

PRINCETON STUDIES IN AMERICAN POLITICS

The background of the cover features a stylized American flag with red and white stripes on a blue field, tilted diagonally. The stripes are thick and wavy, creating a sense of movement.

**Political
Parties
and the
State**

**The American
Historical
Experience**

MARTIN SHEFTER

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE STATE

PRINCETON STUDIES IN AMERICAN POLITICS:
HISTORICAL, INTERNATIONAL, AND
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

SERIES EDITORS

IRA KATZNELSON, MARTIN SHEFTER, THEDA SKOCPOL

Labor Visions and State Power: The Origins of Business Unionism in the United States
by Victoria C. Hattam

The Lincoln Persuasion: Remaking American Liberalism
by J. David Greenstone

Politics and Industrialization: Early Railroads in the United States and Prussia
by Colleen A. Dunlavy

Political Parties and the State: The American Historical Experience
by Martin Shefter

**POLITICAL PARTIES
AND THE STATE**

THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL
EXPERIENCE

Martin Shefter

Copyright © 1994 by Princeton University Press
Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street,
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press,
Chichester, West Sussex
All Rights Reserved

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Shefter, Martin, 1943–
Political parties and the state : the American historical
experience / Martin Shefter.
p. cm. — (Princeton studies in American politics)
Includes index.

eISBN 1-4008-0726-3

1. Political parties—United States—History.
2. Politics, Practical—United States—History.
3. United States—Politics and government.

I. Title. II. Series.

JK2261.S45 1994

324.273'09—dc20 93-25806 CIP

This book has been composed in Bitstream Caledonia

TO MY WIFE

Sudy

AND TO BEN GINSBERG, PETER GOUREVITCH,

IRA KATZNELSON, STEVE KRASNER,

JANE MANSBRIDGE, JEREMY RABKIN,

RON ROGOWSKI, AND THEDA SKOCPOL,

TRUE FRIENDS

Contents

<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
Chapter 1 Political Parties and States	3
PART I: PARTY AND PATRONAGE IN EUROPE AND AMERICA	19
Chapter 2 Patronage and Its Opponents: A Theory and Some European Cases	21
Chapter 3 Party, Bureaucracy, and Political Change in the United States	61
PART II: ECONOMIC INTERESTS AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES	99
Chapter 4 Trade Unions and Political Machines: The Organization and Disorganization of the American Working Class	101
Chapter 5 Regional Receptivity to Reform in the United States	169
PART III: POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLITICAL CONTROL	195
Chapter 6 Political Incorporation and Political Extrusion: Party Politics and Social Forces in Postwar New York	197
Chapter 7 New York City's Fiscal Crisis: Countering the Politics of Mass Mobilization	233
<i>Notes</i>	259
<i>Author Index</i>	293
<i>Subject Index</i>	297

List of Tables and Figures

TABLES

Table 2.1	Party Character and Social Base	23
Table 4.1	Residential Concentration among Russian-, Italian-, and Irish-born Tenement Dwellers in Boston, 1892	109
Table 5.1	The Enduring Impact of Party Organizational Strength	170
Table 5.2	Sources of the Progressive Vote: California	181
Table 5.3	Sources of the Progressive Vote: New York	186
Table 5.A	Inter-Election Transition Matrix	192
Table 6.1	Ethnic Voting for New York City Republican Mayoral Candidates, 1925 and 1933	203
Table 7.1	Race and Voting in the 1985 New York City Democratic Mayoral Primary Election	251

FIGURES

Figure 3.1	Party and Bureaucratic Power	62
Figure 6.1	Major Party Collusion in New York City: Elective Positions for Which Democrats and Republicans Nominated a Common Candidate, 1943–1950	205

Preface

THIS BOOK analyzes the conditions under which political parties emerge, and the forces that influence the strength and character of party organizations. It focuses upon political parties in the United States, although to clarify the distinctiveness of American parties, the first and second chapters analyze the emergence of political parties in other nations.

Although I am a political scientist, much of the analysis in this book is historical. The explanation for my adopting this approach is both biographical and intellectual.

As a graduate student I worked closely with James Q. Wilson, who with his teacher Edward C. Banfield had just published a major work, *City Politics*. “Banfield and Wilson” became central to my intellectual development, and I undertook to define myself as a scholar in relationship to their ideas.

The core argument in *City Politics* is that the central division in the politics of American cities is between urban political machines and the forces of municipal reform. Political machines tend to prevail in cities whose population is composed predominantly of working-class Catholic ethnic groups (of Irish, Italian, and Polish descent), whereas municipal reform generally prevails in localities dominated by the Anglo-American middle and upper classes. Banfield and Wilson explain this association by arguing that machine politics—the exchange of patronage and individual favors for political support—accords with the “private-regarding” political ethos of immigrants from Catholic Europe, whereas reform politics—with its appeals to collective interests—accords with the “public-regarding” political ethos of Anglo-Americans and members of the middle class who have assimilated their culture.

