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**The new bosses: Machines and electoral systems in urban
America**

Kraus, Jeffrey Fred, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1988

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THE NEW BOSSES
MACHINES AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS IN URBAN AMERICA
by
JEFFREY F. KRAUS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1988

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1988

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Political Science in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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There are others whose assistance cannot go unrepor-

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CHAPTER 1

THE CLUBHOUSE REDISCOVERED?

Where is a Democratic leader? Where is a Republican leader? Outside of the City of Chicago, where is a party organization? What functions does a political party serve nowadays in the United States?

Norman Nie¹

The objective here is to examine the role of political clubs and party organizations in the contemporary electoral system of New York City. Similar efforts were undertaken by Roy Peel during the 1930s and Norman Adler and Blanche Davis Blank in the 1970s.² The goal here is to update and explicate their work. Since the Adler/Blank study was published, an "organization" mayor was elected, brought down by the fiscal crisis, and replaced by a "political loner" who, once elected, made "peace" with the leaders of the "regular" party organizations.³ After two overwhelming re-election victories, the incumbent's administration was rocked by a scandal involving the leaders of two Democratic Party county organizations, a borough president (in addition to the county leader who was concurrently a borough president), and a number of city officials.⁴

The scandal caused a resurgence of interest in the party organizations. Editorial writers and scholars, who had ignored or downgraded the role of party organizations

since the fiscal crisis, suddenly rediscovered their "importance."⁵ Representative of this new awareness is the introduction written by Martin Shefter for the paperback edition of Political Crisis/Fiscal Crisis (1987). Shefter concluded that the municipal scandals had come about, in part, because Mayor Edward I. Koch had allied himself with the leaders of the Democratic Party county organizations. Elected as an "outsider" in 1977, Koch found he would need the help of "established" political forces, including the party organizations, "to govern the city or to guarantee his political future."⁶ Because he lacked political ties to the other members of the Board of Estimate or the City Council, Shefter contended that

the most convenient way for Koch to secure the enactment of his budget and legislative programs - and thereby build a record on which to run for reelection - was to grant patronage to the party organizations with which a majority of members of the board and the city council were affiliated (xiii).

In his own book, Politics (1985), the Mayor offered a different perspective on this alliance:

I have been successful, to a far greater degree than anyone would have expected, without the glue of politics--to wit, patronage jobs and patronage judges. I have done it because it was finally accepted by the county leaders that I could not be intimidated or threatened with the loss of political support....Even more overriding was an acceptance by the political leaders that what I was doing was in the best interest of the city even if it was not in the politicians' best interest. (30).

In the wake of the debacle, which whirled around the awarding of contracts by the New York City Parking Viola-

tions Bureau (PVB), the Mayor reacted bitterly. His own integrity beyond reproach, the Mayor attacked the targets of the investigations. He called Queens Borough President (and Queens County Democratic Leader) Donald Manes a "crook," and attempted to reduce party organization influence by creating a panel to recommend appointees to high-ranking government positions and by reviewing a number of city contracts and franchise agreements, to determine whether they were awarded due to political influence.⁷ When Bronx County Democratic Leader Stanley Friedman was sentenced to 12 years in prison for his part in the PVB scandal, Koch pronounced it "deserved."⁸ Less than one hour after Friedman's sentencing, Bronx Borough President Stanley Simon resigned, announcing that he too would be indicted and though innocent, he could not "devote the time required to fight an indictment--no matter how ill-founded--and at the same time serve effectively as borough president."⁹ The mushrooming scandals would not remain confined to the Democrats--a former chairman of the state Republican Party was the target of investigators for his alleged role in the same scandal that had snared Simon.¹⁰ The political leaders, whose influence had supposedly declined, were once again the "evil" force in city politics. Suddenly, observers were asking how the "political bosses" had regained their influence, and what they were using this influence for?

The Party Organization

What will be discussed herein are the party organizations operating in New York City. These organizations are described by David R. Mayhew as "traditional party organizations" (TPOs).¹¹ Mayhew contended that TPOs possess five important characteristics: (1) substantial autonomy, (2) durability, (3) hierarchal internal structure, (4) its interest in bringing about the nomination of candidates for a wide range of public offices, and (5) its reliance on "material" incentives to maintain an organization.¹²

While the organizations of the five "statutory" political parties will be examined, emphasis will be placed on the Democratic party organizations. The party's electoral dominance has rendered the Republican, Conservative, Right-to-Life, and Liberal parties insignificant in the city's politics.¹³

In New York City, the political club has historically been the "backbone" of the party organization. Virtually every neighborhood of the city has at least one political club, although the number of clubs in operation has drastically declined since the publication of Peel's study in 1935.¹⁴ As outposts of the party organizations, the clubs provided social services and functioned as community centers. The district leader was preeminent, with other club members (including elected public officials) deferring to him. He, in turn, was beholden to the county leader. The

The efficiency with which these organizations operated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries won for them the label of "political machine."¹⁵

In examining the political party organizations of the 1980s, I will test the following hypotheses.

First, that the political club, long the backbone of the traditional party organization, has declined significantly. The multi-faceted service role once performed by the political club has withered away, with many of the service functions once performed by clubs now provided by government agencies, non-profit organizations, incumbent politicians, and others. Dedicated primarily to electoral mobilization, the clubs are smaller and perform fewer of the tasks associated with campaigns and elections.

The second hypothesis is that the decline of the political club has had an adverse impact on the party organizations. The inability of the clubs to "deliver" votes has reduced the significance of the party organizations in "high visibility" elections, i. e., citywide and statewide primaries, as well as the presidential primaries. It is only in "low visibility" contests where the organizations still have significance. The decline of the organization has allowed other actors to enter the high visibility elections process (for example, as Alan Ware has observed, candidates establishing their own campaign organizations or slates in primary elections).¹⁶ The organizations have also

been weakened by disunity: the Democrats have been faced with "reform" insurgency and the development of "minority" clubs not interested in maintaining a "sub-machine" relationship with white party leaders.

My final hypothesis is that the weakening of the traditional party organizations has diminished the status of the county leaders. Influential in both party and governmental affairs in the past, the loss of organizational strength has transformed the role of the county leader. No longer able to rule with an "iron fist," the county leader is, I hope to prove, more of a "coordinator" of a divided and decaying party apparatus. While some county leaders may be "powerful," the power they possess is due more to other variables (for example, the public office they may hold concurrently). Once "full-time" party functionaries, the county leadership today is a part-time post--reflecting the decline of the office and the traditional party organization.

It is my contention that the traditional party organization, while still functioning, is a less significant force in the electoral politics of New York City. In the course of this work I hope to discuss some of the factors that have undermined the traditional party organization's historical dominance of the electoral process, including control over nominations for public office.

The Methodology

The conclusions of this work are based on a wide variety of sources and methodologies, many of which will be specifically identified in the pages that follow. I relied upon the literature of the field, government and party documents, interviews and surveys, and newspaper accounts.

While a more detailed literature review will appear later in this work, two works that were relied upon heavily were Roy Peel's The Political Clubs of New York City (1935) and Norman M. Adler and Blanche Davis Blank's Political Clubs in New York (1975). These works provided useful insights into political club activity during the periods studied and, in the case of the Adler and Blank study, much of the comparative data cited in the text.

A number of government and party documents were examined (many of which will be cited herein), including the complex New York State Election Law.¹⁷ I was also able to obtain a variety of records from the New York State and New York City Boards of Elections. These records included financial disclosure statements filed by individual candidates, campaign committees, and party organizations; party enrollment and voter registration data; and information concerning petition challenges.

Interviews were also important to this project. Between 1984 and early 1987 the author conducted a number of interviews--formal and informal--with a wide range of par-

ticipants and observers of New York politics. Their insights help in presenting the reader with a greater understanding of electoral politics in New York, and the role of the traditional party organizations in that process.

A number of surveys were conducted as part of this project. The respondents were political club leaders (the assembly district leaders and the presidents of clubs that did not have a district leader among their members), community board district managers, and county leaders.¹⁸

The survey of political club leaders, which was responded to by eighty-three clubs (30.6 percent of the 271 clubs I identified as being in operation during the period of the study), illuminates some of the findings I will present concerning contemporary club activity. The district manager survey, which was responded to by twenty-four of the fifty-nine district managers, offered some insights into political club involvement in community board activity, and the county leaders' survey, which thirteen of the twenty leaders answered, provided some information about the role of the county leader and the present scope of organizational activity. In conducting these surveys it was not my intention to present a statistical analysis of political clubs and traditional party organizations in New York City. Rather, the presentation of statistical data herein (including the material presented in Chapter Seven, where there is extensive use of statistical data) is to

help illustrate some of the findings and conclusions which will be offered.

The Plan of the Study

The second chapter discusses the rise of the urban "political machine" in New York and in other cities. The social and political environment of nineteenth century urban America is described, as is the organization of the machine. Finally, the advantages and disadvantages of machine rule are outlined.

Chapter three covers the "reform" movement. The "progressive" reform agenda is examined, as are the various "reform" efforts in New York City. The cause of reform has been championed by Republicans, "good government" proponents and, most recently, by "reform" Democrats motivated, according to James Q. Wilson, by "purposive" rather than professional considerations.¹⁹

A literature review takes up the fourth chapter. The literature of political party organization will be examined, with emphasis upon works that deal with organization politics in New York City. The dearth of recent literature on the traditional party organization will be discussed.

Chapters five through eight concentrate on the neighborhood political clubs. The legal status, number and size of clubs, and the structure and traditional functions

of clubs are reported in chapter five. The sixth chapter summarizes the organization's role in the electoral process, while chapter seven examines the contemporary "service" role of the political clubs. The final chapter to deal with clubs offers case studies of four political clubs. While the four are not representative of clubs in operation today, they are, as shall be seen, interesting clubs that reflect some of the developments in present-day club organization and activity.

The ninth chapter offers an overview of traditional party organizations in New York City. The relationship between the clubs and the county organization is examined, as is the structure of the county organization. Special attention will be paid to the role of the county leader. A thumbnail sketch of one leader's rise to power will be offered, giving the reader some sense of how traditional party organizations serve, in the words of Robert K. Merton, as "alternative channels of social mobility for those otherwise excluded from the more conventional avenues for personal 'advancement.'"²⁰

Finally, chapter ten summarizes the state of traditional party organizations in New York City, and goes on to suggest some directions for further research. The traditional party organization, recently ignored by scholars, provides a number of research opportunities. The traditional party organization is not dead. The subject still has

some import in electoral politics and its present state should not be overlooked. Hopefully, the scandals in New York City government during the mid-1980s (in which, it should be noted, the involvement of the party organizations has been exaggerated) will lead to both governmental reform and a new scholarly interest in the traditional party organization.

NOTES

¹Asbury Park Press, 19 January 1981.

²Roy Peel, The Political Clubs of New York City (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1935), and Norman M. Adler and Blanche Davis Blank, Political Clubs in New York (New York: Praeger, 1975).

³Abraham D. Beame, the city comptroller and long-time member of Brooklyn's Madison Democratic Club, was elected Mayor in 1973. Shortly after Beame took office, New York City was plunged into a fiscal crisis. The austerity plan, fashioned primarily by the state government and the financial community, weakened Beame politically (as well as resulting in the retrenchment of city services and the formation of new institutions to monitor the city's finances). In 1977, Beame was not re-nominated as the Democrats selected Congressman Edward I. Koch (who defeated New York Secretary of State Mario M. Cuomo in a run-off primary). Koch then won the general election, defeating Cuomo (who had been nominated by the Liberal Party), State Senator Roy Goodman (Republican) and radio personality Barry Farber (who ran as the candidate of the Conservative Party after losing the Republican primary to Goodman).

⁴On 10 January 1986, Queens Borough President (and leader of the Queens County Democrats) Donald Manes was found in his car on the Grand Central Parkway (a major highway that runs through Queens) bleeding profusely. He initially claimed to have been abducted and stabbed, later recanting the story and admitting that his wounds had been "self-inflicted." By this time (21 January 1986), Manes' close friend, New York City PVB Deputy Director Geoffrey Lindenauer had been arrested and charged with accepting a \$5,000 bribe from Bernard Sandow, a principal of Systematic Recovery Services, a PVB contractor. On 10 March 1986, Lindenauer admitted to accepting \$410,000 in bribes from collection agencies under contract to the PVB. Three days later, Manes committed suicide. By year's end, Manes and Stanley Friedman, the Bronx Democratic Leader, had been branded "racketeers" who had taken over the PVB; two of Koch's commissioners (Taxi and Limousine Commission Chair Jay Turoff and Transportation Commissioner Anthony Ameruso) had been indicted, and former Health and Hospital Corpora-

tion President John McLaughlin was convicted of stealing \$4,200 from one of his law clients.

⁵For example, Martin B. Shefter, in his introduction to the paperback edition of Political Crisis/Fiscal Crisis (New York: Basic Books, 1987) specifically takes up the scandals and the relationship between Mayor Koch and the county leaders, a subject that had received scant attention in the original (1985) edition.

⁶ibid., xiii.

⁷The Mayor's Committee on Appointments, his reversal of his longstanding policy of giving department heads the responsibility for selecting their own subordinated (Lindenauer had been brought into the PVB by Lester Shafran, the agency's head and another Manes associate), and his review of city contracts (in particular, the award of cable television contracts in the "outer" boroughs) were just three of the actions taken by Koch. He also, jointly with Governor Cuomo, empaneled a Commission on Integrity in Government, chaired by Columbia University President Michael Sovern.

⁸New York Newsday, 12 March 1987.

⁹On 3 June 1987 a federal grand jury indicted Simon and six others (Congressman Mario Biaggi; Richard Biaggi, the Congressman's son; Peter Neglia, a former Small Business Administration official who had joined Biaggi's law firm; John Mariotta, an executive with the Wedtech Corporation; Biaggi's law partner, Bernard Ehrlich, and Ronald Betso, a friend of Neglia) on racketeering charges relating to their dealings with the Wedtech Corporation, a Bronx-based defense contractor. The Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statute had previously been used by United States Attorney Rudolph Giuliani to successfully prosecute Stanley Friedman.

¹⁰In the 3 June 1987 indictment, it was alleged that Peter Neglia had demanded from Wedtech \$3,000 "in fees to Republican organizations" (New York Newsday, 4 June 1987). It had been reported by the New York Daily News (12 March 1987) that former Republican State Chair George Clark had used Neglia (whose father, Joseph Neglia, was a Republican district leader in Brooklyn) to obtain contributions from Wedtech. Clark was not indicted.

¹¹David R. Mayhew, Placing Parties in American Poli-

tics (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 17-23.

¹² ibid., 19-20.

¹³ Under state law, any political party that polls at least 50,000 votes for its gubernatorial candidate automatically receives a place on the ballot through the next gubernatorial election. While five parties have met these requirements during the 1980s, the Democrats dominate the city's electoral politics. For a discussion of this dominance, see Peter W. Colby, "The Politics of New York State Today," New York State Today, ed. Peter W. Colby (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 9-22.

¹⁴ Peel found 1,177 political clubs in New York City (Peel, 334).

¹⁵ For a discussion of political machines see Dennis R. Judd, The Politics of American Cities, 2d ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1984), 50-83.

¹⁶ Alan Ware, The Breakdown of Democratic Party Organization, 1940-1980 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 118-119.

¹⁷ All references to state law are from McKinney's Consolidated and Session Laws of New York State, Annotated, Book 17 (Saint Paul: West Publishing Company, 1978).

¹⁸ The surveys conducted were all mail questionnaires.

¹⁹ Wilson contended that participants in politics responded to three possible incentives. He called these material, solidary, and purposive incentives. For his full discussion see James Q. Wilson, The Amateur Democrat (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 2-11.

²⁰ Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, rev. and enl. ed. (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957), 76.

CHAPTER 2

THE RISE OF THE BIG CITY MACHINE

I don't smoke, drink, chew, nor gamble. And I never go to any of them Jesse James night clubs. As the fellow said, 'If you don't do none of them things, Peter, what the hell do you do?' I say, all I do is take God's beautiful air and sunshine. And I play politics

Peter McGuinness¹

The politics played by Peter McGuinness was "machine politics." The "machine," the political "boss," and the power we associate with them is found only in the American polity. There may be cities around the world where a political "boss" rules the local political scene, but hardly any of these bosses have influence on national politics.² The American political machines, in their prime, elected many governor and even a few presidents.

The boss was a by-product of the Industrial Revolution. In New York, and in other cities, the machines gained influence over electoral systems by capitalizing on the inability of existing formal structures of local government to provide essential services to working-class voters. Often, these machines would consolidate their control by gaining the support of the local business elite, which found that dealing with machines was "good business." This is not to say that the machine did not face opposition. "Reform" movements often developed as the result of

either internecine conflict between political leaders or through the efforts of "good government" groups that desired to reduce the influence of the political machines and their working class constituencies through changes in the electoral process and local governance structures. The good government reforms and the Great Depression, much of the literature contends, resulted in the destruction of most machines.³ In this chapter, the development of political machines will be examined.

Urbanization: Industry, Immigration, and Institutions

New York City underwent a radical transformation during the nineteenth century. In 1800, the population of New York City was 60,489, with perhaps another 20,000 people living in Kings, Queens, Richmond, and lower Westchester counties.⁴ In 1900, the population of Greater New York was nearly 3.5 million.⁵ This growth was caused by changes in the economic and social life of the city that would eventually require a governmental response.

Like most other early American cities, New York was a "mercantile city," where the waterfront was the city's lifeblood. Mercantile cities were small and compact, with dock facilities, banks, insurance offices, and the homes of most city residents clustered within walking distance of the city's harbor. Indeed, before 1825, virtually all of New York's urban life was concentrated below Canal Street. As late as 1837, Asa Green could report that "not more than

a sixth part of the island of Manhattan is completely covered with houses, stores and paved streets."⁶

The city's economy was still, at this time, dependent on shipping. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 had given New York a competitive edge over other Atlantic seaports since it could offer an inexpensive inland route. By 1832, real estate speculator Samuel P. Ruggles had concluded that the city's growth was due "almost entirely to the Erie Canal, which has opened our internal commerce with the West, and poured in upon us a rare, steady, and rapidly increasing stream of wealth."⁷

At around the same time, the introduction of regularly scheduled steam ferry service between New York City and Brooklyn saw New York begin to take on a "metropolitan character."⁸ James Fenimore Cooper, writing in 1828, described Brooklyn as "a flourishing village which has arisen with the last half dozen years from next to nothing."⁹

Brooklyn's phenomenal growth continued. The 1830 census counted 15,394 people in Brooklyn (with a total of 20,535 in all of Kings County).¹⁰ By 1834, the Village of Brooklyn would be incorporated as a city. In 1840, the new city's population reached 36,233.¹¹

During the same period a number of technological changes were taking place that would transform the character of the region. Many of these developments were in the field of transportation.

The first breakthrough came in 1828, when the omnibus was introduced to the streets of New York City. A box-like four-wheeled vehicle, the omnibus was pulled by two or four horses and could carry twelve people. Like the contemporary New York City subway system, the omnibus was often the target of complaints by its riders. George Rogers Taylor wrote that "passengers are packed in these vehicles, without regard to comfort or even decency."¹²

Nevertheless, by 1858 the combined annual ridership of New York's five omnibus companies had reached thirty-five million.¹³ The omnibus allowed the city to expand physically, as upper and middle-class residents moved to outlying areas, leaving the area south of Canal Street to commercial uses and housing for the working class.

While the omnibus facilitated intra-city transport, the introduction of the steam railroad would speed inter-city travel and, along with the port, enhance New York's status as a transportation center. The New York and Harlem Railroad began operation in 1832, and would extend to White Plains by 1844. Within another decade, both the New York and Harlem and a new line, the Hudson River Railroad, offered both passenger and freight service between New York City and Albany. This combination of railroads and shipping provided New York with the necessary infrastructure for industrial expansion. By 1860 New York City was producing over \$159 million in finished goods, nearly one-eleventh

of the nation's industrial output in that year.¹⁴ This growth would continue in the years following the Civil War.

The aforementioned economic growth of the city and its environs attracted people to the region. Until the 1830s the largest group of newcomers were New Englanders who sought work in the expanding port.¹⁵ After 1830 the pattern of migration changed as large groups of immigrants from the German states and Ireland began entering the United States. According to Robert Ernst, these people came to America "because they...experience the profound economic and social changes" enveloping Europe during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Between 1800 and 1829, approximately forty-four thousand individuals of German or Irish nationality entered the United States. During the next decade almost 275,000 entered the country. By the 1840s a combination of new poor laws and a potato famine in Ireland and the German Civil War would drive over one million nationals of these countries to emigrate to the United States.¹⁷ Many entered through the Port of New York and stayed in the area.¹⁸ They became clients for limited social services and, as we shall see, the base of support for a potent political force.

Urban Crisis and Urban Government

The frenetic expansion of New York during the first half of the nineteenth century found the local government

in a constant struggle to provide essential services in the face of deteriorating social conditions.

The provision of municipal services during this period was often confined to addressing conditions which immediately threatened public safety and social order. Most city governments, at that time, were administered by local notables (in New York, the Livingstons, Schuylers, and Clintons, to name just a few), who regarded public service as their "civic duty," since they considered themselves (and were regarded by their contemporaries as) the "natural leaders" of their time.¹⁹ Their political battles were intra-mural conflicts, as factions coalesced around national and state political leaders.²⁰ The suffrage statutes of the period precluded serious opposition from outside this elite. The New York State Constitution of 1777 limited the franchise to a relatively small segment of the population, effectively shielding the squabbling elites from either public opinion or political opposition by the masses.²¹

The local governments administered by these notables were informal and fragmented. Service delivery was carried out through a committee system, whereby notables established committees to build port facilities, distribute money to the poor, organize town watchmen, and maintain roads and streets. In addition, the state government exercised considerable control over the city. For example, New

York's ability to borrow was limited by state action. A number of boards and commissioners were appointed by the governor and "home rule" became a rallying cry for city politicians and business leaders. This governance structure, though not very efficient in the middle years of the nineteenth century, had fit the pace and organization of economic and social life in a New York City that did not stretch north of what is now Chambers Street.²²

However, a number of developments rendered the politics and government of mercantile New York obsolete.

First, beginning in 1820, there was a gradual expansion of the franchise.²³ Eventually, the expansion of the electorate would provide the machine a potent constituency.

While extension of the franchise created an opening for new actors in the political process, the Industrial Revolution and the accompanying massive waves of immigration caused the breakdown of service delivery systems. By 1857, for example, 75% of New York City's streets lacked adequate sewers.²⁴ Other services were provided in a haphazard manner, if at all, by a fragmented administration that was more appropriate to a less complex age. By the end of the Civil War, as Seymour Mandelbaum described it, the government of the city of New York was chaotic:

The mayor has been deprived of all controlling power. The Board of Aldermen, seventeen in number, the Board of twenty-four Councilmen, the twelve Supervisors, the twenty-one members of the Board of Education, are so

many independent legislative bodies, elected by the people. The police are governed by four commissioners, appointed by the Governor for eight years. The charitable and reformatory institutions of the city are in charge of four Commissioners whom the City Comptroller appoints for five years. The Commissioners of the Central Park, eight in number, are appointed by the Governor for five years. Four Commissioners, appointed by the Governor for eight years, manage the fire Department. There are also five Commissioners of Pilots, two appointed by the Board of Underwriters and three by the Chamber of Commerce. The finances of the city are in charge of the Comptroller, whom the people elect for four years. The street department has at its head one Commissioner, who is appointed by the Mayor for four years. Three Commissioners, appointed by the Mayor, manage the Croton Aqueduct department. The law officer of the city, called the Corporation Counsel is elected by the people for three years! Six Commissioners, appointed by the Governor for six years, attend to the emigration from foreign countries. To these has been recently added a Board of Health, the members of which are appointed by the Governor (Mandelbaum 1965, 50-51).

The consequences of such fragmentation of governmental authority was that no single official could assert control over the city government.

The Machine: Environment, Organization, and Pros
and Cons of Machine Rule

It was in the midst of the aforementioned governmental disarray that William Marcy Tweed came to power in Tammany Hall. The "Boss" Tweed saga has been extensively covered in the literature of the field and there is really no need to restate it here.²⁵ However, there are some points that must be made concerning Tweed's stewardship of Tammany Hall.²⁶ In the three years (1868 to 1871) that Tweed and his "ring" dominated New York City government,

they became the epitome of the corrupt political machine. In three years, Tweed diverted anywhere between \$30 million and \$100 million of public funds to illicit purposes.²⁷ The "Tweed Courthouse," as it has come to be known, was completed at a cost of \$14 million (fifty-six times the original cost estimate).²⁸ In 1869, Tweed paid \$600 thousand in bribes to state legislators to get a new city charter enacted. Tweed offered newspaper reporters bribes and The New York Times was offered \$5 million not to investigate corruption.²⁹ By 1871, when Tweed was arrested, the city was bankrupt.

How did Tweed manage to obtain so much influence in such a fragmented environment? Tweed's success was based on his ability to consolidate power through control over nominations. Tweed and other bosses found that office-holders, seeking renomination, might be willing to accept boss rule. Those who did not would be replaced by more willing candidates. Control over nominations gave political machines de facto authority over the legally fragmented local governments.

There were other factors that made machines a dominant force in local politics. As Dennis Judd explained, machines flourished because they were able to mobilize the immigrant vote, supply benefits to both their electoral constituency and the business community, and maintain party loyalty through judicious use of patronage.³⁰

Tweed's fall in 1871 did not destroy political machines in New York. The Tammany organization, though temporarily set back by the Tweed scandal, quickly recovered. Under "Honest" John Kelly and Richard Croker (under whose leadership Tammany achieved citywide control of the Democratic Party by building a network of district clubs), Tammany Hall became the premier Democratic organization in New York City.³¹ Indeed, the "New York system," as Matthew P. Breen labeled it, spread.³² Colonel James J. Mooney (who claimed to be a direct descendant of William Mooney, a founder of the Tammany Society) opened a hotel in the suburban town of Morrisania, and soon became the undisputed "boss" of his district.³³

While Tweed was taking control of Tammany, across the East River, Hugh McLaughlin was consolidating his hold on the Brooklyn Democrats. McLaughlin had become a lieutenant to Henry C. Murphy, his predecessor as party leader, due to "his control over the laboring element in the party."³⁴ By 1856 he had appointed boss laborer in the Brooklyn Navy Yard and, during the 1860s, he served three terms as county register. McLaughlin remained county leader until 1903 and, as Harold Syrett noted, "his long reign was more remarkable, because he managed to maintain his leadership at a time when the character of the American city was undergoing its greatest change."³⁵ According to Harold Zink, it was McLaughlin who was first

called "boss."³⁶ McLaughlin said his role was to "do my best to persuade men to my way of thinking when I can and if I succeed, am I to be called 'Boss' for it?"³⁷

To many of his contemporaries the answer was yes.

As the New York Tribune editorialized on 6 November 1893:

McLaughlin names the Mayor; the Mayor reappoints the Boss's men as heads of departments; the Boss's men fill the departments with Democratic place-hunters; the office-holders raise a boodle for the re-election of the Boss's candidate for Mayor; and the boodle is used in hiring the naturalized citizens ground out in Judge Moore's court to vote for the Boss's ticket, and in employing McKane's swarms of repeaters to violate the election laws. So is the circle of Ring iniquity in Brooklyn squared.

It was a pattern of domination duplicated across the river in New York and in cities across the country as the bosses supplied the organizational glue required, not only for politics but for the delivery of services to their various constituencies.

How Machines Were Organized

The machine was structured as a pyramid. At its apex was a "boss." The boss was actually the chairman of the party's general committee, which (if McLaughlin's organization is used as a model) consisted of one delegate from each election district.³⁸ However, the large size of the general committee made it impossible for the body to have any real influence. Real decision-making rested with the executive committee, which was made up of leaders from each of the wards. The executive committees were usually

controlled by the boss since, if McLaughlin and Tammany's leaders are used as models, they would cut renegade leaders off from patronage (which would often result in the ward leader's replacement since he would be unable to provide patronage for his ward and his subordinates would be willing to replace him with someone more to the boss' satisfaction). Few ward leaders, for this reason, were willing to oppose the boss.

It should be noted that the boss was not usually the holder of a significant public office.³⁹ Government leadership was not a prerequisite for party leadership. For example, both Tweed and McLaughlin came to the leadership of their party organizations through their support of the Union war effort during the Civil War. "Honest" John Kelly became Tammany leader following Tweed's fall because he had escaped implication in the scandal. Other leaders came to power due to their control of important wards, or through battles with other leadership contenders.

At the base of the party pyramid was the election district. Each district was headed by a captain who was responsible to the ward leader who, in turn, was beholden to the boss. This grassroots organization was important to the machine's success for three reasons.

First, the election district's small size (rarely more than one thousand voters) made it possible for a captain to know, and be known, by his neighbors. The captain

was more than just a political operative. Rather, he was intimately involved in the life of the community. Typical tasks performed by captains included the encashment of paychecks; posting bond for jailed constituents; providing free Christmas dinner; and job placement. In exchange for these services, the voters would cast their ballots as the captain suggested.

Second, as noted in the first chapter, the machine offered opportunity for advancement. Ambitious young politicians could begin as captains, knowing their work would be rewarded. The reward might be a higher party post or perhaps a government position or a job with some private company controlled by the boss or his associates.

Third, the ward system insured that political machines, because of their dominance of the wards where their supporters were concentrated, could control city governments. Indeed, a common practice of reformers in the twentieth century was to revise electoral systems, doing away with ward-based representation in favor of at-large electoral systems. Such efforts, according to Judd and Domhoff, were designed to dilute the impact of working class voters and machines in electoral politics.⁴⁰

Pros and Cons of Machine Rule

While the machine's negative aspects have been analyzed extensively, the machine did have some positive attributes. Machines combined the social needs of the immi-

grants and the political self-interest of the political machine. What developed was a "patron-recipient" relationship, where the political machine served some of the material and solidary needs of the working class. In exchange, the recipients gave the votes to the machine's candidates.

These services included material assistance such as jobs, loans, food, clothing, and shelter. For some, as already noted, the machine could provide a ladder of opportunity. Alexander B. Callow observed that "politics offered one of the very few escapes from Wooster of Water Streets, and Tammany enrolled the Irish and the Germans into the district organizations, rewarding zeal with a committee post and public office."⁴¹

The machine also provided non-material benefits to its supporters. Picnics, youth clubs, and social organizations were sponsored by political machines. Indeed, it can be said that the machine made politics fun. To immigrants in an alien country, the machine offered a sense of belonging. This feeling extended not only to the community, but also to his new country. George Washington Plunkitt described a Tammany Fourth of July celebration:

You ought to attend one of these meetin's. They're a liberal education in patriotism. The great hall upstairs is filled with five thousand people, suffocatin' from heat and smoke. Every man Jack of these knows that down in the basement there's a hundred case of champagne and two hundred kegs of beer ready to flow when the signal is given. Yet the crowd stick to their seats without turnin' a hair while, for four

solid hours, the Declaration of Independence is read, long-winded orators speak, and the glee club sings itself hoarse (Riordan 1963, 69-70).

So the political machine provided its working class constituency with needed material benefits and spiritual supports while facilitating their "Americanization." In addition, the machine, through the boss' leadership, was able to, in Merton's words, "organize, centralize and maintain in good working condition 'the scattered fragments of power' which are at present dispersed through our political organization."⁴² While no single public official controlled local government, the boss, through his influence, could.

Yet the machine's qualities could never fully compensate for its evils. Fred Greenstein offered the following assessment of the machine:

Even from the limited standpoint of the nineteenth century city resident's desire for physical security, machines had their deficiencies. Party benevolences, after all, were not the citizen's as a matter of legal right. They might always be withdrawn. Furthermore, the party's favors to the voter's employers might negate its services to him--for example, by permitting the continuation of hazardous working conditions in a factory (Greenstein 1970, 60).

The machines did not readily admit all immigrant or working class groups. In New York, immigrant jews found themselves victimized by the machine's operatives, especially the police. Moses Rischin wrote that, for the jew on the lower east side, "the first lesson in Americanism was to placate 'the button'... and 'five dollars protec-

tion money for the policeman' was the recognized business fee."⁴³ Not until 1900 did Tammany Hall nominate a Jew, Henry Goldfogle, as a candidate for the United States House of Representatives from New York's lower east side.

The machine also engaged in schemes of petty and grand corruption. Protection of liquor, gambling, and prostitution was common. The Reverend Charles H. Parkhurst contended that the New York City Police Department, in the 1890s, "had for its principal object to protect and foster crime and make capital out of it."⁴⁴

Corruption was not limited to vice. Grand corruption was lucrative for both the political machine and the business community. The infamous "Tweed Courthouse," \$13 million over budget and unfinished after thirteen years of construction, is often cited as the grandest example of corruption. Few public works were constructed during the last quarter of the nineteenth century without similar (though perhaps on a smaller scale) arrangements. Indeed, urban machines and big city governments were not the only culprits. The New York State Legislature, under the leadership of upstate Republicans, engaged in corrupt activity. Republican-dominated county governments were also susceptible to corruption. In 1908, the state comptroller could report that the funds of upstate Broome County "were being disbursed absolutely contrary to law."⁴⁵ In all these instances, the real loser was the

average citizen whose tax dollars were squandered.

The political machine did not go unchallenged. The challengers, their tactics, and their motives shall be the focus of the next chapter.

NOTES

¹Quoted in The City Boss in America, ed. Alexander B. Callow (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 9. McGuinness was a district leader in Brooklyn during the 1930s. One of his more significant actions as district leader was his successful opposition to the construction of low-income housing in Brooklyn's Greenpoint section in the late 1930s.

²Perhaps the closest one comes to the old American boss is the power possessed by some politicians in France, who combine local and national government office. Jacques Chirac, for example, has served simultaneously as Mayor of Paris and Premier of France, maximizing his power at both levels. In France, "bossism" has been based on dual office-holding. In contrast, the American political boss often held no public office.

³The literature will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

⁴J. D. B. DeBow, Statistical View of the United States (Washington; D.C.: U.S. Census Office, 1854), 26.

⁵Dennis R. Judd, The Politics of American Cities (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 17.

⁶Quoted in A Mirror for Americans, ed. Warner S. Tryon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952) I: 168.

⁷Samuel P. Ruggles to N. P. Tallmadge, 23 January 1932, Samuel P. Ruggles Papers, New York Public Library, New York.

⁸In 1814 Robert Fulton's company introduced regularly scheduled steam ferry service between Brooklyn and New York. For more on Brooklyn's development, see David Ment, The Shaping of a City (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Educational and Cultural Alliance, 1979).

⁹James Fenimore Cooper, Notions of the Americans Picked Up By A Traveling Bachelor (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea, and Carey, 1828), 124.

¹⁰DeBow, 14. ¹¹ibid.

¹²George Rogers Taylor, "Building an Intra-Urban Transportation System," The Urbanization of America, ed. Allen N. Wakstein (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 137.

¹³George Rogers Taylor, The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860 (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1951), 391.

¹⁴William L. Stone, History of New York City (New York: Virtue and Yorston, 1872), 644.

¹⁵See Robert Albion, "Yankee Domination of New York Port, 1820-1865," New England Quarterly V (October 1932): 665-698 for a discussion of this migration pattern.

¹⁶Robert Ernst, Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), 1.

¹⁷N. Carpenter, "Immigrants and their Children," U.S. Bureau of Census Monograph, number 7 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1927), 324-325.

¹⁸Judd, 28.

¹⁹For a discussion of this period, see Jerome Mushkat, Tammany: The Evolution of a Political Machine, 1789-1865 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971). This rule by patricians was not limited to New York as Robert A. Dahl found a similar pattern in New Haven. Robert A. Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1961), 11-24.

²⁰Mushkat, 82.

²¹The 1777 Constitution limited the franchise to those males who, during the six months prior to the election had "been a Freeholder, possessing a Freehold of the value of twenty pounds, . . . or have rented a tenement therein of the yearly value of forty shillings. . . ." Text of the 1777 New York State Constitution found in William A. Polf, 1777: The Political Revolution and New York State's First

Constitution (Albany: New York State Bicentennial Commission, 1977).

²²For a discussion of population growth in New York City and the surrounding area, see Ira Rosenwaike, Population History of New York City (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1972).

²³In that year a new state constitution gave the franchise to all white males, over twenty-one years of age, who had lived in their district for six months, and who had either paid taxes, served in the state militia, or worked on public roads. The 1846 state constitution eliminated the aforementioned requirements for white males who were twenty-one years of age. For a discussion of franchise extension nationally see Chilton Williamson, American Suffrage from Property to Democracy, 1760-1860 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

²⁴Blake McKelvey, American Urbanization (Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973), 44.

²⁵Works include contemporary accounts, such as Matthew P. Breen, Thirty Years of New York Politics Up-To-Date (New York: John Polhemus Printing Company, 1899). Other accounts include Denis Tilden Lynch, Boss Tweed, The Story of a Grim Generation (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927); Seymour Mandelbaum, Boss Tweed's New York (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965); and Alexander B. Callow, Jr., The Tweed Ring (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966). The most recent work on Tweed is Leo Hershkowitz, Tweed's New York: Another Look (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977). This work upgrades Tweed's role in shaping New York while minimizing his role in corruption.

²⁶Tweed became the undisputed leader of Tammany Hall in 1868, remaining in power until 1871.

²⁷Judd, 68. ²⁸ibid., 69. ²⁹ibid., 69.

³⁰ibid., 54-55.

³¹For a discussion of Tammany's consolidation of influence within the New York Democratic Party in the late nineteenth century see Martin Shefter, "The Electoral Foundation of the Political Machine: New York City, 1884-1897," in The History of American Electoral Behavior, eds. Joel H. Silbey, Allan G. Bogue, and William H. Flanigan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 263-298.

³²Breen, p. 63

³³Morrisania is a neighborhood in what is now the Bronx. For more on Mooney, see Breen, 59-67.

³⁴Harold Coffin Syrett, The City of Brooklyn, 1865-1898 (New York: AMS Press, 1968), 71.

³⁵ibid., 73.

³⁶Harold Zink, City Bosses in the United States (Durham: Duke University Press, 1930), 180.

³⁷ibid., 180.

³⁸The election district is the lowest level of party organization in New York. Presently, election districts contain a maximum of 950 registered voters. New York State Election Law, sec. 4-100 (1978).

³⁹For instance, none of the bosses in Brooklyn or New York City during the last half of the nineteenth century held a major public office.

⁴⁰G. William Domhoff, The Powers That Be (New York: Random House, 1978), 153-156, and Judd, 93-100.

⁴¹Callow, Tweed, 64.

⁴²Merton, 72.

⁴³Moses Rischin, The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914 (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 222.

⁴⁴Charles H. Parkhurst, Our Fight With Tammany (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 5.

⁴⁵Harold F. Gosnell, Boss Platt and His New York Machine (New York: AMS Press, 1969), 222-223.

CHAPTER 3
THE REFORM IMPULSE

There have been reform committees of fifty, of sixty, of seventy, of one hundred and all sorts of numbers that started out to do up the regular political organizations. They were mornin' glories--looked lovely in the mornin' and withered up in ahort time, while the regular machines went on flourishin' forever, like fine old oaks

George Washington Plunkitt¹

Plunkitt's characterization of reform, while colorful, was not entirely accurate. The "reformers" did not "wither up." Rather, the reform movement in New York reappeared throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, often in response to machine excess. The efforts to reform New York City government and politics were two-pronged: the Republicans, anxious to break the hold of Tammany Hall, used its control of the state legislature to enact laws designed to weaken the Democrats. In addition to the Republican Party's partisan effort, other attempts were made by those derisively known as "googoes," the good government groups that Plunkitt, a Tammany ward leader, thought so little of.² At times, the Republicans and reformers worked together--their distinct motivations uniting them in a common goal: the destruction of the political machine.

The Republicans and Reform

It should be understood that the state Republican Party saw reform as a way of ending Tammany's hegemony over New York City politics and government. Beginning with the party's formation in the 1850s, it became the promoters of upstate interests while the Democrats were identified as the protectors of New York City in the state polity. Therefore, in attempting to restrain the New York City Democrats, the Republicans were playing their role in the rivalry between upstate and downstate.

The first Republican-engineered reform took place in 1857, when the state legislature enacted a new charter for the city. The Republicans created a county board of supervisors, transferring to this body most of the powers previously exercised by the New York City Boards of Aldermen and Councilmen. In order to insure (what the Republicans hoped would be) the decline of the Democratic Party, the charter specified that the new board would contain an equal number of Democrats and Republicans. However, the Republican plan failed, as "Boss" Tweed was able to control the board by bribing Peter P. Voorhis, one of the Republican members.³ As Tweed explained in his testimony before an investigating committee of the board of aldermen, the payment to Voorhis insured Tweed's influence "on every subject...that came up."⁴ Mushkat, in

his history of Tammany, contended that the Republican "reform" charter of 1857, by dividing legal authority, actually facilitated the development of the political machine: "by deciding that political necessity outweighed all other considerations, they compartmentalized responsibility so narrowly that no legal instrument of government could rule."⁵ According to Mushkat, "when government fragmented, the day of the political boss was at hand."⁶

In addition to its legislative efforts to undermine the Democrats, the Republicans also sought electoral success. In view of the Democratic Party's dominance, victory was possible under two conditions: when the Democrats were internally divided and/or when the Republicans aligned themselves with anti-Democratic or dissident Democratic forces.

In 1861, Republican George Opdyke was elected Mayor with 34.3 percent of the vote, as two Democratic candidates split the party's vote.⁷ In 1872, following Tweed's fall, the Republicans joined with the Committee of Seventy to elect William F. Havemeyer.⁸ Again, in 1895, following the Lexow Committee's investigation of the police department, Republicans joined with a reconstituted Committee of Seventy to elect William Strong mayor.⁹

Strong's election was part of an intensified effort by the Platt machine in the state legislature to undercut Democratic control of New York City and other cities in

the state and, at the same time, limit the influence of New York City in state politics. Platt viewed control of police forces as the key to local political dominance. Police departments, with their responsibility for public order, as pools of patronage, as instruments of graft, and their role in supervising elections, were inviting targets for Platt. The Lexow Committee was sent by Platt to the city to investigate police corruption. In 1895 and 1896, Platt pushed through the legislature laws reorganizing the West Troy, Albany, and Staten Island police forces; stripping the Democratic-controlled local governments of authority over their police departments.

With the goal of containing New York City, Republicans engineered two significant changes during the 1890s. To reduce the city's representation in the state legislature, the Republicans inserted a clause in the 1894 state constitution permanently designating the election districts for the two houses of the legislature. This clause gave each county in the state (except Fulton and Hamilton counties, which shared a district) at least one assembly seat and limited New York City's representation in the state senate.¹⁰ The result was a state legislature dominated by upstate interests.

The other change engineered by the Republicans was the consolidation of New York City. In 1896, Platt decided that consolidation of New York City with Brooklyn and the

surrounding predominantly Republican areas would effectively neutralize the Democrats. Brooklyn had elected Republican-controlled city governments during the 1890s, and was seen by Platt as a countervailing force to Tammany in the proposed consolidation.¹¹

Despite opposition from the mayors of Brooklyn and New York, the legislature approved in 1896 the unification, on 1 January 1898, of New York, Kings, and Richmond Counties, as well as Long Island City, Newtown, Flushing, and Jamaica in Queens County.¹² A charter commission (controlled by the Republicans) was formed.¹³ Its final product, which featured the dispersion of power to the borough presidents and a "non-partisan" police board, was described by The New York Times as a "machine-made charter," while a number of theorists of municipal reform, including Dorman Eaton, Frank Goodnow, and Albert Shaw, also found the charter unsatisfactory.¹⁴ Nevertheless, Platt supported legislative approval, calling for passage without the "dotting of an i or the crossing of a t."¹⁵ In May of 1897, Governor Frank S. Black signed the measure into law.

Thus, while Republicans engaged in "reform" during the last years of the nineteenth century, their efforts were motivated by a desire to gain political advantage.

The "Good Government" Reformers

While the Republicans had partisan objectives, there were others concerned about the power of Tammany Hall for

less partisan reasons. In New York, as in other cities during the period, there were people who regarded the machine as symbolic of a growing political and social crisis. To these reformers, political corruption was only part of a larger problem; the growing lawlessness and decline in moral standards, especially among the immigrants. The nineteenth century reformer perceived his effort as part of a battle between good reformers and evil politicians. Their mission: to "cleanse" the government of the political corruption sponsored by the political machine.

In New York, reform movements began in the 1860s when Peter Cooper formed the Citizens Association. This group focused on cost overruns in the building of the "Tweed Courthouse."¹⁶ In the 1890s, under the leadership of the Reverend Charles Parkhurst, a Committee of Seventy was formed to combat Tammany's role in police corruption. To Parkhurst, the reform effort was necessary to realize a "City of God." Parkhurst regarded Tammany as "a lying, perjured, rumsoaked, and libidinous lot."¹⁷ He saw his efforts to clean up corruption as "a direct blow between the eyes of the Mayor and his whole gang of drunken and lecherous subordinates."¹⁸

The Committee of Seventy elected Strong in 1895, but a year later the group was displaced by the Citizens' Union as the electoral arm of reform.¹⁹ The Citizens' Union and other reformers supported the victorious mayoral campaign

of Columbia University President Seth Low, only to see him defeated in 1903.

In 1907, the Bureau of Municipal Research was established. The Bureau, founded by William H. Allen, Henry Bruere, and Frederick Cleveland, was dedicated to the principles that machines were corrupt and could be eliminated by applying empirical methods and scientific management to local government.²⁰ Their objective: to discover how government really worked and then make its activity "efficient" and "economic" to insure that the taxpayer would get far more for each tax dollar spent than in the past.

As Robert Caro pointed out, the bureau's philosophy differed from prior reform efforts in that those reformers had placed their faith in the belief that once the corrupt politicians had been thrown out, "good government" forces at the controls of city government could save the city.²¹ The founders of this organization believed that more than just "good men" were needed to save local governments. Rather, they were of the opinion that good "methods" were also necessary. By developing this body of knowledge, it was hoped that reformers, when in power, would utilize this information to make local government more effective and, politically, keep the machine from returning to power. It reached its peak of influence following the election, in 1913, of John Purroy Mitchel as mayor.

If one analyzes the reform agenda during this period, one finds two thrusts. Some reformers, especially the moral reformers (Reverend Parkhurst being the most vocal), saw political corruption as part of a threat to the values of society. By wiping out corruption, they hoped to "purify" society. Others were interested in structural reform of government in order to make it more efficient. For example, Frederick W. Holls, a prominent reformer with links to the Republican Party, wrote in 1897 that he hoped that Strong's election would eventually lead to the "normal and orderly development of good city government."²² To Holls and, later, Allen, Bruere, and Cleveland, streamlined and efficient government was the dream.

However, in New York, the "Progressive" reformers fell far short of their goals of moral rehabilitation and/or economy and efficiency in government. What reasons can be offered for this failure?

