PLS 405

PARTIES AND PRESSURE GROUPS IN THE U.S.

Part 2: The Political Party as an Organization

Ch. 3: The State and Local Party Organizations

- 0. Part two: the political party as an organization
 - A. Great variation in the U.S. across time and place
 - B. Generally fairly weak party organizations in the U.S. compared to most western democracies
 - C. Basic goals: enact platform into law by
 - 1. Mobilizing party in the electorate
 - 2. Recruiting, electing, & supporting party in government
 - D. Basic means
 - 1. Money
 - 2. Personnel
 - E. Basic types
 - 1. Cadre parties
 - 2. Mass-membership parties
- I. What is a strong party?
- II. The legal environment of the parties
 - A. State regulations
 - 1. Vary greatly but are more pervasive than federal (except for campaign finance)
 - 2. Parties are seen as public utilities more than private groups
 - 3. Focus of regulations
 - a. Suffrage
 - b. Ballot design & access (by third parties)
 - c. Patronage & preferments
 - B. Levels of party organization Figure 3.1, p 49
 - 1. Local committees or conventions:
 - a. Precinct (~ 200,000)
 - b. Ward, township, city
 - c. County (~ 3000) usually the most active layer of local party organization
 - d. Legislative or judicial district
 - 2. State central committee or convention
 - 3. Decision structure
 - a. Not typically hierarchical
 - b. Fairly decentralized and stratified: each level has some independent powers
- III. The legendary party machines
 - A. How the party machines developed and held on to power
 - 1. Examples
 - a. Urban Democratic
 - (1) New York City Tammany Hall
 - (2) Jersey City Frank Hague
 - (3) Boston James Curley
 - (4) Chicago Big Bill Thompson and Richard J. Daley
 - (5) Kansas City Tom Pendergast
 - b. Suburban Republican: Long Island/Nassau County Alphonse D'Amato
 - c. Small-towns and rural counties, especially in the South Democratic prior to 1980s, becoming Republican since
 - 2. Core characteristic: patron/client relationship build on material incentives
 - a. Patronage to poverty & working classes (especially immigrants)
 - (1) Jobs
 - (2) Social welfare
 - b. Preferments to business & upper classes
 - (1) Contracts
 - (2) Regulations: health, zoning, building
 - (3) Public works
 - B. The decay of the party machines

- Political reforms
 a. Civil service
 b. Sunshine laws
 c. Conflict-of-interest laws
 d. Competitive-bidding laws
 - e. Secret ballot
 - f. Voter registration
 - g. Nonpartisan elections
- 2. State & national public welfare
- 3. Social/economic change
 - a. Unionization of public sector
 - b. Post WWII prosperity
 - (1) Upward mobility educational & financial
 - (2) Outward mobility suburban sprawl
 - c. Challenge to earlier Irish & Italian ethnic groups by Black, Asian, & Latino groups
- IV. Local party organizations declined and then rebuilt

Table 3.1, p. 55

- A. Local parties in the 1970s
- B. Local parties today: richer and more active Box, p. 57
- V. The state parties: newfound prosperity
 - A. Traditional weakness
 - 1. Decentralization
 - 2. Fragmentation
 - a. Regional
 - b. Urban/rural
 - c. Ethnic/religious
 - d. Ideological
 - 3. Recent competitors
 - a. Mass media
 - b. Campaign technocrats
 - c. Issue activists
 - B. Increasing strength in recent years Table 3.2, p. 60
 - 1. Fund-raising
 - 2. Campaign services
 - 3. Republican advantage
 - 4. Allied groups
 - 5. The special case of the South
 - 6. National party money
- VI. Summing up: how the state and local party organizations have transformed
 - A. Local parties adapted
 - B. State parties somewhat stronger
 - C. But, both have less impact on politics than in the past or in other western democracies
 - 1. More competition from other organizations, groups, and professionals
 - 2. More competition for fund-raising