This analysis is fundamentally sociological in character: to explain the basic nature of a city’s politics, Banfield and Wilson looked to the social structure and cultural heritage of the city’s population. But in seeking to understand the sources of machine politics, I turned away from sociology and toward history. I undertook to explore the origins of political machines and to “bring the state back in” to the analysis.¹ In their theory of machine politics, Banfield and Wilson focused on understanding the demands of voters—explaining the conditions under which citizens will demand individual favors or patronage in exchange for their votes—but it seemed to me that forces on the “supply side” of the political market were also relevant to determining when such exchanges will take place; that is, party politicians must be able to extract patronage from the state if patronage-based political machines are to emerge. Thus I argue that the relationship between political

parties and public bureaucracies is of crucial importance in shaping the behavior of politicians. The relative timing of democratization and bureaucratization has crucially influenced the character of political parties both in Europe and America.

The effort to answer questions posed by the work of my teachers is thus a major explanation for the historical focus of the essays in this volume. This book also reflects the intellectual influence of scholars who are personal friends. I shared an interest in history with a number of friends and colleagues from graduate school and my first academic job: Peter Gourevitch, Robert Jervis, Stephen Krasner, James Kurth, and Peter Lange. The scholarship of Samuel P. Huntington and Barrington Moore bolstered our belief that historical analysis was important in political science. In addition, the scholarship of Theda Skocpol reinforced my conviction that it was necessary to “bring the state back in” to political analysis. This focus is reflected in Chapters 2 and 3 of this book. Another friend and colleague, Ira Katznelson, invited me to prepare a paper on working class formation in late nineteenth-century America for a conference he organized and a book he co-edited.² This paper appears as Chapter 4 below. Finally, Chapters 6 and 7 reflect the influence of Benjamin Ginsberg’s work on political parties as institutions of political control.³

I recently was seriously injured in an accident, and the friends to whom this book is dedicated helped me to regain my footing as a scholar by reading and commenting on my recent writings. Ben Ginsberg, Ira Katznelson, and Theda Skocpol aided me most extensively with this book. I also wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to other good friends who provided support: Amy Bridges, Martha Derthick, Milt Esman, Ken Finegold, Peter Katzenstein, Isaac Krannick, Ted Lowi, Jenny Mansbridge, Walter Mebane, Gil Merom, Elaine Swift, Sid Tarrow, Richard Valeyly, David Vogel, and Jim Wilson. In addition, I would like to thank Walter Dean Burnham and Margaret Weir, who read this manuscript, for their generous comments and valuable suggestions.

Much of this book was initially published elsewhere. I acknowledge permission to republish the following material:

Chapter 2. “Party and Patronage: Germany, England, and Italy.” *Politics & Society* 7 (1977): 403–52.

Chapter 3. “Party, Bureaucracy, and Political Change in the United States.” *Sage Electoral Studies Yearbook* 4 (1978): 211–66.

Chapter 4. “Trade Unions and Political Machines: The Organization and Disorganization of the American Working Class in the Late Nineteenth Century.” In *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Aristide Zolberg, 197–276. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Chapter 5. "Regional Receptivity to Reform: The Legacy of the Progressive Era." *Political Science Quarterly* 98 (Fall 1983): 459–83.

Chapter 6. "Political Incorporation and the Extrusion of the Left: Party Politics and Social Forces in New York City." *Studies in American Political Development* 1 (1986): 50–90.

Chapter 7. "New York City's Fiscal Crisis: The Politics of Inflation and Retrenchment." *The Public Interest* no. 48 (Summer 1977): 98–127 (© 1977 by National Affairs, Inc.); Martin Shefter, *Political Crisis/Fiscal Crisis: The Collapse and Revival of New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), xi–xxvi.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE STATE

Political Parties and States

THIS BOOK addresses three questions: Under what conditions will strong, disciplined party organizations emerge and dominate politics in a nation or a city? What influences the character of a nation's parties—for example, the extent to which they are programmatic or patronage-oriented? Finally, under what conditions will the political parties that dominate politics in a nation or a city be subject to attack or otherwise decline? Although this book analyzes the rise, character, and decline of political parties in a number of settings, it focuses upon American politics. The chapters below consider urban political machines to exemplify strong party organizations in the United States.

The essays in this volume embody a definite view about how to go about answering the questions they address. This analytical perspective has been labelled the “new institutionalism” by James March and Johan Olsen. Theda Skocpol has called it a “polity-centered” or “state-centered” approach to political analysis.¹

STATE-CENTERED ANALYSIS

A central premise of the essays in this book is that to explain many significant political phenomena—such as the conditions leading to the emergence of strong political parties—it is less important to chart the views of mass publics than to understand how the strategic behavior of leaders is shaped by and in turn shapes political institutions.