First, the New York reformers were so unlike the working class immigrant electorate they wished to influence. The reformers in New York (like most other cities where there were active reform movements) were protestants from the upper class. For instance, the Bureau of Municipal Research was staffed primarily by college-educated individuals in an age when few went to college. It was financed by Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, neither of whom could be considered members of the working class.²³

A second reason for the reformers' lack of appeal was that their program was not perceived by the working class as being in its best interest. For example, civil service reform was opposed by the legion of city employees who owed their jobs to the party organizations. The subject of their wrath was Mayor Mitchel, who attempted to implement civil service reform following his election in 1913. In 1917, John Hylan, the Tammany-backed candidate, made civil service reform his major campaign issue. Tammany speakers would tell mass meetings of municipal employees that "we do not believe we should have so many efficiency experts," to which the assembled would reply, "a new mayor! a new mayor!"²⁴ Hylan was elected and assured his supporters that "we have had all the reform that we want in this city for some time to come."²⁵ One of Hylan's first acts upon taking office was to fire all the Bureau of Municipal Research staff members that had been brought into the city government during the Mitchel Administration. The civil service controversy gave the Tammany organization (and the other Democratic county organizations) the opportunity to mobilize its supporters by appealing to their fears that reform would cost them their jobs.

Civil service was but one of the "unpopular" proposals presented by the reformers. Mitchel, in addition to civil service reform, also tried to eliminate "unnecessary" programs and expenditures. His efforts to reduce

school expenditures, close schools for the retarded, and cut parks and recreation outlays were not likely to win the support of those who benefitted from these unnecessary expenditures.²⁶

Another reason for the progressive reform movement's inability to institute reform was that their victories were neither total nor long-lived. While reformers might be elected mayor (as were Low in 1903 and Mitchel ten years later), the party organizations retained control of the Board of Estimate and Board of Aldermen. Under the charter in force during that period, these bodies had significant powers and acted as roadblocks to reform.²⁷ Also, both Low and Mitchel were one-term mayors who were defeated when they sought re-election, allowing the machine-supported politicians to roll back the not yet institutionalized "accomplishments" of the reform mayoralities.

Finally, the reformer, once in power, often found that the task would be difficult because of what had to be undone. As one newspaper commented on the eve of Low's inauguration, "Mayor Seth Low's administration will be bound hand and foot during the two years of its existence by the obligations which will be bequeathed to it by the Tammany government and the restrictions placed upon it by state laws."²⁸ Years of Tammany Hall, combined with fiscal and legislative restraints, would make reform difficult.

That is not to say that no reform measures were im-

plemented. Electoral law reform, reorganization of municipal agencies, comprehensive zoning, and the utilization of new budgeting and competitive bidding procedures were significant accomplishments. However, civil service reform failed, the economy and efficiency later dismissed by Robert Moses as "saving rubber bands" and "using both ends of the pencil," and the moral uplift hoped for by some of the reformers was never attained.²⁹ When one compares New York City to other cities, one finds that the progressive reform agenda of electoral, governmental, and social change was largely unfulfilled.³⁰ As William E. Leuchtenburg observed, "Mitchel's administration is the most conspicuous example of the failure of a patrician reform movement because its conception of good government reflected the narrow class perspective of its leaders."³¹ The defeat of Mitchel in 1917 would not permanently do away with reform in New York. Such efforts would await another scandal, and the man the movement would place in City Hall would be quite different than the patrician reformers of the turn of the century.

The LaGuardia Years

Like many of its prior ascents to power, the reform victory of 1933 came about in the wake of a scandal. The investigation, led by Samuel Seabury, a former judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, uncovered evidence of Tammany Hall involvement in vice, influence peddling, and

scandalous appointments.³² These activities were not confined to Manhattan. For example, the Democratic leader of Queens, John Theofel, was found to have a net worth of \$250,000--though his only source of income was his six thousand dollar annual salary as Chief Clerk of the Queens County Surrogate's Court.³³ The investigation was characterized by John Curry, Manhattan Democratic boss, as the "crucifixion, if it can be had, of the Democratic Party of the City of New York."³⁴

The investigation reached a climax with the appearance before the panel of Mayor Walker in 1932. Walker, who had been in office since 1925 (after fifteen years in the legislature), was accused by Seabury of accepting \$300,000 from contractors who had done business with the city and went on to charge that the Mayor's safe deposit box contained one million dollars.³⁵ Walker's response, according to Raymond Moley, amounted to "evasion, amnesia, cheap theatrics and shallow, unbelievable rationalizations."³⁶ Walker, facing removal by Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, resigned on 1 September 1932. In a special election held two months later, John O'Brien, the Tammany-endorsed candidate, was elected mayor.

O'Brien's victory set the stage for the events of 1933. Though elected, O'Brien had run behind Roosevelt (the Democratic Presidential candidate) and Herbert Lehman (the party's gubernatorial nominee), and benefitted from a divi-

ded opposition.³⁷

Fiorello LaGuardia would become the reform candidate in 1933. The Republican standard bearer in 1929, Congressman LaGuardia's allegations of wrongdoing by the regular Democratic Party organizations had been the catalyst for the Seabury probe. Defeated by Walker, he returned to Congress, where he remained until his defeat in the 1932 Democratic landslide.³⁸

Upon his return from Washington, LaGuardia convened a meeting of Tammany opponents at New York's Town Hall. He explained, in a letter to Oswald Garrison Villard, that such a meeting, almost a year before the election, was important because "the best of intentions and good will even of a majority of the people cannot, unless properly prepared, overcome the crookedness, corruption and violence of an entrenched political machine."³⁹

Others were taking up the banner of reform. The City Party was formed with an eye towards making it the force for reform in the 1933 election.⁴⁰ The party program called for accurate budgeting; civil service reform; charter revisions that would make city government more cost effective; and non-partisan local government. Yet, while restoration of the city's economic base was important to the party's leaders, unlike its precursors, the City Party's founders insisted upon maintaining and expanding social services.⁴¹

Another group, organized by Joseph M. Price, became

known as the Independent Fusion Committee.⁴² This group planned to coordinate the activities of those groups and individuals interested in reform. They hoped to mount a unified reform campaign in the 1933 election.⁴³

In the spring of 1933, leaders of reform groups convened a fusion conference committee to select a slate.⁴⁴ While LaGuardia actively sought the support of the fusionists, they were, at first, cool to his entreaties. The reformers perceived a number of drawbacks in a LaGuardia candidacy. First, LaGuardia had lost to Walker in 1929. Second, he was not an "independent" Democrat and the consensus was that the candidate would have to be a Democrat. Finally, the conservative wing of the Republican Party opposed his candidacy. Despite these misgivings, the fusionists agreed to support LaGuardia. A number of factors contributed to the selection of LaGuardia. The first reason was that a number of potential candidates declined the fusion invitation to enter the race.⁴⁵ The second reason was that LaGuardia made it clear that he would enter the Republican primary regardless of the committee's decision. Finally, Judge Seabury's refusal to support anyone but LaGuardia forced the hand of the fusion forces. LaGuardia was nominated by the Republican and City Parties.⁴⁶ The Democrats nominated O'Brien for a full term.⁴⁷ In September, a ticket headed by former President of the Board of Aldermen Joseph McKee, and backed by Bronx Democratic Lea-

der Ed Flynn, was formed.⁴⁸ The Recovery Party, as it was known, was supported by wealthy conservatives (opposed to LaGuardia) and Democrats who believed O'Brien could not win.⁴⁹

When the votes were counted, LaGuardia and his fusion slate swept the citywide offices and elected three of the five borough presidents, gaining control of the Board of Estimate.⁵⁰

Once in power, LaGuardia began his attack on the Democratic organizations. The heart of the Democratic Party was its control over patronage. LaGuardia expanded the use of competitive civil service examinations while reducing the number of "non-competitive" positions.⁵¹ Also, recruitment initiatives were launched to insure that Jews, Italians, and Blacks, historically excluded from the public service, were able to gain access to public employment.⁵² Another personnel reform was the establishment of employee rating systems and uniform salary schedules, making advancement within the civil service subject to fewer partisan pressures.

The LaGuardia Administration also undertook a "clean up" of graft, corruption, and other questionable practices in city government. Spearheaded by Paul Blanshard, the Commissioner of Accounts, this three-year effort resulted in the removal or resignation of ninety-four public officials, and the successful criminal prosecution of twenty

public officials. Virtually all were holdovers from Mayor Walker's years in City Hall. Blanshard's citywide probe was complemented by special investigations into the Departments of Correction, Finance, Sanitation, Markets, and Police. These efforts were dedicated to both the removal of corrupt individuals and attainment of the reform goal of economy and efficiency in government.⁵³

In addition to cleaning up internal corruption, LaGuardia also battled organized crime. Going back to "Big" Tim Sullivan's day, the New York County Democratic Organization had maintained a special relationship with gangsters. In exchange for protection against disruption of their activities, the "underworld" paid political leaders a "retainer."⁵⁴ In some cases, gangsters took an active role in party affairs, as when they ousted East Side District Leader Harry Perry and replaced him with Albert Marinelli.⁵⁵ One of the major underworld "protectors" of the 1920s and 1930s was James J. Hines, leader of Tammany Hall's Eleventh Assembly District organization. Hines was "Dutch" Schultz' chief protector, and also, at one time or another, served "Lucky" Luciano and Frank Costello.⁵⁶ The Mayor, although he lacked jurisdiction over the city's five district attorneys and had limited control over some of the courts, mobilized the police department in a "war" on organized crime. The New York Times (2 January 1934) reported that LaGuardia, upon taking office the day before,

had sent the following message to the police high command:

I have been told that Fulton Street is considered the deadline for crooks. That deadline is now removed. It is replaced by the Hudson River on the west, the Atlantic Ocean on the south, the Westchester County line on the north and the Nassau County boundary on the east. The crooks and the racketeers must be kept out. That is your job.

While successful in his war on pinball machines, the Mayor and the police were unable to repress other forms of vice and racketeering.⁵⁷ In reference to gambling, near the end of his term, LaGuardia declared that he had received "tens of thousands of letters" offering specific information about gambling, leading him to wonder "what the police are doing?"⁵⁸

LaGuardia also attempted to usurp the machine's traditional function of social service delivery. Effective when the demand was small, the Great Depression made it difficult for the traditional party organizations (that is, the machines) to serve the growing number in need.⁵⁹ Using federal funds available through the "New Deal," the city developed an ambitious public works and social welfare program.⁶⁰ The program was significant because it parted with the local government reform tradition of economy and efficiency. LaGuardia recognized that reform, to succeed, would have to develop a positive program to maintain political support. In this respect, LaGuardia was successful. He was the first "reform" mayor to be re-elected, winning in 1937 and 1941.⁶¹

Yet, by other standards, the success of LaGuardia's reforms might be found wanting. During his third term there were a number of episodes that led some reformers to conclude that LaGuardia was more interested in gaining favor with Bronx Democratic Leader Flynn than he was in maintaining a reform-oriented city government. Flynn was also the head of the Democratic National Committee and it was believed in some quarters that LaGuardia had ignored allegations that city employees had renovated (using city-owned materials) Flynn's upstate vacation home.⁶² Throughout much of his final term, the Mayor devoted a great deal of time to the national war effort and to his unsuccessful attempt to obtain a military commission.⁶³ LaGuardia was also accused of compromising with conservatives, who had opposed the fusion effort. In both the Bertrand Russell controversy and his refusal to reappoint Johanna Lindlof to the Board of Education, LaGuardia was charged with sacrificing reform to political expedience.⁶⁴ The New York Times (21 May 1943), in its account of a meeting held to honor Mrs. Lindlof, reported that Mark Starr expressed the feelings of some liberal reformers toward LaGuardia:

Unfortunately, our Little Flower is turning to poison ivy for many of the men and women who once were proud to serve with him to save our city from Tammany control. Does our Mayor think the favor of the clericals will endear him to the Italian people when he arrives as their self-nominated Garibaldi.

In May of 1945, LaGuardia announced he would not seek a fourth term.⁶⁵ In the 1945 election, the Democrats

returned one of their "regulars" to City Hall as William O'Dwyer, the Kings County District Attorney, was elected mayor.⁶⁶ O'Dwyer benefitted from a fusion split: the Republicans, Liberals, and City Fusion Party nominated Jonah Goldstein, while LaGuardia supported Newbold Morris, the standard bearer of the No Deal Party.⁶⁷

Perhaps LaGuardia's greatest failure was his inability to institutionalize reform. Despite his "unbossed" image, LaGuardia depended on the support of Republican leaders. He ran his campaigns out of City Hall and permitted the fusion organization of 1933 to decay. In both 1937 and 1941, the fusion organization played a diminished role and by 1945 the movement had split, as some reformers supported Goldstein while other backed Morris.⁶⁸ The "permanent non-partisan political party" that had been the dream of reformers since the nineteenth century did not emerge from the LaGuardia years.⁶⁹

Beyond LaGuardia

The Democratic Party organizations that regained possession of City Hall in 1946 were far different from those that had been evicted a dozen years earlier. A major difference concerned the internal dynamics of the organizations. Until 1933, the New York County (Tammany Hall) organization was the dominant force. By 1945, Tammany had been superseded by the Bronx Democrats, who had benefitted from Flynn's early support of Roosevelt. During the

Roosevelt years Flynn became the dispenser of federal patronage within the city and the Manhattan Democrats, deprived of City Hall patronage, found themselves dependent upon Flynn.⁷⁰

Another change in the post-war Democratic Party was the growth of a reform movement within the party. These reformers, led by former Governor Lehman and Eleanor Roosevelt, targeted New York County's Carmine DeSapio for defeat. The reformers regarded DeSapio, who had reasserted Tammany's influence during the 1950s, as the "image of bossism."⁷¹ DeSapio's dominance of the state party convention in 1958 galvanized the reformers.⁷² In the 1959 primaries, the Village Independent Democrats (a reform club) tried to unseat DeSapio as district leader (which would have made him ineligible to serve as county leader). While DeSapio retained his district leadership by six hundred votes, reform-backed candidates did win a number of primaries in Manhattan in 1959 and 1960.⁷³ In 1961, Mayor Robert F. Wagner, a long-time ally, broke with DeSapio.⁷⁴

Wagner's action had a devastating impact on the Manhattan regular organization. Wagner decided to seek a third term as mayor, and was endorsed (after some initial hesitation) by the reformers.⁷⁵ DeSapio supported State Comptroller Arthur Levitt, who Wagner defeated by more than 150,000 votes in the Democratic primary.⁷⁶ In addition, fourteen candidates supported by the Committee for

Democratic Voters (CDV) won district leadership posts in Manhattan and nine candidates endorsed by the CDV won councilmanic primaries throughout the city. One of those defeated was DeSapio, who lost his district leadership to James S. Lanigan.⁷⁷ The 1961 primaries were a turning point for the Democratic Party, as the "reform" Democrats began to make major inroads into the regular Democratic organizations. These reformers were middle class professionals who, according to Wilson, were "amateurs" in politics who were motivated by particular issues and a desire for internal democracy. He contrasted these "amateurs" with the "professional" party worker who was oriented toward material rewards or a career in government, with little concern for issues.⁷⁸

While the reform movement has become significant in Manhattan Democratic politics, the movement has been less successful in the "outer" boroughs.⁷⁹ The formation of the New Democratic Coalition (NDC), as an umbrella organization for reform clubs, and the Viet Nam War, seemed to stimulate reform activity in the late 1960s. Yet, as Alan Ware observed,

Only briefly in 1968 and shortly after, at the time of the founding of the NDC, did anti-war activism probably lead to an increase in the number of participants in the New York club movement....Much of the membership increase was short-lived....While it could claim 20,000 members shortly after its formation, by 1979 the NDC had to acknowledge that state-wide there were a mere fifty-five affiliated clubs with a total membership of only about 8,000 (Ware 1985, 98).

The Demographic Challenge

Another challenge to the regular organizations has been the changing ethnic and racial composition of the electorate. Black and hispanic political leaders have focused on winning representation and obtaining material benefits for their constituency. In 1960, J. Raymond Jones, a Harlem district leader, contended that blacks cast twenty-one percent of the vote in Manhattan and should, therefore, receive twenty-one percent of the patronage jobs controlled by the Democratic organization.⁸⁰ Regarding the reform Democrats and their desire to "democratize" party procedure, Jones remarked, "they can join the peace corps."⁸¹

As the minority population of New York City has grown larger, the challenge has been to keep these constituencies within the traditional party organizations.

Concurrent with the growth of the minority population has been the erosion of the party organizations' traditional constituency. As stated at the outset, the backbone of the party organization was the white ethnic industrial worker. As the "embourgeoisment" of this class occurred, its linkage to the party organizations weakened. The "rewards" offered by party organizations were no longer as valuable (or, as readily available) to the white ethnic constituency. Also, the development of alternative organizations (labor unions, civic associations) lessened the

influence of the party organization on its traditional constituency. Finally, the traditional organization supporter often "deserted" the party for suburbia. They were replaced in the "old" neighborhood by people whom the old-line party organization could not mobilize. In some instances, the old-line party organization has been displaced by new leadership reflecting the demographic changes in the community. In other cases, the old-line leadership has been able to hold on due to the low levels of political participation among the city's minorities. Yet, even where they've held on, the lower levels of political participation by their constituents has served to reduce the influence of the party leaders in high visibility elections. While lower turnout has served their own "survival" needs, it has reduced the "clout" of the organization as it has fewer votes to "deliver" in statewide and citywide elections.

The traditional political organizations have had to face a hostile reform movement and the other challenges noted above. The extent of its ability to withstand these challenges (and the resultant outcomes) will be discussed in the pages that follow.

NOTES

¹Quoted in William L. Riordan, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1963), 17.

²Good government forces were active throughout the country at the turn of the century. In 1894, the First Annual Conference for Good City Government was held in Philadelphia and the National Municipal League was established. New York's reform movement antedates the national effort, the first "civic association" having been formed in 1863 by Peter Cooper. For ten years the Citizens' Association monitored city government and pressed for reform. Some of its members were implicated in the Tweed scandal (notably, Nathaniel Sands, who admitted receiving \$75,000 from Tweed). The group was replaced by the New York City Council of Political Reform, which favored honest, efficient, and economic government. During the 1880s there were a number of groups, including the City Reform Club (1882) and the Commonwealth Club (1886). During the 1890s a number of groups were active, stimulated by the police scandal and the national movement. The Society for the Prevention of Crime, under the leadership of the Reverend Charles H. Parkhurst, exposed the police corruption. The City Club (1892) brought together remnants of the City Reform and the Commonwealth Clubs, making its major objectives the separation of municipal elections from other elections and the election of "good" men to city government. The City Club tried to maintain a number of assembly district organizations to rival those of the local party organizations. Another group which attempted to establish itself at the assembly district level was the German-American Reform Union.

The consolidation of Greater New York in 1898 served as a catalyst for those seeking to create a "reform" political party, lest Tammany extend its dominance throughout the metropolis. The Citizens' Union was formed by members of the City Club and "Swallowtail" Republicans (including Elihu Root, William McKinley's Secretary of War), electing Seth Low mayor in 1903. Following Low's defeat in his quest for re-election, the Citizens' Union veered away from electoral politics, becoming an advocate for "good government," and joining the City Club as the leading non-partisan good government groups in the city during much of the twentieth century. Generally, New York's reformers were "natives" from good families who had attended Ivy

League institutions. See Charles Garrett, The LaGuardia Years (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 20-50, and David C. Hammack, Power and Society: Greater New York at the Turn of the Century (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1982), 130-157. Both Garrett and Hammack offer detailed discussion of the early reform movement in New York City.

³Gustavus Myers, The History of Tammany Hall (New York: Burt Franklin, 1917), 191.

⁴ibid., 191. ⁵Mushkat, 305 ⁶ibid, 305.

⁷ibid., 335

⁸Myers, 211-237, discusses the Tweed scandal, including Tweed's relationship with Republican leaders in the legislature. Havemeyer's election is noted by Garrett, 37.

⁹The committee, established to investigate the corruption charges made against the police department by Reverend Parkhurst, was headed by Clarence Lexow.

¹⁰The upstate-downstate conflict and the roles of the Republican and Democratic parties is discussed by Colby, 10-17. A more detailed exposition is offered by David Maldwyn Ellis, New York: State and City (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979).

¹¹Richard L. McCormack, From Realignment to Reform: Political Change in New York State, 1893-1910 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 89.

¹²For an account of the consolidation drive, see Hammack, 185-229.

¹³The members of the commission were Benjamin F. Tracy (chair); Stewart L. Woodford; Silas B. Dutcher; Garret J. Garretson; Brooklyn Mayor Frederick W. Wurster; former New York Mayor Thomas F. Gilroy; William C. DeWitt; Long Island City Mayor Patrick J. Gleason; George M. Pinney; John F. Dillon; New York Mayor William Strong; former Brooklyn Mayor Seth Low, and Andrew Green.

¹⁴McCormack, 94. Ironically, reform groups had initially supported consolidation when it was first proposed by Andrew Green in 1868.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 94.

¹⁶ The county courthouse, with an original cost estimate of \$250,000, was eventually completed at a cost of fourteen million dollars.

¹⁷ Quoted in M. R. Werner, Tammany Hall (Garden City: Doubleday, 1931), 348.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, 348.

¹⁹ Electing Seth Low mayor in 1901.

²⁰ Scientific management was a significant intellectual force in the United States at the turn of the century. With industrial growth, there was great interest in discovering methods of increased productivity and coordination of large workforces. The hope was that industrial productivity could be scientifically enhanced. The treatise of the movement was Frederick Winslow Taylor, The Principles of Scientific Management (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919).

²¹ Robert A. Caro, The Power Broker (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 59-88.

²² Hammack, 144. ²³ Judd, 103. ²⁴ Quoted in Caro, 84.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 84. ²⁶ Judd, 101.

²⁷ While there had been efforts to revise the charter in 1907, 1911, and 1921, these proposals were rejected by the state legislature. Garrett summarized the deficiencies of the charter:

...the structure of government provided for contained a number of weaknesses....A bicameral Municipal Assembly which fostered buck-passing and irresponsibility.. ..The Mayor had too big a job for one man....Too many departments, boards and commissions existed with overlapping and duplicate functions. The borough presidents had both legislative and administrative duties; they both appropriated and spent money, with the result that log-rolling and waste were inevitable....(Garrett, 86).

²⁸ Quoted in Gerald Kurland, Seth Low (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971), 141.

²⁹Quoted in Edwin R. Lewinson, John Purroy Mitchel (New York: Astra Books, 1965), 12.

³⁰For an outline of the national reform agenda, see Judd, 87-120.

³¹in Lewinson, 12.

³²For an account of the scandals, see Arthur Mann, LaGuardia Comes to Power, 1933 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lipincott, 1965), 46-66.

³³ibid., 52.

³⁴Herbert Mitgang, The Man Who Rode The Tiger; The Life of Judge Samuel Seabury and the Story of the Greatest Investigation of City Corruption in this Century (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 226.

³⁵Mann, 61. ³⁶ibid., 61.

³⁷O'Brien defeated Louis H. Pounds (Republican) and Morris Hillquit (Socialist). There was also a substantial write-in vote for Acting Mayor Joseph McKee (who had been President of the Board of Alderman until Walker's resignation), who had disavowed the campaign. O'Brien received over 250,000 votes less than Roosevelt.

³⁸He was defeated by James J. Lanzetta.

³⁹Cited in Mann, 66.

⁴⁰The founders of the party were Raymond V. Ingersoll (active in reform for over thirty years); James E. Finegan (who had helped put together the "No Deal" judicial slate in 1931); Bernard S. Deutsch (ex-President of the Bronx County Bar Association); Rufus E. McGahen (Secretary of the Citizens' Union); Joseph D. McGoldrick (a faculty member at Columbia University); Russell Forbes (a New York University professor); Charles G. Keutgen, and Louis S. Lewis.

⁴¹Mann, 96-97.

⁴²Price was head of the City Club.

⁴³The group was unable to attract a cross-section of reform-oriented activists, and its leaders eventually joined forces with other Tammany opponents in the Fusion Conference Committee.

⁴⁴The committee included Joseph Price (Independent Fusion Committee); Charles S. Whitman (Republican Mayoralty Committee), and Maurice Davidson and Raymond V. Ingersoll of the City Party.

⁴⁵Among those declining the fusion endorsement were Seabury (who felt he might be accused of having conducted his investigation to further his political career); Al Smith; Raymond V. Ingersoll; Richard C. Patterson (an executive with the National Broadcasting Company, whose NBC superiors opposed his entrance into electoral politics); and Nathan Straus (who feared an anti-semitic reaction).

⁴⁶His running mates were Bernard Deutsch (President of the Board of Alderman); W. Arthur Cunningham (Comptroller), and for the borough presidencies: Langdon K. Post (Manhattan); Raymond V. Ingersoll (Brooklyn); Charles P. Barry (Bronx); George U. Harvey (Queens); and Joseph A. Palma (Staten Island).

⁴⁷Garrett, 103-105.

⁴⁸The New York Times, 30 September 1933.

⁴⁹Some of the Recovery Party's prominent supporters were Henry Morgenthau, Sr., Averill Harriman, and the leaders of the New York State Chamber of Commerce. Garrett, 106.

⁵⁰Fusion candidates were elected borough president in Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island.

⁵¹In 1933, 54.5 percent of city employees had obtained their jobs through competitive examinations. By 1939, 74.3 percent had. See City of New York, Civil Service Commission, The Balance Sheet: A Merit System Progress Report, 1933-1940 (New York, 1940).

⁵²ibid.

⁵³For a detailed description of the anti-corruption program, see Paul Blanshard, Investigating City Government

in the LaGuardia Administration; A Report on the Activities of the Department of Investigation and Accounts, 1934-1937 (New York, 1940).

⁵⁴Garrett, 157-159. ⁵⁵ibid., 158. ⁵⁶ibid., 158.

⁵⁷Notably prostitution and bookmaking.

⁵⁸Quoted in The New York Times, 5 February 1945.

⁵⁹Until the depression, "public welfare" in the United States was limited. Churches, charitable organizations, and political organizations were the primary service providers. For a discussion of the development of public welfare, see Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, Regulating the Poor (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971).

⁶⁰Through "New Deal" expenditures by the federal Emergency Relief Administration, the United States Civil Works Administration, the Public Works Administration, and the Works Progress Administration, New York City had (by 1940) obtained nearly one billion dollars in grants and loans for the construction of public works. LaGuardia, taking advantage of the 1934 Housing Act, created the New York City Housing Authority which constructed and managed low-income housing. Also, under LaGuardia, welfare payments were increased and regularized through the imposition of earmarked taxes.

⁶¹He was also the first mayor, since consolidation, to be elected to three terms, a feat subsequently accomplished by Robert F. Wagner (1953, 1957, and 1961) and Edward I. Koch (1977, 1981, and 1985).

⁶²Paul Kern, a member of the Civil Service Commission removed by LaGuardia during a dispute over the classification of employees at the county sherriff and registers' offices, claimed that the Mayor had ignored his charge that twenty-seven city employees had performed construction work at Flynn's Lake Mahopac home. LaGuardia said he had notified both the Bronx County District Attorney and the Commissioner of Investigation. A Bronx County Grand Jury cleared Flynn, finding that while the work had been done, he had not asked the workers to do the work.

⁶³LaGuardia hoped that Roosevelt would make him military governor of Italy.

⁶⁴In October of 1939 the Board of Higher Education appointed Bertrand Russell to the City College faculty. The appointment was opposed by Bishop Manning, who disagreed with Russell's views on sex and religion. In March 1940, the City Council adopted a resolution urging the Board to rescind the appointment. A taxpayer's suit was then filed against the Board, seeking an injunction barring Russell's appointment. State Supreme Court Justice John E. McGeehan ruled for the plaintiffs, finding that Russell's attitude towards sex made him unfit for the appointment and that he was not an American citizen. The Mayor had kept a low profile on the matter, but deleted the funds for Russell's post from the fiscal 1941 budget. Also, LaGuardia directed the Corporation Counsel, William C. Chanler, not to appeal. The Board of Higher Education retained independent counsel, but withdrew its appeal when Russell accepted another teaching position.

Lindlof was a casualty of LaGuardia's dispute with the Board of Education during his third term. LaGuardia tried, unsuccessfully, to have the Board's purchasing function assumed by the city (the Board, as an independent agency, did its own buying), fire the Board's chairperson, and have Mark Starr named adult education director. In 1944 the National Education Association issued a report concluding that the Mayor's activities had been "unprofessional and against public interest." For more on these incidents, see August Heckscher, When LaGuardia Was Mayor (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 269-275, 345-348.

⁶⁵The New York Times, 7 May 1945.

⁶⁶Defeating Jonah Goldstein (Republican/Liberal/City Fusion) and Newbold Morris (No Deal).

⁶⁷The New York Times, 6 August 1945.

⁶⁸Seabury called Goldstein's candidacy "a disgrace and an affront to the independent voters of the City of New York." Quoted in The New York Times, 9 June 1945.

⁶⁹While the City Fusion Party would remain in existence until the 1960s, it was never again a force in New York politics.

⁷⁰After Flynn's death in 1953, the Manhattan Democrats emerged from the shadow of the Bronx organization. Carmine DeSapio solidified his position by supporting Averill Harriman's candidacy for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination in 1954. DeSapio became secretary of

state in the Harriman administration; the same post Flynn had held under Roosevelt while he was governor.

⁷¹For a discussion of the conflict between DeSapio and the reformers, see Edward N. Costikyan, Behind Closed Doors (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1966), 22-29.

⁷²For an account of the 1958 convention, see Costikyan, 159-162.

⁷³In 1959 the reformers won seven district leadership elections. In 1960, William Fitts Ryan defeated organization-backed incumbent Ludwig Teller in the Twentieth Congressional District.

⁷⁴The break came about when the two men could not agree on a successor to Manhattan Borough President Hulan Jack. In splitting with DeSapio, Wagner withdrew the patronage of the borough presidency from the county organization. To understand the seriousness of this withdrawal of patronage, three district leaders loyal to DeSapio had been employed in the borough president's office and there were "several hundred" low-paying jobs available through the office. The New York Times, 1 February 1961.

⁷⁵Costikyan, 28-29.

⁷⁶The New York Times, 8 September 1961.

⁷⁷DeSapio was defeated, 6,165 to 4,745, *ibid.*

⁷⁸Wilson, 2-11.

⁷⁹While the reform faction has played a significant role in Manhattan, the regular faction has continued to control the party organizations in the other counties. For a discussion of the relative strength of the reformers and the regulars, see Ware, 109-119.

⁸⁰The New York Times, 10 January 1960. Jones estimated that blacks held six percent of the patronage jobs controlled by the Manhattan Democratic organization.

⁸¹Wilson, 282.

CHAPTER 4

POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS: THE LITERATURE

There, then, is the machine and its boss. My hope in writing this book has been to show that, while bosses are inevitable under our system of government, bad bosses are not. For in the last analysis, as I said in the beginning, you're the boss.

Edward J. Flynn¹

While Ed Flynn's motivation was to provide a justification for the "good" boss, a number of others have written about party organizations and the existence (or lack) of bosses. The literature of party organizations, with an emphasis on recent research, will be discussed. I will also focus specifically on the subjects being studied through a presentation of the substantial body of literature on New York City political party organization. In examining the literature of the politics of New York City, we will find the existence of what might be called "boss literature" and "reform literature," especially when social scientists examine the city's political system up until around 1951. Much of the literature written about what might be called "contemporary" New York (1951 to the present) tends to ignore the existence of bosses and reformers during the period and includes urban community studies, countervailing pluralism, and power elite theory. In

ignoring the political party organizations, the literature is representative of much of the recent work on parties in that local party organizations are perceived as having declined, giving way to candidate-centered campaigns and having, as organizations, less influence in the electoral process.

Recent Party Literature

In summarizing the recent literature on political parties it would be reasonable to state that most observers agree that political parties as they existed in the last century do not exist today. That parties have lost their preeminent positions as political organizations and that other organizations now perform many of the activities traditionally regarded as the "exclusive prerogative" of the political party. Political action committees (PACs), media consultants, television, candidate-centered political organizations, and changes in presidential nominating procedures have been presented as the "underminers" of the traditional party organization.

Some authors contend that although the party organization has declined somewhat, the party still persists as a force in American politics. Representative of this school of thought is Leon Epstein (1986).² In discussing the state of American political parties, Epstein states that

I have doubts about both the extensiveness of party decline and the earlier glories of American parties.... While not without certain modest hopes for party revi-

val, I am impressed more than are most revivalists by the limits that American circumstances impose on the growth of party capacities (Epstein 1986, 3).

Epstein contended that political parties in the United States are limited by a number of factors. These factors include public hostility towards what they perceive as the corruption of the party organization (the image of Boss Tweed dies hard in the mind of the public); our constitutional system of separation of powers which makes it almost impossible for a president to develop the degree of party discipline that is found in parliamentary democracies; regulation of party activity by state governments; and the use of the direct primary.

Despite these limitations, Epstein found some evidence of the persistence of parties. He noted the existence of more active congressional parties (including, as many other authors have, the growth of congressional campaign committees as donors for candidates), the "modernization" of the political parties (as seen through the growing use of professional staff and the replacement of local party machines by federalized party organizations).³

Another work where the authors contend that the political party has endured is The Party Goes On by Xandra Kayden and Eddie Mahe, Jr. (1985). The authors stated that the party organizations had, by the early 1970s, declined due to a number of structural reforms designed to weaken party organizations. Kayden and Mahe concluded that

the reforms struck at the abuse of power but they hit the capacity of the organization to sustain itself in a changing world. The parties reached their nadir when a new generation grew up that did not have a history of commitment (because of jobs or ideological fervor, or even habit), and when the organizations were too weak to offer new incentives because they had so little control over their own processes. The loss of control of the nomination was the most critical. It left the parties in a passive position. The candidates were self-selected and represented what they, or their ad agencies, wanted them to represent (Kayden and Mahe 1985, 56).

Kayden and Mahe theorized that the changes in campaign finance law at the federal level made the resurgence of the political parties possible. The new party system, according to Kayden and Mahe, is composed of two centralized, national party organizations, where power and resources (these resources being campaign funds, technical expertise, and technology, which they found often went directly to the candidates, bypassing the local party organizations) flow from the top down. Kayden and Mahe also focused on the growing "professionalization" as a force for party viability, noting that "the volunteers and political hacks...have been replaced by professionals."⁴

These professionals were needed to run the campaigns under the Federal Election Campaign Act. According to the authors, the parties became significant as providers of important services (the Republican Party taking the lead in this area) that made them more important to the candidates and to the political process. The political action committee, seen by others as a threat to the party, is regarded

by the authors as having been limited by campaign finance legislation.⁵ The authors were optimistic about the present state of the parties, pointing out that "no individual, no group can compete with the party's ability to raise and spend money, and to provide a host of other services from polling information to press releases."⁶

While Epstein and Kayden and Mahe, and the others who contend that the parties have been persistent (some said that the parties have been "transformed") cite the vitality of the party organizations at the national level, they agree that the parties at the "grassroots" (which is the focus of this work) has declined. In discussing the new parties, Kayden and Mahe contend that

Local parties are the weakest link in the party organizational chain. They have the least influence and the fewest resources. The combination of non-partisan elections, primaries (where there are partisan elections), reliance on volunteers in an era when volunteers are hard to find, complex campaign finance regulations, and the general low regard in which parties are held combine to discourage the best leadership or greatest participation (Kayden and Mahe 1985, 105).

Studies focusing on local party organization have also noted this decline. Ware (1985), in his study of Democratic organizations in New York City, Denver, and the East Bay area of Northern California, found that the local party organizations in those communities had collapsed (though, it should be noted that Ware also concluded that the decline of local party organizations had not transformed electoral politics into party-less politics).⁷ Ware

contended that the collapse of the local party organizations was abrupt (taking place during the 1960s and 1970s, following what Ware called the "Indian Summer" of the local parties during the previous two decades), and had come about due to the growing independence of candidates from local party organizations (new campaign technologies, development of alternative campaign resources), the demographic changes in cities, the reform of the presidential selection process, and the internal conflict that beset party organizations during the latter two decades of Ware's study. According to Ware, the major beneficiaries of the decline of the local party organizations have been the candidates, especially incumbents, who have the opportunity to develop alternative political resources.⁸

Other observers have been pessimistic about the present and future of party organizations, theorizing that the decline of party organizations has not been limited to the "grassroots." In 1969, Walter Dean Burnham published an article, "The End of American Party Politics," and David Broder wrote The Party's Over in 1972.⁹ Both contended that the party system (and the parties as we knew them) had collapsed. Both, picking up on the beliefs of those who saw parties as the "engines of government" (Ranney and Schattschneider for example) worried about the future of democracy without parties.¹⁰

To Broder, it was important to revitalize the par-

ties to address what he saw as a growing despair in the nation: "If we engage ourselves in politics, and particularly concern ourselves with the workings of those strangely neglected institutions, the political parties....we may find the instrument of national self-renewal in our hands."¹¹

Broder suggested a number of measures for revitalizing the parties, ranging from strengthening the role of party caucuses and party leaders in Congress to the rebuilding of party organizations and staff (at all levels) so that they could once again have a significant role in campaign management.¹²

What is interesting about the recent literature is that most of the observers believe that political parties are necessary. Even the local party organization, long characterized as the corrupt "political machine," has its defenders. Polsby, for instance, saw the local party organization as an "intermediary" between the voters and public officials. The loss of these intermediaries, according to Polsby, is largely responsible for the decline in voter identification with the parties.¹³ While conceding that the mass media may inform the public, it does not allow for interaction between voters and their public officials. In speaking of the organizations, Polsby admitted that some "mechanisms may be reasonably efficient as devices for informing candidates," but he continued, "they are bound to be less comprehensively engaging to at least some ordinary

voters than more personalized structures."¹⁴ Polsby feared that this could lead to a loss of political legitimacy, making it more difficult for government leaders to govern.

Much of this literature, where the party is pictured as an engine (or potential engine) of government is in stark contrast with much of the earlier party literature. For example, Herbert Croly (1914) argued that while the political parties had performed useful functions in the nineteenth century, their "overthrow" was "indispensable to the success of progressive democracy, because, under American conditions, the vitality of the two-party system had been purchased and must continue to be purchased at the expense of administrative independence and efficiency."¹⁵

Another critical view of political parties was offered by Moisei Ostrogorski (1902), who took the position that the parties had never served a useful purpose. Rather, the party had been a "predatory" entity, reaching its apex as the political machine. Machines that, in concert with their business allies, had a devastating impact on the American polity:

In all the States where the industrial and financial corporations are numerous, the Machine and the boss, fed with their money as with a sap, flourish like a luxuriant plant that overshadows the whole of public life. In these States, where the Machine is supreme, republican institutions are in truth but an idle form, a plaything wherewith to beguile children. It may be that the government of the bosses is not, administratively speaking, more ruinous for the people

than plutocracy is oppressive for them from the economic standpoint. But both of them eat out the heart of the commonwealth. It is no longer 'a government of the people, by the people, and for the people (Ostrogorski 1902, 576).

Croly and Ostrogorski were writing during the "Progressive Era" of the early 1900s, when party organizations (especially the local political machines) were held in low regard (for instance, Lincoln Steffens' The Shame of the Cities).¹⁶ It seems ironic in that the stature of political parties in the polity seems to have been enhanced at a time when the party organizations were experiencing a decline at their grassroots and a transformation at the national level.

New York City Politics: The Literature

As stated at the outset of the chapter, the politics of New York has been widely chronicled. Individual personalities, political organizations, and distinct periods of the city's political life have been analyzed.

The Boss Literature

The boss literature includes studies of individual personalities (the bosses) and of the institutions (the political machine). Also, one finds the existence of what might be called "war stories," that is, contemporary accounts written by machine opponents. Most of this literature focuses on the New York County (Tammany Hall) Democratic Organization.

There are a number of studies of Tammany Hall. One of the better histories of early Tammany (pre-1865) is Jerome

Mushkat's Tammany: The Evolution of a Political Machine

(1971).¹⁷ Mushkat traced Tammany from its formation as a fraternal society in 1787 up until the end of the Civil War, when The New York Herald described the Hall as "the only regular democratic organization of this city."¹⁸

Mushkat concluded that Tammany survived because its leaders were "masters of nuts-and-bolts politicking--the art of building and running a political machine."¹⁹ He found that the organization endured because of the premium its leaders placed on the maintenance of the organization and their ability to adapt to change (for example, moving from a "nativist" closed organization to a pro-immigrant open organization). Another attribute of the organization was its appeal to the emotions and local concerns of its constituents through rhetoric and a paternalistic system of social services provided in exchange for votes. According to Mushkat, Tweed's contribution to Tammany Hall was not his creation of a new entity, but that he modernized the organization's structure and message (measures essential to Tammany's survival). Yet, Mushkat finds that Tammany's most serious flaw was its unwillingness to embrace progressive change. He concluded that the organization's pragmatic (and conservative) bent did not allow it to become a progressive political organization.

One of the first scholarly and non-partisan studies of Tammany Hall was undertaken by Gustavus Myers, who wrote The

History of Tammany Hall (1901; last revised in 1917), covering Tammany Hall from its beginnings up until the time of publication. Myers found that corruption was not invented by Tweed, but that corrupt activity within the organization went back to at least 1790, leading him to conclude that "Tammany was thus, from the beginning an evil force in politics."²⁰ Myers also determined that the Tammany Society (the fraternal organization) and Tammany Hall (the political organization) were not actually separate organizations since the sachems of the fraternal organization "ruled the politics" of the political organization. In addition, Myers found that battles for control of the political organization were decided by the leaders of the fraternal organization (a point that Mushkat would make nearly seventy years later).

M. R. Werner's Tammany Hall (1931) emphasized the corrupt aspects of the organization.²¹ Werner also examined the leaders (after two chapters on the early years, the remainder of the work is divided into chapters on each of the "bosses," from Fernando Wood to Charles Murphy). Another "personality-oriented" effort was by Alfred Connable and Edward Silverfarb (1967). Their Tigers of Tammany updated Werner by covering the period from Charles Murphy's death in 1924 to the leadership of J. Raymond Jones, the first black to head the organization.²² Almost totally ignored in this work was Edward N. Costikyan, the reformer who headed Tam-

many from 1961 to 1964, resigning after three years of party infighting. Disillusioned with the reformers, Costikyan claimed they had "done nothing on any issues."²³

Costikyan would have more to say in Behind Closed Doors (1966).²⁴ The book is interesting because Costikyan described not only his experiences as county leader, but discussed, in case study fashion, the primary and state nominating convention systems, campaign techniques, and how the organization operated at the "grassroots" in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Costikyan's account is also instructive in that it outlines a basic change in reform strategy in the twenty years following the Second World War. Historically, New York reformers had worked outside the Democratic Party as part of a "fusion" movement.²⁵ In fact, as Costikyan noted, the established reform groups (notably, the Citizens' Union and the City Club) were waiting for the Democrats, returned to City Hall in the 1945 election, to once again become embroiled in scandal. Such a scenario, the fusionists believed, would make possible the election of a "good government" mayor.²⁶

But in the years following the Second World War a "deviant" (Costikyan's term) good government force was developing. These reformers, rather than shunning the Democrats, hoped to change the party from within. They proposed opening the party and replacing the bosses with leaders committed to "democratizing" the party. Costikyan asserted

that previous reform triumphs had been short-lived because of the unwillingness of the reformers to work with (or within) the Democratic Party (the dominant political organization). Costikyan's work is helpful in understanding this significant change in reform strategy in New York local politics.

In addition to the works cited above, there have been a number of anti-Tammany tracts. Some are works by individuals who had fought the organization. One such work is Matthew P. Breen's Thirty Years of New York Politics Up-To-Date (1899), which is a critical account of "machine politics" in New York City and surrounding areas during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century.²⁷ The book discussed Tammany and the spread of the "machine" (which the author labelled the "New York system") to outlying areas. Another publication in this vein was the Reverend Charles H. Parkhurst's Our Fight With Tammany (1895), in which he chronicled his crusade against Tammany Hall, the police department, and the illicit businesses they protected.²⁸ William M. Ivins authored Machine Politics and Money in Elections in New York City (1887).²⁹ Ivins discussed party organizations and explained how a municipal department might serve the machine's needs:

A single department is of itself enough to furnish the foundation of a machine. It only requires that the department be one in which there are a score of fair places for superior politicians, and a laborers' payroll for the rank and file....The better offices are distributed among those who are expected to fill the position

of district leaders....These leaders are expected...to obey the central power uncomplainingly, and to devote so much of their time as they conveniently can to the service of the city (Ivins 1887, 9-10).

Ivins' work is also interesting in that he described how political organizations (he dealt with the Republicans and "Irving Hall" Democrats, as well as Tammany) raised and spent money in elections.³⁰ Candidates were "assessed" (nominations were auctioned to the highest bidder), the organizations using these funds (as well as those stolen from the government treasury) to hire "field workers" for the campaign, buy votes, and enrich the party leadership. Ivins suggested adapting English electoral laws to American politics.³¹ One of the earliest "war stories" was Samuel J. Tilden's The New York City Ring, Its Origin, Maturity, and Fall (1873).³² Tilden, Tweed's principal accuser, offered a first person account of the Tweed Ring's rise and decline. Generally, these works offered a negative view of the party organization and usually glorified the "cause" of the opponents of Tammany.

In addition to the efforts already noted, there have been studies of individual political leaders, with William Marcy Tweed being the most frequent subject. Studies of Tweed include: Denis Tilden Lynch, Boss Tweed, The Story of a Grim Generation (1927); Alexander B. Callow, The Tweed Ring (1966); Seymour J. Mandelbaum, Boss Tweed's New York (1965); and Leo Hershkowitz, Tweed's New York: Another Look (1977).³³ Most of these writings have been critical; typi-

cal of the dominant view on Tweed is Lord James Bryce, who in American Commonwealth (1887) calls Tweed the product of a "rancid dangerous democracy."³⁴ Only Hershkowitz dissents in his appraisal of Tweed. He contends that a myth of corruption engulfs Tweed, and that "myth has become so much a part of history and...such a convenient reference for the afterdinner speaker, pulp writer, or simply something to frighten little children with, that if there wasn't a Tweed, he would have to be invented, and he was."³⁵

Hershkowitz believed that Tweed was "railroaded" by those who feared Tweed as an "outsider" championing the cause of the Irish, Eastern Europeans, and other immigrants that threatened the status quo.³⁶ Hershkowitz even charged that Tweed's accusers were guilty of the tactics associated with Tweed: illegal judicial proceedings; intimidation of witnesses; and the use of informants and other questionable acts.³⁷ According to Hershkowitz, under the rules used to prosecute Tweed, "Snow White would have been hanged for loitering to commit prostitution."³⁸

Hershkowitz' problem, from my perspective, is that his argument is based on selective perception and an unanswered question. The author points out that Tweed was never convicted of graft or theft, the crimes that he and his cohorts were associated with. While Tweed was never convicted, one fact remains--the escapades of Tweed have been documented (notably by Callow and Mandelbaum) and somebody was re-

sponsible. If Hershkowitz clears Tweed (which he doesn't entirely do), he fails to identify those were were responsible.

