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The Pitzer Participant is published quarterly by Pitzer College, 1050 No. Mills Ave., Claremont, Ca. 91711. Second class permit granted by Claremont, Ca. 91711.

Designed and edited by Virginia Rauch

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3 Itinerant Thoughts on Place
Paul Shepard

10 Political Style and the Search for Black Power in Los Angeles: Frederick Roberts and Tom Bradley
Michael Goldstein

15 Celldom · Bullets · Sunny Side Up
Adrienne Turcotte

17 The Welfare Crisis in the United States: The Burden of Responsibility
Kirsten Grønbjerg

26 Community Notes
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Itinerant Thoughts on Place

I

It is not surprising that individual developmental processes that comprise that sense of self often called "identify formation" are generally regarded by modern scholars as given wholly by the human part of the environment: "Nature" is that tiny human animal rescued and shaped by "cultur". Not surprising because of the mockery made of the nonhuman by turning it into scenery, the way picturesqueness reduces everything it touches to surfaces. From the moment the grand tourists invented modern tourism, the gentility went about Italy speaking of the genius loci as though it were a landscape painting. Then it was hitched to consumer recreation. The admirers of landscape were never the opponents of the Promethian hubris, only the disguised and sometimes unconscious handmaidens of it.

The old Romans, whose poetry inspired the notion of genius loci had not meant pictures at all but a tutelar divinity, a guardian spirit. It had been the same among the Greeks, whose temples were expressions of the character of particular goddesses in whose laps the structures were placed. The subtlety with which their architecture was accommodated to the terrain included even the configuration of the horizon; the temple passages were designed to guide ritual processions whose central themes were a dialogue between the people and the earth.

However much they admired the old arts, the neo-classicists more than a millenium later could feel little of the old pagan interior sense in which these sacred places were experienced as part of themselves. The Jews and Christians had methodically sought out the old shrines and covered them with churches in order to redirect the religious impulse away from that place. The bishops who consecrated them and the liturgy they followed referred to a Holy Land elsewhere and a heaven and hell that were nowhere and everywhere.

In his widely read book on The Sacred and the Profane, Mircea Eliade has instructed a whole generation on the making of sacred places: the rites and ceremonies that "cosmosize" a hearth or an altar. But there is for him no real chthonic, no real spirits, only human beliefs. Although at pains to insist on the religious man's loyalty to the heterogeneity of space, he sees it only as something made by men. The indigenous qualities of the spring or cave or mountain are for him little more than markers. There is not the slightest hint that the spiritual entities which pre-classical Romans, Greeks or other so-called primi-
tives conceived as indwelling were anything but cultural assertions. One always called in the forces from a centralized heaven the way one dials a long-distance operator.

Of course the Christians did not invent this making of place by will and designation. The ancient civilizations of the Middle East are speckled with temples built where they would be convenient to the bureaucracy, the keepers of the grain and the army barracks. The shift of attention away from the uniqueness of habitat began long before the Church fathers declared that all places on this earth are prettily much the same. Eliade’s view is ultimately no different from that of municipal street-namers: the world behind the human facade is homogenious.

One founds place rather than discovers place. It doesn’t matter whether a priest blesses an altar or the mayor cuts a ribbon. The autochthonous forces by which the earth speaks are only elements in myths by which the peasants rationalize their designations of sacredness. Quality is not given, it is made.

But the polarity and mystery of the given and the made will not go away. It is the duality at the heart of knowledge, the central enigma of our private and collective identities. Arthur Modell has observed that painting and sculpturing of the Paleolithic caves of Southern Europe often use the erosional forms of the rock as the basis of the animal figure. This synthesis of what is there and what is created externalizes an inextricable relationship between the artist and his materials, between ourselves and our bodies, man and nature. The artist affirms and formalizes that tension which is the core of the maturing self-consciousness of everyone. Art, says Modell, is always a love-affair with the world.

It was this search for self that was not solely defined by acts of transcendence and domination that moved the 19th century romantic imagination, feelings for which the Augustan humanist and modern highway-pipeline-parking-lot builder cannot conceal their scorn. Between the natural and human, given and made, the other and the self — what the romantics, like children, sought was “a place in which to discover a self.” This apt phrase of Edith Cobb’s describes a childhood process by which the terrain and its natural things become a model for the plastic, order-seeking juvenile.

The child, she says, seeks to make a world the way the world is made. Her biographical studies led to the conclusion that the terrain itself provided the durable gestalt upon which the intellect germinated. His “home range” for the eight-year old is the prime, patterned, concrete reality in his life, upon which his waverings and nubile powers of memory and logic cling and develop, like seals climbing out onto the rocks to give birth.