Today, there is some tension between scholars who analyze the strategic choices of politicians and those who study the historical development of political institutions. The essays in this volume seek to overcome this tension.² These essays presuppose that it is useful to locate strategic considerations in a macro-historical context. The chapters below seek to understand how a particular political institution—the political party—has been organized and reorganized by leaders pursuing their strategic interests.

A number of the essays in this volume were written in response to the behavioral movement in political science. During the two or three decades following World War II, students of political behavior characteristically dismissed institutions as “merely formal” features of the political system. For example, political sociologists and psychologists observed that the Weimar

Republic's political institutions were formally democratic but, in the absence of broad popular support for democratic institutions in Germany, history's most brutal dictatorship was able to gain power in the 1930s. They argued that a realistic understanding of the rise of Nazism would pay less attention to the "mere" form of Weimar Germany's political institutions than to more fundamental features of the nation's life, such as the prevalence of authoritarian attitudes among Germans.³

It certainly is true that political institutions and practices will not be stable if large numbers of citizens regard them as profoundly illegitimate and act on those beliefs. But there are at least three reasons why less attention should be devoted to charting the distribution of mass opinion than to analyzing how institutions affect the interests and behavior of political leaders. First, it cannot be assumed that popular attitudes toward politics are autonomous and that they assume their character apart from the activities of political leaders.⁴ To the contrary, it often is the case that members of the public will manifest no opinion on particular political questions until their leaders act. Publics take their cues from leaders and often come to believe that whatever those leaders do is appropriate.

Second, politicians are important actors in their own right.⁵ Even in democratic political systems, politicians are not merely the agents or representatives of others. They have interests and views of their own. Not the least of their goals is retaining and expanding their power in the face of efforts by domestic rivals and foreign opponents to contain their influence or to drive them from power. Politicians who occupy distinctive niches in political institutions generally have an incentive to work on behalf of their goals and are in a position to do so effectively. By contrast, as Mancur Olson has argued, the members of large, inchoate groups characteristically do not have an incentive to expend resources in pursuit of collective purposes, even for goals that most group members share.⁶

Third, and finally, political institutions command resources that are often adequate to carry the day.⁷ States expend vast sums—for example, the current annual expenditures of the United States federal government are roughly \$1.5 trillion—and they can deploy coercive force to accomplish the purposes of their leaders. Although private individuals and groups may influence the policies of the government, few are able to prevail in outright opposition to the state.

THE EMERGENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

A state-centered analysis is useful for understanding the conditions under which strong political parties will develop.⁸ In analyzing these conditions it is necessary to distinguish between two classes of political parties—"externally mobilized" and "internally mobilized" parties.

Externally mobilized parties are established by leaders who do *not* occupy positions of power in the prevailing regime and who seek to bludgeon their way into the political system by mobilizing and organizing a mass constituency. Many European socialist parties and Third World nationalist parties fall into this category.

Internally mobilized parties are founded by politicians who *do* occupy leadership positions in the prevailing regime and who undertake to mobilize and organize a popular following behind themselves. The leaders of internally mobilized parties undertake such mobilization either because they seek to secure their hold over the government in the face of a challenge by an externally mobilized party or because a major cleavage develops within the nation's governing class and each side seeks to overwhelm its opponents by appealing for popular support. The major political parties in American history and most conservative and centrist parties in Europe were founded in these circumstances.⁹

Externally Mobilized Parties

There are a number of strategies that outsiders can pursue to gain entry into a political system: the wealthy can bribe public officials; soldiers can stage military coups; students and intellectuals can propagandize and agitate; workers and peasants can stage general strikes and jacqueries. The lower classes also can demonstrate to win the right to vote and engage in bloc voting after they succeed in obtaining the suffrage.

The fewer resources any group of outsiders commands, the more it will have to rely on the weight of numbers to achieve its political demands. Hence popular forces depend upon mobilizing and organizing as large a proportion of their potential supporters as possible to make their weight felt. This would explain why the mass parties of Europe were organized "from the Left," as Maurice Duverger observes.¹⁰ Parties that sought to win political or social rights for workers or peasants had to aggregate the resources of large numbers of people and rely upon mass actions—such as general strikes—to achieve their demands.

A second condition influencing the strength of externally mobilized parties is the amount of resistance the party must overcome to win a measure of power. The more determined the incumbent leaders are to exclude outsiders, the fewer the allies inside the regime that the outsiders enjoy, and the more powerful the regime an externally mobilized party confronts, the stronger and more broadly based the party of outsiders must be if it is to succeed in forcing its way into the political system.