Tweed's successors as Tammany chieftan have also had their biographers. "Honest" John Kelly, Tweed's immediate successor, is the subject of only one book-length effort, The Life and Times of John Kelly, Tribune of the People, by J. Fairfax McLaughlin, (1885), a friend of Kelly's.³⁹ As the title implies, it is an "heroic" view of Kelly, yet the work (due to the relationship of the author to the subject) should be considered suspect. Werner's chapter on Kelly in Tammany Hall is critical, claiming that Kelly's honesty was, at best, superficial. While Kelly had emerged from the Tweed scandal unscathed, Werner noted that Kelly's term as sheriff was marked by corruption and, as Tammany Hall leader, Kelly did not end corruption. Rather, he made it more efficient.⁴⁰ A moderate view of Kelly was offered by Talcott Williams (1898), who appreciated Kelly's ability to restrain the soldiers of Tammany in the post-Tweed era, giving the organization the opportunity to regain some prestige.⁴¹

Richard Croker, Kelly's successor, has been treated favorably by his biographers. A charismatic figure who went from being a political boss to the owner of the winner of the Epsom Derby, Croker is treated evenhandedly by Lothrop Stoddard in Master of Manhattan: The Life of Rich-

ard Croker (1931).⁴² Alfred Henry Lewis (1901) idealized Croker, calling him "the most potential figure of the greatest city of the greatest state of the greatest country of the world...."⁴³ Despite such platitudes, even Croker was unimpressed with Lewis' work. According to Connable and Silverfarb, the Tammany leader was seen reading the Lewis work while sailing back to England following the 1901 elections and, after reading a few pages, is said to have thrown the book overboard.⁴⁴ While the biographies have not been critical, there is a body of literature that is not as complimentary. Much of this material focuses on the Democratic organization, under Croker, and its relationship with the "underworld." These works include "muckraking" magazine articles such as Josiah Flint's "Interviews with the Underworld," which appeared in McClure's Magazine (April 1901), and the reports of legislative committees periodically dispatched by Republican legislative leader Thomas Platt (the Fassett Investigation, 1890; Lexow Investigation, 1895; and the Mazet Investigation, 1900) to harass the Democrats.⁴⁵ Of course, these reports, while exposing corruption, must also be seen for what they were: politically-inspired efforts to discredit the Democrats.

There are few works dealing with the later bosses. Charles Murphy, leader of the Manhattan Democrats for nearly a quarter of a century, was portrayed favorably by

Nancy J. Weiss in Charles Francis Murphy, 1858-1924: Respectability and Responsibility in Tammany Politics (1968).⁴⁶ Murphy's immediate successors as leader of the Manhattan Democrats have been ignored, as the organization was overshadowed by Ed Flynn and the Bronx Democrats. Carmine DeSapio, who restored the Manhattan Democrats to some measure of its old influence in the 1950s was the subject of a biography by political journalist/public official Warren Moscow (1971), which described the rise and fall of the "last of the big time bosses."⁴⁷ DeSapio was the first boss to come to prominence during the post-war media boom and was the subject of a number of magazine articles.⁴⁸ Whether due to their weakness or to the perception that "boss politics" is a thing of the past, DeSapio's successors have, for the most part, been ignored by both scholars and mass market authors.

Traditional party organizations outside of Manhattan have not received a great deal of attention. Often, they are treated as "offshoots" of a "dominant" New York County Democratic organization, imitating (or collaborating with) the Manhattanites, especially in corrupt activity.⁴⁹ One would think, from the dearth of literature, that the 1898 consolidation of the city resulted in the end of distinct party organizations in the five counties that make up the consolidated city.

Brooklyn political literature is limited. Harold

Coffin Syrett's The City of Brooklyn, 1865-1898 (1944), described the development of Brooklyn between the end of the Civil War and consolidation.⁵⁰ It is instructive in that it presents the picture of a rapidly expanding city, and how political institutions tried to adapt to change. Syrett, relying on contemporary writings, reported on the workings of the Brooklyn Democratic machine, and its leader, Hugh McLaughlin, who headed the party from the end of the Civil War until 1903.⁵¹ Syrett also covered the Brooklyn reformers, notably Seth Low (who served as Brooklyn's mayor from 1882 to 1886 and later served the consolidated city in the same capacity) and other Democrats who, from time to time, challenged McLaughlin. Syrett contended that while Brooklyn enjoyed efficient self government after 1882, it was difficult to maintain because the segment of the electorate most sympathetic to reform (the upper middle class) could not maintain its interest in politics. As a result, Brooklyn periodically fell into the hands of the "politicians."

Another work on Brooklyn was Anna Mary Lanahan's doctoral dissertation (1976). The author recounts the efforts of the borough's Democratic and Republican organization to protect themselves from takeover by the Manhattan party organizations, as well as from progressive opposition, in the years following consolidation.⁵²

Lanahan discovered that Brooklyn's Democrats, though the majority party in the borough, often aligned themselves

with Brooklyn's Republicans and Citizens' Union forces to resist Tammany Hall and other "outsiders" who threatened Brooklyn's autonomy. Despite their efforts, Lanahan concluded that "the consolidation of Greater New York destroyed the independence of Brooklyn's political life."⁵³ According to Lanahan, the loss of Brooklyn's political independence "meant that neither the Democratic nor the Republican county leader...was free to make decisions relative to the administration of city government."⁵⁴ Lanahan's work sets forth, in detail, the split in the Brooklyn Democratic organization between McLaughlin's supporters and those of Patrick Henry McCarren, and how Charles Murphy unsuccessfully tried to capitalize on the internal split and extend Tammany's influence into Brooklyn.

There has been no significant research on Brooklyn political party organizations and their activities in the period after 1916.⁵⁵ There can be three possible explanations for this. First, Lanahan's assertion that Brooklyn politics was consumed by a larger political system may be shared by other scholars who are more interested in that larger system. Second, most of the county's political leaders, in the years following the First World War, were content to play a secondary role in New York City politics (making them less significant to those who would analyze political organizations). Finally, the social scientists who believe that local political party organizations are

"dead," may be more interested in researching "living" elements of the party.⁵⁶

While Brooklyn's literature is limited, there is even less material available on the remaining "outer boroughs." Edward J. Flynn's self-serving You're The Boss (1947) is the only work available on the Bronx Democrats.⁵⁷ There are no significant works dealing with the Queens or Staten Island Democrats or, for that matter, the Republican county organizations in New York City.⁵⁸ One finds brief treatments of these organizations in Warren Moscow (1948); Alan Ware (1985); and David R. Mayhew (1986).⁵⁹ Ware's discussion of the conflict between "regular" and "reform" Democrats in the outer boroughs is rare; much of the literature on this schism concentrates on the Manhattan Democrats.⁶⁰

The Reform Literature

George Washington Plunkitt may have referred to the reformers as "mornin' glories," most of the literature on the reform movement has been complimentary. Like the "boss" literature, much of the reform literature has been personality-oriented, often focusing on the story of a "reformer's" struggle against the "machine."

One early work was entitled, The Triumph of Reform: A History of the Great Political Revolution, November Sixth, Eighteen Hundred and Ninety Four (1895).⁶¹ The work is significant because, through its biographical index, we can learn a great deal about whom the reformers were.⁶²

Generally, the New York reformers at the end of the nineteenth century were from "good" families, and were often "Ivy League" graduates.⁶³ A comprehensive statement of the New York reform agenda was offered by Henry Bruere, founder of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, in The New City Government: A Discussion of Municipal Administration Based on a Survey of Ten Commission-Governed Cities (1912).⁶⁴ Bruere, who would serve as city chamberlain under John Purroy Mitchel, contended that the mismanagement of the city, "formerly attributed to official corruption and to popular indifference was really due to official and popular ignorance of...orderly and scientific procedures."⁶⁵ Machine politics was incompatible with Bruere's vision of local government.

The personality literature of reform stressed the battle between the "evil" politicians and the "good" reformers. These works tended towards "hero worship," lauding courageous men who took on corrupt machines, attempting to deliver the city government from the evil of political party organizations.⁶⁶

Some works do rise above this level to offer real insight into reform politics and politicians. Kurland's study of Seth Low (1971) covered Low's tenure as mayor of Brooklyn and a consolidated New York City.⁶⁷ Kurland summed up the failings of Low and other "social reformers" of the age: their inability to gain complete control over city

governments, and their unwillingness to cultivate support among the laboring classes.⁶⁸

Fiorello LaGuardia has been the subject of many studies. One of the better biographies is by Charles Garrett (1961). Garrett went beyond the caricature of LaGuardia that is presented by many of his biographers, placing the "Little Flower" in the context of the reform and machine movements in New York during the second quarter of the twentieth century. In analyzing the long-term impacts of the LaGuardia Mayoralty on city politics and government, Garrett found that while LaGuardia may have made New Yorkers less tolerant of corruption, William O'Dwyer's election in 1945 proved that the machine had not been destroyed. Garrett believed that the regular party organizations could be overtaken by reform only when the electorate became more sophisticated.⁶⁹

Other works on LaGuardia include his autobiography, The Making of An Insurgent: An Autobiography, 1882-1919 (1948), in which the Mayor recounts his early political career.⁷⁰ Lowell M. Limpus and Burr W. Leyson examined LaGuardia's career through the 1937 election (1938).⁷¹ Other works are primarily memoirs and remembrances and lack balance.⁷²

Recent Literature

The literature on party politics in the post-LaGuardia era (1945 to the present) has mirrored the mainstream

view of the discipline. With few exceptions, political party organization has been dismissed.⁷³ Instead of examining traditional local party organizations, many observers have tended to analyze other actors in the postwar period.

"Power" has been the concern of a number of social scientists. For one group of social scientists, the countervailing pluralists, the traditional political organization, if considered at all, is nothing more than one of many different groups struggling for power.⁷⁴

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, political analysts were interested in "community control," and the desire of blacks and other minorities for greater control over policy decisions affecting their communities.⁷⁵ In these works the traditional party organization is perceived of as a remnant of its former self, at best serving as an impediment to community control. Indeed, some argue that the decline of the local party organization has contributed to the "urban crisis." In his study of the Washington Heights neighborhood in upper Manhattan, Ira Katznelson found that "by the 1960s the erosion of party links, even in areas like Washington Heights that had relatively strong party institutions, was significantly facilitating the urban crisis."⁷⁶ Noting the irony, Katznelson commented that "the very triumph of reform threatened its political, business, and professional supporters."⁷⁷

The contention of many writers of this community con-

trol literature was that pluralist theory was incorrect. They concluded that the pluralist belief that blacks, like other groups, could elicit a positive response from the political system was mistaken. The system proved unsympathetic to blacks, leading Bellush and David to express concern that "the black community...is turning inward and rejecting the legitimacy of institutions and norms associated with the white world."⁷⁸

The "community control" advocated by its proponents was, in some ways, a return to the earlier age of machine politics. What was being suggested was that impersonal administration be replaced by government more personal and responsive to community concerns.⁷⁹

In the late 1970s, as a byproduct of New York's fiscal crisis, a whole field of literature developed. Some of the studies were dedicated to fixing blame.⁸⁰ Other works dealt with the structure of decision-making that evolved during the crisis.⁸¹ Newfield and DuBrul (1977) labeled this structure the "permanent government."⁸² As Ralph Nader explained in his introduction to Newfield and DuBrul's revised (1981) edition, "the permanent government...is skimming off the substantial cream from an urban area lurching from crisis to worsening crisis."⁸³ This "permanent government," they contended, really govern New York in that they control institutions, money, property, and the lawmaking process. Newfield and DuBrul, unlike most observers, re-

cognized that the political clubhouses were one of the "interlocking elites" that are part of this power network. They concluded that the organizations, though different, still endure: "Backroom clubhouse power, once dominated by Carmine DeSapio, is now dispersed among Democrats Meade Esposito, Stanley Friedman and Donald Manes, and Republicans George Clark and John Calandra."⁸⁴

Newfield and DuBrul also found that political organizations still held some power:

While the political bosses have lost much of their electing influence to the Garths and the Murdochs, they still have the institutional stamina to bend elected governments. The bosses still control patronage jobs, and influence funding, vendor, franchise, zoning, construction, and contract decisions. If you want to become a judge, or get a parking lot contract, or kill a controller's audit, or take-over a community board, you still have to see a clubhouse boss (Newfield and DuBrul 1981, 72).

An example of the power described by Newfield and DuBrul is offered by Edward I. Koch. In his autobiography (1984), Koch explained how summer jobs were handed out during his predecessor's tenure:

The jobs had been awarded from City Hall by Stanley Friedman, Mayor Beame's Deputy Mayor for Politics.... Friedman had chosen community leaders, district leaders, county leaders, members of the clergy, and he had given each of them a few dozen jobs to give away (Koch 1984, 86).

Koch claimed to have ended this practice. Yet it would be later discovered that political leaders, including Friedman, still enjoyed a great deal of power and influence. The scandals of the 1980s stimulated Shefter to analyze the re-

lationship of the political leaders to Koch in the paperback edition of a work that, when first published, had downplayed the role of the party leaders.⁸⁵ In contrast with the recent literature on political organizations (including the aforementioned Ware work), Shefter stated that the county leaders were important to the Mayor, as he needed their support to govern effectively.

The dominant view of both scholars and political journalists is that the local party organizations, for a variety of reasons, have declined in importance. In the pages that follow, I will examine the current state of local party organizations in New York City.

NOTES

¹Edward J. Flynn, You're the Boss (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 251.

²Leon Epstein, Political Parties in the American Mold (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986).

³Epstein is but one author who has observed these trends in party organization. Two other observers of centralization and professionalization were Charles H. Longley, "National Party Renewal," in Party Renewal in America, ed. Gerald M. Pomper (New York: Praeger, 1980); and John F. Bibby, "Political Parties and Federalism: The Republican National Committee Involvement in Gubernatorial and Legislative Elections," Publius 9 (Winter 1979): 229-236.

⁴Xandra Kayden and Eddie Mahe, Jr., The Party Goes On (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 183.

⁵ibid., 3 ⁶ibid., 3-4. ⁷Ware, 248-252.

⁸ibid., 143-174.

⁹Walter Dean Burnham, "The End of American Party Politics," TransAction 27 (1969): 12-22; David Broder, The Party's Over (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

¹⁰The responsible party model of government is based on the premise that political parties, if disciplined organizations, will transform their promises into policy once they attain power. We assume that party leadership, once it formulates policy, can impose its will on its members in the legislature or any other decision-making body. In 1950 the Committee on Political Parties of the American Political Science Association published Toward A More Responsible Two Party System (New York and Toronto: Rinehart and Company, 1950). Other works describing this model include Austin Ranney, The Doctrine of Responsible Party Government (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954), and two of E. E. Schattschneider's works: Party Government (New York: Rinehart, 1942), and The Struggle for Party Government (Col-

lege Park: University of Maryland Press, 1948). Schattschneider chaired the Committee on Political Parties for the APSA.

¹¹Broder, xi. ¹²ibid., 255-256.

¹³Nelson W. Polsby, The Consequences of Party Reform (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 139.

¹⁴ibid., 141.

¹⁵Herbert Croly, Progressive Democracy (New York: Macmillan, 1914), 100.

¹⁶Lincoln Steffens, The Shame of the Cities (New York: Sagamore Press, 1957; repr., New York: McClure, Phillips and Co., 1904). Another Steffens effort in this vein was The Struggle for Self-Government (New York: McClure, Phillips and Co., 1906).

¹⁷Jerome Mushkat, Tammany: The Evolution of a Political Machine, 1789-1865 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1971).

¹⁸New York Herald, 10 November 1864.

¹⁹Mushkat, 364. ²⁰Myers, vii.

²¹M. R. Werner, Tammany Hall (Garden City: Doubleday, 1931).

²²Alfred Connable and Edward Silverfarb, Tigers of Tammany (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967).

²³Quoted in ibid., 351. Connable and Silverfarb devote seven scattered pages to Costikyan's three years as leader. In contrast, they set aside an entire chapter for the first three years of J. Raymond Jones' tenure.

²⁴Edward N. Costikyan, Behind Closed Doors (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1966).

²⁵In New York politics "fusion" usually implied an alliance of parties to defeat the Democrats. This alliance usually brought together Republicans and "reformers." The last fusion candidate fitting this description was John V. Lindsay, who was elected mayor as the candidate of the Re-

publican and Liberal parties in 1965. In 1981 a new meaning was given to fusion candidacies. Mayor Edward I. Koch, a Democrat, was also nominated by the Republicans. For more on Koch's 1981 campaign, see Edward I. Koch, Mayor (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 303-324.

²⁶Costikyan, 16-17.

²⁷Matthew P. Breen, Thirty Years of New York Politics Up-To-Date (New York: John Polhemus Printing Co., 1899).

²⁸One result of Parkhurst's crusade was the empanelment, by the Republican-controlled state legislature, of a commission to investigate vice and corruption. Financed by the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York (after Governor Roswell P. Flower vetoed the appropriation), it was chaired by State Senator Clarence Lexow.

²⁹William N. Ivins, Machine Politics and Money in Elections in New York City (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1877).

³⁰While much has been written about Tammany Hall and its dominance of Democratic politics during the late nineteenth century, there were a number of opposition movements active within the party. The Irving Hall Democrats were active throughout the 1870s and 1880s, with their candidates being elected mayor in all elections held between 1876 and 1884 (though, in 1876, 1880, and 1882, Tammany supported the Irving Hall candidate). The Gold Democrats were active sporadically between 1874 and 1901, supporting Seth Low's mayoral campaigns. Tammany did not become the dominant organization until the 1890s and it wasn't until the early 1900s when Tammany became the undisputed Democratic Party organization.

³¹Ivins, 90-124.

³²Samuel J. Tilden, The New York City Ring, Its Origin, Maturity, and Fall (New York: T. Polhemus, 1873).

³³Denis Tilden Lynch, Boss Tweed, The Story of a Grim Generation (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927); Alexander B. Callow, Jr., The Tweed Ring (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966); Seymour J. Mandelbaum, Boss Tweed's New York (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), and Leo Hershkowitz, Tweed's New York: Another Look (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977).

³⁴James Bryce, The American Commonwealth (London and New York: Macmillan, 1887). For his treatment of Tweed, see 379-443.

³⁵Hershkowitz, xiii.

³⁶While not defending Tweed, a number of authors have discussed the class bias of municipal reform. Among the works addressing this issue are Judd, 87-116; Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," Social Change and Urban Politics: Readings, ed. Daniel N. Gordon (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 107-127; James Weinstein, The Corporate Ideal in the Liberal State, 1900-1918 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968); and G. William Domhoff, The Powers That Be (New York: Random House, 1978), 153-156.

³⁷Hershkowitz, xix. The legal attack upon Tweed is described on 207-344.

³⁸*ibid.*, ix.

³⁹J. Fairfax McLaughlin, The Life and Times of John Kelly, Tribune of the People (New York: American News Company, 1885).

⁴⁰Werner, 276-302.

⁴¹Talcott Williams, Tammany Hall (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898).

⁴²Lothrop Stoddard, Master of Manhattan: The Life of Richard Croker (New York: Longman's, 1931).

⁴³Alfred Henry Lewis, Richard Croker (New York: Life Publishing Co., 1901), xiv-xv.

⁴⁴Connable and Silverfarb, 227.

⁴⁵The Fassett Committee investigation of the "Big Four" (Richard Croker, James J. Martin, Hugh J. Grant, and Thomas F. Gilroy), the dominant personalities in Tammany Hall, forced Grant to admit that he had given Croker's two-year-old daughter \$10,000 following his election as sheriff in 1885 (Werner, 320-321). Despite this admission, Grant was re-elected mayor in 1890. The Lexow Commission caused Gilroy to step down as mayor and Grant was defeated in his

effort to succeed him (Werner, 349). The Mazet Commission probe was not very successful in terms of rooting out Tammany corruption in the consolidated city government.

⁴⁶Nancy J. Weiss, Charles Francis Murphy, 1858-1924: Respectability and Responsibility in Tammany Politics (Northampton, MA: Smithe College, 1968).

⁴⁷Warren Moscow, The Last of the Big Time Bosses (New York: Stein and Day, 1971).

⁴⁸Including Meg Greenfield, "The Decline and Fall of Tammany Hall," The Reporter, 15 February 1962; Robert Heilbroner, "The Smile on the Face of the Tiger," Harper's (July 1954); Joseph Alsop and Stuart Alsop, "The Tiger Who Looks Like A Banker," Saturday Evening Post, 23 April 1955; and Leo Egan, How and Why of DeSapio," The New York Times Magazine, 14 September 1958.

⁴⁹For example, the works on the "Tin Box" scandal devote a great deal of attention to Tammany's evils, while skirting the activities of the other party organizations. See Arthur Mann, LaGuardia Comes to Power, 1933 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1965); Walter Chambers, Samuel Seabury (New York: The Century Co., 1932); and Herbert Mitgang, The Man Who Rode the Tiger: The Life of Judge Samuel Seabury and the Story of the Greatest Investigation of City Corruption in this Century (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1979) for instances of this treatment.

⁵⁰Harold Coffin Syrett, The City of Brooklyn, 1865-1898 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944).

⁵¹The longest reign of any political boss.

⁵²Anna Mary Lanahan, "Brooklyn's Political Life, 1898-1916" (Ph.D. diss., Saint John's University, 1976).

⁵³ibid., 317. ⁵⁴ibid., 317.

⁵⁵The Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club, which was the base of Meade H. Esposito's power as county leader (1969-1984), was profiled in Jonathan Rieder, "Danger and Dispossession: The Making of Middle America in Canarsie, 1960-1976" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1979), 47-48.

⁵⁶For a summary and analysis of the mainstream view

of political machines, see Bertram M. Gross and Jeffrey F. Kraus, "The Political Machine is Alive and Well," Social Policy 12 (Winter 1982): 38-45.

⁵⁷Edward J. Flynn, You're the Boss (New York: Viking, 1947).

⁵⁸In view of the Republican Party's insignificant status in New York City politics, it should not astound anyone that the party's organizations have not been extensively studied.

⁵⁹Moscow, 94-101, 125-136; Ware, 47-51; and Mayhew, 32-38.

⁶⁰Ware, 109-118. Another work that touches on the organizational conflict in the outer boroughs is David M. Olson, "Toward a Typology of County Party Organizations," Southwestern Social Science Quarterly 48 (1968): 565-566, which describes the "fight to the death" between the Bronx reformers and the Buckley organization.

⁶¹E. L. Godkin, The Triumph of Reform: A History of the Great Political Revolution, November Sixth, Eighteen Hundred and Ninety Four (New York: Souvenier Publishing Co., 1895).

⁶²ibid., 372-397. ⁶³Garrett, 21.

⁶⁴Henry Bruere, The New City Government: A Discussion of Municipal Administration Based on a Survey of Ten Commission Governed Cities (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1912).

⁶⁵ibid., v.

⁶⁶These works include: Alexander Clarence Flick, Samuel Jones Tilden: A Study in Political Sagacity (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1939); John Bigelow, The Life of Samuel J. Tilden (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1895); Howard Furer, William Frederick Havemeyer: A Political Biography (New York: American Press, 1965); Lately Thomas, The Mayor Who Mastered New York: The Life and Opinions of William J. Gaynor (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1969); Louis Heaton Pink, Gaynor, The Tammany Mayor Who Swallowed the Tiger (New York: International Press, 1931); Mortimer Smith, William Jay Gaynor; Mayor of New York (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1951); William R. Hochman, "William J. Gaynor:

The Years of Fruition," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1955); and Edwin R. Lewinson, John Purroy Mitchel; The Boy Mayor of New York (New York: Astra Books, 1965). Tilden was Tweed's prosecutor, though the works on him cover his pre and post-Tweed careers. Havemeyer was a wealthy sugar merchant who opposed Tammany, and served three terms as mayor between 1845 and 1872. Gaynor was a reformer who was elected mayor (defeating William Randolph Hearst) with Tammany support in 1909. Generally, Gaynor has been treated sympathetically, with authors noting that Gaynor took on Hearst, Tammany leader Charles Murphy (Gaynor was from Brooklyn, and it was during this period that the Kings County Democrats were repelling Murphy's effort to take over their organization), removed corrupt and inefficient officeholders, and survived an assassination attempt (he died from the wound in 1913 as he was preparing to seek re-election). Thomas contended that Gaynor might have been elected president if he had survived. Mitchel was a reform mayor who, after one term, died in a training accident during the First World War.

⁶⁷Gerald Kurland, Seth Low (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971).

⁶⁸ibid., chapter eight. ⁶⁹Garrett, 332-336.

⁷⁰Fiorello LaGuardia, The Making of An Insurgent: An Autobiography, 1882-1919 (New York: Lippincott, 1948).

⁷¹Lowell M. Limpus and Burr W. Leyson, This Man LaGuardia (New York: Dutton, 1938).

⁷²For example, Jay Franklin, LaGuardia; A Biography (New York: Modern Age Books, 1937); Ernest Cuneo, Life With Fiorello (New York: Macmillan, 1955); Robert Moses, LaGuardia: A Salute and a Memoir (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957); William H. Allen, Why Tammanies Revive: LaGuardia's Mis-guard (New York: Institute for Public Service, 1937); Bella Rodman, Fiorello LaGuardia (New York: Hill and Wang, 1962); and William Manners, Patience and Fortitude: Fiorello LaGuardia (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976).

⁷³Aside from the Adler and Blank, Ware, and Mayhew works already cited, few works have concentrated on party organization during the period.

⁷⁴Wallace S. Sayre and Herbert Kaufman, Governing New York City (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1960). Another interesting work is Theodore Lowi, At the Pleasure

of the Mayor (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964). Lowi found that by 1958 mayors had to strike a reform posture; that is, appointing competent administrators rather than party operatives or ethnic group representatives (207). Later, Lowi would conclude that Mayor Robert F. Wagner attempted, following his break with DeSapio, to establish a new political organization based on support from reform Democrats and municipal employee unions. See Lowi, "Machine Politics--Old and New," The Public Interest 9 (Fall 1967): 83-92.

⁷⁵Works in this vein specific to New York City were Race and Politics in New York City, eds. Jewel Bellush and Stephen M. David (New York: Praeger, 1971) and Ira Katznelson, City Trenches (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

⁷⁶Katznelson, 129. ⁷⁷ibid., 129.

⁷⁸Bellush and David, 20.

⁷⁹For a discussion of community control as a response to reform, see John J. Harrigan, Political Change in the Metropolis, 2d ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1981), 175-191.

⁸⁰This literature included Ken Auletta, The Streets Were Paved With Gold (New York: Random House, 1975); Fred Ferretti, The Year The Big Apple Went Bust (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1976); Jack Newfield and Paul DuBrul, The Permanent Government (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1981); Congress, Congressional Budget Office, New York City's Fiscal Crisis: Its Origins, Potential Repercussions, and Some Alternative Policy Responses, Background Paper Number One (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975); and The Fiscal Crisis of American Cities, eds. Roger E. Alcala and David Mermelstein (New York: Vintage, 1977).

⁸¹Notably Robert W. Bailey, The Crisis Regime (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).

⁸²Jack Newfield and Paul DuBrul, The Abuse of Power (New York: Viking, 1977), 75.

⁸³Newfield and DuBrul, The Permanent Government, xiii.

⁸⁴ibid., 72. ⁸⁵Shefter, 1987, xi-xx.

CHAPTER 5

THE MACHINE'S BACKBONE: THE CLUBS

You join your local club. You work for your local leader. And you do alot of work and shut up.

John Sabini¹

John Sabini was speaking about the political clubhouse in Queens County in 1984. The words seem out of place in an era when television, direct mail, and radio can reach virtually everyone, political clubs and the "regular" party organizations no longer hold a monopoly on getting out the vote.² In fact, in 1967, Lowi concluded that "by 1961 the clubhouses and districts had been replaced almost altogether by new types of units."³ Yet, almost twenty years after Lowi's observation, there is literally no neighborhood in the city without a political club. Indeed, despite their diminished capacity, the neighborhood political club persists in New York City. The status of the clubs in the political process, the functions of the clubs, and the size and durability of the neighborhood clubhouse shall be discussed in this chapter.

The Legal Status of Clubs

Essentially, the legal status of the clubs remains unchanged since Peel's 1935 study. According to Peel, "the

functional primary unit of political regimentation is the club, not provided for either by state law or by party rule, but universally acknowledged as the unit-cell in the organization of the major political parties."⁴

In short, the political clubhouse is a voluntary organization whose members identify with a particular political party or, in the case of Democrats in New York, a party faction. Like other voluntary organizations, political clubs have officers, by-laws, meetings, and special events (annual dinners, induction ceremonies, picnics). But a political club, unlike many other voluntary associations, has a partisan political purpose. As Adler and Blank noted, "the manifest business of the political club is to work in behalf of its party, by recruiting and supporting candidates for public and party office."⁵ To attain these goals, political clubs have, historically, engaged in a number of activities that have included, but have not been limited to, campaign mobilization, recruitment and promotion, community services, and social activities.

Club Functions

Campaign Mobilization

Historically, as Ware has noted, the political clubs provided the "shock troops" for both local and national political campaigns.⁶ Donald Manes called the clubs the

"backbone" of party organization.⁷ This "backbone" consisted of the district leaders, political club officers and club members who volunteered to lick postage stamps, stuff envelopes, carry petitions, and perform all of the other mundane tasks associated with campaign mobilization.

One cannot underestimate the importance of these efforts. While television, radio, and other mass communication techniques have become prevalent in city, statewide, and federal campaigns, the sheer cost of such efforts (not to mention the "waste" of reaching thousands, if not millions of people living outside the electoral district) preclude their use in all but a few sub-local campaigns.⁸ At the sub-local level, the "old-fashioned" campaign mobilization techniques are still common and the clubs, in both primary and general election campaigns, still contribute to getting out the vote.

Recruitment and Promotion

Another long-standing function of the clubs has been to serve as a point of entry for those interested in political careers. Geraldine A. Ferraro, the 1984 Democratic Vice Presidential candidate, began her political career in 1974 when she joined the regular Democratic club in Queens County's Thirty-First Assembly District.⁹ Mildred Snyder, the club's female district leader in

1974, later related that Ms. Ferraro "said she wanted to get into politics."¹⁰ According to Snyder, Ferraro "started out like we all do, ringing doorbells with the candidates, going to party functions, addressing envelopes."¹¹ While Ferraro's rapid rise was atypical, the organization has provided entree for aspiring politicians and others seeking to further their careers. Historically, clubs offered a "ladder of opportunity." The initial rung might be as an election inspector or a seat on a community planning board or local school board, and might lead to nominations for public office, recommendations for employment, or a judgeship. Advancement was, traditionally, a reward for service to the club. However, as we shall see, the "reward" system is less rewarding than in the past.

Community Service

Community service is one of the oldest clubhouse functions. Much has been written about the "social service" role of the political machine.¹² While the development of government-provided social services has reduced the club's role, clubs still play some part in service delivery. Today, when clubs provide services, they are more likely to act as a referral agency, directing constituents to government agencies, rather than providing the actual service. The New York Times offered, on 8 June 1976, the following account of a "day in the life" of a Queens district leader:

For men and their sons he found jobs--either part time

or full time. He referred a woman and her mother to a lawyer of the club for free help in a landlord dispute. He promised to help a civilian in the Police Department to get work on a midnight shift so he could be with an ailing father during the day.

The rationale for providing these services today is the same as it was almost a century ago: provide assistance that the voters will remember on election day. The service orientation has given the clubs more than just a political role in their neighborhood. As George A. McCracken, the subject of the aforementioned "day in the life" newspaper feature, explained;

...a district leader is not only a political leader, he's a community leader. That's politics.

Social Activities

Historically, the clubs also offered their communities social activities. As Judd pointed out, the nineteenth century political clubhouses (which were often saloons) were centers of activity, "the Democratic club being a place where a person could get up a card game, play checkers, or just talk."¹³

During the 1930s, Peel found that the clubs were an important center of community social activity. In Peel's words,

The most popular and, one is inclined to believe, effective activity of the political clubs is that which is ordinarily known as 'social.' Nearly every conceivable type of this kind of activity is sponsored by the clubs, but certain distinctive forms of diversion attract their devotees in the various districts. The wealthier sections of the city support entertainments which are of high grade, costly and extraordinarily

well-managed. In the poorer sections, the monetary outlay for social purposes is modest (Peel 1935, 160).

Peel concluded that the clubs sponsored social events in order to attract and maintain political support.¹⁴ The activities of the clubs were varied: dinners; ethnic festivals; variety shows; movies; country outings; athletic teams; and dances were sponsored by the clubs. Peel cited Henry Wallman's remarks for the clubs' interest in children:

Isn't it lovely for the Republican Club for the Fifteenth Assembly District to give these May Parties every year for the fine children of the District, who, when they grow old enough to vote will become staunch and ardent Republicans--members of the best political party that the world has ever known (Peel 1935, 172).

Forty years later, Adler and Blank reported that, "as in the time of Peel's study, a substantial proportion of club discussion, as well as actual club activity, is social in nature."¹⁵ What made Adler and Blank's report more interesting is that the clubs, despite "competition" from other social groups and activities, still saw the need to sponsor social events.¹⁶ Peter R. Gluck explained, in his 1970 doctoral dissertation, the need of the clubs to maintain a balance between two areas of activity: "one in which it operates primarily as an agent in the political process and a second in which it operates as an agent in the individual-oriented satisfaction fulfillment process."¹⁷

The Clubs Today

Number and Distribution of Clubs

In Peel's study he found 1,177 political clubs in New York City.¹⁸ In 1975, Adler and Blank identified approximately three hundred clubs, with 268 of those continuously functioning.¹⁹ In the present study, I have been able to find three hundred clubs. While Peel identified a number of "minor party" clubs, forty years later, Adler and Blank found twenty-seven Conservative clubs and one Liberal Party club.²⁰ I have found ten Conservative Party clubs. While there may be additional minor party clubs presently functioning, I would suggest that they are small, meet in the homes of members (rather than in a clubhouse or some other regular meeting place) and are not continuously functioning. It should be noted that two of the state's "permanent" political parties, the Right to Life and Liberal parties, appear to have no active clubs.²¹ In the case of the Liberals, Costikyan noted that "by 1965, the Liberal Party no longer had district clubs; district leaders, or election district captains in most parts of New York City."²² A member of the Liberal Party staff, in a 1984 interview, conceded that the "neighborhood clubs" had disappeared due to declining party enrollment and the "graying" of the party's membership.²³ In the case of the Right to Life Party, it has never established neighborhood

political clubs.

The geographic distribution of clubs has changed somewhat since the Adler and Blank study. While Queens contained more political clubs than any other county in both the Peel and Adler/Blank studies, my finding was that Queens had been surpassed by New York County (Manhattan). One factor for the increase (from sixty-eight to eighty-seven clubs) in the number of Manhattan-based clubs may be that both the Republican and Democratic county organizations have reorganized, further dividing the assembly districts into parts for the purposes of party organization (a practice once restricted to Queens).²⁴ In Richmond County (Staten Island) the number of political clubs has more than doubled (ten to twenty-two) in the last twelve years, most likely a reflection of the Island's population growth during the last decade.²⁵

Size of Clubs

As Ware observed, "the circumstantial evidence of a dramatic reduction in the total number of active club members is overwhelming."²⁶ In a mail questionnaire distributed for this study (which eighty-three of three hundred clubs responded to), the largest responding club claimed a membership of eight hundred.²⁷ Only two other clubs reported membership exceeding five hundred.

As shall be seen later in some detail, the decline in club membership has impacted on the organization's cam-

Table 1.--Number of Political Clubs, By County

County	1935	1975	1984
Bronx.....	140	35	42
Kings.....	360	73	66
New York.....	220	68	87
Queens.....	404	77	83
Richmond.....	56	10	22
Total	1,180	263	300

Source: For 1935 and 1975 data, Norman M. Adler and Blanche Davis Blank, Political Clubs in New York (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975), p. 34. 1984 data from research by the author.

campaign mobilization efforts. Even the largest clubs are having difficulty finding enough volunteers to carry petitions. Ware, in his study of Democratic party organization in New York, Denver, and the San Francisco Bay Area, reported the following symptom of membership decline during New York's 1977 primary election:

Mayor Beame was supported by most of the regular organizations, and the Bronx county party was one which had remained largely unpenetrated by reformers, despite the electoral success of non-regular candidates in the borough. However, Beame had to pay \$10,000 to a non-party organization to obtain a 'prime voter' list—precisely the kind of information which in the past Democratic captains were supposed to have readily a-

available. The Bronx party simply did not have a sufficiently comprehensive or grassroots organization to provide even basic electoral information (Ware 1985, 90).

If anything, the situation has deteriorated since 1977. Where clubs had once claimed membership of over one thousand members, five hundred has become a more likely (and, perhaps, inflated) claim.²⁸

Durability of Clubs

The Adler/Blank study was the first to attempt to determine the durability of political clubs in New York City. They concluded that "while clubs come and go, the majority of New York City clubs are extremely durable."²⁹ While their general finding remains true, there are factors that affect a club's durability.

The most significant factor may be the loss of party and/or public office by the club's leaders. The defeat of a club's leaders by insurgents can lead to a club's demise. Defeat often means being cut-off from the regular party organization, and the (albeit limited) patronage and political influence that is necessary to maintain the club. Insurgents, once in party or public office, will attempt to usurp the established club, and supplant it as the leading club in the community. One illustration of this process is the death of Brooklyn's Madison Democratic Club.

In 1974 the Madison Democratic Club was described as

"the most powerful political club in the state."³⁰ Its leader, Stanley Steingut, was Speaker of the State Assembly (as his father, Irwin, had been before him).³¹ His son, Robert, was a member of the New York City Council.³² In addition, the club's members included the Mayor, the Kings County District Attorney, and the State Comptroller.³³

In 1978, an insurgent club, the New Way Democratic Club, put forward its own slate of candidates for the male and female assembly district leaderships and for the nomination for state assemblymember in the Forty-First Assembly District. In the primary, the elder Steingut lost both his district leadership and re-nomination for the assembly seat.³⁴ By August of 1979, less than a year after Steingut was defeated, the club was disbanded and the clubhouse was sold for use as a hardware store.³⁵

How did a club, once considered the most powerful in the state, fade so quickly? Steingut's loss of public and party office was a severe blow to the club. The jobs (especially those on the state assembly payroll controlled by Steingut), prestige and favors that had flowed for years to club members was abruptly cut-off. Some members lost interest. Others joined the New Way Club. The remaining members, seeing that keeping the club alive without its former influence and a declining membership would be difficult, disbanded. In addition to the Madison Club, I es-

timate there were at least eight other clubs that closed down in the years since the Adler/Blank study following the loss of district leaderships and/or assembly nominations in party primaries.³⁶

Another variable that may affect club durability is reapportionment. The assembly district is the basic unit of political organization in New York State. The legislative reapportionment following the decennial census disrupts existing alignments. In some instances an affected club attempts to conform to the new district lines.³⁷ In other cases, the club may split into two or more clubs, with each splinter club becoming the regular organization in each of the newly created districts.³⁸ Finally, there might be a merger of clubs when they are placed in the same assembly district.³⁹

Changing neighborhood demographics may affect a political club's durability. As neighborhoods change, clubs face a dilemma: stay and serve a dwindling constituency (while trying to bring the new constituency into the club), or follow their long-time members out of the neighborhood. Typical of the latter course of action was the aforementioned Madison Club. The club's historical base of support had been the white, working class (mostly Jewish) families that lived in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section. As its core constituency moved, so did the club. From Bedford-Stuyvesant the club moved first to Crown Heights, and

eventually, to East Flatbush.⁴⁰

In some cases, a club is formed specifically to challenge an existing club (sometimes, the new club is a "break-off" from the older club). The continued operation of the new club depends on its ability to defeat the established club in primary elections.⁴¹ Clubs that defeat established clubs are likely to remain in operation while those that fail are less likely to survive.

Despite the destabilizing factors, many political clubs endure. Over half (forty-eight) of the eighty-three clubs responding to the aforementioned mail survey were at least fifteen years old, the oldest of which was 104 years old.⁴² In their study, Adler and Blank found that forty-five percent of the clubs operating were at least sixteen years old.⁴³

The Club and the Party Organization

As stated at the outset of the chapter, the club is the "backbone" of the party organization. Both the Republican and Democratic parties have clubs in virtually every assembly district. These clubs have served as the "grassroots" of the parties. Indeed, the clubs' relationship to the party organization has changed little (at least on the surface) since Peel's time. Peel's description of this relationship remains, for the most part, accurate today:

Within each county (New York's boroughs are counties as well) there are a number of assembly districts presided over by an Assembly District Leader. The leader's headquarters are at the office of the regular organization political club....In each county there is a county leader, chosen by the majority vote of the members of the executive district committees (the district leaders). To him is delegated the power to make decisions concerning matters of party or public policy, the latter function being of vast importance when the party controls the city administration (Peel 1935, 65).

While the basic structure remains unchanged, there have been some changes within the organization. The assembly district leaders still sit as the county executive committee. However, the leaders are now elected by party members voting in primaries rather than by the county committeemembers of the assembly district. Another change since Peel's time is the eclipse, in some areas, of the regular Democratic organization clubs by insurgent clubs and leaders. "Reform" has been a major force in the Democratic Party, with reform clubs becoming constituent parts of the regular party organizations by defeating the established clubs in primary elections. By far, the victory of the reformers has been most pronounced in Manhattan. In 1984, forty-one of the seventy-four male and female assembly district leaders in Manhattan were members of clubs affiliated with the New Democratic Coalition (the "umbrella" of reform Democratic clubs in New York State).⁴⁴

In the other four counties the reform Democratic movement has not been as successful, never playing a signi-

ficant role in the selection of a county leader.

The Organization and the "New" Black Clubs

The "new" black clubs I am referring to are those clubs, in black areas, that have rejected a "close" relationship with the white party establishment. The objective of these newer clubs is empowerment for their communities rather than cooperation (though such cooperation, when beneficial, is not rejected) with the party organization (which had been the objective of some of the older black clubs).

Actually, "independent" black politicians within the Democratic Party are not a new phenomenon. As Charles Hamilton said of Adam Clayton Powell, "because of the fragmented nature of New York City politics, Powell could maintain his Abyssinian base pretty much independently of the city machine."⁴⁵ Powell, who dominated Harlem politics during the 1940s and 1950s, was one of many black ministers who have played a role in politics in the black community.⁴⁶

The newer minority clubs, in many cases, emerged from federally-financed community groups that were created during the "Great Society" era.⁴⁷ During the 1970s the leading black political leaders were Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton (who was also a Harlem district leader); Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, and Samuel Wright, a district leader who chaired the community school board in Ocean Hill-Brownsville and served on the city council.

Chisholm, who represented the area in Congress, and Wright battled, throughout the period, for political dominance in the black neighborhoods of Brooklyn.⁴⁸

By the end of the decade, the black community faced what some perceived as a political crisis. Sutton had unsuccessfully sought the Democratic mayoral nomination in 1977 and his defeat left the Board of Estimate without minority representation.⁴⁹ Charles Hamilton, examining Sutton's loss, concluded that the "Great Society" funded organizations, rather than empowering the black community, had "depoliticized" it.⁵⁰ Hamilton described the black clubs' political activity of the time as that of clubs engaging in a "patron-recipient" relationship. However, unlike the bosses of a prior age, the black leaders had been unable to use their political influence in the larger polity because the city's blacks (their recipients) failed to vote in significant numbers.⁵¹ The inability (or unwillingness) of the black clubs to mobilize the black community, and their continued scramble for what Hamilton called "soft-money, funded programs" had placed blacks in a "subordinated" relationship to the dominant (white) political power structure.⁵²

Into this void have entered a group of black political activists, notably Al Vann, Roger Green, and Hilton Clark, who differ from the older generation of black political leaders. While the older leaders had been willing to

deal with the white-dominated party organizations on patronage and other political matters, this new generation of leaders has been less willing to submit to the white party leadership. Roger Green, elected to the state assembly with Vann's help, described his entrance into the "old" black clubhouse of the "old" black clubhouse of the early 1970s:

I went down to Sam Wright's political club, in Brownsville....And it was one of those smoke filled rooms you always hear about....There was an open bar, and people were wearing diamond pinkie rings and white patent-leather shoes. On the wall, there were two big pictures of white people: Sebastian Leone, the borough president, and Meade Esposito, the Democratic-party leader. I bumped into a friend of mine from high school and asked, 'What's this all about?' And he said, "Jobs. You work for them - grease some palms and they take care of you!" (New York Magazine, 10 October 1983, 39).

Vann, who was first elected to the state assembly in 1974, and his allies contend that they wish to reform the black club system in Brooklyn (where Vann's Vanguard Urban Improvement Association has served as his power base) and the other boroughs. However, black leaders opposed to Vann (and allied with the white regular organization) claim that Vann is actually after access to political power. In the same New York Magazine feature that Green was interviewed for, City Councilmember Mary Pinkett, a survivor of Vann-backed challenges, asked,

What are the issues? Where are the issues? I defy him to name one vote I've cast against the interests of black people. I think this 'reform' business is garbage. What we're really talking about is power. Who's going to control.

Another Vann opponent, Carl Butler, contended that Vann was seeking to become another "old-fashioned" politi-

cal boss:

Al is always talking about the machine. He's not trying to put in a machine of his own?....I've fought against the machine a lot more than he has. He deals with the machine all the time up in Albany. He's (Assembly Speaker Stanley) Fink's big buddy. The thing about Al is that he shows one face to whites and another to blacks (New York Magazine, 10 October 1983, 44).

Vann's objective has been to "increase our political power base."⁵³ During the 1980s there have been mixed results. Vann's organization played an important role in Jesse Jackson's 1984 New York primary campaign.⁵⁴ He supported Elizabeth Holtzman in her successful campaign for Kings County District Attorney against an organization-backed candidate in 1981. And he was instrumental in Roger Green's election to the state assembly, and of Major Owens and Edolphus Towns to the United States House of Representatives.⁵⁵ However, Vann has been less successful in unseating some "old line" blacks and, because of infighting between black Democratic factions, some white incumbents have survived in districts where an overwhelming majority of the population is black.⁵⁶ In 1985, Vann suffered two serious setbacks. First, he failed to convince his allies in the Coalition for a Just New York to endorse the candidacy of Herman Badillo and resigned as the group's chair after it endorsed the mayoral candidacy of Herman D. Farrell.⁵⁷ Also, his own campaign for the Democratic nomination for Brooklyn Borough President was unsuccessful.⁵⁸ In 1986, Vann lost his district leadership through a petition challenge. In the general election, Vann and Green (his

nominating petitions were also successfully challenged) were re-elected to the assembly as Liberal Party candidates, indicating that their central Brooklyn political organization, despite setbacks, was still viable.⁵⁹ What role Vann might play in the 1988 and 1989 elections remains to be seen.⁶⁰

The Strength of the Backbone

While the organizational scheme described by Peel has remained relatively unchanged, there have been some cracks in the "backbone" of the party organization. Not all "regular" clubs are solidly behind the regular party organizations. Some are "reform" clubs that have supplanted the old regular clubs in their neighborhoods. Others are black clubs whose leaders have an agenda that diverges (and might conflict) from the white political leadership's position.

Yet, despite change, the clubs still attempt (to some degree) to perform for the party organizations the same functions that clubs performed in Peel's day. There are fewer clubs than in Peel's time, and they lack the comprehensive grassroots organization of clubs in that era. This has contributed to the continued weakness of the party organizations in both political and governmental activity.

In the next chapter I will discuss, in more detail,

the contemporary activities of the political clubs and their continuing role in the electoral process and community-based decision-making.

NOTES

¹Quoted in The Washington Post, 29 August 1984. John Sabini was briefly the leader of the Queens County Democrats following Donald Manes' suicide in 1986.

²See Doris A. Graber, Mass Media and American Politics (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1980) and Larry J. Sabato, The Rise of Political Consultants (New York: Basic Books, 1981) for discussions of the "new" politics and its reliance on modern techniques of voter mobilization.

³Theodore Lowi, "Machine Politics: Old and New," The Public Interest 9 (Fall 1967): 90.

⁴Peel, 61-62. ⁵Adler and Blank, 4.

⁶Ware, 70-106.

⁷Quoted in New York Newsday, 1 August 1984.

