mobility in the USA

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In comparing the influence of different political institutions on minority mobility, the conventional approach is to look at social and economic outcomes. This essay will go further and scrutinize the *standards* by which such outcomes are evaluated. What levels, rates, and disparities of mobility are acceptable, or not, to minority groups and other political actors? The standards used to answer these questions are typically treated as exogenous to the political institutions being studied.[1] These standards

vote-buying and 'rake-offs' be seen as an integral part of United States urban politics at the turn of the century" (Scott 1972: viii). For Scott and others, a more serious problem than corruption was the machines' role in reconciling immigrant workers to an unjust capitalist society: "The effect of machine rule under universal suffrage is to submerge growing collective policy demands with immediate payoffs, thereby retarding the development of class-based political interests among the lower strata" (ibid.: 151).

But Scott is not concerned that machines channeled class- or occupation-based demands into ethnic group-based claims. He suggests a more insidious outcome: "Although pork-barrel legislation pro-

the machine did most of its favors for individuals and families" (ibid.: 108). Likewise, William Grimshaw writes that the Chicago machine rede-

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Advantages of political machines

The virtues of political machines are also widely acknowledged. Scott

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(1972: 152). It accomplished this by serving, in Morris Janowitz's term, as a "bridging institution" between immigrant neighborhoods (the private realm of family, neighbors, and friends) and the wider society (the

individual blacks. But by their very nature, such particularistic benefits could not begin to solve the problems facing African-Americans *as a*

A certain begrudging respect for machines can be discerned in the work

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Many such efforts emerged after the 1960s, when it became apparent that various unorganized or hard-to-organize interests were not being heard in the usual din of pluralist politics. The prototype is Common Cause, founded by John Gardner in 1970.[15] Focused on issues like cam-

interest efforts want *public* results. He doesn't put it this way, but his anal-

Madisonian system. Swift policy change no longer requires public concern, much less outrage. Indeed, change may now be easily pursued

revenues for this purpose." It also became clear that "the major benefit

activists was legitimation, not votes." The result was a decline in organi-

but by identifying with a cause, people also identify with others who join the same group" (Berry 1999a: 369–71). As the center of political gravity has shifted to Washington, Berry now defends public interest organizations as the obvious groups to address "a set of issues that could not be resolved without the involvement of Congress, the president, and the federal courts" (1999a: 369–71, 1999b: 166–7).

Yet Berry also acknowledges that this new regime is biased against

redounds to the specific disadvantage of minorities, is that organizations like MALDEF work outside the party system and end up looking a lot like the "buffer institutions" criticized by Katznelson (1976b: 119, 175–88, 193).

Another problem with the current regime is its formalism, which relates back to the participation–representation trade-off. In our eagerness to

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tarism, the racial and ethnic categories we rely on seem especially concocted and ill-fitting.

Still more troubling is the point raised by Ralf Dahrendorf:

> The risk of the corporatist perversion of the democratic class struggle is that it creates rigidity in the place of movement. Corporatism enters into an easy

will always be more combative than their interest-based counterparts because conflict generates publicity and allows public-interest groups to mobilize their constituents."[23]

This dynamic is illustrated by the contrasting styles of two organizations – MALDEF and the Alinsky-inspired Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) – during the campaign to reform school finance in Texas during the 1980s. Ever since MALDEF's defeat in the 1973 *Rodriguez* decision, increased state aid to poorly funded local school dis-

time is how politics is able to reconcile the inevitable tensions between ideals and realities.[26] Yet time is what our post-civil rights regime affords

3. On the aversion of machine politicians to debate issues and principles, see Banfield and Wilson 1966: 116 and Scott 1972: 108.
4. Katznelson 1976a: 226. See also Katznelson 1987a: 129–30 and Erie 1988.
5. Lowi 1967: 86. James C. Scott pushes this insight further and argues that the rationalized, bureaucratic structures of modern societies depend for their [illegible] day-to-day functioning on the flexibility of informal relations such as characterized machines (see Scott 1998: 352).
6. So did astute Progressives like Jane Addams. See J. B. Elshtain 2002: 77, 104, 157.
7. Katznelson 1981: 70. Here Katznelson's analysis of the machine echoes that of Polish mutual-aid societies in Thomas and Znaniecki 1958: 1590.
8. Huntington 1968: 83. On the transformative role of patronage parties, see Schmidt 1977: 326–7.
9. Katznelson 1981: 108–34; see also Jones-Correa 1998: 69–90.
10. Examples of these structural constraints can be found in Erie 1988: 163–5, [illegible] Grimshaw 1992, Scott 1972: 108. Shefter 1985: 33, 34, 71.
11. [illegible] persists today in New York City politics, to the [illegible]

26. Crick 1982: 156. A similar point is made in Nisbet 1975: 176.

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