The German Social Democratic party of the late nineteenth century is a case in point. The Social Democrats found it necessary to construct a strong party organization because they faced substantial resistance and could count

upon the support of few allies in their effort to secure representation for the German working class. The black civil rights movement in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s is a contrasting case. Blacks were excluded from the political system in the southern states much as workers and peasants who failed to meet property requirements were excluded from the *regimes censitaires* of pre-World War I Europe. To dramatize their demands for political rights, black leaders organized civil rights groups, staged demonstrations, and often were compelled to endure violence. Civil rights demonstrations did not seek to impose sanctions directly upon their targets, however. Rather, demonstrations for voting rights and other civil liberties were staged to appeal for the support of the federal government and those northern whites who were potential allies of the movement. Because blacks were able to engage such support, they did not have to rely solely upon their own resources to finance their activities; nor were they compelled to organize a separate political party to gain a voice in Congress and the executive branch of the federal government. But for the very reason that blacks could draw upon the resources and support of powerful allies, the civil rights groups and the splinter parties they did establish proved to be short-lived and rather weak as organizations.¹¹

Internally Mobilized Parties

Elites who occupy positions of authority within a regime, like outsiders who are seeking to gain entry into that regime, will construct a strong, broadly based party organization only if it is necessary for them to do so in order to gain, retain, or exercise power. As was indicated earlier, incumbent elites might find it necessary to appeal for popular support to sustain their position if they are challenged by an externally mobilized party or if a deep cleavage develops within the governing class and one side undertakes to mobilize outside supporters in an effort to overwhelm the other. In both these instances, however, incumbents may respond to threats without embarking on an all-out campaign of mass mobilization and organization. In particular, they may seek to smooth over incipient conflicts so as to forestall the emergence of an ever-widening spiral of mobilization and counter-mobilization, organization and counterorganization. Alternately, incumbent elites may seek to repress their rivals. The best way to understand the conditions that lead incumbent elites to pursue a full-scale strategy of mass-mobilization and party building is to turn this question on its head and ask what would prevent them from relying on one of these alternative courses of action.

In the sections below I will argue that the leaders of both externally mobilized and internally mobilized parties will organize an extensive popular

following only if they must overcome substantial opposition to gain or retain power and they lack other means of accomplishing their ends.

MOBILIZATION VERSUS DEMOBILIZATION

Incumbent elites can avoid the necessity of constructing a strong and broadly based party organization either by colluding with their opponents or by repressing them.

Collusion

By coming to terms with their opponents, elites can interrupt the chain of events which, if allowed to proceed, leads internally mobilized parties to bring ever larger numbers of voters into the political arena. That chain proceeds as follows: a sharp cleavage on a question of major importance divides the political class. The losers in this conflict, in an effort to reverse the outcome, undertake to mobilize popular support for their cause, thereby threatening to swamp their opponents at the polls or to make it difficult for them to govern in the face of popular turbulence. To meet this threat politicians on the other side seek to establish a mass base for themselves. In this way, both sides come to construct broadly based party organizations. Under appropriate conditions, however, this process of competitive mobilization and party building can be aborted.

The conditions that provide party leaders with an incentive to collude with one another to contain the process of popular mobilization are similar to those that encourage business firms to restrict price competition and nation-states to restrict military competition: each side recognizes that it cannot destroy the other and fears that unrestrained competition will lead to their mutual destruction, or at least will impose intolerable costs on both.¹² In the case of political parties, total victory is out of the question when each party enjoys a solid base of support within some segment of the electorate. Party leaders will regard the effort to rally additional voters to their side as terribly dangerous if they fear that the entry of new groups into the electorate will lead the existing parties to be swamped by the new voters or if they fear that pursuing such a strategy will lead them to lose control over their own party.

Incumbent politicians are unlikely to enter into a process of competitive mobilization if the deepest line of cleavage in the political system runs along geographic (rather than class or sectoral) lines, and the nation's institutions allocate seats in the legislature to geographically defined constituencies. If each party controls a local bastion—be it a set of cities, provinces, or

regions—it has little incentive to maximize the turnout of voters within its domain because it will not thereby increase its representation in the legislature. And if each party sees little hope of winning votes in the opposition's bastion, it will have no incentive to attempt to undercut its rival by invading its enemy's domain.

This state of affairs existed in the United States, roughly speaking, between 1896 and 1932. During this period the South was solidly Democratic, and the Republicans enjoyed firm majorities in many (though not all) northern states. Therefore the Republicans abandoned the effort to win any congressional seats, electoral votes, or control of state governments in the South, and the Democrats made only token efforts to compete in several northern states. For this reason, among others, electoral mobilization in the United States during the early decades of the twentieth century declined quite dramatically from the level it had achieved from 1840 to 1896.¹³

Political leaders will abstain from pursuing a strategy of mobilization and party building not only if the lines of cleavage within the political system fail to encourage such a course of action, but also if they fear that the entry of new voters into the political system will lead to their mutual destruction. It was such a (well-grounded) fear among the political classes of the nations of southern Europe—Italy, Spain, and Portugal—at the turn of the twentieth century that goes a long way to explaining why, despite the existence of nominally democratic institutions, political leaders colluded with one another to restrict the mobilization of new voters into the electoral arena. Consequently, mass-based party organizations failed to emerge in these nations prior to World War I.