⁸During the 1984 elections there were extensive media campaigns in two congressional districts. In the "Silk Stocking" District on Manhattan's East Side, both Manhattan Borough President Andrew Stein and Betty Lall, who had been the Democratic nominee in 1982, advertised on radio. In the Fourteenth Congressional District (Staten Island and the Bay Ridge and Bensonhurst neighborhoods in Brooklyn), Terence Benbow, running against a candidate supported by the regular Democratic organization, aired radio spots. Despite the advertisements, Benbow lost the primary.

⁹At that time, Ms. Ferraro was hired as an assistant district attorney by her cousin, Queens District Attorney Nicholas Ferraro. These posts are often patronage jobs offered to loyal party workers (or their children) upon graduation from law school.

¹⁰New York Newsday, 1 August 1984.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² See Alexander B. Callow, Jr., The City Boss in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Dennis R. Judd, The Politics of American Cities (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979); Robert K. Merton, Social Structure and Social Theory (New York: The Free Press, 1957); and J. T. Salter, Boss Rule: Portraits in City Politics (New York: Whittlesey House, 1957).

¹³ Judd, 63. ¹⁴ Peel, 190. ¹⁵ Adler and Blank, 133.

¹⁶ Adler and Blank found that the following events were held by the clubs: dances, sixty-one percent; dinner parties, sixty-one percent; card parties, thirty-four percent; picnics, twenty-nine percent; participant sports, nine percent. Other club-sponsored events included Christmas Parties; Las Vegas Nights; art auctions; vacation trips; and an "outing" to Albany to see the workings of state government. Data found in Adler and Blank, 133-134.

¹⁷ Peter R. Gluck, "Politics at the Grassroots: The Inducements and Rewards of Party Participation," (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Buffalo, 1970), 21.

¹⁸ Peel, 334. ¹⁹ Adler and Blank, 32. ²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ The Right to Life Party has never tried to establish a network of clubs. The Liberal club network has evaporated.

²² Costikyan, 45.

²³ Patrick Giacagnove, Liberal Party Assistant Executive Director, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 14 August 1984. Between 1981 and 1986, Liberal Party enrollment in New York City declined by over seven thousand (30,441 to 23,232). Enrollment data supplied by the New York State Board of Elections.

²⁴ Both the Republicans and Democrats have divided Manhattan assembly districts into parts for the purpose of party organization. The Democrats have divided four districts into four parts (the Sixty-Third, Sixty-Seventh, Sixty-Eighth, and Seventieth), with most of the remaining districts having been divided into three parts. The Republicans have split three districts (the Sixty-Third, Sixty-Fifth, and Sixty-Eighth) into four parts. Only the

Sixty-Sixth Assembly District remains a whole district for party organization in the Republican Party (all assembly districts in Manhattan have been subdivided by the Democrats).

²⁵Staten Island was the only borough where the population grew between 1970 and 1980. According to the United States Census Bureau, Staten Island's population increased from 295,443 (1970) to 352,121 (1980).

²⁶Ware, 90.

²⁷The Flatbush Democratic Club (Forty-Fourth Assembly District) reported a membership of eight hundred. The female co-leader of the club in 1984 was Joni Yoswein, whose uncle, Leonard E. Yoswein, was the Administrative Judge of the New York State Supreme Court, Second Judicial District (Brooklyn and Staten Island).

²⁸Actually, of the clubs responding to my mail survey (n=eighty-three), they reported the following membership size: fewer than fifty members, four; fifty to one hundred members, thirteen; 101-250 members, twenty-six; 251-500 members, thirty-seven; over five hundred members, three.

²⁹Adler and Blank, 36.

³⁰The New York Times, 8 November 1974.

³¹Irwin Steingut, Speaker of the State Assembly and leader of the Madison Club, died in 1952. He was succeeded in the assembly and as district leader by his son.

³²A councilmember-at-large, Robert Steingut continued as a member of the council until 1981, when the at-large seats were eliminated through a revision of the City Charter. He was then appointed Chairperson of the New York State Workers' Compensation Board.

³³Abraham D. Beame, Eugene Gold, and Arthur Levitt. Other club members, in 1974, included Nathaniel Sobel, Kings County Surrogate; State Supreme Court Justice Murray T. Feiden; Civil Court Judge Anthony Jordan, and State Senator A. Frederick Meyerson.

³⁴Carl Garritani defeated Steingut for the district leadership and Murray Weinstein was nominated to run for

state assembly. Weinstein was a stand-in candidate for his daughter, Helene, whose candidacy had been successfully challenged by Steingut, as she did not live within the boundaries of the district. After serving one term, Murray Weinstein stepped aside and was succeeded by his daughter in 1980.

³⁵The New York Times, 10 August 1979.

³⁶Based on responses to mail survey conducted by author, and on additional research.

³⁷For example, the Fifty-Seventh Assembly District Regular Republican Club has adapted twice to reapportionment. Founded in 1969 in the Fifty-Fourth Assembly District, the club moved its clubhouse after the 1970 reapportionment into the Fifty-Third Assembly District. Following the 1980 reapportionment the club moved again, becoming the Republican organization for the Fifty-Seventh Assembly District. Data provided by Francis J. Voyticky, male district leader, Fifty-Seventh Assembly District, in a mail survey questionnaire completed in June of 1984.

³⁸Following the 1970 reapportionment the Riverside Democrats (Manhattan) splintered into two clubs: The Three Parks Independent Democrats and the Broadway Democrats.

³⁹The Liberty Conservative Club is the product of a merger of two Conservative Party clubs that had functioned before the 1970 reapportionment. The merged club operated in the Thirty-Eighth Assembly District.

⁴⁰The New York Times, 10 August 1979.

⁴¹I identified two insurgent clubs that were established prior to the 1984 primaries. The Gateway Democratic Club was created to challenge the Harry S. Truman Democratic Club in Brooklyn's Forty-First Assembly District. Its founder, Alan Maisel, was chairperson of Community School Board Twenty-Two, and was supported by Anthony Genovesi (who was challenging Howard Golden for the county leadership). Maisel lost and the club disbanded shortly thereafter. The second club, the Village Reform Democratic Club, was set up by John LoCicero, Mayor Koch's chief political operative. Koch, once a member of the Village Independent Democrats, had a falling out with the club when it opposed his re-election in 1981. LoCicero's club won a state committee seat and has continued to operate in Greenwich Village as a rival to the Village Independent Democrats.

⁴²Manhattan's Ivy Republican Club was founded in 1880 to support the Vice Presidential candidacy of Chester Alan Arthur (the chair of the New York County Republican organization). According to Bill Eakins, the male leader of the club in 1984, it is the last surviving club of those founded in 1880 to support the Garfield-Arthur ticket (response to mail survey questionnaire, June 1984).

⁴³Adler and Blank, 37.

⁴⁴Data supplied by the New York County Democratic organization.

⁴⁵Charles V. Hamilton, The Black Preacher in America (New York: Morrow, 1978), 112.

⁴⁶For a discussion of the role of black ministers see, in addition to Hamilton, Hart M. Nelsen and Anne Kusener Nelsen, Black Church in the Sixties (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1975).

⁴⁷Charles V. Hamilton, "The Patron-Recipient Relationship and Minority Politics in New York City," Political Science Quarterly 94 (Summer 1979): 211. For a discussion of the "Great Society" and its impact on black politics from another perspective, see J. David Greenstone and Paul E. Peterson, Race and Authority in Urban Politics (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1973).

⁴⁸Chisholm, who had been the first black to seek a major party's presidential nomination in 1972, and her supporters were critical of Wright's use of federal anti-poverty funds (through the anti-poverty organizations he controlled) for political favors. In 1976, Chisholm handily defeated Wright in the Democratic primary.

⁴⁹The Board of Estimate is composed of the Mayor (who chairs the body), City Comptroller, the President of the City Council, and the five borough presidents. Sutton's defeat meant that for the first time since 1954, there would be no elected black or hispanic on the New York City Board of Estimate.

⁵⁰Hamilton, 1979: 211-217. ⁵¹ibid., 218-224.

⁵²ibid., 212.

⁵³New York Magazine, 10 October 1983, 44.

⁵⁴Vann managed Jackson's campaign in New York State.

⁵⁵Vann also helped galvanize black support for Mario Cuomo in the 1982 primary when Cuomo defeated Koch for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination.

⁵⁶For example, State Senator Martin Markowitz has been able to retain his seat as Vann and his opponents have been unable to unite to defeat him.

⁵⁷Vann had wanted to support Badillo, a Puerto Rican. However, the black members of the coalition wanted to endorse a black. Farrell had not even been a candidate before his selection by the group.

⁵⁸Vann was defeated by the incumbent, Howard Golden. Golden received forty-seven percent of the vote while Vann finished third with twenty-two percent. The runner-up was Martin Markowitz, who was supported by Golden rival Anthony Genovesi, who received twenty-four percent. A fourth candidate, former Park Slope Assemblymember Joseph Ferris, had seven percent. Source of data: The Phoenix, 12 September 1985.

⁵⁹Both Vann and Green were removed from their respective Democratic primaries for technical defects in their nominating petitions. Running as Liberal Party candidates, they defeated the Democratic Party nominees in the general elections.

⁶⁰Indeed, following the 1986 election, Vann suggested that he might leave politics and "become a college professor" (New York Newsday, 6 November 1986).

CHAPTER 6

THE "ORGANIZATION" AND THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

Defendants maintain an operation, by which they extract political favors from each other in order to keep themselves in jobs and power. One of these favors, to accomplish which everyone pitched in, was to deny plaintiff Weiss the designation and thus to insure the defendant incumbent Orlow's seat.

Legal brief filed by Aaron Weiss¹

As stated earlier, the primary objective of political party organizations has, historically, been to control nominations for public office and to capture public office in order to attain and enhance their political power.² It is through their recruitment and promotion, and campaign mobilization activities that the clubs (and the major party organizations) have traditionally obtained and maintained political power. However, in recent years, their ability to maintain their influence has declined.

The Electoral Process and the Organization

Like other states, New York enacted legislation designed to limit the control that political party organizations held over nominations for public office. The current law governing the nominations process dates (with amendments) from 1913. Howard A. Scarrow explained that the law, ...was designed to even the chances for all contenders;

all contenders were now required to gather petitions in order to have their names appear on the primary ballot; the number of signatures required on the petitions was made reasonable; the names of the candidates would appear on the ballot with no indication of which contender (if any) might be favored by the organization; and the organization could spend no money on behalf of any of them (Scarrows 1983, 34-35).

However, while the law appears to be evenhanded, it has historically given organization-backed candidates the advantage. First, while candidates cannot be designated as the organization candidate on the primary ballot, the law does not bar the parties from endorsing candidates. Party organizations routinely endorse candidates.³

Second, the endorsement of the party organization has been an asset to candidates seeking nomination because of the resources required for a primary campaign. A critical need of any candidate seeking nomination are people who will carry his petitions and gather the requisite number of valid signatures from party members.⁴ Here, clubs and party organizations have historically played an important role. Petitions have usually been carried by club members (as the clubs have provided a reservoir of "qualified" subscribing witnesses), who canvassed door-to-door, armed with lists of party members. These subscribing witnesses were volunteers, who often knew the people they were soliciting. Insurgent candidates have faced the problem of developing an organization that can get them on the ballot. Unless they can plug into an existing organization, they might have to develop their own network of volunteers or pay people to act as sub-

scribing witnesses.⁵

Another advantage the regular organization has had concerning ballot access are the resources these groups can devote to challenging insurgent candidates. Historically, the New York City Board of Elections and the state courts have strictly enforced the election law. As Scarrow observed, "petitions have been invalidated for such seemingly trivial irregularities as the signee omitting his middle initial, the use of 'St.' instead of 'Street,' or because a petition lacked a page number."⁶ The regular party organizations historically have possessed the manpower required to mount challenges. People are needed to compare petition signatures with those on "buff cards."⁷ Lawyers, who are often on the public payroll, file the challenges and argue their merits before the Board of Elections and, if necessary, in court.⁸ The challenge process is explained by Louis Hernandez:

I'm going to look at his petitions....There's a lot of little technicalities that you can look at in a petition and those technicalities can knock a guy out.... Any technical mistake and out they go (The New York Daily News, 30 July 1984).

The candidate lacking an organization not only faces difficulties gathering signatures, but will then have to defend them. The case of Aaron Weiss, a Queens insurgent, is instructive. When he filed petitions to seek the Democratic city councilmember-at-large nomination in 1981, among those working on the challenge against Weiss was a

member of the Queens County Public Administrator's legal staff and three members of the state assembly speaker's staff.⁹

Another problem, according to Weiss, faced by an insurgent, is that many of those who rule on the validity of petitions are beholden to the regular party organizations. The Board of Elections staff are tied to the party organizations (the Board is one of the few city agencies left where virtually all employees are patronage appointees), and the judges who hear appeals of Board of Elections decisions have often obtained their judgeship through a selection process dominated by the party organizations. To illustrate, the judge who heard the Weiss case in State Supreme Court had signed the nominating petitions of Weiss' opponent, the organization-backed incumbent.¹⁰ Ware substantiates Weiss' position, concluding that "the judges hearing these cases were elected on a partisan ballot and, since all but a few of them had close ties to the Democratic party, especially its regular organizations, their decisions normally helped to perpetuate these organizations."¹¹

The Clubs and Primary Elections

As might be expected, there are relatively few primary elections in New York City. Mayhew suggested that one reason for the small number of primaries is "New York's uniquely burdensome signature requirement."¹² Another factor that may help explain the small number of primaries in the

Republican, Conservative, Liberal, and Right-to-Life parties is the overwhelming electoral dominance of the Democrats.¹³ In some neighborhoods the Republicans have difficulty finding anyone to accept their nomination.¹⁴ In 1981, the Republicans conceded their inability to win citywide elections by supporting Mayor Koch's re-election.¹⁵

The presence of incumbents also discourages primaries.¹⁶ The power of incumbency is such that regular Democratic organizations will usually refrain from challenging incumbent reformers; recognizing that incumbency can often compensate for the lack of regular organization support.¹⁷ Gerald Benjamin, in an article on incumbency in New York politics, observed that "incumbency is the most important factor in electoral politics today."¹⁸ Their ability to attract publicity, do favors for constituents and interest groups, and use public resources to advance their political careers makes them formidable opponents.

In any case, most primaries are in the Democratic Party, and often involve candidates supported by the regular and reform factions of the party.¹⁹ Historically, the clubs supplied volunteers and a physical plant for campaign operations. However, as shall be discussed, the campaign mobilization role of clubs has changed. While the clubs still play a role in the primaries, their key function has become the circulation of petitions (especially in "high visibility" elections). As Ware found,

To be sure of appearing on the ballot many more signatures than were actually required had to be gathered, and knowledge of both the electoral law and the area's residents provided any group with a distinct advantage. It was precisely this kind of knowledge that, traditionally, the New York clubs possessed, and it is not surprising that, whenever possible, most candidates continued to rely on clubs to make a contribution to this aspect of their campaigns (Ware 1985, 88).

The political club's campaign mobilization function is enhanced by the low voter turnout common in primary elections. According to Scarrow, an "advantage enjoyed by the club's designee is that the organization's network of committeepersons, job holders, and the relatives of these party loyalists constitute a significant portion of the electorate bothering to participate in the primary election."²⁰

Therefore, although political club membership is but a fraction of the party "rank-and-file," these party activists have the capacity to mobilize enough voters to win due to the apathy of the overwhelming majority. This is a likely outcome in "low visibility" elections. Civil Court nominations are one example of the organization's persistence in the electoral process. According to a 1986 study by the Fund for Modern Courts, the Democrats won eighty-three of the eighty-five elections for Civil Court judgeships in the city between 1980 and 1985.²¹ Of the eighty-five nominees, only twelve were challengers of organization-supported candidates who had defeated those candidates in primaries.²² Their conclusion was that the elec-

tion process amounted to little more than the appointment of judges by county Democratic leaders.²³

However, in county and citywide contests, the political clubs and party organizations seem to be less significant than in the past. The loss of the organization's influence in these high visibility contests has come about due to a number of changes in party organization and electoral mobilization.

One factor in the decline of the traditional party organizations is the absence of citywide party organizations. As Lowi (and Peel before him) observed, "making arrangements for the three citywide elective offices is a unique political problem in the city."²⁴ There are actually five party organizations that comprise each "citywide" party organization (as the parties are organized on a county, not a citywide, basis). This built-in division has been more pronounced in the Democratic Party, where the failure of the organizations to reach a consensus has often resulted in primaries, where individual county organizations support their own candidates (leaving the decision to the electorate).²⁵ The conflict between county organizations has been less pronounced in the Republican Party. Historically, New York City's Republican county leaders have been more capable of forging citywide slates than their Democratic counterparts. One factor may be the Democrats' dominance of city politics. The Republican nomination is not

often hotly contested because it doesn't much matter.²⁶

Fragmentation within county organizations has also had a negative impact on the influence of the parties. The county organizations are not monolithic. The Democratic county organizations have splintered. Indeed, Ware has characterized this development as "fratricide."²⁷ The "amateur" reform movement within the Democratic party was the first crack in the organizational structure, with the reformers ultimately gaining control over the Manhattan organization. While not as successful outside Manhattan, inroads were made into the established organizations. For example, while maintaining control of the party organization, by 1977 the Bronx "regulars" had lost two of the county's three Congressional seats, two of the four state senators, and five of the eleven state assemblymembers.²⁸ In Brooklyn, the organization's major defeat was Elizabeth Holtzman's election as Kings County District Attorney in 1981.²⁹

In recent years, another internal challenge has come from a growing black and hispanic electorate. These voters (as well as the political clubs in their neighborhoods) have been less willing to accept the leadership of the established party leadership. When Meade Esposito, then the Brooklyn Democratic leader, was asked why Mayor Abraham D. Beame barely carried the borough in the 1977 primary (with the support of Esposito's organization), he responded:

"Give us a break; we've got seven black and three Puerto Rican districts - what does that leave us?"³⁰ If primary election results are used as indicators, not much. In both the 1977 and 1981 primaries, blacks failed to follow the lead of the regular organizations. Indeed, in both Brooklyn and Manhattan, strong anti-organization clubs have emerged, competing with pro-organization black clubs and (in many instances) eclipsing those clubs.³¹

Finally, the "regulars" have, in some cases, been divided. A serious split in the Brooklyn Democratic organization developed following Meade Esposito's retirement, as two district leaders sought control of the organization.³² In other cases the county organizations have not been able to keep individual district leaders and clubs in line; the club supporting a candidate opposed by the county organization.³³ There are other forms of what might be regarded as party disloyalty. For instance, accepting the endorsement of one of the "minor" parties (Conservatives, Liberals, or Right-to-Life), and contesting the general election despite losing the Republican or Democratic primary. In 1977, Mario Cuomo continued his campaign as the Liberal Party's mayoral candidate, despite his loss to Congressman Ed Koch in the Democratic primary.³⁴ In 1969, Mayor John V. Lindsay was re-elected as the Liberal following his loss in the Republican primary. In 1980, Senator Jacob K. Javits, defeated in the Republican primary

by Hempstead Presiding Town Supervisor Alfonse M. D'Amato, continued his campaign as the Liberal party candidate, denying Elizabeth Holtzman (the Democratic candidate and ideologically closer to Javits than the conservative D'Amato) victory.³⁵

Another crack in party organization has been the willingness of the major party's leaders to endorse their major party opponents. During the 1970s Bronx Democratic leader Patrick Cunningham endorsed Republican State Senator John Calandra as a way of keeping the seat out of reform hands.³⁶ Ware noted that these "cross-endorsements" were:

By 1980...widespread. That year the party chairmen in the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island arranged for the endorsement of three Republican state senators, while the Queens chairman also allowed another Republican to enter the Democratic primary (Ware 1985, 117).

When such "disloyalty" becomes commonplace, it is difficult to maintain loyalty, reducing the influence of the organization.

A third development that has reduced the influence of the traditional party organizations in the electoral process is the rising activity of outside interests in the nominations process. In his 1964 study of New York City politics, Lowi observed that Republican nominations for citywide office have been influenced by good government groups that, on at least three occasions, had joined in successful fusion mayoral campaigns with the party.³⁷ An-

other "outside" force in Republican citywide politics has been the chairperson of the state Republicans Party. Lowi has noted the role of the state chair in New York City Republican organizational politics.³⁸ The influence of George Clark was evident in the 1981 and 1985 elections, when he engineered the cross-endorsement of Mayor Koch in 1981 and the break with him four years later.³⁹

The minor parties have also played an influential role in major party organizational politics. By offering an early endorsement to a contender for a major party nomination, the minor party can influence the major party's nomination process. The Conservative Party has been a more significant force than either the Liberals or Right-to-Life parties. In 1980 they endorsed D'Amato early on, and in 1982 their early support of Lewis Lehrman enabled him to secure the Republican gubernatorial nomination. In both cases, the candidates were unknown until they received Conservative backing.⁴⁰

A fourth factor in the decline of the traditional party organization in the electoral process has been the development of alternative campaign mechanisms. Historically, the political clubhouses had been the only effective way of mobilizing voters. Technological and organizational developments have led to the evolution of mobilization techniques that, on the county and citywide levels, can be as effective as the clubs once were in getting out

the vote. Television advertising is a cost-effective way of transmitting a citywide candidate's message.⁴¹ Computer-equipped political consultants can identify a candidate's potential supporters (a skill once possessed only by the block captain), and direct mail offers candidates the opportunity to tailor a message to specific individuals and to raise money.⁴² Indeed, these new technologies have transformed political campaigns from labor intensive to capital intensive operations (reducing the role of the organization, which had large numbers of volunteers as its primary asset, while enhancing the role of the political fund raiser and the political action committee). While this new technology is available to candidates at all levels, it seems most effective (and accessible) for candidates for citywide office. What this means is that financial support has, in high profile campaigns, become as important (if not more important) as organizational support. Access to campaign donors has become, in these elections, as critical as access to party leaders.

Organizational developments have also changed the nature of campaigns. The decline of the party organizations' ability to "deliver" votes means that candidates must often create their own campaign organization. The "unreliability" of the organization is due to a number of factors already noted, especially party fragmentation. Organizational support is no longer significant if a good proportion of the

organization is disloyal.

It should be understood that the new technologies and new forms of campaign organization have not reached all levels of political activity. At the assembly district level (and in other low visibility contests) the new technology may not be feasible or financially possible. It is at that level that political clubs and organizational support can still be decisive.

The decline in the party workforce has also impacted the party organizations. It has become difficult for party organizations to mobilize significant numbers of volunteers. This is due to the problems that the party organizations have in offering potential volunteers material, purposive or solidary incentives.⁴³

As far as patronage is concerned, much has already been written about its decline.⁴⁴ However, it appears that during the late 1960s and early 1970s, patronage may have actually increased. Mayor John V. Lindsay distributed patronage through his network of John V. Lindsay Association clubs.⁴⁵ According to Wolfinger, the number of "provisional" employees increased eightfold and, in terms of the number of patronage jobs and the size of the payroll, John Lindsay exceeded his predecessor.⁴⁶ During the early years of his tenure, Mayor Beame made an effort to revitalize the regular Democratic organizations through an infusion of patronage.⁴⁷ This effort failed for two reasons.

First, some of the administration's more questionable

patronage initiatives received unfavorable publicity.⁴⁸ The second, and more significant factor was the city's fiscal crisis. Beame was forced to make substantial cuts in the municipal workforce.⁴⁹ The number of provisional employees plummeted.⁵⁰ Agencies that had long been repositories for political appointees, such as the Office of Neighborhood Services, were eliminated.⁵¹ Also, the layers of control imposed by the institutions of the "crisis regime" dictated that, even at the highest (and historically, the most political) levels of city government, appointments would be made on the basis of expertise and experience.⁵² As one Brooklyn district leader was told when he persisted in suggesting party loyalists for high level vacancies, "forget it. It's a whole new ball game."⁵³ The Koch administration continued this commitment to experience. Yet, the scandals that buffeted the administration in 1986 proved that patronage was not dead.⁵⁴

However, while patronage may not be dead, it is more limited. The patronage that rests exclusively within the control of the party organizations is court patronage.⁵⁵ Some patronage is controlled by elected officials (positions on legislative staffs), giving them a degree of independence.⁵⁶ The net result is that the county organizations have fewer incentives to offer than in the past. The ladder of opportunity observed by Merton seems to have lost a few of its rungs. The party organization can no

longer hope to maintain a significant volunteer workforce through the distribution or prospect of patronage.

It appears that the clubs do not offer enough of a purposive incentive to maintain interest. As Wilson found, "purposive incentives" were significant for those drawn to the "amateur" Democratic movement in New York and other cities.⁵⁷ Ware contended that the reform movement began to decline during the 1960s due to the election of John V. Lindsay (a fusion candidate elected by the Republican and Liberal parties), which made it difficult for the reformers to mobilize against a "corrupt" city government, and the Viet Nam War--while the anti-war movement initially bolstered the reformers, they were ultimately drawn out of the party to work on the narrow war issue.⁵⁸

In the 1980s there have been no issues to revitalize the reform cause. The "purposes" that drew many New Yorkers into the "amateur" Democratic clubs have been absent in the 1980s.

The solidary incentives once offered are also lacking. As we have already observed, the "social activities" of the political clubs have virtually disappeared. Today, the club social calendar is likely to consist of one or two social events a year which are geared towards fundraising. For those who enjoyed the social life of the clubhouse, today's clubhouse fails to offer the same opportunities.

The decline in the ability of political clubs to offer the aforementioned incentives, as well as other factors,

has led to the decline of the volunteer workforce. As we've already observed, political clubs are smaller today than in the past and, as a result, can put fewer volunteers on the street for political campaigns.

Despite the factors mentioned, the decline of the party organization has not been as pronounced as it might appear. Between 1974 and 1984 there was only one instance where a major party's organization-supported candidate failed to obtain the party's nomination for countywide office.⁵⁹ In the case of the borough presidencies, the process for filling vacancies in the office has been used by the parties to maintain control over the office.⁶⁰

On the citywide level, the Republican Party leadership has been more successful than their Democratic counterparts. While Beame was supported by most party leaders in 1973 and 1977, their support was not enough to earn Beame a place in the run-off primary in 1977.⁶¹ Koch's victories in 1981 and 1985 were due more to the Mayor's personal popularity and the growing political power of the mayoralty than to the support of party organizations.⁶²

In both 1973 and 1977, candidates favored by the regular party organizations failed to win the Democratic nomination for city council president.⁶³ Yet, at the same time, the organization-backed candidate for city comptroller was successful. It should be noted that in all citywide and countywide elections since 1973, the candidates supported by the Republican Party organization were either nomi-

nated without opposition or were victorious in primaries. One explanation for the success of the Republican leadership may be that the Republican electorate is not used to voting in primaries and may be more willing to follow the lead of their party leadership than their Democratic counterparts.

Therefore, if one measures the strength of party organization by its ability to obtain their party's nomination for their candidate, the organization's are still relatively successful. The Democratic party organizations have some difficulty nominating their candidates. In the case of citywide offices the party organizations' problems can be attributed to both changes in campaign technology and party organization

The Clubhouse in the Community

Since the 1960s, the city and state governments have responded to demands from neighborhoods for input into decision-making processes by establishing, in New York City, a number of mechanisms for "community control" and consultation. Community school boards, community planning boards, neighborhood strategy boards, and advisory boards attached to municipal hospitals, police precincts, and other municipal services were created to deal with what Altshuler described as "demands by groups that traditionally had little power...in the shaping of policies that vitally affect their lives."⁶⁴

In practice, it is apparent that the community interest has, in some instances, been superseded by the interests of local political clubs that have managed to penetrate these community-based bodies.

The Clubs and the School Boards

In the aftermath of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville dispute, the New York State Legislature enacted the Decentralization Act of 1969. The legislation created a system of popularly-elected school boards that would be responsible for policy and administration in the city's public primary and middle schools.⁶⁵ Leaders of the city's minority populations envisioned decentralization as a method of assuring schools that would be responsive to the needs of their communities. In addition, it was assumed that the new boards would staff the schools with more minority professionals.⁶⁶

While the impact of decentralization on the school system has been covered elsewhere, the role of political clubs in school board politics has been overlooked.⁶⁷

Political clubs have become active in school board elections. It has become a common practice for political clubs to endorse school board candidates.⁶⁸ Some clubs have actively sought control of local boards. In their study of decentralization's impact, Rogers and Chung described the struggle for control of what they called a "recently stabilized poor black district,"

A key figure...was a state senator who ran a powerful Democratic club in the area. He was elected to the 1973 CSB and pushed it to appoint more blacks as teachers, principals, and district office staff....One of the white liberals who felt this change keenly explained: 'The second school board marked the emergence of local politicians and people who were interested in building a power base' (Rogers and Chung 1983, 136).

In the case of a "white middle-class" district, the aforementioned authors found that the nine member board usually included four members supported by a combination of the United Federation of Teachers (the teachers' union), Parent-Teachers' Associations, and local political clubs.⁶⁹

There are a number of reasons for the interest of political clubs and politicians in the community school boards. First, as one district leader pointed out, "club members tend to be community activists. Since the schools are part of our community, we feel we have a responsibility to be active."⁷⁰

While the above public-spirited argument may motivate some activity (or at least put a positive face on this involvement), there are other, less altruistic reasons for club intervention. Rogers and Chung found in one district that the school board can serve as a power base. The school boards have the authority to deliver a number of "goods" than can be useful in political "transactions." Local school boards award contracts for goods and services, appoint district headquarters staff, school supervisory personnel, and, in some districts, school aides.⁷¹ In early 1987 a Bronx County grand jury released a report of their

investigation into the operations of Bronx community school boards.⁷² According to Bronx District Attorney Mario Merola, the grand jury found that children had become "secondary and all this political patronage was of paramount concern among the people functioning on school boards."⁷³ The grand jury discovered that teachers were required to become active in political clubs and school board campaigns if they hoped to be promoted.⁷⁴ In addition, the panel reported that teachers and school supervisory personnel were regularly pressured into buying tickets for political functions.⁷⁵ Merola concluded that the grand jury's report illustrated that a wide pattern of "sleazy" politics existed, emphasizing favors for "personal friends and political club colleagues" while ignoring the needs of the school-children.⁷⁶

One reason for the politicization of the school boards was identified by Boulton M. Demas. Demas, in his study of the 1970 school board elections, found that the election rules encouraged the "slating" of candidates.⁷⁷ Under the proportional representation system used in the elections, "slated" candidates have an advantage over independents.⁷⁸ Although the decentralization statute stipulated that "no candidate shall be identified by political party or other organizational affiliation on the nominating petitions," the law, Demas contended, actually encouraged slating.⁷⁹ These slates, due to the ability of their sup-

porters to mobilize voters in low turnout elections (the turnout in school board elections has never exceeded twelve percent of the eligible voters), have been able to gain control of many school boards. Political clubs, in alliance with church-backed groups and unions representing public school employees, have been able to dominate school board politics.⁸⁰ According to one observer of Brooklyn politics, the "school boards are controlled by political clubs."⁸¹ In recent years, slates have included Republican, as well as Democratic club members to insure access to Republicans in the state legislature and the federal government.⁸²

While some major political figures have been prominent members of school boards or have been beneficiaries of school board preferments and patronage, a more common tactic has been through the placement of political confidants on the school boards or through nepotism.⁸³

The Clubs and the Community Boards

The community planning boards are another arena where the neighborhood political clubs have become active participants. The boards, already in existence for over twenty years, were institutionalized through the 1975 charter revisions.⁸⁴ As Benjamin F. Lorick explained in an official city handbook for community board members, the charter changes were "designed, in part, to respond to... feelings of political powerlessness and alienation" that

many of the city's residents had experienced.⁸⁵

The new boards, which were empaneled in January of 1977, have the power to:

1. prepare their own capital and expense budget priorities
2. plan for the growth, improvement and development of the community district
3. evaluate the quality and quantity of municipal services; and
4. disseminate information about city services, process complaints and answer questions for district residents.⁸⁶

Unlike the community school boards, whose members are elected, members of the fifty-nine boards are appointed by the borough president, in "consultation" with the city councilmembers who represent any portion of the board's service area (councilmembers also serve as ex-officio members of the boards).⁸⁷ Each board hires a full-time district manager and other staff to maintain a district office.

Political clubs have long had a presence on these boards. In a study prepared for the State Charter Revision Commission for New York City in 1973, it was found that fifty-four percent of the responding community board members (n=795) reported membership in political clubs.⁸⁸

Political club members have remained on the boards. In a

survey conducted for this study, I found that eighty-one percent of the responding clubs (n=eighty-three) reported that at least one of their members belonged to a community board.⁸⁹ This might be expected since the board members are appointed by the borough presidents acting upon the recommendation of the city councilmembers. The only criteria for appointment is that the prospective member "have a residence, business, professional, or other significant interest in the district."⁹⁰ While the charter language suggests that "community boards, civic groups and other community groups and neighborhood associations" make nominations to the borough presidents and councilmembers, a number of political clubs are represented on the boards. This should not be unexpected. First, in many instances there is group "overlap" in that political club members may also belong to other community organizations. The presence of these overlapping affiliations allows political club members to "represent" other community groups as well.

Second, some club members regard the community boards as political springboards. As John LoCicero explained, the public exposure earned by active board members, along with the member's experience in government operations, can produce successful political activists.⁹¹ In some instances the board member's civic activity may lead to their recruitment by political clubs, the club seeing the board member as a potential asset.

Third, appointment to the community board may be utilized as a "reward" to loyal club members. Those who have worked on the club's behalf are "recognized" for their service. In this sense, the board (although it is a voluntary post with no remuneration) can be used as a form of political patronage.

Finally, community boards do have significant powers. In addition to land use decisions, the boards are involved in the capital and expense budget processes, and play a role in determining how municipal services are delivered. As one Staten Island district manager explained it, "the borough president is not going to appoint people who are going to cause him problems....The clubs are a source of reliable people."⁹²

In his study of community boards, John Mudd noted the relationship between the boards and the borough presidents (who, it should be noted, through most of the last twenty years, have been "organization" politicians, especially in the "outer" boroughs) in the city's politics:

Community boards are political, and they politicized the decentralization process in a very distinct way. As appointees of the borough presidents (or in some cases of the local city councilpersons), the boards are clearly perceived as the instruments of the borough presidents (Mudd 1984, 191).

While claiming that its occurrence is infrequent, a Manhattan district manager had heard of situations where the "word came from downtown" on how to vote on a specific matter.⁹³ To illustrate the pervasiveness of political

club members on community boards, in a mail survey conducted for this project, two-thirds of the responding district managers (n=twenty-four) estimated that at least fifty percent of their board's members were also members of a local political club.⁹⁴ One Brooklyn district manager contended that the "borough president has used politics to make his appointments instead of community involvement."⁹⁵

Another development in the relationship between the political party organizations and the community boards is the interest that the parties have had in the selection of district managers. Madeline W. Adler and Jewel Bellush found that over seventy percent of the initial group of district managers (those appointed in 1977) were involved in their local party clubhouses.⁹⁶ Political clubs and leaders have taken an active role, even recommending candidates for vacancies. Because of its potential for political mobility, it appears that the role of the district manager as a non-partisan professional, as envisioned in the initial Lindsay administration proposal, has given way to the appointment of "political" district managers in a number of communities.⁹⁷

The electoral role of the political club has changed. The club's major electoral function today appears to be the collection of signatures for nominating petitions. This function is still a "labor intensive" operation, and the experience of club members in this process (their

knowledge of their neighborhoods and understanding of the nuances of the election law) continues to make the clubs important in this phase of the nominations process.

However, the broader electoral role of the club in mobilizing supporters on election day has declined. Clubs lack the volunteer workforce today that historically got out the vote. Basically, the political clubs remain important in what sometimes have been called "committeeman's elections," i.e., low profile contests where the offices contested are relatively insignificant or do not generate public interest. In these elections the clubs are still the "armies of electoral mobilization." That is because these elections, where turnout is low, do not require an "army" of volunteers. When major elections are contested, the political clubs have been eclipsed by candidate-centered, professional organizations utilizing state-of-the-art campaign technology.

It appears that club interest (and influence) has grown in "community political institutions," i.e., the community school boards and community planning boards. In both these arenas the club leaders have recognized the potential for patronage, preferments, and political influence in what has become their forte: political power through mobilization of their supporters in situations where the public is generally apathetic. It is in those "low profile" activities (and in the task of gathering signatures for nominating petitions) where the political clubs

and their leaders can maximize their influence.

NOTES

¹Quoted in The New York Times, 7 May 1982. Weiss was and insurgent candidate for Democratic councilmember-at-large in Queens. His nominating petitions were successfully challenged by supporters of incumbent Councilmember Stephen Orlow, the regular organization's candidate. Weiss filed suit, contending that his constitutional right to seek office had been violated by what he termed a "conspiracy" of public and party officials who used public funds to finance their petition challenge. The suit was later settled out of court. See The New York Times, 2 July 1983, for a report on the settlement.

²The primary objective, as stated herein, appears in a wide variety of political science texts on the role of political parties. For instance, Ruth K. Scott and Ronald J. Hrebener, Parties in Crisis, 2d ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1984), 4-6.

³The "designation" of candidates by political clubs and party organizations is a longstanding practice in New York politics. The endorsement has, historically, been important because the chosen candidate appears on the petitions carried by "regular" club members. In the case of statewide office, party designation, since 1970, has given candidates an automatic place on the primary ballot (in addition, any candidate receiving twenty-five percent of the vote at a party convention also appears on the ballot), allowing them to bypass the costly, and complicated, petition route.

⁴As of 31 December 1986, the requirements for valid signatures were as follows: the three citywide elected officials (mayor, city council president, comptroller), ten thousand; United States House of Representatives, two thousand; state senate, one thousand; and state assembly, five hundred.

⁵While clubs have historically relied on volunteers to carry petitions, in recent years it has become difficult for some clubs to find enough volunteers. As early as 1977, John LoCicero (then leader of the Village Independent

Democrats) admitted that his club, one of the largest in the city, was having "problems with petitions," i.e., getting enough volunteers to act as subscribing witnesses. Quoted in The New York Times, 22 August 1977. In some cases, clubs have had to pay people to act as subscribing witnesses. The author writes from personal experience, having carried petitions for the Queens County Democratic Organization, for pay, in 1981 and 1982.

⁶Howard A. Scarrow, Parties, Elections, and Representation in the State of New York (New York and London: New York University Press, 1983), 39.

⁷"Buff cards" are the individual voter registration records (they are known by the color of the paper they're printed on) that are maintained at the county offices of the New York City Board of Elections, and are important to the petition challenge process. The information on the card must be identical to that written on the petition (name, address, party affiliation) or the petition signature will be invalidated.

⁸Decisions of the Board of Elections are subject to court review.

⁹The New York Times, 7 May 1982.

¹⁰The judge withdrew from the case. ¹¹Ware, 88-89.

¹²Mayhew, 338.

¹³Between 1980 and 1984, there were a total of twelve Republican, nine Conservative, and one primary in both the Right-to-Life and Liberal parties. In contrast, there were forty-two Democratic primaries in 1984. To illustrate the electoral dominance of the Democrats, of the 147 elected non-judicial officials in New York City who were in office on 1 January 1987, 134 had been elected as Democrats, eleven as Republicans, and two as Liberals.

¹⁴In 1984 (when a strong national Republican ticket might have been expected to help local Republicans), the Republicans failed to contest fifteen local elections (two congressional seats; six state assembly races; five contests in the state senate, and two judgeships). In contrast, the Democrats conceded three elections.

¹⁵Koch, upon the invitation of four of the five Repub-

lican county leaders, entered the Republican mayoral primary. He defeated John Esposito, who was supported by the Queens Republicans.

¹⁶For a discussion of the advantages of incumbency, see David R. Mayhew, Congress: The Electoral Connection (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

¹⁷For example, for a number of years the Brooklyn Democratic organization did not challenge reform State Assemblymember Joseph Ferris (whose district included the Park Slope neighborhood). Following Ferris' retirement in 1984 the regular organization tried to re-take the seat. The effort failed as Ferris' aide, James F. Brennan, defeated the regular organization candidate in the primary and went on to win the general election.

¹⁸Gerald Benjamin, "The Power of Incumbency," Empire State Report 13 (April 1987): 34.

¹⁹Republican primaries, when they've occurred, usually involve ideological conflict between "liberal" and "conservative" Republicans.

²⁰Scarrow, 40.

²¹M. L. Henry, The Illusion of Democracy: New York City Civil Court Elections, 1980-1985 (New York: Fund for Modern Courts, Inc., 1986).

²²ibid., 15. ²³ibid., ix-xi.

²⁴Lowi, At The Pleasure of the Mayor, 12. See Peel, 56-63, for a discussion of the relationship between the county organizations and its impact on candidate selection during that period.

²⁵The last such conflict-resolving primaries were in 1985, when Democratic organizations divided over the nomination for city council president (some supported Kenneth Lipper, a former Deputy Mayor under Koch, while others supported Manhattan Borough President Andrew Stein), and in 1981, when the Queens Republicans challenged the decision of the other county organizations to support Mayor Koch. Robert Dahl noted the utility of primaries in resolving internal party disputes (he was writing about New Haven) in Who Governs? (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1961), 113-114.

²⁶ Almost certain defeat makes it difficult for the Republicans to recruit. For example, following their break with Koch in 1985, the Republicans turned to Diane McGrath, a member of the State Crime Victims Compensation Board, to run against Koch after a number of prominent figures declined their nomination. McGrath had never before sought public office.

²⁷ Ware, 109. ²⁸ The New York Times, 13 March 1977.

²⁹ Though, in this case, it was not a reform organization victory. Holtzman, because of her stature as a former member of Congress and unsuccessful United States Senate race in 1980, was able to appeal to both white reformers and anti-organization blacks. Therefore, this was more a victory of Holtzman's appeal rather than the decline of the Democratic organization.

³⁰ The New York Times, 12 September 1977.

³¹ For example, Albert Vann (Brooklyn) and Hilton Clark (Manhattan) have formed clubs and challenged the "machine" black organizations that existed in their neighborhoods.

³² Following Esposito's retirement, Borough President Howard Golden was elected interim leader, defeating Anthony J. Genovesi, a Canarsie district leader. Genovesi then attempted to unseat Golden by supporting anti-Golden candidates in the 1984 primaries. Genovesi (who was supported by Mayor Koch) was unsuccessful (Golden was supported by Governor Cuomo). In 1985, Genovesi supported State Senator Martin Markowitz in the borough presidency primary against Golden, who was re-nominated and subsequently re-elected. The split persisted until early 1986 when, with the help of then-State Assembly Speaker Stanley Fink (who represented Genovesi's district in the state assembly), the rivals entered into a "truce."

³³ For example, in 1977, Mario Cuomo was supported by about one-third of the regular Democratic clubs in Queens and by a number of Brooklyn clubs (both organizations were officially supporting Mayor Beame's renomination).

³⁴ Cuomo lost to Koch in the general election.

³⁵ D'Amato defeated Javits in the Republican primary by a fifty-six to forty-four percent count. In the general election, Javits received eleven percent, while D'Amato ed-

ged Holtzman, forty-five to forty-four percent. Data from Michael Barone and Grant Ujifusa, The Almanac of American Politics, 1986 (Washington, DC: National Journal, 1985), 901.

³⁶The New York Times, 9 November 1974. Cunningham's endorsement of Calandra angered state party leaders who hoped to capitalize on the Watergate scandal and win control of the state senate.

³⁷Lowi, At the Pleasure of the Mayor, 13.

³⁸ibid., 12.

³⁹Clark was state chair of the Republicans and was responsible for Koch's endorsement in 1981. He contended that Koch had "double-crossed" him by running for governor in 1982, and by failing to follow through on his promises to help local Republicans by fundraising and through patronage and preferments. Koch claimed to have not made any promises to the Republicans in exchange for their support in 1981.

⁴⁰D'Amato was the Hempstead Presiding Town Supervisor at the time of his election to the Senate. His fifteen years in politics had been spent in a variety of positions in Nassau County. Lehrman was a wealthy businessman (owner of the Rite-Aid drug store chain), who had no previous experience in government.

⁴¹The size of the New York "market" makes television and radio quite expensive for sub-local candidates, who would be charged for reaching thousands (if not hundreds of thousands) of voters who could not vote for them. However, there have been some instances of candidates using this "wasteful" form of communication. For example, in 1986, State Senator Christopher Mega aired radio commercials in his successful re-election campaign in Brooklyn's Bay Ridge neighborhood.

⁴²An example of "modern" campaigning at the citywide level: in 1977 Bella Abzug hired, for two hundred thousand dollars, a professional canvassing concern to locate (and mobilize) potential Abzug supporters. This task was historically performed by a local political club's block captains. Reported in The New York Times, 6 September 1977.

⁴³For a discussion of these incentives, see Ware, 73-79.

⁴⁴Judd, 57-59.

⁴⁵Lindsay attempted, through the creation of JVL Association clubs, to create his own personal political organization. A Republican, Lindsay could not rely on a network of clubs that his Democratic predecessors had used. The creation of the Office of Neighborhood Government by Lindsay (and the establishment of "Little City Halls") was seen by some Democrats as an effort by Lindsay to forge a governmental arm for his political organization.

⁴⁶Raymond E. Wolfinger, "Why Political Machines Have Not Withered Away and Other Revisionist Thoughts," Journal of Politics 34 (1972): 372.

⁴⁷The New York Times, 19 January 1975 and 20 January 1975. In a two-part series on Mayor Beame's appointments during his first year in office, Marvin Tolchin characterized Beame's policies as those of "a party man who has astutely practiced patronage in its classical form--legally allocating the discretionary favors of government in exchange for political support."

⁴⁸Beame used Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) funds to hire eighteen aides for the Office of Neighborhood Services (ONS). Of the eighteen, thirteen were also Democratic district leaders, members of the state committee, or had some other connection to the regular Democratic organizations. CETA funds were intended for assistance to the long-term unemployed, with priority given to veterans, heads of households, and welfare recipients. The federal Department of Labor ordered the dismissal of seven of the employees, The New York Times, 21 May 1975.

⁴⁹By one estimate, the municipal payroll was reduced by forty-five thousand. The Economist 287 (2 April 1983): 17.

⁵⁰On 1 April 1975, there were 9,335 provisionals on the payroll. On 1 October 1976, there were 4,163. Source: The New York Times, 28 November 1976.

⁵¹Lindsay had staffed the office with his supporters. Beame had replaced most of the Lindsay loyalists with Democratic Party stalwarts.

⁵²Among the "oversight" agencies established were the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC); the Mayor's manage-

ment Advisory Board; the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB); the Temporary Commission on City Finances (TCCF); Financial Community Liasion Group (FCLG), and the Office of Special (State) Deputy Comptroller for New York City (OSDC).

⁵³The New York Times, 25 September 1975.

⁵⁴One of the revelations of the 1986 scandals was that Donald Manes, at the height of the fiscal crisis, was able to arrange patronage appointments for Geoffrey Lindenauer. Lindenauer, who was the "star" witness in the federal prosecution of Stanley Friedman, eventually rose to the position of deputy director of the New York City Parking Violations Bureau (PVB). It was PVB which Lindenauer, Friedman, and others used to enrich themselves. In July 1987, Lindenauer was sentenced to two years in prison for his role in the scandal.

⁵⁵This includes personnel matters such as the selection of judges, clerks, administrative aides, and law assistants and non-personnel matters such as the appointment by surrogates of guardians and estate administrators to represent the interest of minors and heirs.