Cobb’s study was a search for the genesis of thought and creativity by studying the lives of the gifted. That genius is both the “spirit of place” in its classical sense and also the most powerful minds among us is not coincidental. The essential formation of the self in children who are yet untouched by ideology is a growing awareness of one’s own anatomy, the discreteness of body parts, organs, complexity of surface, the play of feelings and moods. Experience for the infant is a formless sea of emotion that engulfs the individual. To gain control over them they must be isolated and named. Diversity, richness, all those terms of multiplicity that describe a heterogenous world, have been demonstrated repeatedly by biologists as essential to the de-
velopment of intelligence. From nutritional and environmental studies of laboratory maze-running rats, to observation of babies with and without playpens, institutionalized children, and the psychology of the playground, the evidence is strong that heterogeneity is like an essential nutrient.

But how does it work? You cannot, after all, just put a baby in a bag with a thousand objects and shake well before using. Claude Levi-Strauss believes that the species system of plants and animals is a durable, dependable concrete model for the development of the powers of categorizing, that is, basic cognition. Edith Cobb holds that the fixation on terrain is an organizing process by which the percept of relatedness is interiorized. White and his associates at Harvard find that the intelligence of children emerges relative to a spatial movement among objects, coupled with naming. All of these imply real changes in the nervous system. Psychiatrist Mayer Spivak has identified thirteen "archtyped places." One can live without these special places for resting, feeding, conviviality, grooming, courting and so on, but without them we become, as do other similarly deprived mammals, increas-

ingly stressed and pathological. Such places are not merely spaces for different activities but are the perceptual and physical prerequisites of the different behaviors.

The habitat is not merely a container but a structured surround in which the developing individual makes tenacious affiliations. Something extremely important to the individual transpires between the complex structure of those particular places and the emerging, maturing self. What is going on is a kind of macro-micro correlation, a centering mostly unconscious, essential to the growth of personal identity.

Even in its more conventional sense — identity as our conscious positions in matters — place is important. Before the Revolution the American knew himself in three contexts: as Protestant, English colonial, and village community member. As this scaffolding was cut away by revolution, secularization, and industrial-urbanization, the American of the 19th century suffered an acute attack of inchoateness from which he still has not recovered. The landscapes of those institutions had been the stable rural countryside tightly and hierarchically ordered around the church and town, making zones upon the land and interpenetrations with the wild that changed little between 1520 and 1800. In an era of rapid change we may forget how constant was American life for three centuries, and we may overlook how traumatic the collapse of that old order was. In the painting by the "Hudson River School" we have a body of representations of terrain preceded by an indigenous prose and poetry, especially that of Washington Irving, J. F. Cooper, and William Cullen Bryant. From time immemorial the myths of creation have been presented as drama, perhaps could only be comprehended that way. The 'legends' of sleepy hollow and the adventures of Leatherstocking among the Iroquois were geographically explicit. It was possible to go, as John Trumbull did in 1810, to Norwich Falls in Connecticut, where Cooper had placed a climactic scene in The Last of the Mohicans, and to do a portrait of the place, an analysis of its character the way one would a person. Trumbull was the painter of heroes and battles, whose work hangs in the Capitol in Washington. He probably painted no more than three landscapes in a busy career. The fictional heroes and events, no less than the historical, gave place to elements of American identity — for we "identified" with the Irving and Cooper characters.

From the 'actual' sites of such places, which much of the early painting scrutinized with an almost frantic intensity, the painters moved out in search of correspondingly dramatic sites, appropriate to the imagination of episodes of pioneering life, or even storms or mountain geology. Thomas Cole was its most fervent spokesman. He painted and wrote
long essays. To be lost in the wilderness he said, was the supreme experience. Neither the eroticism nor the adolescent emotionality of his work have gone unnoticed. This immaturity for which critics later had only contempt had its purposes, for it turned Americans back to maternal themes, to the land in a search for new beginnings without which they would remain lost. Cynics after the Civil War saw the romantic artists merely as weak and undisciplined, as the Victorians considered women to be. To attend to trees and waterfalls seemed to them to be sentimental and silly. The artists' own personalities were indeed rife with immaturity. But they were, in a sense, childish for us all.

Before them, the Europeans who settled America were on alien ground. With few exceptions their concrete connection to locality remained in Europe. The painters in America tried, in a few decades, to overhaul that whole troubled subjectivity, to imprint on our nervous systems a new Eden in the form of a wild mountain spectacle as home, to do in the New World what had taken centuries in Europe. Of course they could not possibly succeed. But in some ways no concept of place and landscape in America since then has been without something of their mark.

