

# Political Science 171: State Politics

Loren Collingwood

University of California

*loren.collingwood@ucr.edu*

April 21, 2015

# State Party Organizations

- Golden Age of Political Parties
  - Political parties dominated elections during their so-called golden age – latter half of 19th century- early 20th century

# State Party Organizations

- Golden Age of Political Parties
  - Political parties dominated elections during their so-called golden age – latter half of 19th century- early 20th century
  - State party organizations coordinated with national and local party committees

# State Party Organizations

- Golden Age of Political Parties
  - Political parties dominated elections during their so-called golden age – latter half of 19th century- early 20th century
  - State party organizations coordinated with national and local party committees
  - Machine-based politics – party leaders controlled nominations, disseminated voter information, led GOTV, determined resource distribution (turkeys)

# State Party Organizations

- Golden Age of Political Parties
  - Political parties dominated elections during their so-called golden age – latter half of 19th century- early 20th century
  - State party organizations coordinated with national and local party committees
  - Machine-based politics – party leaders controlled nominations, disseminated voter information, led GOTV, determined resource distribution (turkeys)
  - Party leaders then used this influence over elected-officials

# State Party Organizations

- Golden Age of Political Parties
  - Political parties dominated elections during their so-called golden age – latter half of 19th century- early 20th century
  - State party organizations coordinated with national and local party committees
  - Machine-based politics – party leaders controlled nominations, disseminated voter information, led GOTV, determined resource distribution (turkeys)
  - Party leaders then used this influence over elected-officials
  - Candidates selected via party-run nominating caucus or convention – attended by party activists

# State Party Organizations

- Golden Age of Political Parties
  - Political parties dominated elections during their so-called golden age – latter half of 19th century- early 20th century
  - State party organizations coordinated with national and local party committees
  - Machine-based politics – party leaders controlled nominations, disseminated voter information, led GOTV, determined resource distribution (turkeys)
  - Party leaders then used this influence over elected-officials
  - Candidates selected via party-run nominating caucus or convention – attended by party activists
  - Usually very strong connections between candidates and party organization/leaders

# State Party Organizations

- Golden Age of Political Parties
  - Political parties dominated elections during their so-called golden age – latter half of 19th century- early 20th century
  - State party organizations coordinated with national and local party committees
  - Machine-based politics – party leaders controlled nominations, disseminated voter information, led GOTV, determined resource distribution (turkeys)
  - Party leaders then used this influence over elected-officials
  - Candidates selected via party-run nominating caucus or convention – attended by party activists
  - Usually very strong connections between candidates and party organization/leaders
  - In some cases, party leaders literally wrote the ballots their supporters cast – gov't had no role – slips simply put into ballot boxes



Boss Tweed: All I ever wanted to be was a boss



## Growth of Layers of Party Organizations

- State party organizations thus concentrated their efforts on capturing state offices

## Growth of Layers of Party Organizations

- State party organizations thus concentrated their efforts on capturing state offices
- DNC, RNC, DCCC, NRCC, DSCC, NRSC, focus respectively on capturing the the executive and legislative branches of federal gov't

## Growth of Layers of Party Organizations

- State party organizations thus concentrated their efforts on capturing state offices
- DNC, RNC, DCCC, NRCC, DSCC, NRSC, focus respectively on capturing the the executive and legislative branches of federal gov't
- Local party organizations more about grassroots politics (door knocking, party rallies and picnics, neighborhood contact) – national parties more about media-based politics (Meet the Press, Sunday talk shows, etc.)

## Growth of Layers of Party Organizations

- State party organizations thus concentrated their efforts on capturing state offices
- DNC, RNC, DCCC, NRCC, DSCC, NRSC, focus respectively on capturing the the executive and legislative branches of federal gov't
- Local party organizations more about grassroots politics (door knocking, party rallies and picnics, neighborhood contact) – national parties more about media-based politics (Meet the Press, Sunday talk shows, etc.)

## Party Reform

- In the early 20th century state gov't's began to enact regulations limiting the control party organizations once held over the nominating process

## Party Reform

- In the early 20th century state gov'ts began to enact regulations limiting the control party organizations once held over the nominating process
- **Direct primary** (introduced in WI in 1903) – took control away from party leaders – completely changed nature of nominating contest

## Party Reform

- In the early 20th century state gov'ts began to enact regulations limiting the control party organizations once held over the nominating process
- **Direct primary** (introduced in WI in 1903) – took control away from party leaders – completely changed nature of nominating contest
- Candidates began appealing directly to same-party voters – as opposed to bosses – built their own campaign organizations



## Party Reform

- In the early 20th century state gov't's began to enact regulations limiting the control party organizations once held over the nominating process
- **Direct primary** (introduced in WI in 1903) – took control away from party leaders – completely changed nature of nominating contest
- Candidates began appealing directly to same-party voters – as opposed to bosses – built their own campaign organizations
- **Australian (secret) Ballot** – Introduced in late 1800s encouraged voters to focus on the candidates