⁵⁶Ware, 151-160. ⁵⁷Wilson, 165. ⁵⁸Ware, 97-98.

⁵⁹In 1981, Elizabeth Holtzman, with the support of the borough's reform club and Al Vann's political organization, defeated Norman Rosen for the Democratic nomination for Kings County District Attorney by about ten thousand votes out of 180,000 cast. As noted earlier, Holtzman was able to gain support from reformers and blacks, an elusive coalition in New York politics. When one considers that Mr. Rosen was a political unknown, his showing against a nationally-known figure with significant political resources must be considered an example of the organization's persistence.

⁶⁰The city charter requires vacancies to be filled (on an interim basis) by vote of the borough's councilmembers. Invariably, the councilmembers have elected the candidate supported by the county Democratic organization, giving the "interim" borough president the advantage of incumbency when seeking election in their own right. To underscore the practice, four of the five borough presidents in office on 1 January 1987 had first come to office through this process: Howard Golden (Brooklyn); Ralph Lamberti (Staten Island); Claire Shulman (Queens), and Stanley Simon (Bronx).

⁶¹Though it should be noted that Beame's predecessor, John V. Lindsay, had been supported by the Republican party organizations, yet was defeated in the 1969 primary.

⁶²Koch, 303-324.

⁶³In the 1973 primary there was no consensus organization candidate. In 1977, most of the organization clubs supported the incumbent, Paul O'Dwyer, who lost in the run-off primary to State Senator Carol Bellamy.

⁶⁴Alan A. Altshuler, Community Control: The Black Demand for Participation in Large American Cities (New York: Pegasus, 1970), 13.

⁶⁵For more on school decentralization in New York City, see Marilyn Gittell, School Boards and School Policy: An Evaluation of Decentralization in New York City (New York: Praeger, 1973), and David Rogers and Norman H. Chung, 110 Livingston Street Revisited: Decentralization in Action (New York and London: New York University Press, 1983).

⁶⁶See Rogers and Chung, 1-17, for a discussion of the origin of the school board plan.

⁶⁷The literature of school board politics has concentrated, for the most part, on the role of the United Federation of Teachers. For example, Susan Fainstein and Norman Fainstein, Urban Political Movements (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974).

⁶⁸Mayhew, Placing Parties in American Politics, 37.

⁶⁹Rogers and Chung, 156.

⁷⁰George Daly, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 6 March 1986.

⁷¹Community School Board 20 (Brooklyn) in early 1986 stripped their principals of the power to appoint school aides, taking this responsibility for themselves. The school aides posts have traditionally been a form of patronage that principals dispensed to leaders of their school's parents' associations.

⁷²The Grand Jury of Bronx County, An Inquiry Into Politics and the School System, 21 January 1987.

⁷³The New York Times, 1 February 1987.

⁷⁴The Grand Jury, 10. ⁷⁵ibid., 5.

⁷⁶The New York Times, 1 February 1987.

⁷⁷A slate is a group of candidates that run as a team in school board elections. Using the "proportional representation" system as a campaign weapon, candidates will urge voters to mark their preferences for members of the slate. Such slating can maximize the chances of individual members of the slate. The independent, without the coordinated "spillover" effort of a slate, is at a disadvantage. According to Demas, slates have been organized by candidates; by committees formed specifically to contest the elections; and by political clubs and other established groups that may have some interest in the schools (for example, religious organizations or the unions representing school employees). Boulton Demas, The School Elections: A Critique of the 1969 New York City School Decentralization (New York: Institute for Community Studies, 1971), 24.

⁷⁸ibid., 24-30. ⁷⁹ibid., 25. ⁸⁰ibid., 24.

⁸¹Steven H. Richman, Director of Off-Track Betting Operations, New York State Racing and Wagering Board, interview by author, tape recording, Brooklyn, New York, 28 February 1985.

⁸²ibid.

⁸³One example: Ailene Golden, the wife of the borough president/Democratic county leader, was a curriculum coordinator in Brooklyn's School District Fifteen. When the chair of the Board, Philip Kaplan, split with her husband, Ms. Golden was dismissed. She was soon appointed to the same post in Brooklyn's School District Twenty-One (which included a number of Golden's allies, such as the female district leader of the Forty-Seventh Assembly District).

There are some boards where political leaders actually take a public role. In School District Nine (Bronx), one of the long-time members was Israel Ruiz, a state senator and district leader. In School District Nineteen (Brooklyn), Vito Battista, a Republican district leader, was a long-time board member. Perhaps the best example of a "politicized" board was the panel elected in Community School District Twenty-One (Brooklyn) in 1986. Elected with no opposition (their opponents had been removed from the ballot through petition challenges), four of the nine were dis-

trict leaders (three Democrats and one Republican). One of those elected, Hyman Cohen, defended the board's politicization: "I think politics belongs here. You can't do anything without politics" (New York Newsday, 1 May 1986). A different perspective on the rise of politics in school board activity was offered by State Assemblymember G. Oliver Koppell (Bronx), who claimed that "these school boards' are using the school as an employment and a political tool rather than bringing the kids out of poverty" (The New York Times, 5 May 1986). In retrospect, the "Bundy Report," which warned that the school board election procedure could lead to "domination by political clubs..." was prophetic. Mayor's Advisory Panel on the Decentralization of the New York City Schools, Reconnection for Learning: A Community School System for New York City (New York: Praeger, 1969), 19-20.

⁸⁴In the election held in November of 1975, the voters approved a number of revisions to the City Charter which had been prepared by a State Charter Revision Commission for New York City, which was headed by Manhattan State Senator Roy Goodman.

⁸⁵Benjamin F. Lorick, Resource Handbook for Community Board Members (New York: Community Assistance Unit, 1980), 1.

⁸⁶ibid., 3.

⁸⁷New York City Charter, chap. 70, sec. 2800a.

⁸⁸State Charter Revision Commission for New York City, Community Boards (New York: State Charter Revision Commission for New York City, 1974), C-III, viii.

⁸⁹Sixteen of the eighty-three political clubs responding reported that none of their members belonged to community boards. Of the sixteen, nine were Republican clubs, six were Democratic, and one was a Conservative club. Of the sixty-seven clubs reporting that their members belonged to community boards, fifty were Democratic, sixteen were Republican, and one was Conservative. Based on these responses, eighty-nine percent of the Democratic clubs were "represented" on community boards, while sixty-four percent of the Republican clubs and fifty percent of the Conservative clubs had members who served on community boards.

⁹⁰City Charter, chap. 70, sec. 2800a.

⁹¹The New York Times, 17 August 1980. Among the "graduates" of this political training school are Leon Bogues, June Eisland, and Claire Shulman. Bogues served in the state senate from 1979 to his death in 1985. Eisland was first elected to the city council in 1977, while Shulman was elected Queens Borough President by the Queens city council delegation following Donald Manes' suicide in May 1986. She was elected by the voters to complete Manes' term in November of 1986.

⁹²Rosemary Palladino, Community Board One (Staten Island) District Manager, interview by author, tape recording, Staten Island, New York, 9 May 1985.

⁹³Lydia Brown, Community Board Six (Manhattan) District Manager, interview by author, tape recording, New York, New York, 9 May 1985.

⁹⁴Of the twenty-four district managers, eighteen reported that at least fifty percent of their board's members were also members of political clubs (one district manager estimated that seventy percent of his board's members were also club members).

⁹⁵Frank Seddio, Community Board Eighteen (Brooklyn) District Manager, interview by author, tape recording, Brooklyn, New York, 16 May 1985. In January 1985, Borough President Golden declined to reappoint twenty-three of Community Board Eighteen's members. Virtually all of those removed were aligned with Anthony Genovesi, Golden's rival for control of the county organization. Genovesi claimed that the ouster of his supporters was politically motivated. Golden contended that those left off the board had been sacked for "high absenteeism" (New York Daily News, 9 January 1985).

⁹⁶Madeleine W. Adler and Jewel Bellush, "A Look at the District Manager," New York Affairs 6 (1980): 50.

⁹⁷The appointment of "political" district managers is not new. Stanley J. Heginbotham noted the creation of the Office of Neighborhood Government and the appointment of district managers by Mayor Lindsay was seen by the Mayor's political opponents as part of an effort "to build a citywide servicing organization that would institutionalize and alternative to Democratic clubs as a basis of political support" (Heginbotham in Allen H. Barton, et al., Decentralizing City Government (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1977)). For Lindsay's initial proposal, see John V. Lindsay,

Program for the Decentralized Administration of Services in
New York City Communities (New York: Office of the Mayor,
December 1971).

CHAPTER 7

THE CLUBS AS "SERVICE CENTERS"

In the past, State elected officials didn't have funding for district offices. A lot of people who would normally go to the clubhouse now go to the district office.

Joseph Lentol¹

The Service Role of the Clubs

While political clubs are primarily concerned with, as William Foote Whyte noted, "electing its boss (or one selected by him) to public office and of providing him with the voting strength necessary in order to make good political connections," clubs have also found it necessary to provide social services and social events to the members and constituents.² As Adler and Blank observed, political leaders "realized that permanent political organizations needed more for survival than simply the trappings of campaigns; their members required...the broad spectrum of events, programs, and human interaction that Peel so clearly described in his book."³

In his seminal study of New York political clubs, Peel found that the clubs fulfilled a number of service functions for their communities. Clubs secured jobs for unemployed constituents, helped the sick gain entry to public

hospitals, and handed out turkeys at Christmas. In addition to this community service role, Peel also observed that the clubs were centers of social activity.⁴

In their study, Adler and Blank also examined the community services and social activities of political clubs. They, like Peel, found that much club activity was social in nature. However, in observing the community services offered, they found that "the political clubs in New York City seem to be less interested in community service than the clubs Peel studied."⁵

In examining the clubs during the 1980s, I found that the declining interest noted by Adler and Blank appears to have continued.

The Clubs and Community Service

In attempting to analyze the commitment of the clubs to community service and social events, I conducted a mail survey among club leaders. While not a scientific response (as only eighty-three of the three hundred clubs responded), their replies do help illustrate some trends that will be discussed.

One trend in club delivery of community services that would have been unthinkable in Peel's day is that some clubs have discontinued all forms of community service.⁶ Most of the clubs that have discontinued services are Republican clubs.⁷ It might be assumed that they ended this function because they lacked the people to provide services,

did not have access to government agencies that could be helpful to their constituents, or because they have no constituents--they weren't really political clubs.⁸

In the aforementioned survey, club leaders were asked to identify the services provided by their clubs.⁹ One significant development in service delivery appears to be the growing number of clubs offering landlord-tenant assistance.¹⁰ Many of the clubs offering this service are located in "prime" neighborhoods, and the clubs have focused on cooperative and condominium conversion and development problems.¹¹ Some clubs intervene in other types of housing problems and, in poorer areas, clubs make referrals to the New York City Housing Authority.¹²

A variable that may affect club service delivery is the age of the club. Older clubs seem to be less active in service delivery than new clubs. This may be because older clubs, many of whose members have aged along with their clubs, lack a cadre of young members (for instance, young lawyers willing to do volunteer work) to maintain the club's traditional community services.¹³ Another reason may be that the older clubs, without competition from insurgent clubs, get complacent. Younger clubs, anxious to establish themselves, may be more willing to provide services. The desire of a new club to deliver services was expressed by Rich Perosi, a founder of the North Island Democratic Club of Staten Island, in 1985: "we're not a social club, and if I have my way, we'll never have a roast beef dinner social

party."¹⁴ Perosi said that the club had been formed "to take a leadership role in the problems that affect our neighborhoods."¹⁵

Party affiliation also appears to have an impact on service provision. Democratic clubs are more likely to offer services than Republican or Conservative groups.¹⁶ The Conservative clubs responding to the survey reported that they did not offer legal, landlord-tenant, employment, or welfare services. The Conservative clubs' inability to provide legal aid or landlord-tenant assistance might be attributed to the relatively small number of lawyers that are members of such clubs.¹⁷ The unwillingness of Conservatives to provide employment or welfare services may be due to the political views of club members and the party leadership. The party has historically stood for "fiscal responsibility," and once proposed a "citizens' commission to investigate all State spending with special emphasis on the areas of welfare and education."¹⁸ A party whose members take these policy stands is likely to devote less of its effort to club-sponsored "welfare."

There are some differences in the range of services provided by Democratic and Republican clubs. Democrats are more likely to offer assistance with government contacts simply because their domination of local electoral politics often provides them with better access. As Adler and Blank found in their study, Democrats are more likely to attract tenants' groups, and this was still the case ten years la-

ter.¹⁹ Educational services seem to have declined as a club service. While some clubs still sponsor speakers and other educational activities noted by Adler and Blank (films, tutoring services, counseling, and publications), for many clubs "education" is defined as the training of the subscribing witnesses who carry the club's nominating petitions.²⁰

Welfare, once a staple of the services provided by the clubs, is one service that they are no longer likely to offer. While political clubs, as Judd pointed out, typically provided loans, food, shelter, and jobs to their nineteenth century (and, as Peel found their 1930s) constituency, the clubs of the 1980s are no longer in the business of providing direct welfare assistance in their neighborhoods.²¹ Instead, the few clubs that still provide welfare services are geared towards helping constituents obtain government benefits. In some communities, where the club's leaders may also control the local anti-poverty organizations, there is still an element of direct service as the anti-poverty funds are used to funnel aid to potential supporters.²² The major difference between this contemporary "patron-recipient" relationship and the nineteenth century political machine is that, in many cases, today's patrons are relying on the legitimate use of government funds. In contrast, the old political machines were usually fueled by illegally obtained funds.²³ As might be expected, most of the clubs offering welfare assistance today are located in

the city's low-income neighborhoods.

Race and ethnicity are other variables that appear to have an influence on the range of services political clubs offer. Clubs dominated by Jews appear to offer a broad array of services, although welfare is one service that few of the "Jewish clubs" offer. Black-dominated clubs are more likely than Italian, Irish, or WASP-dominated clubs to offer community services. In offering help, black clubs tend to emphasize the services valued by their (generally) low-income constituents: legal aid, employment, and contacts with government agencies. Also, while black clubs (like all other political clubs) have de-emphasized welfare services, they are more likely to provide welfare services than clubs dominated by any other group.²⁴

The Quantity of Club Services

Through discussions with district leaders, public officials, and other observers of "clubhouse politics" in New York City, it is clear that services, though available, are not taken advantage of. This is because the clubhouse no longer has a monopoly on service delivery. Today, a constituent in need might, instead of going to the local political club, go to the district office of his local legislator, which leads to the control of the clubs by incumbent officeholders.²⁵ In addition, there are community boards, which by Charter mandate are required to "receive and work to resolve residents' service delivery problems."²⁶ These

"service providers" have an incentive (as well as the resources) to offer help. The elected officials, according to Myles Gordon, are interested in community service since, "as a local ombudsman, the local legislator has greater local visibility with the opportunity to establish his or her own independent political base."²⁷

The advantage of such a base is obvious; by creating a base of support independent of the local clubhouse, the official becomes less dependent upon the party machinery. Indeed, they are often able to take over the local party organization. In addition to those factors already cited, there have been a number of other developments that have had a negative impact on the clubs' ability (or willingness) to provide help to significant numbers of their constituents.

Perhaps the most significant development has been the expansion of government's social welfare function. Whereas the political machine of the nineteenth century may have provided "social services" to its constituents for a price, their political support, the gradual expansion of government's social service role has, to some degree, undermined political clubs. Many of the services historically offered by political clubs are now routinely obtained from government agencies. Government provision of social services diminishes the importance of the clubs by transferring their traditional service role to what are theoretically apolitical agencies.²⁸

Another development that has weakened the service delivery of the clubs is the growing phenomenon in New York City politics of clubs without clubhouses.²⁹ In some cases, clubs sold their buildings to raise money (or because they could no longer afford to maintain them) while other clubs moved due to rent increases that made their facilities unaffordable. While these "nomadic" clubs may rent facilities (community rooms, catering halls, school auditoriums, church meeting halls) for meetings, the lack of a permanent facility makes service provision difficult. While some constituents may wait for club meetings or arrange to meet with club leaders, it's easier, for most, to go to the political club's competition: the permanent and visible district offices.

Typical of the clubs' present service role is this account, which appeared in the 13 February 1976 editions of The New York Times, of a "constituent's night" at Percy Sutton's club, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Democratic Club:

There was a young man who was having difficulty getting into law school. Mr. Sutton suggested that he get a tutor to help him....

At midnight, Mr. Sutton's wife and sister-in-law left the club. Mr. Sutton stayed on. He was talking now with a young man who had an idea for an anti-poverty project. Mr. Sutton thought he might speak to the Ford Foundation about it.

At the time, Sutton was the most important black politician in New York.³⁰ Yet, he was reduced to offering advice. There might have been a time when a leader of Percy Sutton's stature might have been able to offer help to

someone seeking admission to law school or offered to help obtain funding for a new anti-poverty program (of course, it is also possible that these were people Sutton didn't want to help).³¹ For virtually all clubs, the days of offering such assistance are long past. The material benefits once distributed by political clubs have diminished. Representative of the assistance offered by present-day clubs is this vignette from the aforementioned Sutton club meeting:

There was...an old prize fighter who said he would like to be a dishwasher. The old prize fighter had a broken face, and he shuffled when he walked. When Mr. Sutton said he remembered his name, the old prize fighter grabbed his hand and tried to kiss it.

Mr. Sutton did not offer to help the man find work.

Most clubs are also unable to provide what was once another staple of the old-line political club: high-level employment for loyal club members.³² Few clubs boast large contingents of members who occupy high-level government positions.³³ The absence of Republican clubs with large numbers of high-level government employees may be explained by Democratic control of New York City and of the governor's office and state assembly. While one might expect Democratic clubs to have larger numbers of high-level appointees, it appears that most clubs do not. This doesn't mean that clubs do not try to place their members in government employment. Apparently, a few clubs still manage to install their members in desirable positions in government or with non-profit organizations that receive government financial assistance.³⁴

The clubs' welfare activities have declined in importance to both the clubs and their constituents. The "personal touch" once provided by the club has been replaced by the "casework" of elected public officials (and their staff-members) and through the assumption of many welfare services by government agencies. The political machine, as Salter discovered, brought aid to individuals who had nowhere else to go:

It (government) is an environment that in normal times is often impersonal, remote, and meaningless to the people themselves until a wide-awake division leader appears before them, in the flesh. He...speaks their own language and knows their own wants. He often makes warm and personal that which had been cold and distant. He 'knows everybody' at City Hall, or he knows someone who does. He bridges the gap between the unseen outer world and the inadequate citizen (Salter 1957, 72).

The present-day club leader does not serve as a bridge for an inadequate citizenry. The clubs don't provide the range of services once provided to their communities. Indeed, in those communities where the "bridge" might still be useful, i. e., in the poorer black and hispanic areas, the political leaders, as Hamilton observed, have not been able to capitalize on their patron-recipient relationship in the way of their nineteenth century predecessors.³⁵ Indeed, their inability to mobilize their communities has limited their influence in the larger polity.³⁶

The Social Activities of the Clubs

Historically, the old-time political clubs were "social" institutions as well as political organizations. As

Judd explained,

Machine politicians organized a multitude of activities - picnics and patriotic gatherings (there were always Fourth of July celebrations), baseball, choirs, and youth clubs. Machines were the important community social institutions, the Democratic Club being a place where a man could get up a card game, play checkers, or just talk (Judd 1979, 65-66).

Peel discovered that the depression-era clubs also placed a premium on social events, with many of the activities geared to young people. In Peel's words, "the underlying reason for the social affairs conducted by and for the young people of both sexes is matrimonial."³⁷ Dances were the most popular event, with some clubs holding them nightly. Participant sports were also popular, with Peel reporting that "hundreds of local clubs either maintain athletic teams or cooperate with other organizations in support of a neighborhood athletic club."³⁸ Picnics, luncheons, and dinners were also common.

Adler and Blank found that a substantial portion of club energy was devoted to social events, with dances and dinner parties being most popular.³⁹ Sports, prominent in Peel's day, had declined in importance as a club activity, though many clubs still sponsored "Little League" baseball teams and other youth sports programs, leading the authors to conclude that "the emphasis on sports in many clubs seems to have shifted to children."⁴⁰

In examining the contemporary social activity of the political clubs, two trends appear. First, clubs are narrowing their social role, eliminating many of the activi-

ties traditionally engaged in at New York political clubhouses. The second development is that many of the social events mounted by the contemporary club are actually fundraisers, with any "social" activity secondary to the financial objectives.

Many clubs have discontinued all social activities except for dances or dinners.⁴¹ While dances and dinners remain the high points of the club social calendar, they are not the nightly affairs they were in the 1930s. The club dance or dinner of today is more likely to be an annual event. It's also likely to be held at a catering facility (restaurant, hotel ballroom, banquet hall) than at the clubhouse. While "social" in that such events bring club members together, the annual affair also satisfies other club needs.

First, the annual affair is an important fundraising tool. For almost half the clubs responding to a mail survey, the annual dinner or dance accounts for at least fifty percent of their annual revenues.⁴² In addition to selling tickets, the clubs publish a journal that features paid advertisements from public officials, local businesses, and others interested in "saluting" the club and its honored guests.⁴³ Since the event is a fundraiser, many clubs obtain a "drawing card," that is, a guest of honor whose presence will generate strong ticket sales and insure a large journal. For instance for its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Dinner, Manhattan's Park River Independent Democrats presented

Governor Mario M. Cuomo as a "special guest," and gave its "Lowenstein Award" to Mary Frances Berry.⁴⁴ In Cuomo and Berry, the club had two nationally prominent figures.⁴⁵ Honorees of significant stature can generate significant interest in, and turnout for, the event.

A second important function of the annual event is that clubs can honor deserving club members.⁴⁶ The accolades of their fellow club members is one way of providing members with symbolic satisfaction for their effort, giving them (and other members) an incentive for participation in future club activity.

In examining club activities through club party affiliation, it appears that Democratic clubs are more likely to offer some sort of social activity than either their Republican or Conservative counterparts. Democrats are more likely to engage in five of the seven types of activities surveyed. Republican clubs are marginally more likely to hold card parties or take trips to sporting events than Democratic clubs. With the exception of dances, Conservative clubs have abandoned virtually all other social activity. An explanation for this may be that the small size of Conservative clubs makes it difficult for them to make other social activities worthwhile. Indeed, the dearth of activities sponsored by Republican clubs may also be attributed to the small number of Republican activists. As most Republican clubs include large numbers of individuals who have joined solely to become election inspectors (many of

who are nominal Republicans, voting Democratic but registering as Republicans in order to serve as Republican election inspectors), the number of club members who might be willing to participate is probably insufficient to mount most social events.

Two additional trends concerning social activity should be noted. The first is the virtual disappearance of the "nationality event," that is, an activity geared to attract specific ethnic groups.⁴⁷ While nationality events have lost their allure, another has gained popularity: the Atlantic City gambling junket.⁴⁸ A number of clubs are now chartering bus trips to Atlantic City casinos. This is a continuation of a longstanding club tradition of gambling. As Peel observed fifty years ago, "in the regular and in many of the smaller organizations which cater to men, it is no uncommon sight to see groups of men sitting around haize-colored tables piled high with var-colored chips, and playing rummy and black-jack and stud poker."⁴⁹ Such activity was (and still is) illegal. Therefore, it might be concluded that the casino trips are nothing more than an innovative (and legal) form of traditional club activity.

A number of developments have contributed to the decline of political clubhouses as centers of social activity. Perhaps the most significant has been the "extinction" of the political clubhouse. Peel believed that "since the political club is a social contact agency, it should have a permanent fixed abode."⁵⁰ As previously noted, many clubs

Table 2.--Clubs Offering Social Activities

Party	<u>N</u>	Card Parties (%)	Dances (%)	Theater Parties (%)	Dinners (%)	Picnics (%)	Participant Sports (%)	Spectator Sports (%)
Democrats.....	55	6 (11)	42 (76)	2 (4)	30 (55)	16 (29)	9 (16)	4 (7)
Republicans.....	26	3 (12)	7 (27)	0 (0)	5 (19)	6 (23)	0 (0)	2 (8)
Conservatives...	2	0 (0)	2 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Total	83	9 (11)	51 (61)	2 (2)	35 (42)	22 (26)	9 (11)	6 (7)

Source of data: mail survey conducted by the author.

have given up their permanent homes.⁵¹ Of the clubs still maintaining permanent homes, the overwhelming majority operate out of storefront facilities.⁵² While storefronts provide visibility in the community, and facilities for holding meetings and organizing campaigns, they are usually not suited to house the variety of social events once sponsored by clubs. In Peel's time, "the customary nightly and weekly entertainments are held at the club quarters."⁵³ Today, there are no customary nightly and weekly entertainments to speak of, and political clubs, when mounting an event (especially a dance or a dinner) must find space outside the clubhouse.

Another development has been the growth of social opportunities outside the club. The club is no longer the only place for social activity in the neighborhood. A glance at daily or weekly newspapers yields a large number of social activities. Restaurants, night clubs, dances, and other events, once not available to those who attended club events, now proliferate. In addition, there are new forms of entertainment now available for personal use: television and videocassette recorders, stereo equipment, videogames. Indeed, the "matrimonial" purpose that Peel attributed to many of the events run for young people at political clubs has been replaced, in contemporary New York, by the "singles bar." In short, even if clubs were willing to provide a broad array of activities, it is questionable whether there

would be a demand for such an array of activities. There are too many other diversions, outside the club, for their members to engage in.

Another change that must be noted, as it has impacted on the clubs' social activities and on their volunteer base for service activity, is the large increase in female employment and single-parent households. As Ware observed, the growing need for women to enter the workforce "has drastically reduced a major source of recruits for the party, because both the employed and single parents have less time for social activities outside the home."⁵⁴ Less time, coupled with greater competition for that time from aforementioned non-political social activities, has undermined the clubs.

The Decline of the Club as a Service Center

The clubhouse's role as a community multi-service center has diminished. The decline of the clubhouse can be attributed to the loss of the clubs' one-time monopoly status as the provider of community services and social activity.

The assumption by government agencies of many social services historically provided by the clubs has negatively impacted the clubs' role in this field. This has been compounded by the opening of neighborhood administrative and legislative offices. Where the clubhouse was once the single bridge to the "outside" world, it might now be said

that the outside world is less remote, with many more bridges open to reach it. Clubs performing social service functions find that they are now in "competition" with other providers who may, or may not, be part of the party organization.⁵⁵

Clubs have also modified their service role in the community. The club is no longer a center of community activity. Clubs have scaled back their social function, and the rationale for such activity has changed. Peel wrote that clubs mounted social events because such activity fostered "group cohesion and loyalty...by catering to social hungers and appetites more effectively than other types of associations or other factions, the dominant party builds up indissoluble symbols of joint action and symbolism."⁵⁶ Fifty years later, the appetites and hungers of the public are being sated through other forms of leisure activity. Now, club social activity is geared towards fundraising and opportunities to offer symbolic rewards to their members; these objectives having become more critical than the group cohesion once cultivated through nightly dances and card games.

NOTES

¹The (Brooklyn) Phoenix, 28 March 1985. Assemblymember Lentol represented Brooklyn's Fiftieth Assembly District.

²William Foote Whyte, Streetcorner Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), 201.

³Adler and Blank, 116. ⁴Peel, 160-222.

⁵Adler and Blank, 136.

⁶Seven of the clubs responding to my mail survey (n= eighty-three) reported that they provided no form of community service.

⁷Six of the seven clubs reporting that they no longer provided community services were Republican clubs.

⁸At the time the mail survey was conducted (1984) the Democrats had controlled City Hall for ten years and the Governor's office for nine years. It is possible that control by the Democrats had greatly restricted the access of Republicans. Or, perhaps their constituents, believing that the Democrats had exclusive access, stopped calling on Republican clubs, making their service function unnecessary.

⁹Respondents were asked, "What services does your club provide to the community?" The number of clubs reporting that they offered particular services was as follows (n=83): education, 49 (59%); landlord-tenant assistance, 52 (63%); legal, 56 (67%); government contacts, 49 (59%); employment, 49 (59%); and welfare, 19 (23%).

¹⁰According to Adler and Blank, 46% of the clubs offered landlord-tenant assistance (136). Over 60% responding in 1984 reported affirmatively on landlord-tenant assistance.

¹¹For example, the Lenox Hill Democratic Club estab-

lished a Development Committee to deal with constituent questions concerning real estate development (demolition, renovation, construction, co-operative and condominium conversion). The club concentrated this effort on Manhattan's East Side, between Fifty-Fourth and Seventy-Seventh Streets from Second Avenue to the East River. Some clubs have shown interest in the impact of development on small business. One club, the West Brooklyn Independent Democrats, held public forums on commercial rent control, a concern to shopkeepers in areas where gentrification has forced up commercial rents. For more on gentrification, see J. John Palen and Bruce London, Gentrification, Displacement and Neighborhood Revitalization (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).

¹²However, the ability of leaders to insure preferential treatment by the Housing Authority varies.

¹³Adler and Blank (137) also found that young clubs were more likely to offer services than older clubs.

¹⁴Staten Island Advance, 13 January 1985. ¹⁵*ibid.*

¹⁶In response to the question, "What services does your club provide to the community?" the following responses were reported: Democratic clubs (n=55): education, 65%; legal, 73%; government contacts, 65%; landlord-tenant assistance, 73%; employment, 60%; and welfare, 27%. Republican clubs (n=26): education, 46%; legal, 61%; government contacts, 46%; landlord-tenant assistance, 46%; employment, 62%; and welfare, 15%. The Conservative clubs (n=2) reported providing educational (100%) and government contact (50%) services.

¹⁷Adler and Blank estimated that one percent of Conservative club members were lawyers. In the mail survey I conducted (albeit that only two Conservative clubs responded), I estimate that 3.5% of Conservative club members are lawyers.

¹⁸Conservative Party of New York State, Introducing the Conservative Party of New York State (New York: The Conservative Party of New York State, n.d.), 2.

¹⁹Adler and Blank, 137.

²⁰Subscribing witnesses must be made aware of the state's complex election law so that they can collect proper signatures--not an easy task under the law.

²¹For a description of the nineteenth century political machine's welfare function, see Judd, 65-67. For Peel's description, see Peel, 205-216.

²²For a discussion of this contemporary practice, see Hamilton, "The Patron-Recipient Relationship," 211-217. Hamilton contended that the "community control" politics of the 1960s served to depoliticize blacks. A more positive analysis is offered by J. David Greenstone and Paul E. Peterson, Race and Authority in Urban Politics (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1973). The use of anti-poverty funds as the "fuel" for political machines is discussed in Newfield and DuBrul, The Abuse of Power, 221-230.

²³As Adler and Blank observed (140), "clubs today that are located in poverty areas help their constituents obtain relief provided by the government."

²⁴Based on the mail survey I conducted, 46% of the black clubs (n=13) reported providing welfare assistance. Of the Jewish clubs (n=22), 9% reported that they offered such help, while 22% of the Italian-dominated clubs (n=18) replied that they offered welfare assistance. No Irish (n=5) or WASP club (n=5) reported providing such aid.

²⁵To illustrate the proliferation of district offices in New York City:

<u>Office (number from city)</u>	<u>District Offices</u>
City Council (35)	34
State Assembly (60)	49
State Senate (25)	21
Congress (14)	15
Total (134)	119

In addition to 119 district offices, there were 59 community board offices. Source: The City of New York, The Green Book, 1985-1986 (New York: The City of New York, Department of General Services, 1985).

²⁶The Green Book, 47.

²⁷The (Brooklyn) Phoenix, 28 March 1985.

²⁸This doesn't mean that government welfare agencies cannot be taken over by political organizations. For example, Peel found that some political clubs had taken over the distribution of emergency unemployment funds and work relief jobs during the "New Deal" era (cited in Adler and Blank, 140). More recently, Piven and Cloward wrote that the "Great Society" was President Lyndon B. Johnson's at-

tempt to create a national Democratic political machine. Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, Regulating the Poor; The Functions of Public Welfare (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), 261.

²⁹Based on a review of club directories and responses to the mail survey conducted for this project, I estimate that approximately forty percent of the political clubs operating in 1984 lacked a permanent clubhouse.

³⁰Sutton was then Manhattan Borough President. In 1977 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the Democratic mayoral nomination.

³¹For a brief discussion of the material benefits distributed by the old political machines, see Bertram M. Gross and Jeffrey F. Kraus, "The political Machine is Alive and Well," Social Policy 12 (Winter 1982): 38-46.

³²For the purpose of this study, I defined "high-level" government employment as being at the level of deputy commissioner or higher. This is the same definition employed by Adler and Blank, 140.

³³In their study, Adler and Blank asked clubs to report how many of their members held the position of deputy commissioner or above, and sixty-six percent of the clubs reported that no member was employed at this level (140).

³⁴The state court system (since the mid-1970s, the city and state courts have been administered by the Office of Court Administration, a state agency), community development programs, and "non-competitive" positions in state and local government are likely placements.

³⁵Hamilton, "The Patron-Recipient Relationship," 211-227.

³⁶ibid. ³⁷Peel, 173. ³⁸ibid., 168.

³⁹Adler and Blank, 133. ⁴⁰ibid., 134.

⁴¹According to the responses of the mail survey conducted for this study, dances (61%) and dinner parties (42%) were the most popular events (n=83).

⁴²In response to the question, "Approximately what

percentage of your club's revenues are obtained from social events?" 40 of the clubs (n=83) reported that at least half of their revenues were generated by social events (dances and dinner parties are the primary money makers for the clubs).

⁴³The ticket buyers and journal advertisers often make their purchases with the expectation of receiving something in return. As Adler and Blank discovered:

The contributors understand, and most clubs would acknowledge, that the principal reason for their contributing to political clubs is to gain the clubs' support for their particular candidates for office (or for themselves) at party conventions and caucuses, in the form of street campaigning and endorsements by the clubs (Adler and Blank 1975, 145-146).

⁴⁴The award is named for the late Congressman and political activist, who was prominent in liberal causes during the 1960s and 1970s.

⁴⁵Cuomo had been elected with the help of the New Democratic Coalition, while Dr. Berry had been recently involved in the controversial attempt by President Reagan to restructure the United States Civil Rights Commission in 1983.

⁴⁶To illustrate, at the aforementioned club event, presentations were also made to past district leaders.

⁴⁷I also found that the disappearance of nationality events has been accompanied by the decline of the ethnic-oriented political club. I identified, through my research, ten clubs that might be regarded as "nationality" clubs.

⁴⁸Casino gambling is legal in New Jersey, the New Jersey State Legislature having enacted the New Jersey Casino Control Act on 2 June 1977. The first casino, Resorts International, opened on Memorial Day in 1978.

⁴⁹Peel, 225. ⁵⁰ibid., 87.

⁵¹See note 29 of this chapter.

⁵²Of the fifty clubs in my survey that reported having permanent homes, thirty operated out of storefront locations.

⁵³Peel, 179. ⁵⁴Ware, 77.

⁵⁵Even where competing service providers are allied with the party organizations (for example, a "friendly" state legislator), their ability to provide services makes them less dependent on the club and the party organization. Ware observed that:

Incumbent legislators have...altered their conditions of services in ways which indirectly improved their own electoral prospects. This has weakened whatever dependence they may have had on their party organization (Ware 1985, 151).

⁵⁶Peel, 184.

CHAPTER 8
THE CLUBS IN ACTION: FOUR CASES

The clubs don't exist anymore? That's bull!

Gerdi Lipschutz¹

As part of my assessment of political clubs, I undertook a field study of four clubs. While the four are not necessarily representative of the contemporary clubhouse, they are, as shall be seen, interesting clubs that reflect some of the current developments in club organization and activity. Three are Democratic clubs. One is a "regular" club that is unique because it was one of two regular organizations in the same assembly district part (usually, a political club will control both male and female district leadership posts; here, each leader had their own club). The "reform" club studied seemed to be decaying as an organization, its leadership divided over the club's future and unable even to hold meetings. The third Democratic club is a newer black club in Harlem that has challenged the more established black political clubs. Like many newer black clubs, its emphasis has been on black empowerment rather than on cooperation with the white party leadership. The fourth club is a Republican club. What sets this club apart from most Republican clubs in the city is that it is,

relatively speaking, active.

What follows are some snapshots of club activity. When combined with the previously presented material it offers a useful insight into how political clubs are structured, and how some were functioning in New York during the mid-1980s.

A Queens "Regular" Democratic Club

The first club is a regular club, though it is unusual in that it is not the only organization designated as such in its assembly district part. In most neighborhoods, there is a single club which controls both the male and female district leaderships. In this community each of the leaders heads their own club, a situation due more to personality conflict than to any political dispute. The club is located on the Rockaway peninsula, a part of the city that is isolated from the rest of Queens by Jamaica Bay and connected by two bridges and a subway line to the rest of the city. Democrats hold a three-to-one voter registration edge in the assembly district part, where approximately seventy percent of the residents are white, twenty percent are black, and most of the remaining ten percent are hispanic.² All of the community's elected public officials are Democrats, and the local councilmember, state assemblymember, and state senator are members of the club.

Club History

The club was formed as a "break-off" from an existing

Democratic club in 1976 when the club's founder, who had been the female district leader as a member of the original club, was elected to the state assembly. The split came about due to personality differences between the two leaders and resulted in the establishment of two clubs whose members are loyal to the respective leaders.

Since the breakaway club's establishment, the older club has pursued a strategy of proposing mergers and, when its entreaties are ignored, attempting to oust the female leader in the primary. Efforts by each of the clubs to consolidate control over the two district leaderships have, thus far, been unsuccessful as both incumbents have survived primary challenges. Since her election to the assembly, the female leader hasn't been challenged for the Democratic nomination and in the 1986 general election defeated her Republican opponent by an almost four-to-one margin.³

Since its formation, the club has been located in a storefront situated on a major thoroughfare in the community's main commercial district. Although the district leader is also the assemblymember from the area, the clubhouse and legislative district office are in separate locations, with the assembly office occupying the second floor of a bank building.

Club Demographics

The club has grown steadily since its formation in December of 1976, and by September of 1985 had approximately

five hundred dues-paying members. In addition to the core group of members who split from the older club, membership now includes those who had left the older club prior to the split and, as the leaders of the breakaway club readily admit, people attracted to the club because of its image as the "winning club." While the older club has retained the male district leadership, the breakaway club includes the female leader (who is also the state assemblymember), a city councilmember, and a state senator. The presence of the elected officials, as shall be seen, enhances the constituency services provided through the club.

An overwhelming majority of the club's members are white, which reflects, to some degree, the ethnic and racial composition of the community (though blacks and hispanics are underrepresented in the club). About half of the club's members are women, and the dominant ethnic groups with the club are the Irish and the Jews.

According to the district leader, lawyers are the largest occupational group within the club, as approximately twenty-five percent of the club's members are lawyers. Teachers comprise twenty percent of the membership, while government employees and students account for about ten percent each of the club membership. Those over sixty-five years of age make up the largest single age group in the club (forty percent).⁴

Club Leadership

The club is run by an eight-member executive board. However, it appears that the female district leader is the moving force within the club. Board members and the club "rank and file" wait for cues from the district leader on major issues. Club endorsements and the relationship with the older club are matters where the district leader has a great deal of influence.

Club Activities and Services

While the club meets weekly, there are few formal membership meetings. The meetings might be more accurately characterized as "constituent's nights," as the bulk of the evening is consumed by personal contacts between the female leader and her constituents.

Another characteristic that seems to set this club apart from most clubs is that it appears to be an active provider of services, primarily through the leader's combination of party (the district leadership) and public office (the assembly seat). She conceded that her ability to provide services as district leader is enhanced by the legislative post: "the club meetings are really for people who can't get to my district office during the day."⁵ Services include government contacts; employment referrals (while district leaders control very little patronage, they do make recommendations to patronage dispensers, such

as the county leader); and constituent problems relating to public service delivery. The leader sees club services as an extension of the constituency services provided through her legislative office.

The sole club-sponsored social event is an annual dinner-dance, which is held at a local catering hall. The event is a major revenue producer as the dinner and the journal published in conjunction with the event account for about fifty percent of the club's operating funds. It also provides an opportunity to honor club and community achievement as awards are bestowed at a ceremony held during the affair. Awards recognize club members for the club activity and, in an effort to reach beyond the club, the work of community leaders. As one club officer put it, "we get a chance to bring 'outsiders' into the club."⁶

The club's electoral activities focus on petitioning for primaries and trying to get out the vote on primary and election day. According to the district leader, no more than ten percent of the club's members take part in the effort, and at least one-third of the election districts lack "captains."⁷ In recent years the club has hired teenagers to distribute campaign literature. In addition to campaigns for public office, the club has been active in local community school board elections, endorsing candidates. In 1983 a club member was elected to the local school board, with the endorsement of the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), and the club tends to support the UFT's positions. As the

leader explained, "our policy is to support the UFT."⁸

There were five club members on the local community board and two were serving on a neighborhood policy board.⁹ While the district leader contended that she did not "control" the votes of these members, she admitted to "advising" the board members on certain issues, and that her advice was often followed.¹⁰

There are two major impediments to the club's continued growth. First is the existing older club. As county leader, Donald Manes had maintained a policy of dividing patronage between the two regular clubs. This, according to the club president, "does not make us as strong as we should be."¹¹ Manes had also discouraged primary fights. What his successors do will have a bearing on the continuance of the present relationship between the two clubs.

A second factor that may affect the club is the fallout from the leader's involvement in the corruption scandal. She had placed two "no show" secretaries on her assembly payroll at the request of Richard L. Rubin, Manes' chief patronage dispenser. The leader testified under a grant of immunity against Rubin in federal court, and resigned her assembly seat in March of 1987.¹² What effect this will have on the club's fortunes remains to be seen.

Conclusion

The key to the club's growth had been the dual office-holding of the club's founder. Unlike other clubs,

which have reduced their service role, this club continued to provide a broad range of community services. As assemblymember, the district leader effectively offered constituent services. In many communities the political clubs have relinquished their service functions to district legislative offices.¹³ In this community, the club and the legislative office, though separate, complemented each other. Club and legislative services were blurred, enhancing the legislator's prestige and the club's visibility in the community.

In a special election held to replace the incumbent, a district leader from another part of the district was elected to the assembly. The club's future will depend on the course of its relationship with the older regular club, and whether, as district leader, the former state assemblymember (though she resigned from the assembly, she retained the district leadership) can maintain the club without the advantages of the assembly seat. If she becomes vulnerable, will the older club reassert itself? Or, will a new club emerge?

A Brooklyn Republican Club

This club is an anomaly in New York City politics as it is an active Republican club. Most of the Republican clubs in the city are small and inactive.¹⁴ In fact, in many areas of the city, Republican club membership is inflated due to the number of people who join in order to be-

come election inspectors. Since the election law requires that the polls be staffed by equal numbers of Democratic and Republican inspectors, in many parts of the city Democrats join the Republican club (changing their party affiliation, though not their allegiance) in order to become inspectors. The Republican clubs, hard pressed for members and cash, accept these Democrats and their "inspector's dues." The admittance of these would-be inspectors to the Republican clubs serves to inflate their membership rolls and provide many clubs with a substantial portion of their operating funds. However, the practice of accepting individuals into the club so that they can become election inspectors illustrates a serious problem facing the Republican party in New York City: an insufficient number of party activists.¹⁵

The club in question does not accept ex-Democrats as election inspectors (it has enough members to staff the polling places). While not competitive with the Democrats (the Democrats control all the elective offices within the area), the club is one of a handful that are active. Depending on who you talk to, these clubs are anomalies or, if you believe the leaders of this club, the wave of the future.

The club is located in an area of Brooklyn where most of the residents are white and middle-class.¹⁶ The major ethnic groups in the area are Italian, Jewish, and Irish, and the club draws much of its membership from the substantial pool of single-family homeowners of Italian descent.¹⁷

Despite the relatively high level of club activity, Democrats maintain a five-to-one registration advantage in the assembly district and all elected public officials from the neighborhoods are Democrats. Despite the Democrats' electoral dominance, President Reagan came within two thousand votes of carrying the district in 1984, although the President lacked "coattails." While Reagan was drawing forty-eight percent of the vote in the district, the incumbent Democratic assemblymember outpolled her Republican opponent by a better than two-to-one margin.¹⁸

Club History

The club grew out of the anti-Lindsay movement of 1969.¹⁹ Its first members were a breakaway element from the area's existing Republican club that was (like most of the Republican organization clubs) supporting Mayor John V. Lindsay's re-election campaign. The insurgents supported John Marchi, a Staten Island State Senator, who defeated Lindsay in the Republican primary, winning seventy-seven percent in this assembly district.²⁰

In 1970, the incumbent Republican district leaders were defeated by insurgents supported by the new club. In 1972, the club played a major role in the battle for control of the Kings County Republican organization as those who had supported Marchi's 1969 effort attempted to wrest power from the party leaders who had remained faithful to Lindsay. The insurgents were victorious, and George Clark

was installed as the new county leader in 1973.²¹

Since then, the club has faced one significant challenge. In 1977, the club supported the mayoral candidacy of State Senator Roy M. Goodman, who was challenged in the primary by radio personality Barry Farber.²² While carrying the district for Goodman, the club angered some Republicans who favored Farber's more conservative stance. In 1978, these disaffected Republicans challenged the incumbent male district leader, who survived this challenge by sixty-eight votes.²³ Following the primary, the leaders of the failed insurgency crossed over to the Democrats, while most of the followers of the insurgency rejoined the established Republican club.

According to a former district leader affiliated with the club, the insurgency's leadership switched parties to, in his words, "get something."²⁴ It is his contention that the leading opponents were more interested in taking political power than anything else, and decided to switch when they concluded that the declining party registration in the district makes it more difficult for insurgents to take control. As the former district leader explained, as party enrollment declines, the leader's control is enhanced since "he has the same number of inspectors, clerks at the Board of Elections, patronage employees in the courts."²⁵ Therefore, as enrollment declines, the established leadership controls a greater proportion of the potential primary vote.

As a result, it becomes harder to dislodge incumbent district leaders. The club's candidates for district leaderships have faced no opposition since the 1978 insurgency.

While the club is currently located in a storefront in a residential neighborhood, it has been forced to relocate on a number of occasions in recent years. The first move took place in 1982, following the decennial reapportionment of state assembly districts. The existing clubhouse was not within the boundaries of the new district, so new quarters (the club rented a dance studio on evenings when dance classes were not being held) were obtained. In mid-1983 the building's owners evicted the dance studio (and the club), and the club moved to a storefront on a commercial strip in the district. In 1984, their landlord sold the building and the club moved to its present site. The club has always rented its quarters; while the club's leaders considered purchasing a building in the mid-1970s, that option was rejected as being too expensive.

Club Demographics

The club has experienced erratic growth. Its greatest growth took place between 1972 and 1977 as the club played an active role in Brooklyn Republican politics. The club suffered a membership decline in 1977 and 1978 as members opposed to the Goodman endorsement left the club. In 1979, the club recovered many of the members who had left to join the insurgency, and membership has since remained stable at

approximately three hundred members.

