead is obvious; blacks and other racial minorities are present as service workers or patrons, but not as residents. The business of Buckhead is business; there are no government, social, or philanthropic institutions in the area, with the exception of the Atlanta History Center. Regionally, the shift of Atlanta's "center" six miles to the north mirrors the northern expansion of economic and residential activity.¹¹ One of the most telling points is that the last white mayor of Atlanta, Sam Massell, is known as the (unelected) "mayor" of the relocated and reconstituted white downtown.

With the qualified exception of Buckhead, none of these suburban business districts serves as the center of a true "edge city" or "urban