The regimes governing the nations of southern Europe in the late nineteenth century were grounded upon coalitions of landowners and industrialists. The policies they pursued were beneficial to these coalition members and provided precious few benefits to anyone else.¹⁴ Regimes pursuing policies that served the interests of such a narrow segment of the population would have found it difficult to survive in the presence of party competition. Moreover, active competition for the votes of the peasantry had the potential of undermining the harsh system of labor control upon which the landowners of these nations depended. Therefore, rather than engaging in a strategy of competitive mobilization and party building, the leaders of southern European parties developed procedures for alternating in power and inducing deputies who nominally belonged to the opposition to vote for the government of the day.¹⁵

Finally, if incumbent politicians are to contain the process of popular mobilization, they must have some means of maintaining themselves in power short of building a mass-based party organization. Moreover, the participation of groups that are excluded from the regime must in some way be limited or deflected. Again, the political systems of southern Europe at the turn

of the twentieth century can be cited as examples. Italy, Spain, and Portugal adopted the institutions of the Napoleonic state. The government of the day was able to use the prefectorial system to “make” elections. The benign side of this system involved funneling patronage through public institutions to local landlords or creditors, who would redistribute it to their clients. On the other side, however, local bosses or *caciques* could with utter impunity rely upon violence to deal with the recalcitrant because the judicial system was entirely under the control of the central government and closed its eyes to such election practices. This system of electoral management was so reliable that Spain’s official government gazette was able to report accurately the results of elections before they were actually held!¹⁶ These narrowly based regimes could survive, however, only so long as the politically excluded groups did not join in a concerted attack upon them. When the regimes’ opponents did join forces, the systems collapsed and order was restored only after authoritarian dictators seized power.

In short, even in nations with nominally democratic institutions, incumbent political leaders can remain in power without building mass-based party organizations if (a) the lines of cleavage within the political class are not of such a character to induce them to embark upon a strategy of mobilization; (b) the leaders of the existing parties have reason to fear that the entry of new groups into the political system will lead to their mutual destruction; (c) politicians are able to rely on institutions other than parties to win elections; and (d) the politically excluded groups are divided or can be intimidated.

Coercion

The most obvious way for an incumbent elite to respond to challenges to its position is, of course, to repress its opponents. The authoritarian dictatorships that emerged in Italy, Spain, and Portugal between the two world wars, for example, relied upon force to maintain themselves in power.

For a number of reasons, however, elites may not be able to use coercion to defeat the opposition or they may find it to be more in their interest to embark upon a strategy of countermobilization than to use repression to deal with their rivals. First, the elites in question may not command a repressive apparatus sufficient to crush their opponents. The military forces these elites control may simply not be strong enough relative to the forces at the disposal of their rivals to enable them to intimidate the opposition. For example, one reason that the Federalist administration of President John Adams did not attempt to use force against the Republican opposition that Jefferson and Madison were organizing—the response Alexander Hamilton, in particular, advocated—was that the United States Army of the 1790s was not more

powerful than the militia the Republican stronghold of Virginia could easily raise.¹⁷ Alternately, incumbent elites may find themselves unable to crush their opponents because, were they to attempt to put down the opposition of the day, they could not count upon the loyalty of the repressive apparatus they nominally command.¹⁸

A second major reason why incumbent elites may pursue a strategy of countermobilization rather than repression in dealing with their opponents is that international considerations may preclude their pursuing the harsher course of action.¹⁹ These considerations go a long way toward explaining why, despite the fragility of democratic traditions in Germany, Italy, and Japan, the conservatives who came to power in these countries in the late 1940s sought to outmobilize, rather than to repress, the major working class parties that contested their rule. The United States, which occupied these nations with its army and later was the military protector and creditor of these regimes, simply would not have tolerated any other policy. Or, to phrase this more precisely, these regimes resorted to only those repressive measures—outlawing the Communist party in Germany and Japan, and undertaking to split the labor movement and to expel the peasants from illegally occupied land in Italy—that the United States and the other Allied powers would tolerate.

The third and perhaps most important reason why incumbent elites may pursue a strategy of countermobilization rather than repression in dealing with their opponents is that they require the cooperation of these opponents to accomplish their own goals, especially to contend with threats from abroad. A nation seeking to mobilize the manpower, money, and industrial production that modern warfare requires cannot risk conscription riots, labor unrest, and tax strikes. These forms of resistance are less likely to occur the more firmly the population is attached to the regime that is calling upon them to make sacrifices. It was for this reason that the final wave of popular enfranchisements occurred in European nations, as they were plunging into World War I, during the war, and in the war's immediate aftermath.²⁰

MOBILIZATION, ORGANIZATION, AND PARTY BUILDING

Politicians will have an incentive to embark upon a strategy of mass mobilization, organization, and party building if a serious cleavage opens up within the political class that divides it along functional or sectoral lines, and that leaders cannot readily compromise or smooth over. The challenge of an externally mobilized party that politicizes issues of religion, culture, or social class also can lead incumbent elites to respond with a strategy of countermobilization. The last three decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century witnessed a burst of competitive party

building in Europe because precisely such cleavages were generated by the growth of international trade during that era, which encouraged the extension of state power into new realms of life and into the peripheral regions.²¹