Virtually all of the club's members are white. The present male district leader explained the lack of black and hispanic members as a result of a combination of two factors: the small number of blacks and hispanics living in the district, and the inability of the Republican party in New York City to attract black and hispanic support.²⁶

Italians are the largest ethnic group in the club (over fifty percent of the club's members are Italian-Americans), while the remainder of the club's membership is almost equally divided between Irish and Jewish members. Club leaders readily admitted that the ethnic composition of the club does not reflect that of the district. One club leader believed that this had been a handicap in elections since "our candidates are usually Italian, while a majority of voters in the district are Jewish."²⁷

About seventy percent of the club's members are women, more than half of whom are senior citizens. Some of the women joined the club in order to become election inspectors.²⁸ About twenty-five percent of the club's members work in either government or the legal profession, while about half of the members are housewives. As far as length of membership is concerned, nearly three in four members had been with the club at least seven years.²⁹ Only fifteen percent of the club's members had been with the club for three years or less, which may indicate that the club is

having some difficulty recruiting new members.

Club Leadership

The club is formally run by a six-member executive board. However, the dominant force in the club has been the founding district leader, George Clark. Though he has gone on to serve as county leader and state party chair, he has continued to influence the club (despite having given up the district leadership in 1979).

The current district leader (who also serves as club president) took office in 1985.³⁰ Until then, he had been the club vice president after coming into the club through the Young Republican movement.³¹

While club officers are elected by the membership, the leadership has rarely been challenged. Both current leaders, and the two former male district leaders appear to be able to sway many members. The influence of these leaders may be due to the lack of a written constitution, a document that might serve to limit the powers of the club leadership or to provide a mechanism for challenge. Another factor in the leadership's influential position appears to be the degree of deference that club members offer, especially to the founding leader.

Club Activities and Services

The club holds monthly meetings featuring a guest speaker and announcements of future club activities. Atten-

dance at the meetings depends on the interest generated by the guest speaker. Prominent guest speakers have attracted as many as 150 people. At other times, when the speaker is not as well-known, turnout may not exceed twenty-five. Past speakers have included members of Congress, mid-level officials of the Reagan administration, and Republican candidates for elective office.

The actual business of the club is conducted at bi-monthly executive board meetings. Here, major club decisions are made. These meetings are followed by constituents' nights, when local residents seeking help meet with the male and female district leaders and other members of the executive board. Usually, four or five people seek assistance each night. While much of the club's "casework" involved untangling bureaucratic red tape, the club has also been asked to help secure appointments to military service academies, help obtain scholarships from private colleges, provide employment, and to help in obtaining excuses or exemptions from jury duty. Much of the club's patronage has come from either the New York City Board of Elections (two club members hold senior management positions there) or the state court system. While no club member holds a judgeship or high-level position in either city or state government, some patronage is available.³² In recent years, the club has had some difficulty placing people at the Board of Elections because the Deputy Executive Director, Alfred Panta-

leone (who is also the Kings County Republican leader), has, due to disputes between the club and the county organization, cut off the club's patronage at the board.³³

The club sponsors an annual dinner which is held at a local restaurant. The dinner serves as a testimonial to someone the club wishes to honor and is a major source of income for the club.³⁴ In addition, there are three parties held annually at the clubhouse (Columbus Day, Saint Patrick's Day, and Christmas-Chanukah), which are "get-togethers" for the club membership.

The club's major electoral effort is petition signature gathering. Aside from major "get out the vote" efforts during the 1977, 1978, and 1980 primaries, the club has had little to do during the primaries.³⁵ General election campaigns have not generated much activity since, in most cases, the result is a foregone conclusion: a Democratic victory. The club's one-time male district leader (1979-1985), and an unsuccessful candidate for a number of elective offices, summarized the club's general election activity:

We don't spend alot of money or alot of time because we know we're not going to win. When I recruited candidates, I would let them know right away. Don't expect to win.

At best, as far as local elections are concerned, the club runs token campaigns, with perhaps one bulk mailing urging support for local Republican candidates. In years when there are Republican statewide or national candidates

with a chance of doing well, the club will step up its activity in conjunction with a larger county or statewide effort. In the 1985 elections, the club did send about twenty-five members to assist on Election Day in the field operation for a Republican city council candidate who had a good chance of winning in another part of Brooklyn. As the club's current male district leader explained, "since we didn't have a chance in our election, we might as well send our people where we have a shot."³⁶ The club's limited success in electoral politics also extends to the local community school board. Three club members serve on a local community planning board, although one of the club's former leaders pointed out that the three had been appointed because of their activity in local civic associations and "not because Howard Golden was giving us (the club) a break."³⁷

Conclusion

While one of the city's more active Republican clubs, the continued growth of the club probably depends on the ability of local Republican leaders to capitalize on statewide and national Republican gains. During the first dozen years of the club's existence it could count on the help of George Clark, who was a high-ranking official in both the county and state party organizations. With his departure from these posts, the club does not have the support of a key leader at either the county or state organization level. The club's relationship with the present county leader

is not good, and has affected the club's ability to obtain patronage. Founded as a conservative Republican club, the only challenge to the club took place when it strayed ideologically. While another ideological insurgency appears unlikely, a challenge inspired by the county leadership, if tension continues, is possible.

A Black Manhattan Democratic Club

The club is located in Central Harlem, an area of Manhattan that is nearly one hundred percent black. Like other black neighborhoods in the city, the Democrats enjoy an overwhelming voter registration edge: the ratio in this assembly district part is nearly twenty-to-one, in favor of the Democrats.³⁸ The elected officials from the community are all Democrats, yet only the city councilmember (who is also the male district leader) actually belongs to this club.

Club History

The club is actually the second group formed by the founder to counter what he called the "Harlem Democratic machine."³⁹ From 1971 to 1977, the club's founder was president of an insurgent Democratic club in Harlem. After three unsuccessful efforts to dislodge the incumbent district leaders, the club disbanded.⁴⁰

In 1980 the present club was formed following the election of insurgent male and female co-leaders. The ini-

tial effort had been through a campaign committee formed for the primary. Following their victory, the new leaders decided to institutionalize their group by forming a new club.

In July 1985, the male leader of the club challenged the incumbent city councilmember in the Democratic primary. The major issue was the challenger's contention that the incumbent, a long-time councilmember, had failed to use his position to advance the community's interests. The challenger, the son of a well-known black psychologist, claimed that the established black leadership in New York had, historically, been too willing to accommodate the white leadership of the Democratic Party.⁴¹ This relationship, the challenger and his supporters believed, placed blacks in a subordinate position.⁴² The challenge was unsuccessful, as the incumbent (who was also a male leader in another part of the district) was re-nominated. However, the incumbent died shortly after the primary and the defeated challenger was then selected to run in his place.⁴³ Following the election, in which he was elected, he was appointed by the council to complete the two months remaining in his predecessor's term.⁴⁴

Since its founding, the club has occupied an apartment in a privately-owned apartment building in a residential neighborhood. The club had the apartment gutted and converted into a single, large room. The space is utilized for club meetings and most club functions. The stability of club

location is viewed as an asset by the club's leaders since, over time, people in the community have learned of the location and have come to the club--to join and to seek aid.

Club Demographics

The club has approximately three hundred dues-paying members; ninety-five percent of whom are black. More than half of the club's members are women. No single occupational group dominates the club. The club is almost even divided among blue collar workers, white collar workers, public employees, housewives, and the unemployed. Unlike many other political clubs (especially Democratic clubs) in New York City, there are very few lawyers (approximately one percent of the club's members are attorneys). The club has experienced substantial membership growth, as more than forty percent of the club's members had been with the club for one year or less. This rapid expansion can be attributed to the club's recent electoral success. The club's leaders expect that the councilmanic election victory will stimulate additional membership growth.

Club Leadership

Club officers include a president, four vice presidents, a secretary, a treasurer, a business manager, and a legal advisor. Club meetings I attended featured extended debate before the adoption of club policies. All club members receive a copy of the club constitution, and some mem-

bers referred to it during the meetings. The club's leaders seem to welcome the membership's participation in decision-making, contending that this is one of the features that distinguishes this club from the regular Harlem Democratic clubs. As the male district leader said, "in other clubs, the leaders decide. Here, the members decide."⁴⁵

Club Activities and Services

Club meetings are held weekly, and are usually attended by anywhere between thirty and sixty members. Meetings include reports from the district leaders and announcements of club and community activities. In addition, leadership meetings are held weekly, where constituents meet with club leaders.

The club divides its activities into what the male leader labels constituent services and community activities. As might be expected in a poverty-stricken community, many of the requests for assistance concern housing and employment. The club attempts to assist those seeking entry-level jobs, but has been handicapped by a lack of patronage jobs suitable for its constituency. Many of the jobs that might be appropriate are covered by civil service hiring procedures.⁴⁶ The club offers referrals for skills training and, where possible, places people in the non-profit and private sectors.

Housing assistance is often requested from the club. The largest source of low-income housing is the New York

City Housing Authority.⁴⁷ The club writes letters supporting the applications of constituents seeking apartments in one of the Authority's developments. The club's male leader estimates that about half of the club's "cases" obtain apartments, although he is not sure whether the club's help matters.

One other constituent service issue that the club handles on a regular basis are matters relating to military service. Often, the club makes referrals to the area's Congressman, who has opposed the club in local primaries. When asked why one of the Harlem regulars would be willing to help, the club's female leader noted that "our people are also in his district."⁴⁸

The club also offers community services. Some of these services are reminiscent of the activity of clubs in earlier times.⁴⁹ For example, in conjunction with the Salvation Army, the club has conducted a summer lunch program. It has also sponsored educational programs, such as workshops on housing revitalization, the prospect of gentrification and its potential impact on Harlem, and a series of lectures on the history of Harlem politics.

According to the co-leaders, the club's emphasis on constituent and community services was an attempt by the club to compensate for the lack of elected public officials. By providing an array of services, the club's leaders hoped to build a base of support that could, through voter mobil-

ization, be translated into electoral support.

The club also sponsors an annual dinner, conducts raffles, and publishes an annual journal. These activities generate about sixty percent of the club's revenues, with the remainder coming from dues. Like other clubs, this one has come to rely on social events for fundraising.

As might be expected, the club undertakes petitioning and get out the vote efforts. One of the club's handicaps has been the low socio-economic status of its membership. Many club members hold two jobs, and cannot devote much time to the electoral mobilization effort.

In addition to the councilmanic seat won by the male district leader in 1985, one other club member serves in an elective office, having been elected to the civil court in 1982. Club members are active in the institutions of neighborhood governance; three members belong to the community school board; two are on a community planning board, and two serve on a neighborhood policy board.

Conclusion

This club is one of a growing number of anti-establishment black clubs that have emerged as an organizational base for those seeking to displace the more establishment-oriented blacks who have dominated clubhouse politics in the black community. Lacking a cadre of elected officials, the club pursued a strategy of offering services as a means of building a strong political base. The election of the

club's male leader to the city council in 1985 is a significant event in the club's history. First, it provides the club with an opportunity to enhance its constituent service delivery through the dual party-public office holding of its male leader. Second, as the councilmanic district is geographically larger than the club's assembly district part, there is the potential for the club to expand its power base.⁵⁰ Finally, there is always the possibility that the club, now that it has attained a degree of political power, will moderate its orientation and evolve into more of an establishment-oriented black political club.

A "Reform" Manhattan Democratic Club

This reform club operates on Manhattan's East Side. It is found in an area of the borough that is predominantly white and upper middle class.⁵¹ The assembly district where the club is located is one of the few in the city where even thirty percent of the enrolled voters are registered Republicans.⁵² This is reflected in the party affiliation of the community's elected officials. Republicans represent the neighborhood in both the United States House of Representatives and the state senate.⁵³ Yet, the area can be regarded as liberal: both of the aforementioned Republicans are part of the party's liberal wing and have attracted support from Democrats and independents. In the 1984 election, Walter Mondale carried the district by forty-three hundred votes.⁵⁴

Club History

The club was founded in 1948 as a "break-off" from the assembly district's regular club. According to a club published newsletter that appeared during the summer of 1984, the insurgents formed a club because they

felt the need to build an effective Democratic campaign organization on the East Side. They believed...that the (regular) club had not worked hard enough to nominate good candidates and elect them to office. Also, they felt that the club had often let down the Democratic ticket in statewide races.

In 1951, insurgents won the county committee seats from the southern part of the assembly district. However, this victory was nullified by the county committee's decision to merge the two parts into a single district (leaving the district in the hands of the regulars). In 1952, the club's candidates for state committee were victorious, and in 1953, the insurgents were able to win the county committee seats. Since then, the club has controlled the district leadership posts in the assembly district. Subsequent reorganizations have resulted in the division of the district into three parts and club members hold all six leadership posts. Since the mid-1950s, the club has faced no serious opposition to its control of these posts. The club has been active in most reform Democratic causes and supported Eugene McCarthy's 1968 and Edward Kennedy's 1980 campaigns for the Democratic presidential nomination.

A club member has represented the district in the

state assembly since 1971. However, club efforts to elect members or favored candidates to other offices have been unsuccessful. The Republican incumbents have prevailed, and the councilmanic seats that include portions of the club's district are occupied by Democrats who are affiliated with clubs in other assembly districts.

The club is located in a small storefront on a commercial street in the northernmost portion of the district. Instability of clubhouse location has been a problem for the club. The club has moved six times since its formation, mainly because of rapidly rising commercial rents on Manhattan's East Side.⁵⁵

Club Demographics

The club's membership has risen and fallen throughout the club's history. Membership peaked in the late 1960s at the height of the Viet Nam War when over one thousand people were members. The end of the war and the absence of a similar "burning issue," membership declined.⁵⁶ In the 1980s the club's membership has averaged approximately five hundred, with the number increasing in years when there are intense primary battles as the supporters of candidates bring new members into the club in an effort to secure the club's endorsement. When the decision is made, many of the new members leave the club.⁵⁷

There are few blacks or hispanics in the club. About half of the club's members are WASPs; about twenty-five

percent of the members are Jewish, and the remaining twenty-five percent are divided among other white ethnics. About sixty percent of the club's members are women. Most of the members are professionals (lawyers, teachers, white collar government employees) or housewives. There are few blue collar workers, students, or unemployed people in the club.

Club Leadership

There is a fifteen member executive committee, comprised of a president, five vice presidents, treasurer, secretary, parliamentarian, and the six district leaders (male and female co-leaders from each of the three parts). The officers are chosen annually by the general membership. The executive committee meets monthly. One of the problems besetting the leadership seems to be a lack of coordination. Symptomatic of this problem is an incident that took place at the 1985 Manhattan Judicial Convention, where one of the club's male district leaders made a deal with the county leader concerning the nomination of judicial candidates without consulting (or informing) the club's other delegates to the convention.⁵⁸ As the club president during that period recalled, "It was bad enough that he had made a deal without telling us...but then he didn't even bother to tell us what the deal was, and I ended up voting for other candidates."⁵⁹ In recent years the club's leaders have disagreed over endorsements (especially in contests involving Andrew Stein and efforts by Stein's father, Jerry Finkel-

stein, to further his son's political career) and key community issues such as real estate development. The leadership split reflects the larger division within the club.

On one hand, there are members who continue to adhere to a progressive reform ethos of Democratic organizational politics. It was this faction that supported Frank J. Barbaro's 1981 and Carol Bellamy's 1985 campaigns against Mayor Koch. On the other side are those who've joined the club because they were interested in getting involved in local politics and the club is considered "the only game in town." In short, the club has attracted a number of members who do not identify with the club's reform tradition. It was this group that supported Koch in 1981 and 1985, as well as his unsuccessful 1982 quest for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination. Throughout the 1980s, this has divided the club. However, by 1985, neither faction had been able to gain control. Some of the club's leaders were discussing the formation of a new club, but these discussions had not progressed toward action.⁶⁰

Club Activities and Services

Until the late 1970s, the club offered an array of community and constituent services. In addition to such traditional services as helping with government agencies, the club once ran a Saturday morning free tutorial program for children.⁶¹ These programs have been discontinued, with legislative district offices and other community service or-

ganizations filling the void. In my discussions with club leaders, two schools of thought emerged regarding the end of the service function. One view is that the club's present location makes service delivery difficult. The location of the clubhouse at the northern end of the district makes it inconvenient for those living in the rest of the district. This makes it difficult to attract volunteers or those who might need help.

The second view is that the club no longer possesses a cadre of members willing to undertake the effort. This shortage of volunteers also hampers the club's electoral efforts. In recent years, the club has, according to one district leader, supplemented its volunteer petitioning effort with paid canvassers.⁶² The club's leafletting and get out the vote efforts have also suffered. Here, the manpower shortage is magnified by the unwillingness of some club activists to work on behalf of club-endorsed candidates whom they do not personally support. While this may be in keeping with the reform tradition of refusing to mindlessly follow club edicts, it has a negative impact on the club's ability to deliver votes. It appears that the club's most viable electoral activity is the renting of the clubhouse to club-endorsed candidates for use as a campaign headquarters.⁶³ However, the candidate must develop their own campaign organization.

The club holds an annual dinner at a local restau-

rant. At this event awards are given to elected officials, club members, and community residents. The dinner generates about half of the club's revenue. In the early 1980s the club sponsored a series of Sunday brunches, which were discontinued for lack of interest.

In the summer of 1984 the club revived its newsletter. The offset-printed publication is mailed to all club members and includes club news, feature stories, and notices of meetings and other information. This newsletter has become the primary mode of communication between the club's leaders and membership.⁶⁴

In addition to the district's assemblymember, the club has elected a number of judges, both on the civil court and the state supreme court. There are four club members on the local community planning board and two sit on the local community school board.

Finally, one of the founding club members, who is still active in the club (and a member of the Democratic State Committee), is a Commissioner of the New York City Board of Elections.⁶⁵

Conclusion

The Manhattan reform club is one that seems to be on the decline. Membership has dropped by fifty percent since its peak during the Viet Nam War. In recent years, the club's domination of local politics has led to the admission of members lacking a commitment to the reform "tradition,"

seriously dividing the club. Finally, a shortage of volunteers (which is not unique to this club) has forced the club to scale down its campaign efforts and, at least in the minds of some members, its service operation.

The club's dominance of Democratic politics in the assembly district seems to be due to a lack of opposition. In electoral contests with clubs from other assembly districts, the club has done poorly. It seems possible that a well-organized club could wrest control of party posts away from the club, ending the present state of victory by default.

The Cases: A Summary

The four clubs studied are not representative of the state of party organization clubs in New York. They do, however, offer some interesting insights into clubs and their activities. While one should not use these examples to generalize about all clubs in New York City, there are some observations that can be made.

First, it is clear that the clubs are smaller in size than they once were. The shrinkage of membership makes club operation difficult; there are fewer people to do the club's work. Neighborhoods go without block captains; people have to be paid to act as subscribing witnesses or to do "lit drops," and volunteers aren't available to perform constituent service.⁶⁶ In the case of the black club, the small corps of activists might be reasonably attributed to the membership's scarcity of leisure time. In the case of the

Republican club, it is an indication of the party's weakness (this club is exceptional because of its relatively high level of activity, as most Republican clubs do much less) in New York City. The reform club's small cadre seems to be the product of club infighting, and the higher socio-economic status of their membership. While affording them a greater degree of leisure time, the socio-economic status of the membership might work against their active involvement since they have many opportunities to engage in leisure activity and they, for the most part, do not need the "ladder of opportunity" that club activity might provide.⁶⁷ Finally, the Queens club was limited because of the existence of a competitive regular organization within their assembly district part.

In two of the four clubs studied it appears that club leaders exercise a great deal of authority. In the black club there has been an effort to disperse authority, while the reform club has become so factionalized that strong leadership seems impossible. In looking at leadership styles at the four clubs, I find that two clubs are dominated by either a "strong man" or small leadership clique that attempts to impose its will on the rest of the club (or can do so because they are trusted and respected by the membership).

In terms of club activity, it is reasonable to state that clubs (at least those studied) no longer offer the

range of services that political clubs once provided. Of the clubs studied, the black club comes closest to the traditional service role. It should be noted that the constituency served by this club most closely resembles the traditional recipients of club provided services, i.e., "poor" people, who fall into a "patron-client" relationship with the club. Services at the Queens club complemented those offered by the district leader in her role as an elected public official. The Brooklyn Republican club is not called upon very often to provide help. Finally, the Manhattan reform club has given up--services are not offered (whether it be because they can no longer find the volunteers to provide help or because those in need are finding help elsewhere). Even when clubs offer a service, they are not always called upon. Other organizations have replaced political clubs in this regard. The district leader, who may have once seen dozens of constituents at his club in a given evening, may not see anyone during a contemporary "constituent's night." There are too many other places to go. Too many others willing to help. Too many others can do the job as well as the district leader. What seems to remain within the purview (almost exclusively) of the club is the appeal for the club to do something illegal.⁶⁸

The electoral mobilization activities of these clubs are also more limited. The cadre of volunteers who gathered

signatures on nominating petitions is smaller, Candidate-centered campaigns rely on their own organizations, using the clubs to gather their petitions or simply renting the club's headquarters. The network of block captains that linked the club to the community and brought the vote out on election day has withered away. There are areas where clubs have no block captains. The clubhouse, once a nightly beehive of activity, is now closed most of the time. The clubs spend much of their time on electoral mobilization, and are most effective in electing district leaders, members of the state assembly and state senate, and civil court judges, mainly because of a lack of opposition. However, beyond these victories by default in low visibility elections, where interest is greater on the part of potential candidates, the voters, and other political actors, the clubs (and the party organizations) are less effective. In the high visibility elections there are more sophisticated forms of campaign organization (candidate-centered, professionally-staffed) and technology which are more effective at mobilizing potential supporters.⁶⁹ The party organization's support, once decisive in primary and general elections even at the statewide level, is no longer a guarantee of victory.

The clubs have become involved in the institutions of neighborhood governance. In some instances, clubs have been able to dominate the local school and planning boards.⁷⁰

In most instances, the clubs do not dominate. There are many other groups interested in the activities of these panels, and they make an effort to place their people on these boards as well. None of the four clubs studied in this chapter could be regarded as having control over a planning or school board.⁷¹ Rather, we see a situation where the clubs are allied with others (for example, the United Federation of Teachers).

In summary, what we find functioning in many neighborhoods of New York today are political clubs of diminished significance. Membership is smaller, and active members are even fewer in number. The array of roles the political club once performed in the community have been reduced, in most instances, to electoral mobilization. Even that one role has become more difficult for the clubs to undertake.

Another clue to the changing nature of the political club is their fragile status. A Democratic club that loses its party or elected officials usually disbands, being unable to survive without the status and power that accrues from having a district leader or state legislator in the clubhouse. Republican and Conservative clubs, supporters of the perennial losers in New York City politics, are small (Republican club membership inflated by the presence of the election inspectors) and in most areas of the city are capable of mounting nothing more than a token campaign

While the political club still exists, it is a shadow of the clubs of Peel's day. As we shall see, this has had an impact on the county organizations and politics and government on a wider scale in New York City.

NOTES

¹Gerdi E. Lipschutz, interview by author, Tape recording, Far Rockaway, New York, 19 November 1985.

²All data relating to race and ethnicity is based on estimates provided by the district leaders from the area. Where possible, I compared their estimates to census data. However, such a comparison cannot be precise as census tracts do not correspond precisely to political maps.

³The New York Times, 5 November 1986. The incumbent received over 13,500 votes while her Republican opponent polled slightly over 3,400.

⁴Data provided by district leader.

⁵District leader, interview by author, Tape recording, Far Rockaway, New York, 21 November 1985.

⁶Club vice president, interview by author, Tape recording, Far Rockaway, New York, 21 November 1985.

⁷The block captain historically functioned as the liaison between the club and the street where the captain lived (or covered). The captain's responsibility was to get to know each voter, what his or her concerns were, and to make sure that the club responded to neighborhood problems. According to the district leader, "as block captains move or die or just give up, we can't find replacements." Interview, *ibid.* For more on the block captain, see Costikyan, 57-84.

⁸District leader, interview. The United Federation of Teachers (UFT), the teachers' union, has been extremely active (some would say dominant) in school board politics. For more on the union and school decentralization in New York City, see Rogers and Chung.

⁹Neighborhood policy boards are another local decision-making institution. Mandated in designated "poverty areas," they provide input as to how federal anti-poverty

funds are to be spent in the affected communities.

¹⁰District leader, interview. However, the leader also contended that her advice was just one opinion to the board members from her club. Many, she said, "belong to civic associations and other groups....Sometimes, they vote those interests."

¹¹Club president, interview by author, Tape recording, Far Rockaway, New York, 15 November 1985.

¹²Rubin was convicted of seven counts of mail fraud and conspiracy to commit mail fraud, one count of conspiracy to commit tax fraud, and two counts of tax fraud. The assemblymember, Gerdi E. Lipschutz, resigned on 9 March 1987. Her successor, Audrey Pheffer, a district leader from the Harry S. Truman Democratic club in another part of the district leader, was elected 28 April 1987.

¹³Ware, 153-160.

¹⁴Club size is discussed in chapter five.

¹⁵The insufficient number of party activists has made it difficult for the Republicans to mount more than a token campaign in New York City.

¹⁶According to the New York State Legislative Task Force on Reapportionment, the 1980 census racial breakdown for this assembly district is as follows: White, 103,103 (87.8%); Black, 11,080 (9.4%); Other, 3,243 (2.8%).

¹⁷Male district leader, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 3 October 1985.

¹⁸Mondale defeated Reagan in the district, 21,126 to 19,150. At the same time, the incumbent Democratic Assemblymember received 25,107 votes to her opponent's 11,706. Source: New York City Board of Elections.

¹⁹John V. Lindsay had been elected Mayor as the Republican-Liberal candidate in 1965. In 1969, Lindsay was challenged by State Senator John Marchi for the Republican nomination. Lindsay lost the Republican primary, but was re-elected as the Liberal Party candidate in the general election.

²⁰Joseph L. Gentili, "The History of the Brooklyn Re-

publican Party," unpublished manuscript, 1984; original in archives of the Douglas MacArthur Republican Club, Brooklyn, NY, 11.

²¹ *ibid.*, 11-12.

²² Goodman defeated Farber in the primary. Both were candidates in the general election (Farber as the nominee of the Conservatives), and were defeated by Edward I. Koch, the Democratic candidate. The fourth candidate in the general election was Mario Cuomo, who ran on the Liberal line following his loss to Koch in the Democratic primary.

²³ Gentile, 13.

²⁴ Former district leader (1979-1985), interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 9 October 1985.

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ Male district leader, interview by author, Tape recording, Brooklyn, New York, 16 October 1985.

²⁷ Club secretary, interview by author, Tape recording, Brooklyn, New York, 16 October 1985.

²⁸ Estimate offered by male district leader. However, he contended that, unlike other clubs where Democrats became Republicans in order to become inspectors, "our people were already Republicans when they joined." Interview, 3 October 1985.

²⁹ Based on response to mail survey submitted by the club.

³⁰ His predecessor, who had served since 1979, resigned because of personal problems which made it difficult for him to continue in his leadership role.

³¹ In Brooklyn there were two Young Republican clubs. These clubs were not confined to an assembly district, but covered wider geographic areas.

³² Patronage ranged from the per diem election inspectors to entry-level clerical positions at the Board of Elections and in the Office of Court Administration, to better paying positions as law clerks and law secretaries. In 1985,

entry-level salaries at the Board of Elections were about \$13,000. The legal positions mentioned, which require a law degree (but not admission to the bar), started at approximately \$35,000 annually.

³³The county leader declined comment.

³⁴According to financial records supplied by the club to the author, the 1985 dinner raised \$3,500. The club's expenses for 1985 were approximately \$6,500.

³⁵In 1977 the club supported Goodman, and one year later they had to contend with the insurgency. In 1980, they supported D'Amato in the primary against Senator Jacob Javits, and backed Ronald Reagan in the presidential primary.

³⁶Male district leader, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 3 October 1985.

³⁷Former district leader (1979-1985), interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 9 October 1985.

³⁸As of March 1987, party enrollment in the assembly district part was as follows: Democrats, 8,191; Republicans, 398; Conservative, 17; and Liberal, 84. Source: New York City Board of Elections.

³⁹Male district leader, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 11 November 1985.

⁴⁰ibid.

⁴¹The challenger was Hilton Clark, whose father, Kenneth Bancroft Clark, is a well known scholar who was a professor at the City College of New York (1942-1975) and was appointed the first black member of the New York State Board of Regents in 1966.

⁴²A scholarly exposition of this view was presented by Hamilton, "The Patron-Recipient Relationship."

⁴³Under Democratic Party rules, this was done by the county committeemembers for the councilmanic district. Rules and Regulations of the Democratic Party of the County of New York, art. 5, sec. 3.

⁴⁴ Vacancies on the council are filled by majority vote of its membership. The only limits on the council in this process are that the individual selected must be a member of the same political party as the person who vacated the seat, and the new member must reside in the district. New York City Charter, chap. 2, sec. 24.

⁴⁵ Male district leader, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 11 November 1985.

⁴⁶ For instance, one of the few major sources of patronage remaining are positions in the state court system. However, most of the "exempt" positions (that is, those not covered by competitive hiring) require law degrees. Virtually all of those seeking the club's help lack the qualifications that might make them eligible for such employment.

⁴⁷ The New York City Housing Authority, created in 1934, builds, operates, and maintains low-income public housing. In 1985 the Authority was operating 263 projects containing more than 169,000 apartments.

⁴⁸ Female district leader, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 17 October 1985.

⁴⁹ A discussion of the traditional service role of political clubs in New York City is found in chapter 7.

⁵⁰ One of the male leader's assumptions is that the death of his council predecessor (who was also male leader in another part of the district) will eventually cause the demise of the late councilmember's club. He expects his club to fill the void. Interview, 11 November 1985.

⁵¹ According to the 1980 census, of the 118,984 people who lived in the district, 112,883 (94.9%) were white; 2,140 (1.8%) were black; and 3,961 (3.3%) were "other." The mean household income (1979) in the district was \$37,113. Sources: The New York State Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment, and the New York City Department of City Planning.

⁵² According to the New York City Board of Elections, there were 31,832 Democrats and 15,608 Republicans (as of March 1987).

⁵³ Both are the only Republicans from Manhattan in their respective bodies.

⁵⁴Mondale received 25,992 votes (54%) to Reagan's 21,670 (46%), The New York Times, 8 November 1984. The 4,300 vote plurality was Mondale's smallest in New York County. Countywide, Mondale polled 379,521 (72%) to Reagan's 144,281 (28%), The New York Times, 8 November 1984.

⁵⁵Male district leader (part b), interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 17 November 1984.

⁵⁶Ware cites the end of the Viet Nam War and the lack of a new "burning issue" as the cause for the membership decline in New York reform clubs (98-99).

⁵⁷Not only do the supporters of candidates recruit members prior to endorsement meetings (which are usually held about a month before the beginning of the petitioning period), but in some cases actually pay the dues for these new members. Membership padding prior to the endorsement meeting is not limited to this club or, for that matter, to New York City or the United States. For a discussion of this practice in Canadian riding associations (the Canadian equivalent of the political club), see Joseph Wearing, The L-Shaped Party: The Liberal Party of Canada, 1958-1980 (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1981), 115-118.

⁵⁸In New York, all nominations for state supreme court are made by judicial conventions. Convention delegates are selected through primaries and, historically, have been supporters of the party organizations. Because of their control of these conventions, county leaders usually arrange for cross-endorsements, insuring judicial patronage for the major parties. The cross-endorsed candidates run unopposed in the general election, cementing the party leadership's control over the state judiciary.

⁵⁹Club president, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 23 September 1985.

⁶⁰ibid. ⁶¹ibid.

⁶²Male district leader (part b), interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 17 November 1984/

⁶³These rental payments are to compensate the club for any additional costs that might be incurred by the candidate's use of the clubhouse. Candidates favor this arrangement because it's usually cheaper than renting space from commercial landlords who, aware of the precarious fi-

nancing of some campaigns, demand large security deposits (often three or four months worth of rent payments) from the candidate.

⁶⁴Club president, interview by the author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 23 September 1985.

⁶⁵The Board of Elections is responsible for administering elections within the City of New York. It consists of ten Commissioners of Elections appointed by the City Council upon the recommendation of the two major political party organizations (Democrats and Republicans) in the five counties.

⁶⁶"Lit drop" is a term used to describe literature distribution. There are different types of lit drops. One type is the door-to-door drop, where literature is distributed door-to-door. A novel variation on this method were the "door knockers" placed on the doorknobs of almost 250,000 homes in New York City by the Cuomo campaign between six o'clock in the evening on election eve and six o'clock in the morning on election day in 1986. Also, literature is handed out in shopping districts, at subway stations, and "dumped" in apartment building lobbies (the latter method developed due to the inability of volunteers to gain entry to apartment buildings in what has become a security conscious city).

⁶⁷For a discussion of the structure of opportunity provided by political organizations, see Robert K. Merton, Social Structure and Social Theory (New York: The Free Press, 1957).

⁶⁸One popular service request is for the club to help obtain exemptions or excuses from jury duty. Basically, this requires cooperation from a court clerk, who either excuses the person or falsifies court records to read that the person reported for jury duty and was excused after one day. Fixing parking tickets and intervention in police matters are other common requests.

⁶⁹For a discussion of these developments, see Ware, 143-208.

⁷⁰For example, the Riverdale Democrats (Bronx) and the Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club (Brooklyn).

⁷¹Being defined as a numerical majority, or the ability to influence a majority of, the board.

CHAPTER 9

COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS: LEGALITY AND REALITY

What do political leaders do? They don't sit around or play chess or pinochle. Political leaders sit around and make deals.

Thomas Puccio¹

Unlike political clubs, county organizations are regulated by state law. Current law deals with the formation of party committees, the organization and rules of such committees, and the selection of party leaders.² The county committee, as a "statutory body," must adhere to certain legal requirements.³ However, the legal structure and authority of the county organizations do not necessarily coincide with the reality of the ways that power is actually exercised within those organizations.

The County Committee: Legal Structure and Power

State law provides for the election of a county committee, whose members are to be elected from each election district within the county. The law provides for each election district to be represented by at least two members (election districts may receive an additional two seats, dependent upon party rules).⁴ Members are elected for two-year terms in elections held in conjunction with the party primaries. Contests for county committee rarely occur, as

the candidates slated by the party organizations are rarely challenged. The leadership's ability to slate candidates, who will almost always be elected, gives party leaders a great deal of influence over the actions of the county committee.⁵

Structure and Powers

While county committee structure varies somewhat, there are similarities. First, each county committee elects its own officers, including a chairperson. The chairperson, according to the rules of the Kings County Republican Committee, "shall preside at all meetings and shall possess the general powers of a presiding officer."⁶ However, the "powers" of the chair, as of the county committees as a body, are almost non-existent. One district leader, upon his election as chair of the Kings County Democratic County Committee, thanked his colleagues and asked, "now, if someone will tell me what I'm supposed to do."⁷ In addition to electing a chair, the county committees usually elect a number of vice chairs, a secretary, and a treasurer. In two of the organizations, the ceremonial county committee chair also serves as the county leader (who, as shall be seen, is the real head of the organization).⁸

The county committees establish standing committees, the most important of which is the executive committee. While party rules generally endow county committees with substantial legal authority, these powers are almost always

exercised by the executive committee.⁹ Representative of the broad delegation of authority to these executive committees is Article VIII, section 1 of the Queens County Democratic County Committee's rules:

At all times when the County Committee is not actively in session, the Executive Committee of the County Organization shall have, possess and exercise without any limitation whatsoever, all the rights, privileges, powers and duties which the County Committee may have, possess or exercise including but not limited to subdividing Assembly Districts pursuant to the provisions of Article XII.

In addition, executive committees possess powers that are independent of those of the county committees. In most of the county organizations, the executive committee selects its own officers, including an executive committee chairperson, who is the county leader. To underscore the substantial authority of these bodies, once again the rules of the Queens Democrats (Article VIII, section 2) are instructive:

The Executive Committee...shall be vested with the general management of the affairs of the Democratic Party in Queens County. It shall have the custody, management and control of the funds and headquarters of the County Organization. It shall have the authority to maintain such headquarters and to employ such clerical and other assistance as it may deem necessary...It shall have the power to do all things and adopt all measures not in conflict with law or these rules.

In all county organizations, the elected assembly district leaders are members of the executive committee. In addition, most of the county organizations provide for others (the officers of the county committee) to serve as voting members of the executive committee.¹⁰ Also, the executive committee designates candidates for placement on county-wide

nominating petitions.

The county committee's lack of influence in the organization is due to a number of factors. First, the full county committee meets infrequently (while all meet at least once every two years, two or more meetings of a full county committee during its term are rare), meaning that the executive committee is the body that exercises the county committee's powers. The power of the county committee is further weakened by the lack of a mechanism for the county committee to review the actions of the executive committee when it is acting as the county committee. Also, the members of the executive committee are elected by the voters. Therefore, the line of accountability (if one exists) runs from the district leaders to the party rank-and-file.¹¹ Another factor that strengthens the executive committee is that the members of the county committee (who were slated by the leaders) regard the executive committee as the organization's "leaders." Because the county committee members recognize the preeminence of the leaders within the organization there is usually no inclination (on the part of the county committee) to challenge them. Finally, the sheer size of the county committee makes it unwieldy as a decision-making body.¹²

With limited power, the real function of the county committee is to serve as a "support network" for the party organization. Members of the county committees carry nominating petitions and are the core of party activists (albeit

a diminishing core) the organization relies upon.

The County Leader

By far, the most powerful figure in the organization has historically been the county leader. The statutory role of the county leader is non-existent. This lack of legal status allows the county leader to avoid regulation by state law (unlike the statutory organs and officers of the county committee).¹³ Party bylaws in each county also fail to precisely define the leader's role, although the provision of the New York County Democratic rules designating the leader as "the principal political, executive and administrative officer of the Democratic Party" is typical.¹⁴ It is a multi-faceted role, although the following functions have been performed, to some degree, by New York's county leaders in recent years.

Candidate Recruitment and Selection

While all county leaders engage in some candidate recruitment, Republican leaders are likely to be more active in this process due to the shortage of prospective candidates.¹⁵

In both major parties the county leaders are involved in candidate selection, which entails the designation of regular organization candidates prior to primaries and the selection of nominees for special elections.¹⁶ Candidates supported by county leaders usually are endorsed by

the executive committee or the county committee.¹⁷ In city-wide campaigns the county leader must make agreements with his counterparts in the other boroughs. As Lowi has noted, failure of the county leaders to forge a consensus often results in primaries between candidates supported by different county organizations.¹⁸

Dealmaking

County leaders act as "power brokers." In addition to forging agreements on citywide nominations, leaders are involved in other types of deals. For example, following the retirement of Thomas Cuite as City Council Vice Chairman (majority leader) in 1986, all five Democratic leaders participated in the scramble for power.¹⁹ Ultimately, Stanley Friedman (Bronx) and Donald Manes (Queens) succeeded in electing their candidate, Queens Councilmember Peter Vallone. In exchange for his support of Vallone, Friedman was allowed to select the new city clerk.²⁰

County leaders arrange cross-endorsements.²¹ For many elective offices the cross-endorsement is by one of the minor permanent parties (Conservative, Liberal, or Right-to-Life) of the Republican or Democratic nominee.²² These endorsements might be significant, as the support of the minor parties can be the margin of victory in a close election. In some instances, the nomination by the minor party of their own candidate might deprive a major party candidate of victory.²³ One consideration that is part of this process

is the availability of patronage for the smaller party. While trading jobs specifically for political support is illegal, there is a tacit understanding among the players involved that the smaller parties expect what one county leader called "access."²⁴ The practice is not confined to the smaller parties. The Republican endorsement of Mayor Edward I. Koch in 1981 is a case in point. At the time it was reported that the Republican leaders agreed to support the Mayor because he had promised to help the party raise money and provide it with "equal access" to City Hall.²⁵ In 1985 the Republicans did not support Koch, claiming that, among other things, the Mayor had reneged on the promised access.²⁶

Judicial nominations are most often the product of agreements between the major party leaders. In New York, State Supreme Court Justices are popularly elected and the nominations are made by judicial conventions. The delegates to these conventions are elected in the primaries (though, in most cases, the delegates are actually elected before the primary as the organization-backed slate is usually unopposed), and the meetings are dominated by the party leadership. Their ability to influence these conventions gives the leaders the opportunity to insure cross-endorsements, making the election of their choices a foregone conclusion. Control of these judgeships is important to the party organizations because it provides them with the last substan-

tial reservoir of patronage. Citywide, more than one thousand positions are involved.²⁷ Also, control of the judicial nominations process gives the party organizations a place to install party stalwarts who have been loyal operatives or are failed (or potentially failing) elected officials. An illustration of the latter was the elevation of Brooklyn Borough President Sebastian Leone to the bench in 1976. After a series of primary losses to reform-backed Jewish candidates for the civil court, Democratic County Leader Meade Esposito concluded that it was unlikely that a non-Jew could win the nomination for borough president in 1977. According to Esposito, "when I lost three out of four, I said, 'Hey, this is not good.'"²⁸ Worried about the loss of the borough presidency, Esposito arranged for Leone to receive the Democratic and Republican endorsements, and the borough president was elected to a fourteen-year term on the state supreme court in 1976. Esposito then installed City Councilmember Howard Golden, a Jewish regular, as Leone's successor. Golden has subsequently been re-elected three times, maintaining the regular organization's hold over the borough presidency.

Patronage Dispenser

The former Brooklyn Democratic Leader, Meade Esposito, said that "patronage is an old system. If you know of a better one let me know."²⁹ County leaders dispense what patronage remains within their organizations. While there

is not as much patronage available as in the past, leaders still use it to enhance their influence. Today's leader dispenses patronage selectively: while some patronage is dispensed to each club, the bulk (and most sought after) of the patronage is directed to the clubs, leaders, and other actors whom the county leader feels are critical to his success. Stanley Friedman of the Bronx engineered such a patronage policy, maintaining his influence by providing patronage to key supporters and to potential rivals like Ramon Velez, the "poverty pimp" of the 1970s who returned to political prominence through his alliance with Friedman and Mayor Koch.³⁰ During the 1970s, Velez had recognized that the various anti-poverty programs, if controlled by a politically astute operative, could be used for political purposes. By gaining control over many anti-poverty programs in the Bronx, Velez could use their resources (jobs, benefits) as a form of patronage to fuel his own political organization. Hampered by the Koch overhaul of anti-poverty programs in the late 1970s and the loss of his councilmanic seat, Velez managed to recover during the 1980s. His South Bronx Democratic Club became a pillar of organization support, carrying nominating petitions for the organization's candidates, and by supporting Koch in his 1981, 1982, and 1985 campaigns. For his efforts, the organizations controlled by Velez have obtained millions of dollars each year from the city, allowing Velez to create and

maintain his own "sub-machine." The support of the sub-machine by Friedman assured Velez's cooperation. This cooperation continued when Velez supported Stanley Friedman's hand-picked successor, George Friedman, leaving control of the Bronx County Democrats in the hands of whites though they are a minority in the county. One example of Friedman's largesse towards Velez, outside the anti-poverty realm, was his selection of Carlos Cuevas, a Velez protege, as city clerk in 1986.

William Bastone and Jack Newfield have written that "Velez's poverty empire is built on patronage."³¹ It is an empire that has elected Hector Diaz to the state assembly and Rafael Castaneira Colon to the city council, the two having come out of the staff of the Hunts Point methadone clinic (a Velez-controlled organization). It is the selective insertion of patronage that has permitted white Democrats to maintain control over the Democratic organization in the Bronx and, to a lesser degree, Brooklyn.

Patronage is not limited to government employment. There are other ways to reward supporters. Preferments are another type of material political reward. By preferments, I mean the individual attention and preferential treatment given an individual or business enterprise. These preferments may range from government contracts for public works construction to the government's purchase of a wide variety of goods and services.³² Contracts can be steered to-

ward supporters or those willing to do "business" with the county leaders. The Citisource, Hyfin, and Wedtech scandals that shook the foundation of New York City government and politics in 1986 and 1987 are terrible examples of what may happen when preferments run amok.³³ The courts, in addition to providing jobs, afford the organization the opportunity to appoint guardians and estate administrators--lucrative appointments to politically connected lawyers that have served the organization.³⁴ Newfield and DuBrul understood the importance of patronage (and control of the offices that deliver patronage) to the party organizations: "the Democratic machine in New York doesn't care that much about a Senate primary: Senators don't control leases or contracts; no patronage, no favors for clubhouse hangers-on are at stake."³⁵ According to Newfield and DuBrul, "what the machine does care about is who is mayor and who are surrogate court judges."³⁶

Fundraiser:

The escalating costs of political campaigns requires the political organization to expand its fundraising efforts. The county organization in the 1980s must obtain funds for its day-to-day operations and for political campaigns. Fundraisers, dinners, and direct solicitation are methods commonly utilized to raise money for the party organizations and the campaigns. In his role as fundraiser, the county leader is aided by a finance chairperson; an ac-

whose status as a raiser and dispenser of funds makes him one of the more powerful members of the organization's leadership.³⁷

As to fundraising itself, some of the party organizations have formed their own political action committees (PACs). For example, the Brooklyn Democrats, the political action committee of the Kings County Democratic Organization, raised \$165,000 during 1985.³⁸ Simultaneously, another Brooklyn party organization, the Committee for a Golden Future, collected over one million dollars for Howard Golden's campaign for re-election as borough president.³⁹ The pressure to raise funds has even spread to the city's least populous borough, Staten Island, where both major party organizations amassed over \$100,000 in contributions during 1985.⁴⁰

Disciplinarian

One of the crucial variables in party organization is party cohesion. Historically, it has been the job of the county leader to maintain a degree of party unity. As party "disciplinarian," the leader may threaten to withhold patronage, make it difficult for party mavericks to raise funds, withhold the party's designation for primary nominating petitions, or encourage candidates to run against an incumbent who has been disloyal to the organization.

In Peel's day, the county leader's discipline was un-

assailable. In contemporary politics, the leader's disciplinary powers have diminished. In some cases, the leader finds that the target of "discipline" is not affected. An officeholder can develop his own power base. Indeed, Ware has identified candidates (especially incumbents) as the "new notability" of electoral politics.⁴¹ Constituent service can be transformed into political support by individual officeholders as well as it can by the clubhouse. In many ways, the legislator's district office has replaced the clubhouse as the neighborhood service center. Another way the district office serves the legislator is to act as the base of his local political operation. While state law prohibits the use of state facilities (including district offices) for political purposes, the offices usually house the key staff members who, in campaign periods, leave the legislative staff to run the incumbent's campaign (many campaign staffers are actually paid legislative employees using their vacation or personal time).⁴² Further diluting the power of the leader is the ability of candidates to obtain support from other organizations (for example, the reform Democrats) that can compensate for the loss of the regular organization's support. It is no longer unusual for politicians to defy (and overcome) leaders. For example, in the early 1970s, then Queens Democratic Leader Matthew Troy attempted to "purge" City Councilmember Arthur Katzman. With the help of the New Democratic Coali-

tion, Katzman was re-nominated.⁴³ During the mid-1980s, at the height of the rift within the Kings County Democratic Organization, supporters of Borough President Howard Golden were unable to defeat any of the incumbents who were supporting Golden's rival, Anthony Genovesi.