We are reminded with painful regularity of our continuing sense of dislocation, the neuroses of personal identity problems, the terror of loneliness in the crowd, of isolation both from society and from the rest of nature. These anxieties are fraught with doubts about the purpose of life, even of order in the creation. Traditional psychology, peremptory humanism and even our religious preoccupation with the self have tried to explain these dilemmas of unconnectedness as arising within society and its works — in the family, the home, the job, or the church. But our failure to either elucidate or remedy them on those grounds raises doubts that man either makes or unmakes himself apart from the non-human, or that his loneliness stems from inadequate social planning or ideology.

It is easy to blame rootlessness, mobility, the fluidity of American life for our anguish, but all the truly primitive people — the hunting and gathering cultures — who have ever been studied move serenely through hundreds of miles without such troubles. Although they traveled through vast spaces there is a scale about their lives which is different from ours. W. H. Auden once observed that the mega-world of galaxy and the mini-world of the atom are real for us mainly in frightening ways. In “Ode to Terminus” he speaks of a middle earth where all visibles do have a definite outline they stick to and are undoubtedly at rest or on motion, where lovers recognize each other by their surface, where to all species except the talkative have been allotted the niche and diet that becomes them. This, whatever microbiology may think, is the world we really live in and that saves our sanity...

“The saving our sanity” in this mesocosm, might well include putting the heaven of the other world religions along with the Adlerian psychology of simply willing your own world with other tall stories.

Eliade wants us to believe that places differ according to the amount of a universal holy oil we
pour on them. He is in company with the chartographers whose surveys of latitude, longitude, township and range we have also accepted as the terms of location, of 'defining space.' But the world is not a billiard table until we finally turn it into one. It is unique everywhere in combining features differently which, in some unknown way, both reflect and create an inner geography by which we locate the self.

However exact the mathematical, political or ecclesiastical subdivision of space may be, if it is imposed from the outside it cannot refer to place in the sense which is meant here, any more than maturity is achieved by ceremonies by which those institutions confer power on the individual, however much ceremonial scenery they frame it in. Tyrone Guthrie, the British drama critic, once wrote of Thornton Wilder's play, "Our Town",

"Wilder uses the stage not to imitate nature, but to evoke, with the utmost economy of means, a series of images . . . He is essentially an American writer, a New England writer, writing about his own environment. Authenticity to this environment is essential if the best results are to be achieved in production. But at the same time his plays are sufficiently true to universal human experience, sufficiently transcend merely local environment and character, to make them acceptable on a cosmopolitan level.

I believe that such a close attachment to, and interpretation of a particular part of the earth is an absolute essential to any work of art which can ever be of deep or lasting significance. It is one of the paradoxes of art that a work can only be universal if it is rooted in a part of its creator which is most privately and particularly himself. Such roots must sprout not only from the people but also the places which have meant most to him in his most impressionable years."  

Wilder may seem for us to create place — or, more exactly, he creates the means of its recognition. But his own experience is one of discovery. He is like Carlos Cas tenada, who tells us how difficult it is for one coming from a culture of the human domination of nature, to discover, even in a room 12 x 8 feet, the spot on which he could sit without fatigue. His frustrating search under the tutelage of Don Juan took all night. Again one thinks of the 19th century painters on foot, roving back and forth across the White and Green mountains, the Berkshires, the Taconics, the Hudson Highlands and the Catskills searching endlessly. You don't need to connect with Cas tenada's brand of spirituality to realize that the heterogeneity of the land is not made by man — only discovered and celebrated, or ignored and diminished by him.

One is reminded of John Ruskin's refusal to come to America, saying that he could never visit a country which had no old castles. If you had no old castles you had no history, and if you had no history there was no place in which the events which made you sanctified the ground.