Political leaders will respond to these challenges by pursuing a strategy of mobilization and countermobilization only if they are confident that they will not be displaced and that the political and economic power of the classes with which they are allied will not be completely destroyed in the process. There are a number of circumstances under which such assurances can be provided. Incumbent officials may agree to restrict the authority of elected politicians so that they and their elite allies will not be displaced from key government positions. For example, as noted in Chapter 2, a proposal for civil service reform in Great Britain had been roundly defeated in 1854, but another proposal was passed without arousing any opposition whatever immediately upon the heels of the suffrage extension of 1867. The insulation of the civil service from the influence of party politics assured Britain's traditional governing classes that lower middle class and working-class politicians would not be able to use patronage to build an independent base for themselves, and that the grip of the aristocracy and the upper middle classes upon positions of leadership in the Liberal and Conservative parties, the cabinet, and the higher civil service would not be loosened.²² Alternately, party leaders may strive to exclude potentially threatening issues from the arena of electoral politics. The very politicians who were responsible for building the world's first mass-based party organizations—the leaders of the Democratic and Whig parties in the United States—attempted in a variety of ways over a twenty-year period to exclude the question of slavery from the national political arena, an issue they correctly perceived would shatter their parties.²³

Another precondition for incumbent leaders' pursuing a strategy of party building and political mobilization is that no single public or private institution so completely overshadows all others in civil society that politicians are able to maintain themselves in power simply by allying themselves with it. In that event they would have no incentive to undertake the hard work involved in building a structurally autonomous party organization. This is one reason why political struggles took the form of competitive party building more often in nations that industrialized early than in late industrializers or nations at the periphery of the world economy.²⁴ The economies of late industrializers and peripheral nations are commonly dominated by a few large corporations, banking combines, or the state itself. Where this is so, politicians are likely to be able to withstand challenges by drawing on the material and organizational resources of these corporations. Where this alternative is not available, the only way politicians may be able to link themselves to a popular base and mobilize electoral support is to build an organization for this very purpose—that is, a mass-based party organization.

Finally, incumbent political leaders are likely to respond to challenges to their rule by building strong, broadly based party organizations only if they are not in a position to rely upon intimidation to deal with their opponents. This will be true if a regime requires the active loyalty, rather than merely the sullen acquiescence, of its citizenry in order to accomplish the goals of its rulers. Such was the case in northern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where the integrity of international boundaries was far from assured, and where political leaders sought to foster rapid industrialization. Statesmen were prepared to take a “leap in the dark,” as Benjamin Disraeli put it—to deal with their opponents by seeking to out-mobilize them, rather than through repression—because this was a more effective means of political stabilization than a strategy of demobilization. The very process of channeling political participation through party organizations and the institutions of representative government contains it and reduces the probability that it will take violent forms and be directed against the regime itself.²⁵

CHALLENGES TO PARTY GOVERNMENT

The circumstances of a party's origins can have enduring consequences for the strength of the organization it constructs and the breadth of its popular base. If the leaders of a regime gain or retain power by constructing a broadly based party organization, the party they build is likely to play a major role in the nation's politics thereafter for several reasons. The party organization leaders construct to meet early challenges to their rule will be on hand to meet the problems they subsequently confront in governing the regime they now control. Moreover, to the extent that rulers were able to maintain themselves in power by relying upon a party organization, they will have an incentive to use their authority to further strengthen the party. Finally, the mobilization of the masses into politics permanently changes the perceptions, expectations, and norms of political actors—the very language of politics.

But history does not come to an end when the masses appear on the political stage. The ties binding voters to the party that brought them or their ancestors into the political system can be shattered if that party proves to be incapable of protecting their way of life in the wake of a major depression, a period of hyperinflation, or the social dislocation of wartime mobilization and postwar demobilization. Millenarian expectations arising from religious revivals or foreign revolutions can also lead to changes in mass political behavior.²⁶

Elites may also abandon the political parties with which they once had been allied, and come to advocate changes in political arrangements they

once had supported or at least tolerated. For example, businessmen who had been allied with a political machine may desert it if in an effort to retain mass support it lives beyond its means and accumulates a large public deficit. Urban machines that behave this way may ultimately be unable to borrow funds to finance their deficits, and national political parties that live beyond their means can generate severe balance-of-payments difficulties, rampant inflation, and serious social turmoil.

As such fiscal and economic crises erupt, the business interests that once had supported the party in question are likely to abandon it, and to insist that a program of retrenchment and “reform” be adopted. Such events encouraged businessmen, higher civil servants, and army officers to support military coups against civilian regimes in Latin America in the 1970s.²⁷ Similar developments led to the formation of business-dominated reform movements in American cities from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.