The party is no longer a significant donor of campaign funds. Many candidates (especially incumbents) have their own fundraising operations (even school board candidates have established elaborate fundraising operations).⁴⁴ They can raise money in their own communities and, as has been common in Congress for quite some time and, more recently, in the state legislature, from groups and individuals interested in the legislation that comes before the committees that individual legislators sit on. Bradley H. Zeve found that "PACs seem to target the legislators who sit on legislative committees which can most directly affect public policy of specific interest."⁴⁵ Therefore, the loss of party funds, which are not that plentiful anyway, can be more than compensated for by PAC contributions.⁴⁶ Such contributors have made legislators less dependent financially and politically upon the party organizations.⁴⁷

Another reason for the decline of party unity has been the willingness of county leaders to put other interests ahead of party unity. In 1965, when the Village Independent Democrats (VID) endorsed John Lindsay, there was a motion, at a meeting of the county executive committee, to

censure their district leaders.⁴⁸ In contrast, sixteen years later, the Manhattan party leader, Herman Farrell, broke with the party by endorsing David Dinkins, the Liberal Party candidate, for borough president after Dinkins had lost the Democratic primary to Andrew Stein. Yet, even though Dinkins lost, Farrell was never reprimanded for deserting the party he is the leader of. Such disloyalty is becoming more frequent (in 1986, Brooklyn Democratic boss Golden endorsed Assemblymember Roger Green over the Democratic candidate who had knocked Green, the incumbent, off the primary ballot through a petition challenge). As Ware observed, "disloyalty was both more frequent and more pragmatic in character; it was much less connected with struggles inside the party organizations."⁴⁹ In short, politicians were discovering that it was not always in their best interest to be loyal to the party organization. When county leaders are disloyal, it becomes difficult to expect the others in the county organization to remain totally committed.

That doesn't mean that discipline is no longer applied. That rationale for discipline today appears to be that the loss of organizational support, while no longer fatal, can make things harder. When State Senator Andrew Jenkins defied the Queens County Democratic Organization by seeking election to the House of Representatives as the Liberal Party candidate in a 1986 special election, the coun-

ty executive committee stripped him of the party's designation for re-nomination to the senate. In doing so, the executive committee denied Jenkins a place on the organization's designating petitions, requiring the defiant state senator to collect his own signatures in order to get on the primary ballot.⁵⁰

An interesting disciplinary tactic is to challenge the nominating petitions of disloyal candidates. By challenging the validity of the petitions, the party organization might be able to remove their target without mounting a primary campaign.⁵¹

Party Administrator

The county leader is the "chief executive" of the county organization. The administrative responsibilities vary from organization to organization. By no stretch of the imagination is the county leadership the full-time responsibility it once was.⁵² The part-time nature of the position relates to the current state of the county headquarters and organizations. Four of the ten major county organizations failed, in 1986, to employ a single full-time staff person.⁵³ The largest full-time headquarters staff consisted of four employees, and only two of the ten county organizations employed a full-time executive director.⁵⁴ The manpower needs of the headquarters are being met through the efforts of volunteers, student interns, and

part-time staff.⁵⁵ The New York County Democratic and Republican organizations, once the epitome of the party organization, have experienced the most precipitous declines. "Tammany Hall," the prototypical "political machine," has become one room (with one full-time employee) in the New York City office of the state Democratic Party.⁵⁶ The clubhouse, long sold, is now shared with the state party in order to split the rental cost. The Manhattan Republicans, while maintaining an office in a midtown hotel, lack a full-time staff. An answering service handles their phone calls and correspondence.⁵⁷ In the Bronx, while the Democrats rented their own building and had the largest full-time staff, those calling "Republican headquarters" found, in 1985, that they had reached the district office of the Republican state senator who was also the county leader (despite the state law prohibiting the use of government facilities for partisan political purposes).⁵⁸

Adapter

Lowi had noted the tendency of party leaders to accommodate emerging ethnic groups.⁵⁹ The need to bring new constituencies into the organizations has continued to confront party leaders. In the last two decades, the Democratic organizations in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and, to a lesser degree, Queens, have had to contend with growing black and hispanic constituencies seeking to move into the political mainstream. One way the established political

leaders have tried to admit these groups is through "gerrymandering to insure the election of blacks and hispanics."⁶⁰ One controversial decision that can be attributed to this effort to admit new constituencies was the Bronx Democrats' failure to re-nominate two white state supreme court justices in 1983.⁶¹ Instead, a black and hispanic were nominated. The following year, the Bronx Democrats supported a black community activist against a five-term assemblymember in a district where sixty-five percent of the residents were black, and about fifteen percent were hispanic.⁶²

In Brooklyn, the Democratic organization not only had to open their ranks to black and hispanics, but had to turn to a jewish candidate in order to retain the borough presidency in the mid-1970s.⁶³

County leaders play two roles in this adaptation process. First, they must prepare their organizations for change. Those who are already part of the organization are often resistant to change since they fear it will threaten their status. The second task is to incorporate the new constituencies into the organization. Who should the county leader try to bring into the organization? In what capacity? Can the "leaders" of the new constituency become part of the organization? Often, new constituencies are admitted by expanding a body (as this permits newcomers to join without taking anything away from the established players), waiting for an "opening" to develop or, in rare cases, dis-

placement of existing actors.⁶⁴ Admission of new constituencies is not always possible. The inability to adapt affects the organization's effectiveness, and creates the potential for a viable opposition. This threat has served as an incentive for adaptation.

County Leaders: Stability and Power?

Between 1975 and 1985, leadership of New York City's major party county organizations was stable. The average tenure of a county leader during the period was slightly over seven years.⁶⁵ Of the ten leadership changes during this period, only the two Manhattan Democratic changes might be regarded as "hostile."⁶⁶ Another change came about when a sitting leader died. One leader stepped down following lengthy legal action where a special state prosecutor had charged him with selling judgeships.⁶⁷ The other six changes might be regarded as orderly transitions of power.⁶⁸

While leadership has remained stable, it has not been unchallenged. During the period in question, there had been leadership challenges in seven of the ten major party county organizations.⁶⁹ Leaders were able to survive these challenges for one or more of the following reasons.

The primary factor has been the power of incumbency. The incumbent county leader can take advantage of the power of the position. Patronage can be used to reward supporters and punish enemies. He can attempt to discipline those in

the party who might be trying to undermine his position. The party leader's ability to adapt by bringing potential opponents into the organization as their allies, can be decisive.⁷⁰ It's important to understand that, as county leader, he controls whatever organizational resources exist. Those resources can give him a decisive advantage over his opponents.

Leaders have also benefitted from divided opposition. While his opponents may dislike him, they may not be able to coalesce around a single opponent. Frank Rossetti's survival as Manhattan Democratic Leader during the 1970s was due, in large part, to the ability of reformers, blacks, and hispanics to agree on a single opponent.⁷¹ In Brooklyn, Howard Golden was able to repulse Anthony Genovesi's challenge because black district leaders, though not enamored with Golden, were unwilling to support the challenger.⁷²

A third factor that buttresses the county leadership is that one of the advantages of "power" in New York City's (albeit diminished) party organizations is that the opposition is usually outside the party organization. In order for an insurgency to succeed, the opposition must conduct a full-fledged primary campaign against the "regulars" in order to gain control over the organization.

This requires the development of a campaign organization. While I've already noted that political clubs have become less significant in the political process, they usu-

ally still surpass the level of organization that can be attained by the insurgents. The insurgents must find candidates to run for district leadership posts and county committee seats throughout the county. The task is complicated by the lack of interest in the operation of the party organization. The potential pool of candidates is limited in that many political activists see no point in seeking party office, as they regard public office as being more of a direct route to their political goals. Even regular organization clubs have had difficulty recruiting candidates for district leaderships.

If candidates are recruited, nominating petitions must be circulated, requiring an "army" of subscribing witnesses. Petitions must then survive challenges. Finally, if these hurdles are surmounted, the primary must be contested. While both the organization and the insurgents must go over the same hurdles, the organization is better able to run this obstacle course due to their expertise in the state election law. There have been few successful insurgencies: between 1970 and 1985 there were two that succeeded.⁷³

The basic problem is that the declining organization of the party can still be more effective than their opponents. Even when an opportunity presents itself, opponents of the regular party organization are not able to capitalize. A case in point is the 1986 Democratic primaries. Two

county organizations were mired in scandal, yet their opponents could not defeat them.⁷⁴

Despite the stability that appears to be attached to the county leadership, the contemporary leader cannot rule in the manner that their predecessors of the last century were accustomed to. Today's leader must be more tolerant of opposition than their predecessors were. Unconditional fealty is no longer expected. According to John Sabini, a major reason for Donald Manes' longevity as head of the Queens Democrats was his willingness to give his district leaders a degree of freedom and his tolerance of the reform element within the party.⁷⁵ In doing so, Manes effectively undercut any opposition that might have developed against his leadership. In Brooklyn, Meade Esposito's successor, Howard Golden, contended that he's a "different kind of leader than Meade was."⁷⁶ Esposito ran a well disciplined organization during his sixteen years in power. However, even Esposito, who ran what was called "one of the country's strongest political machines," could not defeat an insurgency in Brooklyn's black neighborhoods and had to shift a long-time colleague in party councils out of the borough presidency in order to save it from the reformers.⁷⁷ Would Esposito's predecessors a century ago confronted such problems? Would they have responded in the same fashion? If one believes the legends of the autocratic leaders, as well as the historical accounts of their

reign, probably not.

A County Leader's Rise To Power

How does one become party leader? While every leader has taken a somewhat different route to party leadership, there are similarities in their ascendancy. All have been active in their party organizations, beginning in a local club and working their way "up the organization," serving as district leaders, as officers of the county organization, and, in some instances, as "heirs" to their predecessor. Some have served in government or in private sector jobs that dovetailed nicely with their party responsibilities.

Stanley Friedman's rise to power, as Bronx Democratic Leader, is typical of the rise of other leaders. His is the ascent, albeit to the highest levels, of the typical "clubhouse politician." During his federal corruption trial in the fall of 1986, his account of his rise in Bronx Democratic politics prompted one courtroom spectator (another "veteran" of Bronx political wars) to remark to Friedman: "It was remarkable. Your life was just like my life."⁷⁸

Entering the Organization

Born to working class parents in the Bronx (his father drove a bagel truck and a taxi), he was a graduate of City College and a second-year student at Brooklyn Law

School when he first got involved in the Bronx organization. It was 1960, and his neighbor, City Councilmember David Ross, persuaded Friedman to join the Pondiac Democratic Club. It was in the early years that Friedman obtained the first of a number of patronage posts. In the 12 November 1986 edition of New York Newsday, Friedman recalled this first job offer:

One monday night at the Pondiac Democratic Club the district leader called me in and said there was going to be a vacancy at the district attorney's office. Would I be interested?

After two years with the Bronx District Attorney, Friedman became the associate counsel to Ross, then the Council's majority leader, and remained when Ross was succeeded by Thomas Cuite.⁷⁹ In eight years, Friedman became, as John Darnton observed, "a surrogate for Mr. Cuite - a position that endowed him with more power than many of the councilmen themselves."⁸⁰

In 1974 Mayor Beame appointed Friedman the city's chief Albany lobbyist. Friedman had also been moving up within the Bronx Democratic organization, becoming secretary and a close associate of Patrick Cunningham, the county leader and state party chairperson.

In 1975 Friedman became the Deputy Mayor for Intergovernmental Relations. At his trial, Friedman testified that his "political leader in the Bronx as well as other political leaders supported my candidacy."⁸¹ For three

years Friedman was Beame's "political" deputy mayor and one of his major responsibilities was to act as the administration's chief patronage dispenser. As Beame's term neared its end, Friedman became the recipient of one of the bigger patronage plums in city government: the presidency of the Board of Water Supply.⁸²

Following Cunningham's resignation in 1978, Friedman was elected to succeed his former colleague, defeating Alan Solomon, who had been Cunningham's choice.⁸³ John LoCicero, Mayor Koch's chief political operative, was instrumental in the Friedman victory. While Koch was officially neutral in the contest, LoCicero's efforts made clear which candidate had the Mayor's unofficial support for the county leadership.⁸⁴ Shortly after his election, Friedman resigned his water board post which, along with the board, was then abolished.

During the next eight years Friedman became one of the more influential actors in city politics. A member of Roy Cohn's politically-connected law firm, the Bronx leader combined party office and governmental influence with his legal contacts. He installed his own choice as borough president; made peace with the reform and minority factions within the organization, and became known as a "dealmaker." In an interview that appeared in the 2 September 1981 edition of The New York Times, he offered his prescription for being party "boss,"

I'm a firm believer in a disciplined organization. An army can't function in war or peace without a chief executive. I like to think of myself as that general or that chief corporate officer.

He parlayed his political power into a lucrative career as a lawyer-lobbyist. He represented taxicab fleet owners and theater owners and others.⁸⁵ When Datacom Systems Corporation couldn't secure a city contract for towing the cars of parking ticket scofflaws, they hired Friedman. Friedman arranged a deal between Datacom and the New York City Parking Violations Bureau (PVB), and accepted as his fee from the firm one percent of its profits on the contract.⁸⁶ A testimonial to Friedman's effectiveness as a lobbyist was offered by Mitchell Neuhauser, an executive with one of Friedman's clients, who said, "you need something done in city government and the state legislature, you go to Stanley Friedman."⁸⁷

During his 1986 trial, in which the federal government alleged that Friedman had used his influence to steer a contract for a PVB computer to Citisource in exchange for stock in the firm, Friedman was asked why a client would pay him ten thousand dollars to make one phone call. The 26 November 1986 edition of New York Newsday reported that Friedman replied that,

I got paid \$10,000 for fifteen years of experience in government. . . . Fifteen years of experience is knowing who pulls the strings, so to speak. . . it manifests itself in a telephone call.

Even in the wake of his conviction, Friedman was

able to install his chosen successor, George Friedman, as county leader.

Friedman's career, as briefly sketched here, is an example of "rising through the ranks" to the party leadership. An "insider," Friedman's one act of disloyalty was his decision to run against Cunningham's choice for county leader. Relying on the support of Mayor Koch's chief political operative, Friedman became county leader and an ally of Koch.⁸⁸

As leader, Friedman consolidated his leadership by making "peace" with those who threatened his position. As a lawyer-lobbyist, Friedman used his political influence to enhance his legal practice which, in turn, expanded his political influence.

Like many of the political leaders who have fallen from power due to corruption, Friedman's demise came about due to a combination of greed and immersion in a process that made him believe that many of his activities were either not illegal (because business had always been done that way), or that his activities would not be punished.

The Leaders: Anachronism or Necessity?

The county leaders and their organizations of the mid-1980s are not as important as they once were. County leaders can no longer annoint candidates, dispense almost unlimited patronage, or rule with an "iron hand."

But the leaders and their organizations are not without significance. The "organization" remains the umbrella for most political clubs. The county committee, while having little power, is the "army" of volunteers that works out of the local clubhouse. These are the people who carry the nominating petitions and help get out the vote. The electoral mobilization function of the county committeemembers outweighs their legal responsibilities in party governance.⁸⁹

While the influence of the district leaders has declined, they are not without importance. They still recommend individuals for patronage appointments to the county leaders and, in most of the county organizations, select the county leader. Therefore, the county leader must manage to maintain the support of the district leaders in order to remain in power. While revolts are rare (and successful revolts even fewer in number), the county leader must remember that they remain a possibility. The durable county leaders have learned to stress coordination and adaptation more than the iron hand of the leaders of the past.

Today's leaders are involved in candidate selection and recruitment. This is especially true in the Republican Party where, because of the party's limited electoral success in the city, the leader is often hard-pressed to find anyone willing to carry the party's nomination in the gen-

eral election. On the Democratic side, where there is usually an ample supply of candidates (a supply that often increases whenever an elected office becomes open due to death, retirement, or movement to higher office), the role of the leader in the candidate selection process has focused less on recruitment and more on "passing the word" to the party organization as to the leader's preference.⁹⁰

The county leaders also act as "brokers." Their brokerage activities include the arrangement of cross-endorsements, dividing up patronage, and serving as intermediaries between the mayor and governor and members of the city council or state legislature from their county. In some instances, they use their influence to steer preferences to favored constituents. Their ability to broker within the political system enhances their influence both within the party organization and the larger polity.

While all candidates raise their own funds (and have grown less dependent upon the party organizations for campaign funds), the party organizations and party leaders are still in the fundraising business. Traditionally, the big fundraiser is the organization's annual dinner, which in a "good year" may bring in well over \$100,000. These funds are necessary for the organization's day-to-day operations, county-wide campaign activities, and to support individual candidates. The prestige and power of the leader is a fundraising tool. The more influential the leader

der, the more successful the party's fundraising efforts.

Party discipline, while less of a factor than in Peel's day, can still maintain a degree of loyalty. While no longer able to effectively "purge" disobedient political operatives, there is still the potential for making things difficult for wayward members of the party organization. However, the leader's discipline is not what it once was. Party disloyalty today is often due to the judgement of the disloyal operative that he is acting in his own best interest by opposing the organization.

The leader today is more of a coordinator than a dictator. He presides over less of an organization than his predecessors. His ability to "deliver" nominations, votes and patronage have diminished. Yet the leader, especially the leader who combines party and public office, is still a dynamic actor in city politics. The roles of the leader, and the party organization, while diminished, remain in city politics. What has changed is the role of the organization and the leader in the larger political system.

NOTES

¹The Washington Post, 1 October 1986. Puccio, Friedman's attorney, was making his opening statement at the federal corruption trial of Friedman and his co-defendants, Michael Lazar, Lester Shafran, Marvin Kaplan, and Marvin Bergman. Friedman, Lazar, Shafran, and Kaplan were all convicted of violating the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statute and mail fraud. Kaplan was also found guilty of lying to the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Bergman, Donald Manes' former law partner, was severed from the trial by federal Judge Whitman Knapp.

²For the election law, see McKinney's Consolidated Laws of New York, Annotated, Book 17 (Saint Paul: West Publishing, 1978).

³The law prescribes county committee structure; the basis for representation on the county committee; the procedure for filling vacancies on the county committee, and the method for removal of individuals from the county committee. These are just a few of the matters affecting the county committee that are covered by statute.

⁴Under state law, each election district is entitled to two representatives on the county committee. An additional two seats, based on the vote received by the party's gubernatorial candidate in the election district in the most recent general election, may be awarded. New York State Election Law of 1949, c. 100, (12); amended L. 1953, c. 388, (1); L. 1960, c. 701, (1); L. 1964, c. 976, (2); and L. 1976, c. 234, (5). This provision gives those clubs that can "deliver" votes more clout as they will have more votes on the county committee than a club that is less able to get out the vote.

⁵George Hart, interview by author, Tape recording, Staten Island, New York, 7 March 1986. Hart, leader of the Richmond County (Staten Island) Republicans, said that elections for the county committee generally take place as part of a larger struggle for the county organization.

⁶Rules of the County Committee of the Republican Party in Kings County, Article II, is representative of the rules of the various county organizations.

⁷Frank Santo, acceptance speech presented at the organizational meeting of the Kings County Democratic County Committee, Brooklyn, New York, 23 September 1986. The author, then a member of the county committee from the Forty-Seventh Assembly District, attended the meeting in question.

⁸The Republican and Democratic county committees on Staten Island elect county committee chairpersons who also serve as county leader.

⁹County committees generally meet following the primary to elect county committee officers (as required by state law). This is ordinarily the only formal meeting of the full committee during its tenure.

¹⁰For example, the Kings County Republican Party County Committee Executive Committee includes, in addition to the elected district leaders, the officers of the county committee and the chairs of the law and finance committees. Rules of the County Committee of the Republican Party in Kings County, Article VIII, section 2.

¹¹Until 1955, the county committeemembers from each election district selected the district leaders. After 1955, the selection of district leaders was shifted to the enrolled party members living in the assembly district, or assembly district part.

¹²The size of the major party county organizations ranges from about five hundred members (Staten Island) to close to three thousand members (Brooklyn and Queens).

¹³Only the position of chairman of the county committee is recognized by state law. The "non-existence" of the county leader's post in state law allowed Meade Esposito to remain county leader despite his admission that he had received \$20,000 in consulting fees from Edwin Fleck, one of the financiers of the short-lived Parr Meadows Race Track, The New York Times, 15 November 1978. State law barred political leaders from getting involved in the operation of any race track regulated by the New York State Racing and Wagering Board, and subjected violators to forfeiture of their party office. However, it was determined

that since Esposito was not a "party official," as defined by state law, the prohibition on race track activity did not apply to him.

¹⁴Rules and Regulations of the Democratic Party of the County of New York, Article III, section 4.

¹⁵To underscore the Republican plight, Staten Island Republican George Hart, the county leader, became his party's candidate for borough president in 1985 because he could not recruit anyone willing to oppose the incumbent, Ralph J. Lamberti. In the general election, Hart lost to Lamberti.

¹⁶Designation of an individual as the regular organization candidate generally assures his or her listing on the joint nominating petitions circulated by the clubs loyal to the regular organization. The advantage of placement on the joint petition is that candidates on the list can usually satisfy the signature requirements for placement on the primary ballot due to the club's expertise in gathering signatures. When a special election is held, there is no primary. The party organizations are responsible for nominating candidates in special elections.

¹⁷An assertion made by both George Hart (7 March 1986) and Howard Golden (31 March 1986) in interviews I conducted with them. The mechanics of designation are explained by Costikyan, 97-135.

¹⁸Lowi, At the Pleasure of the Mayor, 12.

¹⁹An agreement between Brooklyn's Howard Golden and Manhattan's Herman Farrell to elect Sam Horowitz majority leader fell apart when one of the Manhattan councilmembers, Robert Dryfoos, voted for Vallone. As a reward for his defection, Dryfoos was given the chair of the Council Committee on State Legislation. An insight into the values of the New York City political system may have been offered by Queens Councilmember Arthur Katzman, a Vallone supporter, who opposed Dryfoos' appointment, accusing him of having "deceived his colleagues," and having "sold himself for the committee chairmanship on state legislation." This led Katzman to conclude that Dryfoos "does not possess the integrity" to serve as a committee chair, New York Chief-Leader, 31 January 1986. Ruth Messinger, who would have become chair of the Education Committee if Horowitz had won, called Dryfoos a "liar and a scoundrel," New York Newsday, 9 January 1986. Another "reward" for Dryfoos' de-

fection was given to Alan Warshave, an ex-district leader from the Lenox Hill Club, who was hired for a "seldom show" city council post as a lobbyist in Albany.

²⁰The position, described by William Bastone and Maria Laurino as the "best plum in the world," went to Bronx Deputy Borough President Carlos Cuevas (Village Voice, 18 February 1986). Cuevas was a longtime associate of Ramon Velez, the "fat man" of the South Bronx, who has supported white Democratic leadership in exchange for the right to operate his own "sub-machine," fueled by anti-poverty funds, in the Bronx.

²¹For a discussion of the practice of cross-endorsement in New York, see Joseph F. Zimmerman, The Government and Politics of New York State (New York and London: New York University Press, 1981), 79-87.

²²Liberals have tended to endorse Democrats while Conservatives have usually endorsed Republicans. However, there have been exceptions to this rule. Notable Republicans endorsed by the Liberals include John V. Lindsay and Jacob Javits, while the Conservatives have endorsed Mario Biaggi.

²³For example, Elizabeth Holtzman, the Democratic nominee for the United States Senate in 1980, lost the general election to Republican Alfonse D'Amato by 83,537 votes. The Liberals had nominated Senator Javits, who had been defeated by D'Amato in the Republican primary, who polled 629,468 votes in the general election.

²⁴George Hart, interview by author, Tape recording, Staten Island, New York, 7 March 1986.

²⁵The New York Times, 6 June 1981.

²⁶George Hart claimed to have recommended a dozen people for jobs. None received an appointment. George Hart, interview by author, Tape recording, Staten Island, New York, 7 March 1986.

²⁷Estimate provided by Joseph L. Gentili, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 23 November 1986.

²⁸Quoted in The New York Times, 3 January 1977.

²⁹New York Daily News, 4 April 1985.

³⁰In addition to providing Velez with control over anti-poverty and community development funds which his organizations disburse in a manner reminiscent of old style patronage, Friedman took care of other key supporters. One beneficiary was Francisco Lugovina, the one-time chair of the Bronx Democratic County Committee. While holding his party post and working in a number of part-time state and city jobs (those posts included membership on the State Banking Board, the Chairmanship of the New York State Mortgage Agency, and the board of the New York City Water Finance Authority), Lugovina's companies obtained more than forty city and state contracts and more than forty-seven million dollars in low-interest construction mortgages subsidized by the city and state. His companies included real estate development, consulting, and job-training enterprises. In addition, Lugovina had received more than \$220,000 from Cablevision, a firm seeking a cable television franchise for the Bronx, in consultant's fees. Details on Lugovina's activities were reported in the 27 April 1986 editions of New York Newsday.

³¹Village Voice, 21 May 1985.

³²One Lindsay era preferment: the city purchased more than \$100,000 worth of ketchup annually from the Heinz Company, which had been a major contributor to Lindsay's campaigns. Mayor Beame reduced the amount spent annually to \$43,000, and he divided the contact among several vendors. Reported in Ware, 81.

³³One of the allegations made against Stanley Friedman was that he had received a financial stake in a computer company seeking to supply equipment to the New York City Parking Violations Bureau (PVB), a patronage stronghold of the Queens Democrats. In exchange for stock, Friedman steered a \$22.7 million contract to Citisource.

The Hyfin case (Hyfin was an acronym for Help Your Friends in Need, a credit union) involved the funneling of children's trust funds, created from awards to minors in negligence cases, to Hyfin. In return, it was alleged that State Supreme Court Judge Jerome D. Cohen had received six interest-free loans totaling more than \$140,000. Cohen was acquitted in a 1987 trial.

The Wedtech affair involved former company officials who, in an effort to obtain leniency, accused Bronx Congressmen Mario Biaggi and Robert Garcia, as well as Bronx Borough President Stanley Simon, of receiving payments for helping the defense contractor in federal and city busi-

ness deals. In April 1987, Stanley Simon was indicted by a federal grand jury, being charged with extortion and perjury in shaking down Wedtech officials. In June 1987, a federal grand jury indicted Mario Biaggi; his son, Richard Biaggi; Stanley Simon; Peter Neglia (a Republican Party activist who had been New York regional director of the federal Small Business Administration from 1981 to 1986); John Mariotta (a co-founder of Wedtech); Bernard Ehrlich (Biaggi's law partner and a former major general in the New York National Guard); and Ronald Betso, accusing the group of a number of crimes, including racketeering, perjury, extortion, mail fraud, obstruction of justice, and income tax evasion.

³⁴The practice is discussed in M. L. Henry, Surrogate's Court Elections in New York State, 1980-1985 (New York: Fund for Modern Courts, 1986).

³⁵Newfield and DuBrul, The Abuse of Power, 204.

³⁶ibid., 205.

³⁷For example, one of Donald Manes' closest aides during his years as Queens Democratic chief was Richard Rubin, the finance chairperson.

³⁸The Campaign Elections and Procedures Law, enacted by the New York State Legislature in 1974, provides for the full disclosure of all campaign receipts and expenditures. Under the law, periodic reports must be filed with the state Board of Elections. Financial data in this note, as well as subsequent notes dealing with campaign finance data, are from these reports. Brooklyn Democrats, Financial Disclosure Statement, filed 7 February 1986.

³⁹Committee for a Golden Future, Financial Disclosure Statement, filed 7 February 1986.

⁴⁰Republican County Committee of Richmond County, Financial Disclosure Statement, filed 4 February 1986; Democratic Campaign Fund of Staten Island, Financial Disclosure Statement, filed 2 February 1986; Democratic Ball Committee of Staten Island, Financial Disclosure Statement, filed 2 February 1986, and the Democratic Dinner Committee of Staten Island, Financial Disclosure Statement, filed 2 February 1986.

⁴¹Ware, 143. ⁴²ibid., 151-160.

⁴³Katzman was "punished" by the Queens regulars for supporting candidates endorsed by the New Democratic Coalition (NDC) and for voting in favor of a homosexual rights bill in council, where it had been opposed by Troy. The organization designated Sidney Straus, a Forest Hills district leader, who Katzman defeated in the primary.

⁴⁴Under existing statutes, school board candidates were not required to file disclosure statements under the Campaign Elections and Procedures Law. However, there have been allegations that school board candidates have pressured teachers and other school personnel to donate to campaigns (one of the charges investigated by a Bronx County grand jury in 1986). From personal experience, the author can write that he raised more than \$15,000 for the campaigns of two school board candidates in Community School District Twenty in 1986. In addition to a direct mail appeal, a fundraiser was held for the two candidates at a local political clubhouse (the club donating its facility for the event).

⁴⁵Bradley H. Zeve, Big PACs Love New York (Albany: New York State Common Cause, 1985), 16.

⁴⁶To underscore the decline of party organizations as a vehicle for campaign fundraising, Brooklyn Democrats made a single three thousand dollar contribution to Councilmember Noach Dear during the 1985 election cycle. This was the only contribution the group made to a councilmanic candidate during this period. Source: Brooklyn Democrats, Financial Disclosure Statement, filed 7 February 1986.

⁴⁷The impact of political action committees on parties and candidates is discussed in Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaign Finance Laws, ed. Michael J. Malbin (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1980).

⁴⁸The New York Times, 19 November 1965.

⁴⁹Ware, 115.

⁵⁰Jenkins was renominated without opposition (while stripping Jenkins of the designation, the organization did not designate another candidate), and was re-elected by a nine-to-one margin over his Republican-Conservative rival.

⁵¹What has happened is that the organizations have begun to use against internal opponents the same tactic

they've used against insurgents: petition challenges. The first organization to make widespread use of this tactic were the Queens Republicans, who challenged a number of district leader's petitions in 1987.

⁵² Each of the major party county leaders in office in 1985 had other responsibilities. Two were borough presidents (Manes and Golden); one was a deputy borough president (LaPorte); there were state legislators (Farrell, Goodman, and Calandra); two were legislative staff members (Hart and Hagerty); one was a senior manager at the New York City Board of Elections (Pantaleone), and one was an attorney in private practice (Friedman).

⁵³ Data obtained from mail surveys completed by the county leaders.

⁵⁴ *ibid.* ⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ "Tammany Hall" shares the space with the state committee in order to share its rental costs.

⁵⁷ Mail survey completed by county leader.

⁵⁸ The leader was John Calandra, who was also a state senator.

⁵⁹ Lowi, At the Pleasure of the Mayor, 29-54.

⁶⁰ A practice upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of United Jewish Organizations of Williamsburgh, Incorporated v. Carey, 430 US 144, 97 S Ct 996, 51 L Ed 2d 229 (1977).

⁶¹ The two sitting judges, Donald Sullivan and William Kappelman, were not renominated because, according to Friedman, they no longer reflected "life in the Bronx." Reported in the New York Daily News, 17 February 1985.

⁶² Friedman's candidate, Larry Seabrook, defeated the incumbent, Vincent Marchiselli, who had grown increasingly independent of Friedman after becoming majority whip in the Assembly. By supporting Seabrook, Friedman was able to satisfy minority constituents while eliminating a troublesome member (to the organization) from the legislature.

⁶³ The replacement of Sebastian Leone by Howard Gol-

den.

⁶⁴A common "inclusionary" tactic has been to divide the assembly district into parts.

⁶⁵The average tenure was 7.2 years.

⁶⁶Frank Rossetti (1967-1977), one of the last of the old regular district leaders in Manhattan, declined re-election in 1977. He had survived a number of challenges from New Democratic Coalition (NDC) supported candidates. However, following Koch's victory in the Democratic primary, Rossetti decided to avoid running in an election where he didn't have the votes (in stepping out, Rossetti claimed to following the tradition of allowing the mayoral candidate to choose the county leader in his home county). Miriam Bockman (1977-1981), decided not to seek re-election because of Mayor Koch's opposition to her leadership.

⁶⁷The Bronx Democrat's Patrick Cunningham (1971-1978) had been accused of selling judicial nominations by Special Prosecutor Maurice Nadjari.

⁶⁸Orderly transitions defined as the voluntary departure of the leader, and the ascent of their chosen successor. In two cases, the transition was orderly, but not unopposed. John Hagerty's (1984-1985) selection as Queens Republican leader was challenged by Sheldon Farber, a former state senator. Howard Golden (1983-1985) was opposed by Anthony Genovesi, a district leader from Canarsie's Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club.

⁶⁹The challenges were in Brooklyn (Democrats and Republicans); Queens (Democrats and Republicans); Manhattan (Democrats and Republicans), and the Bronx Democrats. None of the efforts were successful.

⁷⁰For example, one of Stanley Friedman's significant early achievements was to make "peace" with the Bronx party's reform and minority factions. By doing so, he was able to minimize the threat to his leadership. Basically, the regular organization refrained from challenging incumbent reformers in primaries (which, in light of the growing power of incumbency, may have been a logical course anyway), began nominating blacks and hispanics for judgeships and legislative offices, and began directing anti-poverty funds to Ramon Velez, buying his support by allowing him to develop his own patronage-fueled sub-machine in the South Bronx.

⁷¹The inability of the NDC and black district leaders to sack Rossetti was due, I believe, to the long-standing rift between the reformers and black district leaders in Manhattan. In The Amateur Democrat, Wilson noted J. Raymond Jones' negative view of reformers (282). A more contemporary view was offered by Hilton B. Clark, a Harlem district leader and city councilmember, who said that reformers we're "hypocritical. Their concern about process invariably excludes blacks and other minorities." Quote from Hilton B. Clark, interview by author, Tape recording, New York, New York, 11 November 1985.

⁷²At the 24 January 1984 meeting of the Executive Committee, twenty-four district leaders supported Howard Golden, and Anthony Genovesi polled seven. Nine votes were cast for Thomas Fortune, a district leader from Bedford-Stuyvesant. Reported in the New York Daily News, 25 January 1985.

⁷³Both George Clark (Brooklyn) and George Hart (Staten Island) came to power by insurgency.

⁷⁴The Bronx and Queens Democratic organizations, whose leaders (Manes and Friedman) had been embroiled in scandal, remained in power. In Queens, Claire Shulman, who had become interim borough president following Manes' suicide, polled sixty-six percent of the primary vote. In the Bronx, among those renominated was State Senator Joseph Galiber, who had been indicted in a \$7.3 million larceny scam with former federal Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan. Galiber received sixty-four percent of the vote (his constituents' faith was later vindicated as Galiber, along with Donovan and their co-defendants, was acquitted).

⁷⁵John Sabini, interview by author, Tape recording, Forest Hills, New York, 17 April 1986.

⁷⁶Howard Golden, interview by author, Tape recording, Brooklyn, New York, 31 March 1986.

⁷⁷New York Daily News, 4 April 1985.

⁷⁸New York Newsday, 12 November 1986.

⁷⁹New York Post, 12 November 1986.

⁸⁰The New York Times, 24 December 1974.

⁸¹New York Newsday, 12 November 1986.

⁸²The Board of Water Supply was regarded as one of the juiciest patronage posts in city government. The lifetime posts paid \$20,000 annually (the president received \$25,000). In July of 1978, Governor Hugh L. Carey signed legislation abolishing the board, transferring its staff and functions to the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

⁸³Solomon was on the staff of the State Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

⁸⁴Actually, Koch did give up his neutral stance shortly before the balloting, making his support for Friedman public. Ironically, in light of later developments, when Friedman had originally approached the Mayor, Koch had expressed concern that the party leadership might be used to solicit business for the Bronx politician's law firm. Roy Cohn, Friedman's partner, said that the firm had "no intention of seeking any politically related business - in the Bronx or anywhere else." Cohn quoted in The New York Times, 17 May 1978.

⁸⁵Friedman represented the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade, the Metropolitan Motion Pictures Theatre Owners, Incorporated, the New York Bus Service (holder of express bus franchises between New York and the Bronx), and Donald Trump at one time or another.

⁸⁶(Long Island, NY) Newsday, 13 February 1986.

⁸⁷ibid.

⁸⁸As noted earlier, Friedman had been elected county leader with the support of John LoCicero, who was quoted in the 2 May 1978 edition of The New York Times as describing Friedman as the "quality candidate."

⁸⁹To underscore the limited role of the county committeemembers in party governance, the following passage from a letter written by district leaders to their committeemembers is instructive: "We want to thank you for allowing us to put you on the County Committee. The County Committee usually requires no work." Charles Ragusa and Irene Barbaro to members of the county committee from the Forty-Seventh Assembly District, 27 May 1986. Author received letter as member of the county committee.

⁹⁰This "passing of the word" was described in the following report by Frank Lynn that appeared in the 14 May 1986 edition of The New York Times:

Twenty-two Queens Democratic district leaders selected Mr. Waldon, a 49-year old second-term Assemblyman, in an unusual display of democracy among political leaders at Queens Democratic headquarters in Forest Hills. In the past, the late Donald R. Manes, the former Democratic County leader and Borough President, would have made the selection and 'passed the word' to the district leaders.

CHAPTER 10

CLUBS AND MACHINES: FACING THE FUTURE

Trying to launch a political career in the 1980s through party activity is like learning to swim in a lead wetsuit

Edward N. Costikyan¹

The State of the Organization

In discussing the present state of political clubs and party organizations in New York City, it is important to look back at the hypotheses presented at the outset.

The political club, it was suggested, has declined significantly; its one-time multi-faceted service role decimated by the work of incumbent officeholders, bureaucratic agencies, non-profit organizations, and others.

Based on my research, I suggest that the above hypothesis is correct. The service role of the political club has declined. Much of the community service work once done by the clubs has become the "casework" of incumbent officeholders, undermining the importance of the clubs in the community. As Ware observed,

Not surprisingly, there is no evidence that, when aides are provided, legislators fail to make use of them to develop the casework side of their jobs. Not only does this service enhance his prospects of remaining in office whatever the fortunes of his party in other elections, it also enables him to free himself

from a major part of the system of mutual obligations which tied his predecessors to the city party organizations. Indeed, the most striking aspect of the aide system in New York is the considerable impact it may well have had in advancing the breakdown of the traditional relationship between the legislators and political clubs (Ware 1985, 157).

Where the political club once either provided the service or acted as the intermediary between the constituent and the elected official, the legislative district office, staffed by personnel able to do "casework," has become the direct contact point for constituent service.² Where clubs once built bases of support by delivering services, incumbent officeholders can now fashion their own base.

The clubs have also scaled back their social activities. Today's events are geared towards fundraising rather than to provide solidary incentives. The reduction in social activity has had a negative impact on the clubs' capacity to serve, in the words of Peter B. Gluck, as "an agent in the individual-oriented satisfaction fulfillment process."³ More opportunities for leisure activity, more two-income households, and an increase in the number of female-headed households have made the wide array of social activities once offered by the clubs impractical. A typical club "social calendar" in the 1980s would most likely include an annual dinner (geared to fundraising through ticket sales and journal advertisements) and a small party on election night. The nightly festivities that Peel observed during the 1930s are gone. Some clubs,

in an effort to maintain the interest of their members, might hold an additional event or two during the year. These additional activities might serve to fulfill the the needs of some club members; if nothing more than as an expression of appreciation for their support. As one club member said at a party given by a Brooklyn Democratic club for its petition-carriers, "what makes this club special is that they give us things like this (the party)."⁴

However, most clubs are either incapable or unwilling to mount social events. The clubhouse, once a center of community activity, is now (if it exists) an empty place most nights.⁵

As far as electoral mobilization, their other traditional role, is concerned, we found that collecting signatures on nominating petitions seems to be the most important electoral function undertaken by clubs. Even this task is becoming more difficult, as some clubs have difficulty rounding up enough volunteers to act as subscribing witnesses. Clubs (and candidates) have resorted to paying people to act as petition-carriers; a practice unheard of in the heyday of the clubs.

Another unheard of practice is the need of candidates to hire consulting firms to identify potential supporters. The block captain was once the "expert" in this role. However, as Costikyan wrote in 1980, "few of the clubs have any captains at all."⁶ If anything, the situation has grown

worse since that time as old captains move, retire from political activity, or die--the clubs having no one to replace them. As the network of party activists that once served as the "backbone" of the traditional party organization continues to disappear, the grassroots of the party organization deteriorate.

That brings us to our second hypothesis: that the decline of the political club has had an adverse impact on the traditional party organizations. I feel that this hypothesis is also correct. The landscape of New York politics is littered with the wreckage of candidacies that relied too heavily on the "pulling power" of the party organization.⁷

The traditional party organizations have lost their "monopoly" on electoral mobilization in high-visibility elections.⁸ Modern political campaigns do not require the armies of campaign workers (which the contemporary club can no longer mobilize anyway) that once got out the vote. The support of party leaders, in terms of relative importance, has been superseded by what Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has called the "new profession of electronic manipulators."⁹ The information that block captains once gathered about their constituents on index cards can now be stored in computer databases and be called up at a moment's notice by those crafting the candidate's "message." In high visibility elections, the modern methods of electoral mobilization

have diminished the party organization's role in getting out the vote. The party organization, once the key to electoral mobilization, has now become the adjunct to television, direct mail, and polling.

These new techniques of campaign mobilization have further diminished the role of the party organization. Historically, political campaigns were labor intensive operations. In the era of the labor intensive campaign the political organizations, with their network of activists in the neighborhood clubhouse, could be a potent force in getting out the vote. However, modern high visibility campaigns are capital intensive. The emphasis now is on fundraising.

This new emphasis has further reduced the role of the traditional party organizations. Campaign donors, who may be seeking access to decision-makers, are likely to make their donations directly to the candidate. Franz L. Leichter, in a 1985 study, found that sixteen of the twenty-five largest campaign contributors had matters pending before the Board of Estimate or had other business with the city government between 1981 and 1985. Leichter also contended that there were at least ten instances where contributors significantly increased their financial support when they had matters pending before the Board of Estimate.¹⁰

Another illustration of the financial prowess of

candidate-centered organizations are the massive sums of money raised by Governor Mario M. Cuomo and United States Senator Alfonse D'Amato during their 1986 re-election campaigns. Even lower visibility elections in New York City have become attractive to donors. Labor unions, political action committees, wealthy individuals, and corporations have been willing to fund campaigns, especially the campaigns of incumbent officeholders.¹¹ Funding for legislative and councilmanic contests might reach even higher levels if these ever became competitive. As noted at the outset, most elections in the city result in a Democratic victory over token Republican opposition.¹²

Actually, in low visibility elections, the party organizations and political clubs still have some import. The clubs can usually retain the control of district leaderships and county and state committee seats and the party organizations, through their control of judicial conventions, usually select judicial nominees.¹³ Indeed, as was suggested earlier, the decline in local party organization activity and significance has probably made the local assembly district club more secure (but less important) than in earlier times. The club that dominates the party leadership posts is considered the "official" club, and insurgents face the challenge of building and maintaining an organization. The challengers must compete with the "regulars" not only in primaries, but for the allegiance

of the dwindling pool of neighborhood party activists. The regular clubs, because they can call on their (albeit dwindling) membership, have an advantage over most insurgencies which are faced with the task of developing an organization to, at the very least, gather signatures on nominating petitions. This situation tends to perpetuate dominance of the neighborhood party apparatus by the established clubs and district leaders. In recent years there have been few challenges for district leaderships in the Republican and Democratic parties and not many have been successful.¹⁴ Of course, one factor in the decline of such challenges is the perception that party office (district leadership) is no longer important.¹⁵

The third hypothesis, that the decline of the traditional party organization has changed the role of the county leader, is also borne out by the research. The mere fact that the county leadership is no longer a full-time task is an indicator of the decline of the role. The days when a Hugh McLaughlin could devote all of his energies to party business are long gone.

Also gone is the dictatorial power of the old political "boss." Today's leader must contend with a diverse organization that (especially the Democrats) is likely to include elements not solidly behind his or her leadership. More a coordinator than a leader, party leaders must face party disloyalty. Leaders can no longer be sure that their

organizations will support organization-endorsed candidates. This practice has become so acceptable that county leaders have personally been disloyal without being sanctioned by the party organization.¹⁶

The result of this decline in party discipline is that candidates have come to rely on their own organizations to perform electoral tasks once performed by the party organizations. The change in attitude of candidates (especially incumbents) towards the traditional party organization is reported by Costikyan:

It's over. The days when congressional and senatorial candidates and would-be governors and presidents faithfully made the rounds meeting party leaders in hopes that blocs of delegates would be delivered at conventions is over. Today, the elected public official is more likely to be courted than the county or state chairman. It is hard to think of a significant national primary or general election in recent times in which party organization or party leaders played a significant role (Costikyan 1980, 26).

Costikyan pointed out a significant development: the rise of the elected public official. This trend has been reflected by one change in party leadership: the increase in the number of leaders holding both party and public office. With the election of Assemblymember George Friedman as Bronx leader in 1987, four of the five Democratic county leaders were also elected public officials.¹⁷ Dual officeholding has even reached down to the district leadership level, as the officeholders found that the combination of public and party office enhances their political influence.¹⁸ The staff, patronage, and le-

gal authority of public office apparently is seen by some as a way of overcoming the weakness of party organization while maintaining a leadership role in the organization. With Stanley Friedman's departure, it appears that the age of the powerful county leader who does not also hold public office has passed.¹⁹

In short, the powerful traditional party organization, once a dominant force in the politics of New York City, has declined in importance. No longer do the "bosses" sit down to dictate nominations and policy.

Where Has All The Power Gone?

In concluding that the "power" of the clubs and traditional party organizations has ebbed, I would like to offer some suggestions as to where the influence of the organization has flowed.

It is obvious that incumbent elected officeholders have become a dominant force in electoral politics. Historically, incumbents were dependent upon the organizations. Those at the bottom of the ticket relied upon party leaders for their nominations and on the strength of the party to pull out votes for the candidates at the head of the ticket (which would carry those at the bottom in if there were long enough "coattails"). Martin Tolchin and Susan Tolchin illustrate this relationship in their recounting of this story about Hymie Shorenstein, a Brooklyn district leader during the 1920s. Shorenstein,

was once confronted by a worried Assembly candidate who had not received the funds he needed to campaign actively. Shorenstein calmed him: 'You see the ferryboats come in?' Shorenstein asked. "You see them pull into the slip? You see the water suck in behind? And when the water sucks in behind the ferryboat, all kinds of dirty garbage comes smack into the slip with the ferryboat? Go home. Al Smith is the ferryboat. This year you're the garbage' (Tolchin and Tolchin 1971, 18-19).

This "garbage" relationship between the candidate and the party organization is not as accurate today as it was in Shorenstein's time. As Ware, Costikyan, and Benjamin have observed, incumbent officeholders, once subordinate to the party organization, have grown independent of the party.²⁰ The key to this independence having been the flow of politically critical resources to incumbents and to candidate-centered organizations.

Perhaps the most important resource that has shifted to the incumbent is the ability to interact directly with the constituency. Historically, the clubhouse was the intermediary between the elected official and his constituents (especially if the official were a member of Congress or the legislature, which would preclude their spending a great deal of time in the district). If a constituent needed help, they would go to the club (or speak to the block captain), and the club would then contact the elected official (if necessary) to obtain his aid. The official, dependent on the organization for electoral resources, cooperated.

Today, perhaps the most important resource for the

incumbent is the district office, which has become pervasive.²¹ These offices have become important for a number of reasons.

First, they provide the incumbent with a "presence" in the community. In a time when clubs are giving up their permanent sites or their clubhouses are open only one or two evenings a week, the legislative district office becomes the contact point for constituent service. Rather than seeing the leader at the clubhouse, a constituent can see a legislative assistant at the district office, bypassing the political clubs.²² In providing these constituency services, the legislators have been able to usurp much of the clubs' traditional service role.