## Party Reform

- In the early 20th century state gov't's began to enact regulations limiting the control party organizations once held over the nominating process
- **Direct primary** (introduced in WI in 1903) – took control away from party leaders – completely changed nature of nominating contest
- Candidates began appealing directly to same-party voters – as opposed to bosses – built their own campaign organizations
- **Australian (secret) Ballot** – Introduced in late 1800s encouraged voters to focus on the candidates
- Official gov't printed ballot – included names of all candidates competing in general election – eventually this led to split-ticket voting

## Civil Service Reforms – Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics

- Progressive Era reform movement: – sought to prevent party leaders from rewarding their volunteers with the promise of public-sector jobs

## Civil Service Reforms – Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics

- Progressive Era reform movement: – sought to prevent party leaders from rewarding their volunteers with the promise of public-sector jobs
- Competitive bidding for gov't funded projects

## Civil Service Reforms – Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics

- Progressive Era reform movement: – sought to prevent party leaders from rewarding their volunteers with the promise of public-sector jobs
- Competitive bidding for gov't funded projects
- These reforms led to loss of patronage-based political system (although still have it a bit today – i.e., ambassadors)

## Civil Service Reforms – Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics

- Progressive Era reform movement: – sought to prevent party leaders from rewarding their volunteers with the promise of public-sector jobs
- Competitive bidding for gov't funded projects
- These reforms led to loss of patronage-based political system (although still have it a bit today – i.e., ambassadors)
- Rather than motivate workers with tangibles, party organizations forced to motivate volunteers based on ideology and principle

## Civil Service Reforms – Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics

- Progressive Era reform movement: – sought to prevent party leaders from rewarding their volunteers with the promise of public-sector jobs
- Competitive bidding for gov't funded projects
- These reforms led to loss of patronage-based political system (although still have it a bit today – i.e., ambassadors)
- Rather than motivate workers with tangibles, party organizations forced to motivate volunteers based on ideology and principle
- By 1970s, political consultants began playing a more dominant role in campaigns – production of ads, polling, media mail, etc., highly specialized jobs

## Civil Service Reforms – Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics

- Progressive Era reform movement: – sought to prevent party leaders from rewarding their volunteers with the promise of public-sector jobs
- Competitive bidding for gov't funded projects
- These reforms led to loss of patronage-based political system (although still have it a bit today – i.e., ambassadors)
- Rather than motivate workers with tangibles, party organizations forced to motivate volunteers based on ideology and principle
- By 1970s, political consultants began playing a more dominant role in campaigns – production of ads, polling, media mail, etc., highly specialized jobs
- These reforms and developments led to a candidate-centered system – eroded the role of boss politics once so dominant in American politics



## Civil Service Reforms – Rise of Candidate-Centered Politics

- Progressive Era reform movement: – sought to prevent party leaders from rewarding their volunteers with the promise of public-sector jobs
- Competitive bidding for gov't funded projects
- These reforms led to loss of patronage-based political system (although still have it a bit today – i.e., ambassadors)
- Rather than motivate workers with tangibles, party organizations forced to motivate volunteers based on ideology and principle
- By 1970s, political consultants began playing a more dominant role in campaigns – production of ads, polling, media mail, etc., highly specialized jobs
- These reforms and developments led to a candidate-centered system – eroded the role of boss politics once so dominant in American politics
- Voters began to turn toward nationally focused media and away from local party committees for their political

## Contemporary State Party Organization

- State parties are now more about fundraising than they once were – by 2008, Dem/Reps state party dogs raised \$479 million – a huge increase from 20 years prior.
- Larger budgets/more stable funding produced more full-time headquarters (legit rented office space, etc.)
- Volunteer base – mixed with professional staff skilled in fund-raising, voter targeting, polling, and communication
- By 1999, all but one party state central committee were housed in permanent headquarters – all but 7 employed full-time executive director
- Thus, while nature of state party has changed – still relevant – parties still recruit candidates, coordinate efforts with national and local party organizations, allied interest groups (pluralism), consultants, and activists
- Publish newsletters, employ voter-identification programs
- State parties organize seminars and campaign assistance programs for candidates for statewide office and state

# Contemporary State Party Organization

- State party development does vary from state to state
- A state's history and political culture are important
  - States that have long history of formidable party orgs tend to continue to have vibrant orgs – NJ, NY, IL (Chicago!). Traditionally weaker states include KS, NE, ND, and SD
  - Political competition in state – FL GOP has a very strong party organization, and Dems are ok too
  - State laws – some states limit party's ability to support candidates – as of 2012, 32 states restricted amounts state central committees can contribute directly to statewide, leg, and judicial candidates