Finally, mass-based party organizations may be subject to external challenges they are unable to withstand or to internal strains that seriously undermine their strength. Among these challenges are the emergence of new forms of organization and new media of communication that enable politicians to mobilize popular followings apart from older political structures. The rise of television, the emergence of professional campaign firms, and the development of computer-based mass-mailing operations have enabled candidates for elective office in the United States to appeal to voters apart from, and in opposition to, old-line party organizations.²⁸ Finally, mass-based party organizations may be seriously weakened from within, so to speak, if they are unable to maintain control over their cadres. This is an especially severe problem for parties that attract cadres by holding out to them the prospect of obtaining positions or promotions in the civil service, for this system can be undermined if the civil servants form labor unions to protect their interests against the politicians who helped them get their jobs in the first place.

Developments that loosen the ties binding voters, elites, and cadres to old parties provide political entrepreneurs with the opportunity to piece together a new governing coalition. Any effort by such entrepreneurs to bring about major political changes, however, is likely to precipitate political struggles. The higher the stakes in such struggles, the more likely it is that each side will pull out the stops and attempt to rally all the allies it can find to support its cause—including allies who exercise control over the means of production, administration, and, in the extreme case, violence. As groups that normally remain on the sidelines are drawn into the struggle, and as conflicts spill outside normal institutional channels, the political situation becomes increasingly unstable and its outcome difficult to predict. Nonetheless, it remains true that the better organized and the more broadly based

were the parties constructed by politicians prior to the current challenge, the stouter the defense they will be able to mount on behalf of existing institutional arrangement. This is because a well-organized and broadly based party is less likely than a weaker one to suffer massive defections and to collapse in the face of the various challenges mentioned above. Consequently, the leaders of such a party will be able to retain a base of support for resisting the political forces that rally against them.

In sum, the party organizations that are constructed when a mass electorate is first mobilized into politics are not immune to subsequent challenge or change. Subsequent developments may lead to the emergence of political forces that conclude that their interests can best be served not by working through the existing party system but by attacking that system broadside. Self-styled reformers may seek to restructure or destroy the existing parties or to alter the relationship between the parties and other public institutions.

Parties that mobilized a very broad popular base and constructed a strong organization early in the democratic era are in the best position to withstand such challenges. But there are challenges that even strong parties cannot withstand without suffering defections. The outcome of a full-scale battle may be uncertain and the fight itself may impose costs on both sides. For this reason party leaders have an incentive to come to terms with their opponents. Such deals are arranged by granting influence over a portion of the state apparatus to the forces that challenge the old parties. By this means the structure of party politics may be preserved, while the domain of the party system is diminished. In the United States during the twentieth century, this process has occurred in several guises: reforming the civil service and creating independent agencies not directly subject to the control of elected officials; forging a bipartisan consensus in the realm of foreign policy and vesting control over foreign policy in the hands of officials nominally divorced from party politics; and defending various political claims as rights that are constitutionally guaranteed and judicially protected. It is precisely such processes that have contributed to the decay of political parties and the demobilization of the electorate in the United States.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE AMERICAN STATE

The chapters below further discuss the issues addressed in this introduction. Chapter 2 argues that the role patronage plays in party politics is a function of the relative timing of democratization and bureaucratization. Where the creation of a mass electorate preceded the establishment of civil service examinations or other formal procedures to govern recruitment into the bureaucracy, politicians were able to gain access to patronage for party building. The party organizations they constructed acquired a widespread popu-

lar base and the political capacity to successfully raid the bureaucracy for patronage, even after formal procedures governing civil service recruitment and promotion were enacted.

On the other hand, where formal civil service recruitment procedures were enacted, and a political constituency committed to their defense emerged, prior to the development of mass-based political parties it was likely that this “constituency for bureaucratic autonomy” would be able to prevent party politicians from raiding the bureaucracy. In such circumstances, politicians were compelled to build mass-based party organizations that did not depend upon patronage. Commanding such organizations, party politicians did not thereafter have an overriding incentive to extract patronage from the bureaucracy.²⁹

Chapter 3 discusses how the relationship between political parties and public bureaucracies has changed over time in U.S. national politics. This chapter also analyzes the implications of these changes for the structure of political parties in the United States and the character of the American regime.³⁰

Chapters 4 through 7 discuss American urban political machines and the “reform movements” that opposed these party organizations. From the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, political machines were the characteristic institution of urban politics in the United States. The machines that dominated politics in major American cities—such as the Tammany machine in New York, the Kelly-Cermak and Daley machines in Chicago, the Crump machine in Memphis—were the strongest party organizations in the history of the United States.

How can one account for the emergence of party organizations in American cities in the late nineteenth century that were patronage-oriented and so powerful? Although American political machines had an electoral base among the lower classes, they were not founded by political outsiders. These party organizations were founded prior to the enactment of civil service reforms. Enjoying a measure of support among established political forces, they were able to acquire access to government patronage.