Another advantage of the district office is that it is a form of patronage. The legislative assistants and other staff employed by the officeholder are patronage appointees. While there are usually not enough jobs here to lead to the creation of personal political machines, the jobs can be used creatively for patronage purposes. One strategy is to provide part-time employment, on a rotating basis, to loyal supporters.²³

In addition to patronage and constituency service, the district office has become an unofficial campaign headquarters for the local elected official.²⁴ Where political campaigns were once run by the clubs, candidates are now likely to use their own people for campaign management. A

common practice has been the placement of campaign aides on the public payroll until the next campaign, when they take leaves of absence from their public positions in order to work in the campaign. As Ware concluded, "we could say that many legislators could now use public money to pay a kind of retaining fee to some of the purveyors of electoral services."²⁵

In addition to the district office, there are other ways that elected officeholders now have of reaching their constituents. For example, state legislators can send three communications yearly to each constituent. While these newsletters cannot include political material, it seems that most legislators time their mailings to coincide with primaries and general elections.²⁶ These mailings provide the incumbent with name recognition, a critical advantage in electoral politics.²⁷

Another change that has affected the officeholder is their enhanced ability to raise funds for their campaigns. As already noted, political action committees have become major donors, even in legislative elections.²⁸ Virtually all campaign financial resources are directed to the candidate or through campaign committees operated by their legislative leaders.²⁹ As money has become more critical in politics, fundraising has become more significant. Needless to say, the inability (in part, legally mandated) of party organizations to raise money for candidates has reduced the

dependence of candidates upon the traditional party organizations.

The Rise of the Leadership

Individual incumbent elected officials have not been the only beneficiaries of the decline of the traditional party organization's political campaign power. At both the national level (in Congress) and in the legislature, we have seen legislative leaders amass and distribute the resources that have become critical in electoral politics: money and modern campaign technology.

Democrats and Republicans in Congress have organized their own fundraising operations, independent of the national party committees. According to Hugh A. Bone, the existence of these separate campaign committees means they can "take cognizance of the diversity of locality. Members of Congress feel there is a need for specialization in campaigning, an element best provided by independent groups operating for Capitol Hill."³⁰ However, such campaign committees undermine traditional party organizations in that congressional leaders are interested in returning a majority of their party to the body, not in whether the individual member is supported by their local party organization. Thus, by providing support to candidates, the congressional campaign committees have reduced the dependence of members of Congress upon their local party organizations.³¹

A similar situation has developed in the state legis-

ture. The four legislative campaign committees are now raising and spending more than three million dollars in each election year.³² In addition to providing financial support to legislative candidates, the campaign committees, according to Frank Lynn, "use squads of legislative aides who are skilled in public relations, fundraising, mailings and other campaign techniques."³³ As George Friedman observed, "the legislative committees are taking over what were formerly party functions."³⁴

This phenomenon was magnified by the indictment, in September of 1987, of the minority leader of the State Senate, Manfred Ohrenstein, and two other Democrats for allegedly conspiring to use state funds to finance election campaigns.³⁵ The three were charged with placing campaign workers on the senate payroll while they were actually working on the campaigns of state senate candidates in eight districts that the Democratic leadership had targeted in their effort to take control of the chamber.³⁶ The acceptance of this practice is illustrated by the comments of the Assembly's Republican minority leader, Clarence D. Rappleyea, who said, "I don't know which side of the line those guys were on...because I'm not sure where the line is."³⁷ Indeed, what seems to set the aforementioned situation apart from the standard legislative practice is that the staff involved were hired specifically to work in these campaigns rather than having already

been on the legislative payroll before the election (and taking unpaid leave or vacation time).

What the use of legislative resources for campaigns highlights the weakness of party organizations. As Rappleyea said in the wake of Ohrenstein's indictment, "I'd be a whole lot happier if the party structure was healthier and we didn't need these committees, particularly the fund-raising aspect."³⁸

The poor health of the party structure described by Rappleyea has afforded legislative leaders the opportunity to influence their colleagues in the legislature (who, as we've already seen, now rely on them for politically critical resources). There is a high degree of party-line voting in the state legislature.³⁹ To illustrate the influence of the floor leaders, the following observation of a reporter in the 9 April 1981 edition of The New York Times is instructive:

It was one of those moments a legislative leader dreads. Warren M. Anderson, leader of the Senate's Republican majority, was committed to passing his version of a bill to aid mass transit, and the bill was going down to defeat. Senator Anderson conferred hastily with his counsel, John F. Haggerty. Mr. Haggerty pointed his finger at one Republican Senator, then another, and they quickly changed their votes from negative to the affirmative. The bill was still one vote short of passage when Mr. Haggerty's gaze fixed on Senator Martin S. Auer, a Syracuse Republican. Senator Auer rose from his red leather chair. 'Mr. President,' he said, 'it has been called to my attention that there is \$1.6 million in there for central transportation. Due to that, I am going to change my vote to yes.' The measure passed.

The influence of the floor leaders is further enhanced by their authority over committee assignments, staff and office allowances, committee chairmanships (in the case of the majority), and even the assignment of office space in Albany.⁴⁰ These powers, as well as their command of campaign resources, have given the legislative leaders more influence than in the past.

The only legislative body where the county leaders still exercise a great deal of influence is the city council.⁴¹ Unlike the state legislature, where there is competition between the Republicans and Democrats, the New York City Council is dominated by the Democrats.⁴² The existence of "one party rule" in the council seems to have enhanced the influence of the county leaders. While legislative leaders in the state legislature regard their campaign committees as a means to insure a majority for their party, the one-sidedness of the city council has not offered the council's leaders the same incentive to intervene in individual elections.⁴³

Thus far, the primary motivation of legislative leaders has been to attain majorities in their legislative body.⁴⁴ However, the intervention of the leadership, especially in the legislature, could lead to what political scientists have called the "responsible party model of government."⁴⁵

The responsible party model is based on a number of assumptions. First, as Schattschneider wrote, "that par-

ties might be used as beneficent instruments of popular government."⁴⁶ That is, if we know a candidate's party affiliation, we can better determine the candidate's policy orientation, and we can then make a reasoned electoral decision. Under the responsible party model, we assume that each political party stands for some philosophy, some perspective on the issues of the day, and that the candidates of that party share those views.

From this we assume that political parties are disciplined entities that, once in power, transform their proposals into policy. We assume that party leadership, once it formulates policy, can impose its will on its members in government.

Whether party leaders in the legislature will move beyond using their electoral resources and legislative authority to influence individual votes in a system of developing party policy (on which their legislative candidates will seek office) is a matter for speculation and future research.

Changes in the Rules of "The Game"

Another factor in the decline of the traditional party organizations and political clubs since the time of the Adler and Blank study has been the change of some major rules in the political "game." These changes have had a negative impact on the party organizations.

Two of the changes concerned the nomination of can-

didates. One of the changes has been in the method of selecting the presidential candidates of the major parties.⁴⁷ The use of primary elections to select convention delegates further diminishes the traditional party organizations as the leaders can no longer "broker" their convention delegates.⁴⁸ The days of a party leader heading an "uncommitted delegation" or a delegation solidly behind one candidate to national conventions are long past. Today, party leaders often find that their organizations fragment, supporting competing candidates for the nomination. The wider the field of candidates, the greater the potential for fragmentation.⁴⁹

The second change has been in the role of the statewide party nominating convention. Until 1974, nominees for statewide office had been selected by the convention.⁵⁰ Beginning in 1974, the power of the convention (and the party organizations which controlled them) diminished. The statewide conventions now "designate" candidates.⁵¹ In addition, any candidate receiving twenty-five percent of the convention vote may appear on the primary ballot along with the convention's designee. Finally, candidates denied designation or failing to receive twenty-five percent of the convention vote may still get on the ballot through a petition process.⁵²

The direct primary makes it possible for candidates not favored by the party establishment to seek their par-

ty's nomination. Indeed, the above process has magnified the inability of the party organizations to "deliver" the vote. For example, two of the four Democratic designees have been defeated in the gubernatorial primary.⁵³ The two successful designees were incumbents (Hugh L. Carey in 1978 and Mario M. Cuomo in 1986).⁵⁴ Another illustration of the weakness of the parties in the primary process was the effort mounted by Governor Cuomo's forces to challenge the petitions of Abe Hirschfeld, who was seeking to run against Stan Lundine, Cuomo's choice for lieutenant governor. Fearful that Hirschfeld, a wealthy builder, might defeat Lundine, the Cuomo forces mounted a successful challenge of the sixty-eight thousand petition signatures that had been submitted on behalf of Hirschfeld's candidacy.⁵⁵ The petition-challenge process, described earlier as labor-intensive, was executed by the "Friends of Cuomo" with minimal assistance from the traditional party organizations that historically had provided the manpower for such efforts. Rather, the Cuomo campaign relied on state employees (who were on vacation, on leave without pay, or who worked on the challenge during their non-working hours), help from friendly unions, and volunteers generated through their own grassroots organizing.⁵⁶

A third change in the rules of the political game was the New York City fiscal crisis. The fiscal crisis injected into the political process what Robert W. Bailey has called

the "crisis regime," which restored financial solvency and created a new set of monitoring agencies, new actors with political influence, and enhanced state (and, for a time, federal) controls.

Perhaps the most direct effect on the party organizations as a result of the fiscal crisis was the earlier-discussed decline in patronage. Mayor Beame, in an effort to revitalize the organizations (Beame having been a member of Brooklyn's powerful Madison Club) had used his patronage powers to benefit the clubhouses. The fiscal crisis curbed patronage and, as described earlier, made party connections a liability rather than an asset in a time when "expertise" was to become a major factor in the drive to bring "sound management" to New York City government.⁵⁷

But the fiscal crisis had an even greater effect on the parties. While many of the formal institutions created during the crisis have ceased to function, the actors who became involved in the political process have not ended their activity. Their interest has not only influenced a re-direction in public policy, but the political leaders find themselves working with (some would say, subordinate to) the "crisis regime."⁵⁸

What's Left?

If the traditional party organization is no longer a "machine," what role does it play? The traditional party organizations have become less significant actors in the poli-

tical and governmental processes. Two areas where the party organizations still seem to have a great deal of influence is in the selection of judges and in what I call "sub-local politics," which includes school board elections and community board politics.

However, even in these areas political clubs may be vulnerable. Control over state supreme court nominations has always been based on the ability of the county organizations to control the judicial convention. The 1987 Bronx Democratic Judicial Convention may be the start of a new trend, as a coalition of black, hispanic, and white anti-organization legislators seized control, nominating a black and hispanic who were opposed by the county leader.⁵⁹ Assemblymember G. Oliver Koppell, one of the insurgents, described the defeat of the organization as "a new day."⁶⁰ If it was, it was a day where elected officials used their resources (having run their own slates of delegates in the primaries, defeating organization-backed slates) to impose their will on the organization.⁶¹

Sub-local politics, presently dominated by political clubhouses, may someday be contested by other neighborhood-based organizations. The school board elections may be the precursor of these sub-local contests, as groups that have historically shunned partisan political activity conclude that such activity can help them attain their objectives. We already have some evidence of such development. Some of

the black Democratic clubs in Harlem, Brooklyn, and Queens emerged from the community action programs of the 1960s.⁶² There have been other examples of community groups moving into the electoral process.⁶³ It appears that such activity depends on the willingness of a local political club to support neighborhood groups. Where support is forthcoming, the clubs will be more likely to be able to keep these other groups from entering sub-local politics. Where there is conflict between local political clubs and neighborhood groups, the groups may initiate political action. Such a development is likely to weaken the county organizations further, as the neighborhood groups will not necessarily be committed to the maintenance of the "regular" organization. Rather, they are more likely to be concerned about their own programs, further weakening the party organization.

The future of the traditional party organization is not bright. The clubs are the "backbone" of the organizations, and the relative strength of the backbone ultimately has a bearing on the organization's effectiveness. The party headquarters has few workers of its own. It has historically relied on the local clubs to provide for its human resource needs. If the clubs cannot provide volunteers, the organizations cannot be as effective.

The weakness of the regular party organizations has grown more severe as incumbent officeholders and the legislative leadership have obtained the resources requisite for

political campaigns independent of the party organizations. As a result, the elected official, once dependent on the party, is now an independent political force.

The irony in all this is that this latest development, the shift of electoral power from the party organization to the officeholder, is actually a regression in American politics.

Historically, political parties in the United States began as associations of elected officials who worked together in government (what political scientists call the party in government).⁶⁴ However, as the franchise was enlarged, politicians needed to develop support among the mass public to be elected to office.⁶⁵ "Modern" political parties developed to organize the mass electorate to support politicians.

Recent developments make it clear that many of the electoral mobilization functions once performed by the political clubs and traditional party organizations on behalf of politicians have now been assumed by those politicians. What we are seeing is what Ware called the rise of "party-less" politics, where incumbency, control over campaign resources, and personality have become more important assets than support of the organization.⁶⁶ While the party organization is not dead, it is not as significant as it once was. Once a "star" performer, it is now more of a supporting player on the stage of New York politics.

Directions for Research

While traditional party organizations have been overlooked in recent years, there are a number of opportunities for research.

The electoral system, which has been opened to a number of "outsiders" with the decline of the traditional party organization, is likely to remain open. Future researchers may examine the evolution of the electoral system into two distinct systems. There may eventually be a "mega-system," made up of high visibility elections. These electoral contests, which rely on modern campaign techniques and large infusions of capital, will be elections where party organizations, structurally divided and lacking the relevant resources, may become minor actors in this electoral process--providing nothing more than an organizational framework (that is, the nominations process) for participants who have little connection with the traditional party organization.

The second system, a "sub-local" electoral system, might be one where political clubs retain an important role. Researchers may someday examine political club influence in these elections, the activities of other groups at this level, and the relationship between these sub-local elections and the higher visibility elections described above.

Another question which scholars might wish to investi-

gate is the existence of the suburban political machine. Most of the research on political machines has focused on urban party activity.⁶⁷ Ignored for the most part has been the party organization in outlying areas. Perhaps the most powerful political party organization in the New York metropolitan area during the 1980s has been the Nassau County Republican Organization.⁶⁸ Researchers may examine the question of whether the shift of the middle-class from urban to suburban areas has resulted in the relocation of the political machine. Are the Nassau County Republicans an anomaly or the wave of the future of traditional party organizations? Does suburbanization require the type of political organization that accompanied urbanization? If it does, what fuels the suburban machine, and how does that machine interact with other actors in the metropolitan polity? Will the "reform" impulse that has periodically emerged to challenge the urban machine also manifest in suburban politics? These are just some of the questions that future studies may answer in examining suburban political organizations.

Another research opportunity will lie in the examination of any long-term consequences of the scandals of the mid-1980s. What remedial measures (if any) will be taken to insure that similar acts do not recur? What will be the impact of the scandals on the traditional party organizations and other actors in the political process? Will

the scandals revitalize the reform movement and other insurgent efforts? What effect will the scandals have on policy formulation and implementation? Has the organization declined to the point where the scandals become the final nail in the coffin of the traditional party organization?

The role of the incumbent officeholder is also a matter that should be pursued. While Ware has examined the incumbent and his efforts to obtain resources outside of the traditional party organization, I would suggest two additional matters for study.⁶⁹

First, an analysis is needed of the shift of power from the traditional party organizations to the legislative leadership. Manfred Ohrenstein's indictment alerted the general public to what had become a common practice: the use of legislative employees in political campaigns. The relationship between the county leaders and legislative leaders should be explored. The influence of the legislative leaders on primary elections might be an interesting field for examination. Also, a systematic study of legislative leader influence and county leader influence upon incumbent legislators might help answer the question of whether county leaders have lost power to the legislative leadership.

The second matter of study might be the rise of the dual officeholder in organizational politics. The power of incumbency appears to be a useful supplement to party lea-

dership. As noted earlier, at the time of the writing of this study, four of the five Democratic county leaders were elected officials (as were two of the Republicans).⁷⁰

What is significant about this trend is that the more successful traditional political organizations, in New York and in other cities, in recent years have been those headed by public officials. The officeholder who is also a political leader is not new: David Lawrence, Richard Daley and (as Charles Garrett suggested, the prototypical) Fiorello LaGuardia have been succeeded by new leaders.⁷¹ The ability to combine the power of elective office with that of party leader made Donald Manes a force in New York politics as Queens Democratic Leader/Borough President. Personal machines have developed in recent years in Gary, Indiana and in the District of Columbia.⁷² In those cases, and in other places where personal political machines exist, the question remains as to whether such organizations can survive the departure of their leaders.⁷³

Finally, a great opportunity exists in the dearth of recent study on traditional party organizations at the local level. Aside from Ware's study on New York, Denver, and the East Bay region of California, there is little recent literature on traditional party organizations in urban areas.⁷⁴ Has the political power of incumbency spread to other cities? Do legislative parties intervene in local politics? Have the "new majorities" of blacks and hispanics

in many of America's large cities turned to organizational politics? Is New York City representative of developments in other parts of the country, or is it the deviant case?

While the political machine may be dead, there are new "bosses" in urban politics. The political leader/public official, the incumbent legislator and his district office staff, and the legislative leader with their new-found control over resources critical to the electoral process are the "next wave" of organizational politics.

This "next wave" presents challenges to political scientists and the political system. Will these new bosses choose to take over the traditional party organizations, or will they choose to create new forms of electoral organizations? Can the labor-intensive, volunteer-reliant traditional political organizations adapt to the capital-intensive, professionally-oriented nature of the "new politics?" Who governs in an age where the significant forces in electoral politics do not rely on a "popular base," when the support of the "backbone" of the traditional organization (the political club) is displaced by a new "backbone" (capital and those who supply it to the new political leaders) that is not grounded in popular support? Does it really matter?

There are those who argue that the traditional party organizations have long ceased to represent (if they ever did) the electorate. The question remains (one which will

be asked frequently in the future), can "party-less" politics also become "people-less" politics? The implications of such a question cannot be ignored by those interested in either the relatively narrow field of political organizations or in the larger question of "who governs?" and how that impacts upon "who gets? what? when? and how?"

NOTES

¹Edward N. Costikyan, How to Win Votes (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1980), 23.

²Ware found that relatively few cases were actually referred by political clubs to district offices. Only two of sixty-six legislators in New York City responding to Ware's 1982 mail survey reported that between twenty-five and fifty percent of the cases had first contacted a political club. The other sixty-four legislators reported that less than twenty-five percent of their casework had come through political clubs (eleven legislators reported that none of their cases had come through clubs). Ware, 158.

³Gluck, 21.

⁴Dante Naccarato, interview by author, Tape recording, Brooklyn, New York, 8 August 1986.

⁵Most clubs are open one night a week, if that frequent.

⁶Costikyan, How to Win Votes, 24.

⁷For instance, Howard Samuels' 1974 gubernatorial campaign (he lost the primary to Hugh L. Carey), Ed Koch's 1982 campaign, and John Dyson's campaign for the Democratic senatorial nomination in 1986, just to name a few.

⁸These elections being defined as statewide and citywide primaries and general elections.

⁹The Wall Street Journal, 14 May 1979.

¹⁰The contributors cited were 60 Hudson Street Associates (the Board of Estimate approved a \$40 million lease for the Department of Correction in November of 1985); Morgan Stanley Company and Forest City Associates (recipients of a zoning variance for the construction of a

back-office facility in Brooklyn in October, 1985); Ian Bruce Eichner (obtained a zoning variance in October, 1985); Barney's (which obtained a zoning variance for the expansion of its store in the face of community opposition); William Zeckendorf (who was given permission by the Board for a large mixed-use project in Union Square in January, 1985); Jack and Burton Resnick (who benefitted from modifications in the Lower Manhattan Mixed Use Zone which allowed them to construct an office building on the site of a parking garage they owned); Shearson Lehman/American Express (in June of 1984, the Board authorized the sale of city-owned property to the company for the construction of a computer operations complex); Olympia and York (the Toronto-based developer, which had asked the Board in 1982 to eliminate a restrictive covenant that had prevented the company from selling individual buildings in its World Financial Center complex); and George Klein, Michael Lazar, Larry Silverstein, Nederlander Theatres, and Jujcamyn Theatres (all participants in the Times Square Redevelopment Project). The contributors cited had given less than thirty thousand dollars combined to members of the Board of Estimate prior to their dealings with the body. Leichter found that these donors provided over \$375,000 in campaign contributions following approval of their requests by the board. The contributors and recipients might argue that the timing of the election was the key factor. Since the municipal elections took place in 1985, it could be contended that campaign funds would be donated later, rather than earlier, in the four-year cycle. Leichter was not unbiased. He had unsuccessfully challenged City Comptroller Harrison J. Goldin, withdrawing before the primary in 1985 because of his inability to raise money.

¹¹ Campaign fundraising for legislative contests is discussed in Peter A. A. Berle, Does the Citizen Stand a Chance? Politics of a State Legislature (Woodbury, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 1974), 52.

¹² A good commentary of the strengths and weaknesses of the political parties in New York is provided by Peter W. Colby, "The Politics of New York State Today," New York State Today: Politics, Government, Public Policy, ed. Peter W. Colby (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 9-22. The most expensive councilmanic campaign in 1985 (when the eight members of the Board of Estimate raised more than eight million dollars combined) was run by Brooklyn Councilmember Sal Albanese, who spent \$82,813 to defeat Republican-Conservative Michael Long in one of the few seriously-contested elections. More representative of campaign spending in councilmanic elections was Councilmember Abraham Gerges, who spent \$8,039. Source

of data: New York City Board of Elections.

¹³As noted earlier, judicial conventions nominate state supreme court nominees.

¹⁴A year when an unusually high number of challenges was 1984. In Brooklyn, where there was a struggle for control of the Democratic organization, there were sixteen assembly districts (out of nineteen) where competing slates of district leader (male and female) candidates filed petitions. In nine districts no primary was held, as the petitions were successfully challenged, with the removal of candidates by the Board of Elections or the courts. In the seven contested districts, the incumbents were re-elected. To my knowledge, the most recent successful primary challenges to sitting district leaders took place in 1982, when Al Vann and Annette Robinson were able to win the posts in the Fifty-Sixth Assembly District (Brooklyn). In 1980, Vann had lost the Democratic district leadership when his petitions were invalidated by the Board of Elections. In 1986, Vann once again lost his district leadership through the petition challenge process.

¹⁵Frank Lynn's article, "Races With Few Rooters: Democratic District Leaders," discusses this perception, The New York Times, 27 August 1977.

¹⁶For example, Herman D. Farrell's support of David Dinkins for Manhattan Borough President in 1981 as the Liberal Party candidate (Dinkins was defeated by Andrew Stein in the Democratic primary), and Howard Golden's endorsement of Assemblymember Roger Green's 1986 re-election bid (after Green's disqualification for failing to file valid petitions for the Democratic primary).

¹⁷They were: Assemblymembers Herman D. Farrell (Manhattan) and George Friedman (Bronx), Borough President Howard Golden (Brooklyn), and Congressman Thomas Manton (Queens). The fifth leader, Staten Island's Nicholas LaPorte, Sr., was deputy borough president.

¹⁸I am referring to the assemblymember/district leader whose club was discussed in chapter eight.

¹⁹In Queens, following Donald Manes' suicide, there was a consensus among party leaders that the new county leader should not be an elected public official. Nevertheless, when the district leaders selected a new leader,

they chose a member of the United States House of Representatives.

²⁰Gerald Benjamin, "The Power of Incumbency," Empire State Report XIII (April 1987): 34-39.

²¹Ware found that all sixty-six of the state legislators responding to his mail survey had at least one office, Ware, 158.

²²*ibid.*, 157-158.

²³Brooklyn Democratic Congressman Leo Zeferetti, during the mid-1970s, employed twenty-four part-time staff members (none working more than ninety days), paying out forty-three thousand dollars in staff allowance funds. Reported by The New York Times, 26 June 1976.

²⁴While it's illegal, under state law, for partisan political activity to occur in state offices (including legislative district offices), the mere existence of a district office, with staff loyal to the legislator dispensing constituent services, is bound to help the legislator's political career.

²⁵Ware, 156. ²⁶*ibid.*, 155.

²⁷Name recognition is discussed in Thomas Mann and Raymond Wolfinger, "Candidates and Parties in Congressional Elections," American Political Science Review 74 (September 1980): 617-632.

²⁸Bradley H. Zeve, Big PACs Love New York (Albany: New York State Common Cause, 1985).

²⁹Discussed in David W. Adamany, Campaign Finance in America (North Scituate, MA: Duxbury Press, 1972).

³⁰Hugh A. Bone, Party Committees and National Politics (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), 157.

³¹Ware, 151-154.

³²The New York Times, 17 September 1987.

³³*ibid.* ³⁴*ibid.*

³⁵The others indicted were State Senator Howard E. Rabbush of Brooklyn, and Frank Sanzillo, the secretary to the minority leader.

³⁶Two incumbents, Ralph Quattrociocchi (Rochester) and Suzi Oppenheimer (Westchester) were re-elected. The others, challengers to incumbents, were defeated.

³⁷The New York Times, 17 September 1987. ³⁸ibid.

³⁹A discussion of the relationship between floor leaders and individual legislators is offered by Jeffrey M. Stonecash, "Political Development and Political Dialogue: The New York State Legislature," paper presented at the New York State Political Science Association meetings, Albany, New York, 4 April 1986, 12-19

⁴⁰Stonecash, 12-14.

⁴¹I am referring to Democratic county leaders. Republican leaders have little influence in the body (as there are few Republicans to influence).

⁴²The body elected in 1985 contained thirty-four Democrats and one Republican.

⁴³Thus far, there have been no political action committees or campaign committees formed by the council leadership.

⁴⁴Alan R. Gitelson, M. Margaret Conway, and Frank B. Feigert, American Political Parties (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984), 198-201.

⁴⁵In 1950 the Committee on Political Parties of the American Political Science Association published Toward A More Responsible Two Party System (New York and Toronto: Rinehart and Company, 1950). Other works describing the responsible party model include Austin Ranney, The Doctrine of Responsible Party Government (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954), and E. E. Schattschneider, Party Government (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1942). The four-year long effort of the Committee on Political Parties was chaired by Schattschneider.

⁴⁶Schattschneider, 8.

47 The reforms in the Democratic Party are discussed in Byron E. Shafer, Quiet Revolution (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1983).

48 Primaries in the presidential selection process are discussed in James Lingle and Byron E. Shafer, "Primary Rules, Political Power, and Social Change," American Political Science Review 70 (1976): 25-40; Nelson W. Polsby, The Consequences of Party Reform (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), and Democratic National Committee, Commission on Presidential Nomination, Report of the Commission on Presidential Nomination (Washington, DC: Democratic National Committee, 1982).

49 To underscore this fragmentation, between 1920 and 1968, an average of 86.5% of the New York delegation would vote for one candidate on the first ballot at the Democratic National Convention. Since 1972 (1972 being the first convention to operate under the rules changes), an average of 68.6% of the delegation voted as a "bloc" for the delegation's favored candidate. Sources of data: for 1920-1972, Richard C. Bain and Judith H. Parris, Convention Decisions and Voting Records, 2d ed. (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1973), 402-429; for 1976, Richard Reeves, Convention (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 228-229; for 1980 and 1984, Office of the Secretary, New York State Department of State.

50 The convention system had been used until 1913, when it was replaced by a direct primary. Conventions were reinstated in 1921, and remained in use until 1967, when the state legislature enacted the law mandating the present system, New York Laws of 1967, chap. 716).

51 A candidate receiving a majority of the convention vote is designated as the party's candidate in the primary, guaranteeing him a place on the ballot. However, the designation does not appear on the primary ballot.

52 Prospective candidates for statewide office must obtain twenty thousand signatures, with at least one hundred signatures from each of at least half of the state's congressional districts.

53 Howard Samuels in 1974 and Edward Koch in 1982.

54 Carey defeated then-Lieutenant Governor Maryann Krupsack and State Senator Jeremiah Bloom. Cuomo had no primary.

⁵⁵Hirschfeld was stricken from the ballot by the New York State Court of Appeals for failing to present at least one hundred signatures from half of the state's congressional districts.

⁵⁶The author of this study was a participant in this challenge process.

⁵⁷For a discussion of the policies, especially the management policies, developed during the fiscal crisis, see Robert W. Bailey, The Crisis Regime (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 13-128.

⁵⁸For a discussion of the "crisis regime's" political impact, see Bailey, 129-176.

⁵⁹The anti-Friedman coalition supported Frank Torres, a family court judge, and William T. Martin, an attorney in private practice and former prosecutor.

⁶⁰The New York Times, 29 September 1987.

⁶¹The coalition of anti-Friedman legislators included Assemblymembers Eliot L. Engel, Gloria Davis, John C. Dearie, G. Oliver Koppell, Larry Seabrook, and Jose Serano.

⁶²For example, Al Vann's club in Brooklyn. For a discussion of the community action programs and political organizations, see J. David Greenstone and Paul E. Peterson, "Reformers, Machines, and the War on Poverty," City Politics and Public Policy, ed. James Q. Wilson (New York: John Wiley, 1968).

⁶³Virtually all of these forays have been in the school board elections.

⁶⁴For a discussion of the party in government, see Gitelson, Conway, and Feigert, 254-305.

⁶⁵An analysis of this development is offered in Austin Ranney and Wilmore Kendall, Democracy and the American Party System (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956), chap. 5.

⁶⁶Ware, 274.

⁶⁷This literature is discussed in chapter four.

⁶⁸The Nassau County Republicans were discussed by Samuel Kaplan, The Dream Deferred (New York: Seabury, 1975). Underscoring the strength of the organization, Dick Behn, in 1977, found that the group could raise one million dollars annually, and charged that "part of that comes from one percent wage contributions from county workers" (Empire State Report, April 1977, 149). Frank Lynn, writing in the 7 July 1974 edition of The New York Times, observed that the suburbs may be the machine strongholds of the future:

Suburban bossism is built on the bedrock of its urban counterpart: fundraising, patronage and legislative influence, which produces benefits that continually reinforce the machine's power base. But it owes its success largely to suburban demography. A relatively homogeneous and affluent population makes the suburbs more 'manageable' politically than the city, where diverse sectors compete for power that has waned as the suburbs' political potency has increased.

⁶⁹Ware, 151-160.

⁷⁰The two Republicans were State Senators Roy Goodman (Manhattan) and Guy J. Velella (Bronx).

⁷¹Garrett, 222.

⁷²Richard Hatcher (Gary) and Marion Barry (Washington). Both built their "machines" with a combination of massive public works projects and infusions of federal aid. One estimate of federal aid to Gary is that between 500 million and one billion dollars was spent in the city, mostly for temporary employment and job training programs (creating a personal patronage army for Hatcher). The mayor, interviewed in the 7-13 May 1986 edition of In These Times, defended his use of federal aid, contending that,

We hired people who otherwise wouldn't have had a job. Those dollars represented the salvation of our city, and are a real tribute to the aggressiveness of those administrators who went after those funds.

The mayor's critics contended that these funds had been used by the mayor to build his political organization. In 1987, Mayor Hatcher was denied his party's nomination in the Democratic primary, ending his twenty-year rule of Gary, Indiana.

⁷³Hatcher had been defeated, and, as of this writing, Barry was under investigation by federal prosecutors for alleged corrupt activity.

⁷⁴The small amount of literature that has been produced, aside from Ware and some works on the fiscal crisis in New York that discuss its impact on political organization, has centered on Chicago and Harold Washington's election as the first black chief executive of that community. For example, Milton Rakove, "Reflections on the Machine," The Making of the Mayor: Chicago, 1983, ed. Melvin G. Holli and Paul M. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984), 127-140.

APPENDIX A

POLITICAL CLUBS IN NEW YORK CITY

Democratic

ANOROC Democratic Club (Queens)
Adam Clayton Powell Club (Bronx)
Aldos Regular Democratic Organization (Queens)
Alfred E. Smith Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Allied Democrats (Queens)
Andrew Jackson Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Ansonia Independent Democrats (Manhattan)
Audubon Reform Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Bedford Avenue Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Benjamin Franklin Reform Democratic Club (Bronx)
Benjamin S. Rosenthal Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Bensonhurst Independent Democrats (Brooklyn)
Broadway Democrats (Manhattan)
Bronx Independent Caucus
Bronx Unity Democratic Club
Brooklyn Women's Political Caucus
Bushwick United Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Caribe Regular Democratic Organization (Manhattan)
Carver Democratic Club (Manhattan)

Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats
Central Queens Regular Democratic Club
Chelsea Reform Democrats (Manhattan)
Committee for Fair Politics In Queens
Committee of One Hundred Democrats (Bronx)
Community Action Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Community Democratic Club (Bronx)
Community Democratic Club of Harlem (Manhattan)
Community Democratic Club of Kings County
Community Free Democrats (Manhattan)
Concerned Democratic Coalition (Manhattan)
Concourse Democratic Club (Bronx)
Continental Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Decatur Democratic Club (Bronx)
Democratic Club of the Twenty-Sixth Assembly District
(Queens)
Democratic Club of Yorkville (Manhattan)
Democratic Community Action Alliance (Brooklyn)
Democratic Organization of the Fifty-First Assembly Dis-
trict (Brooklyn)
Democratic Socialists of America (Manhattan)
Democrats for New Politics (Queens)
Demosthenes Ellino American Democratic Club (Queens)
Douglass-King Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Downtown Independent Democrats (Manhattan)
Eastern Queens Regular Democratic Club

Eastern Queens Women's Regular Democratic Club
East Harlem Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Eastside Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Eleanor Roosevelt Independent Democrats (Brooklyn)
Elmer H. Blackburne Democratic Club (Manhattan)
FDR Independent Democratic Club (Bronx)
FDR-Woodrow Wilson Democrats (Manhattan)
Fiftieth Assembly District Reform Democrats (Brooklyn)
Fifty-Fourth Assembly District Regular Democratic Organi-
zation (Brooklyn)
Fiorello H. LaGuardia Independent Club (Manhattan)
Fiorello H. LaGuardia Independent Democratic Club (Bronx)
Franklin D. Roosevelt Democratic Association (Queens)
Frederick Douglass Democratic Club (Queens)
Gateway Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Gay and Lesbian Independent Democrats (Manhattan)
George A. McCracken Democratic Association (Queens)
Gramercy Stuyvesant Independent Democrats (Manhattan)
Greater Flatbush Independent Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Greater Ridgewood Democratic Club (Queens)
Guy R. Brewer United Democratic Club (Queens)
Harry S. Truman Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Harry S. Truman Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Harry S. Truman Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Herbert H. Lehman (Bronx)
Highbridge Independent Democratic League (Bronx)

Hispanic Political Action Committee (Staten Island)
Hubert H. Humphrey Democratic Club (Bronx)
Hubert H. Humphrey Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Independence Democratic Club of Queens
Independent Citizens' Club of Brooklyn
Independent Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Independent Democratic Organization of Flatbush and Flat-
 Bush Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Independent Neighborhood Democrats (Brooklyn)
J. Raymond Jones Democratic Club (Manhattan)
James A. Phillips Regular Democratic Association (Queens)
Jefferson Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Jefferson Democratic Club (Queens)
John F. Kennedy Club (Brooklyn)
John F. Kennedy Democratic Club (Queens)
John F. Kennedy Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Kanawka Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Kings County Democratic Coalition
Kings County Young Democrats
Kings Highway Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Lambda Independent Democrats (Brooklyn)
Lenox Hill Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Lesbian and Gay Political Action of Queens
Lexington Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Liberty Democratic Club of Woodside (Queens)
Martin Luther King, Jr. Club (Manhattan)

McManus Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Midbay Independent Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Mid East Bronx Independent Club
Midland Beach Democratic Club (Staten Island)
Mid-Manhattan New Democratic Club
National Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Nettie Carter Jackson Democratic Club (Staten Island)
New Democratic Club (Manhattan)
New Democratic Club of the Forty-First Assembly District
(Brooklyn)
New Democratic Dimensions (Manhattan)
New Directions Democrats (Manhattan)
New Era Democrats (Manhattan)
New Jackson Democratic Club (Bronx)
New Jamaica Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
New York County Young Democrats
New York SANE Peace Council (Manhattan)
North Bronx Democratic Club
North Central Independent Democratic Club (Bronx)
North End Democratic Club (Bronx)
North Island Democratic Club (Staten Island)
North Shore Democratic Association (Queens)
North Shore Democratic Club (Staten Island)
Northside Democratic Association (Queens)
Northside Women's Democratic Association (Queens)
Onondaga Democratic Club (Brooklyn)

Park River Independent Democrats (Manhattan)
Parkway Independent Democrats (Brooklyn)
Pelham Bay Democratic Club (Bronx)
Pelham Bay Division of the Concourse Democratic Club
(Bronx)
Peninsula Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
People for Responsive Government (Bronx)
Pocahontas Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Powhattan Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Polish Democratic Club of Greater New York (Manhattan)
Polonia Democrats (Brooklyn)
Puerto Rican Independent Democratic League (Bronx)
Queens County Line Democratic Club
Queens Democratic Alliance
Ravenswood Democratic Club (Queens)
Reform Democratic Club of Central Queens
Regular Democratic Club of the Rockaways (Queens)
Regular Democratic Organization of the Fifty-Third Assem-
bly District (Brooklyn)
Rich-Haven Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Richmond County Independent Democrats
Ridgewood Democratic Club (Queens)
Riverdale Democratic Club (Bronx)
Robin Democratic Club (Staten Island)
Rockaway Democratic Coalition (Queens)
Roosevelt Democratic Club (Brooklyn)

Roosevelt Independent Democrats (Manhattan)
Roosevelt Kingsborough Independent Democrats (Brooklyn)
Seneca Club (Brooklyn)
Sojourner Truth Democratic Club of Harlem (Manhattan)
South Bronx Democratic Club
Southeast Queens Regular Democratic Club
South Queens Democratic Club
South Shore Democratic Club (Staten Island)
Stars and Stripes Regular Democratic Organization (Brooklyn)
Staten Island Banner Democratic Club
Staten Island Democratic Association
Staten Island Political Action Association
Stevenson Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Taminent Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Taminent Women's Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Thirtieth Assembly District, Part A, Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Thirty-Fifth Assembly District Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Thirty-First Assembly District Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Thirty-Fourth Assembly District Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
Thirty-Second Assembly District Regular Democratic Club (Queens)

Thomas Jefferson Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Thomas Paine Independent Democrats (Bronx)
Three Parks Independent Democrats (Manhattan)
Tilden Midtown Democratic Club (Manhattan)
Town Hall Regular Democrats (Queens)
United Alliance Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
United Community Democrats (Queens)
United Democratic Club of Co-Op City (Bronx)
United Democratic Organization (Manhattan)
United Democratic Team (Bronx)
United Democrats (Queens)
United Executive Regular Democratic Club (Queens)
United Hispanic Democratic Club (Manhattan)
United People Pueblo Democratic Club (Manhattan)
United Regular Democratic Club (Brooklyn)
Unity Democrats (Brooklyn)
Vanguard Independent Democratic Association (Brooklyn)
Village Independent Democrats (Manhattan)
Village Reform Democrats (Manhattan)
Walt Whitman Independent Democrats (Brooklyn)
Washington Square Democratic Club (Manhattan)
West Brooklyn Independent Democrats
West Queens Independent Democratic Club
Williamsburgh-Greenpoint Independent Democrats (Brooklyn)
Willow-dale Aliotta Democratic Club (Staten Island)
Women's Democratic Club of Queens Village

Woodside-Elmhurst Democratic Club (Queens)

Young Democrats of Richmond County

Republicans

American Eagle Republican Club (Bronx)

Armand J. Starace Republican Club (Brooklyn)

Asian-American Republican Club (Staten Island)

Attacks Republican Club (Manhattan)

Beechhurst Republican Club (Queens)

Bronx Republican Club

Central and Western Harlem Republican Club (Manhattan)

Century Republican Club (Manhattan)

Coliseum Republican Club (Manhattan)

College Point Republican Club (Queens)

Community Republican Club (Manhattan)

Community Republican Club (Queens)

Co-Op City Republican Club (Bronx)

Dirksen Republican Club (Brooklyn)

Dr. Lawrence C. Arnett Republican Club (Brooklyn)

Douglas MacArthur Republican Club (Brooklyn)

Douglas MacArthur Republican Club (Queens)

East Side Republican Club (Manhattan)

East Side Young Republicans (Manhattan)

East/West Republican Club (Staten Island)

Edmund G. Seergy Republican Club (Brooklyn)

Eisenhower Club (Queens)

Eisenhower Republican Club (Manhattan)

Elmhurst Republican Club (Queens)
Empire Republican Club (Manhattan)
Excelsior Republican Club (Bronx)
Fiftieth Assembly District Regular Republican Club
(Brooklyn)
Fifty-First Assembly District Parkway Regular Republican
Club (Brooklyn)
Fifty-Second Assembly District Republican Club (Brooklyn)
Fifty-Seventh Assembly District Republican Club (Brook-
lyn)
Fifty-Third Assembly District Republican Club (Brooklyn)
Fort Tryon Republican Club (Manhattan)
Fortieth Assembly District United Republican Club (Brook-
lyn)
Forty-Eighth Assembly District Republican Club (Brooklyn)
Forty-Fifth Assembly District Republican Club (Brooklyn)
Forty-Fourth Assembly District Regular Republican Club
(Brooklyn)
Forty-Seventh Assembly District Regular Republican Club
(Brooklyn)
Francis E. Rivers Republican Club (Manhattan)
Garfield Bobo Regular Republican Club (Brooklyn)
Hamilton Republican Club (Manhattan)
Harold C. Burton Republican Club (Manhattan)
Highbridge Republican Club (Bronx)
Independent Republican Club (Manhattan)

Interboro Republican Club (Brooklyn)
Inwood-Marble Republican Club (Manhattan)
Italian-American Republican Club (Staten Island)
Ivy Republican Club (Manhattan)
Javits Republican Club (Manhattan)
Javits Republican Club (Queens)
John Foster Dulles Republican Club (Queens)
John Palmer Robert Regular Republican Club (Queens)
Kenna Republican Club (Queens)
Knickerbocker Republican Club (Manhattan)
Lower Manhattan Republican Club
MacNeil Mitchell Republican Club (Manhattan)
Manhattan Republican Club
Maspeth Republican Club (Queens)
Metropolitan Republican Club (Manhattan)
Mid-City Republican Club (Manhattan)
Morningside Heights Republican Club (Manhattan)
New York Young Republican Club (Queens)
North Bronx Republican Club
North Shore Republican Club (Staten Island)
Northeast Bronx Republican Club
Northeast Republican Club (Manhattan)
Old Glory Republican Club (Queens)
Old Mill Republican Club (Brooklyn)
Progress Republican Club (Manhattan)
Progressive Republican Club (Brooklyn)

Prospect Republican Club (Bronx)
Queens Village Republican Club
Renaissance Regular Republican Club (Brooklyn)
Republican Volunteers for a Clean Judiciary and Clean
Politics (Manhattan)
Richmond Hill Republican Club (Manhattan)
Riverdale Republican Club (Bronx)
Riverside Republican Club (Manhattan)
Rocco A. Fanelli Regular Republican Club (Manhattan)
Shorefront Young Republicans (Brooklyn)
Sixty-Third Assembly District West Federal Republican
Club (Manhattan)
South Shore Republican Club (Staten Island)
Southeast Republican Club (Manhattan)
Steinway Republican Club (Queens)
Taft Republican Club (Bronx)
Theodore Roosevelt Republican Club (Brooklyn)
Throgs Neck Republican Club (Bronx)
Thirty-Fifth Assembly District Republican Club (Queens)
Twenty-Fifth Assembly District Regular Republican Club
(Queens)
Union Republican Club (Manhattan)
United Republicans of Western Queens
Uptown Republican Club (Manhattan)
Village East Republican Club (Manhattan)
Vincent F. Albano Republican Club (Manhattan)

Webster Republican Club (Bronx)
West Side Republican Club (Manhattan)
Whitestone Republican Club (Queens)
Women's Republican Club (Staten Island)
Young Republican Club (Staten Island)

Conservatives

American Heritage Conservative Club (Brooklyn)
Community Conservative Party Club of Marine Park (Brooklyn)
East Side Conservative Club (Manhattan)
Eastern Richmond Conservative Club
Eugene Walsh Conservative Party Club (Brooklyn)
Jim Ryan Conservative Club (Brooklyn)
Liberty Conservative Club (Queens)
Middle Richmond Conservative Club
Washington Heights-Inwood Conservative Club (Manhattan)
West Side Conservative Club (Manhattan)

APPENDIX B

MAJOR PARTY COUNTY LEADERS, 1975-1985

Democratic Party

Kings County (Brooklyn)

Meade Esposito (1969-1983)

Howard Golden (1983-1985)

Queens County

Donald Manes (1974-1985)

New York County (Manhattan)

Frank Rossetti (1967-1977)

Miriam Bockman (1977-1981)

Herman D. Farrell (1981-1985)

Richmond County (Staten Island)

James Smith (1973-1980)

Nicholas LaPorte, Sr. (1980-1985)

The Bronx County

Patrick Cunningham (1971-1978)

Stanley Friedman (1978-1985)

Republican Party

Kings County (Brooklyn)

George Clark (1973-1981)

Fred Pantaleone (1981-1985)

Queens County

Melvin Klein (1974-1976)

Jack Muratori (1976-1984)

John Hagerty (1984-1985)

New York County (Manhattan)

Vincent F. Albano (1962-1981)

Roy Goodman (1981-1985)

Richmond County (Staten Island)

Arnold R. Thompson (1974-1981)

George Hart (1981-1985)

The Bronx County

John Calandra (1970-1985)

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Note on Sources

The conclusions of this work are based on a wide variety of sources and methodologies, many of which will be specifically identified in the pages that follow. I relied upon the literature of the field, government and party documents, interviews and surveys, and contemporary newspaper and magazine accounts.

The two works that I owe a great intellectual debt to are Roy M. Peel's seminal study, The Political Clubs of New York City, and Norman M. Adler and Blanche Davis Blank's Political Clubs in New York. These works provided great insight into political club activity during the periods studied and, in the case of Adler and Blank, offered some data that proved useful for comparison to present-day levels of club activity.

In addition to those documents cited herein, I consulted a number of statutes, with special emphasis on the New York State Election Law. All references to the New York City Charter are from the edition published by the New York City Department of General Services (as amended to 15 September 1985). Other records were made available by the New York State and New York City Boards of Elec-

tions, the New York State Department of State, and the State Assembly Speaker's office. Party organizations were helpful, supplying copies of party rules, directories of political club and party organization officials, party documents, and other materials that I requested. These materials proved invaluable as I conducted my research. In addition, party officials facilitated my research by paving the way with party operatives who might not have been willing to be forthcoming with information. A phone call by a county leader seemed to have great influence with party operatives who were not initially cooperative.

Interviews were also important to the project. Between January of 1984 and early 1987, the author conducted a number of interviews with a wide range of participants and observers of New York politics. Their insight helped me attain a greater understanding of electoral politics in New York, and the role of party organizations in that process and the larger polity.

I also relied on surveys. Mail surveys of district leaders, community board district managers, and county leaders were conducted, and much of the statistical data presented herein is derived from that research. In addition, the individual questionnaires were useful during "follow-up" interviews that were conducted with some of the respondents. These interviews gave the respondents the opportunity to clarify, and expand upon their written

replies.

Newspapers and periodicals were also consulted. In addition to examining accounts in daily newspapers, I found that the city's many neighborhood weekly papers provide a wealth of information on the activities of local political clubs and political actors. Much of this material is generally ignored by the city's dailies, making these weeklies important to anyone interested in following local politics in many of the city's neighborhoods.

Finally, I'd like to note that throughout the period I had an opportunity to observe the clubhouse's role in the political process. I have been a member of a regular Democratic club in Brooklyn, managed the school board election campaigns of two club members in 1986, and was a member of the "Friends of Cuomo" Brooklyn Task Force during the 1986 election. The role of the county committee is one I discuss from personal experience, having served as a member of the Democratic County Committee in Kings County since 1986.

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