Established elites constructed strong party organizations to shape the governance of rapidly developing cities. As noted in Chapter 4, party leaders in New York and elsewhere learned through experience that local officials would exploit opportunities to grow rich from corruption in growing cities so long as party organizations were weak and undisciplined. Spectacular episodes of corruption, such as New York’s Tweed Ring scandals in the 1870s, encouraged local newspapers, clergymen, leaders of the business community, and other forces of respectability to enter the political arena and attempt to “throw the rascals out.” To avoid such reform crusades and preserve their alliances with elites, party leaders had an incentive to establish a measure of discipline within urban party organizations. This encouraged

American urban politicians to strengthen patronage-oriented political machines at the same time that their working-class supporters were engaged in the organization of relatively class-conscious trade unions. The emergence of political machines in American cities in the late nineteenth century thus is not explained by the narrow loyalties of the urban electorate.³¹

Party leaders established disciplined organizations so that they would be able to compel national, as well as local, officials elected on the party's ticket to behave in ways that would enable the party to retain elite support. For example, as noted in Chapter 5, Republican and Democratic machine politicians in the Northeast and Midwest in the late nineteenth century were able to win support among bankers, manufacturers, commercial elites, and other elements of the business community by virtue of their parties' stance on the monetary, tariff, and trade policies of the national government.

Businessmen in the West were less likely than their counterparts in the states east of the Mississippi River to support the local organizations of the Republican and Democratic parties, because in this region the issues dividing the national parties were not central concerns of the upper classes. The profitability of firms in the sparsely settled West was more influenced by their access to rail transportation and the railroad rates they had to pay than by the monetary and tariff policies of the federal government. Thus during the Progressive era opponents of the major party organizations were able to acquire more extensive support in the West than in the Northeast. This explains variations in "regional receptivity to reform."³²

Political parties are mechanisms of political control as well as instruments of popular representation. Through parties, political elites can establish a popular base for themselves and they may be able to overwhelm more radical, and potentially disruptive, political movements. Chapter 6 describes how New York City's major party organizations were able to "extrude" from the city's political system radicals who attempted to speak for several of the city's ethnic and racial groups following the Second World War.³³

Reform movements are an important feature of American politics. What is noteworthy about these movements is that they sought to eliminate more than patronage from electoral politics. Reformers also undertook to destroy the party organizations that were the major institutions through which the working classes participated in American politics. The ideologies of reform movements in the United States were never explicitly antidemocratic. But attacks upon party government by self-styled "reformers" often reduced the influence that the masses were able to exercise in American politics.

Chapter 7 analyzes one of the most striking recent examples of this—the reorganization of New York City's government and politics following the municipal fiscal crisis of 1975.³⁴ The 1960s had witnessed a substantial mobilization of popular forces in New York City—especially racial minorities

and unionized municipal employees—and a significant increase in the flow of public benefits to these newly mobilized groups. The cost of these benefits exceeded the city's revenues. To finance its expenditures the municipal government found it necessary to borrow increasing sums. By 1975, participants in the municipal credit markets came to fear that New York might be unable to repay the money it was borrowing and the market for the city's paper dried up. This threatened disaster because New York had to be able to borrow to pay its bills.

To prevent the collapse of New York City's government, New York State intervened. The state government removed ultimate control over municipal finances from elected city officials, substantially limiting democratic self-government in New York City. In the 1977 municipal election, Edward Koch ran for mayor as a reformer, denouncing the incumbent mayor and other machine politicians for driving the city to ruin. After taking office, Mayor Koch attacked municipal labor leaders and black political activists ("poverty pimps," he termed them), reversing the political mobilization of the 1960s, or at least sharply limiting its effect. The aftermath of New York's 1975 fiscal crisis illustrates how an attack upon machine politics—municipal political "reform"—can come at the expense of popular political forces. This analysis of the political aftermath of New York's 1975 fiscal crisis—a recent example of the collapse of the politics of popular mobilization and organization—brings the book to a close.

Taken together, the essays in this volume indicate that political parties are not simply devices for transmitting to leaders whatever views happen to prevail in the electorate. Rather, parties are institutions constructed by political elites to mobilize popular followings. This book analyzes the conditions leading elites to engage in mass mobilization and organization, the forces shaping the character of the parties they construct, and the consequences of their pursuing a strategy of party building.

An important consequence of party building is enhancing the stability and authority of the political system. By organizing and expanding political participation, parties extend the popular base of regimes and contribute thereby to political stability. Regimes characterized by extensive popular mobilization and organization generally are more powerful than regimes in which political parties are weak.³⁵

For this reason, the decay of political party organizations in the United States over the past several decades is a matter of concern. As Benjamin Ginsberg and I argue in *Politics by Other Means*, American political elites in recent years have developed and increasingly employed weapons of "institutional combat," such as the revelation of wrongdoing by the opposition, and the investigation and prosecution of opposition politicians for their alleged misdeeds.³⁶ The use of such weapons enables politicians to prevail over their