But Ruskin was inordinately attached to the picturesque, to the necessity of ruins and the moral qualities of painting. Some dimensions of place do not depend on architecture. In her introduction to the poetry of Carl Sandburg, Rebecca West described the loquaciousness of Americans in public, their readiness to discuss their lives with total strangers, and the leisure they take in self-explanation. She says,

"It occurs to one, as such experiences accumulate, that one has encountered in art, though not in life, people who talk and behave like this: in Russian novels. There one gets precisely the same universal addiction to self-analysis. And then it occurs to one also that this place is in certain respects very like Russia. Chicago, like Leningrad, like Moscow, is a high spot, to use its own idiom, on the monotony of great plains; a catchment area of vitality that rejoices extravagantly in its preservation because elsewhere in this region it might have trickled away from its source and been swallowed up in the vastness of the earth. All round Chicago lies the Middle Western plain. It stretches in every direction, a day's journey to the east, a day and a night and a day to the west, and more than that to the south: flat, oozing, the longest possible span from horizon to horizon. All the fields look the same whether one looks from the train just after dawn or before nightfall on any of these journeys; and again and again one passes the same village, for here man has had so much to do in merely covering the ground that he has neither time nor energy to develop variations of his establishment. What with the clouds and the moon and the stars, it often seems as if there is more doing in the sky than on earth. The physical resemblance between Russia and the Middle West is certainly close enough. And it may be that life which finds itself lost in the heart of a vast continent, whether that be Old or New, has a tendency to take the same forms. Life in another case, which flows in a number of channels and is divided into small nations as an audience, who will give it a verdict on its performance, which is none the less useful if its inevitable function is to be disbelieved; and it has a basis for optimism about the universe, since it sees the neighboring nations surviving and flourishing in spite of what it is bound to consider their inferiorities. But a nation that is isolated in its vastness has no audience but itself, and it has no guarantee that continued existence is possible or worth while, save its own findings. Therefore, Russia and Middle West alike, it is committed to introspection, to a constant stocktaking of its own life and a constant search for the meaning of it.

This entails various consequence. It ac-
My theme can now be drawn together and signified by the “walkabout” of certain Australian aborigines. In going on the pilgrimage called walkabout, the Aborigine travels to a succession of named places, each familiar from childhood and each the place of some episode in the story of creation. The sacred qualities of each is heightened by symbolic art forms and religious relics. The journey is into the interior in every sense, as myth is the dramatic externalization of the events of an inner history. To those on walkabout these places are profoundly moving. The landscape is a kind of archive where the individual moves simultaneously through his personal and tribal past, renewing contact with crucial points, a journey into time and space refreshing the meaning of his own being.

Terrain structure is the model for the patterns of cognition. As children we internalize its order as we practice “going” from thought to thought, and learn to recognize perceptions and ideas as details in the sweep of larger generalizations. We intuit these incorporations and texture into a personal uniqueness. Mind has the pattern of place predicated upon it, and we describe its excursions, like this paper, as a ramble between “points”, the exploration of

“fields”, following “paths”, and finding “boundaries”, “wastelands” or “jungles”, of the difficulty of seeing forests for the trees, of making mountains of molehills, of the dark and light sides, of going down hill or uphill.

Cognition, personality, creativity, maturity — all are in some way tied to particular gestalts of space, to locality, partly given, partly found.

What does this say to us as Americans? From the standpoint of society as a whole, our disadvantages seem obvious and enormous. We have little cultural continuity with the land; history has few tangible relics. The vestiges of pre-colonial art and earthworks remain, but their meanings we do not know nor feel. At the time of its settlement by Europeans, the continent had vast diversity, as indicated by the diversity of Indian tribes. Almost everything we have done to it in the last century has worked toward the destruction of these differences. We have idealized this uniformity in the image of the melting pot and the standard of living. The industrial complex levels mountains, drains swamps, opens forests, plants trees in grasslands and domesticates and exterminates the wild. We have long been aware of this and of the rejoinder that it is a small price to pay for convenience, security and comfort; that entertainment, travel, instant news, electrified homes and an unlimited array of goods are made available in this way. Diversity, in fact, is suspect because it is divisive, or at best it is just one more source of pleasure in a complex of “trade-offs.” We are doubtful and ambivalent about diversity. Phyllis McGinley put it this way:

Pictures and parks are part of that American syndrome. Tourism and the park mentality, like that which pushed American Indians onto reservations, makes enclaves — not on the theory that quality is everywhere unique but on the theory that between the isolated points of interest there is only weary uniformity. Carl Sandburg was not singing parks and petrified villages like Lincoln’s New Salem. He belonged. Belonging, says Erik Erikson, is the pivot of life, the point at which selfhood becomes possible — not just belonging in general, but in particular. One belongs to a universe of order and purpose which must initially be realized as a particular society in a natural community of certain species in a terrain of unique geology. What Rebecca West sees as the empty plains of Illinois and Russia betrays her own bias, for they are empty only — as she noted — of close neighbors.
Since this ingenious earth began
To shape itself from fire and rubble;
Since God invented man, and man
At once fell to, inventing trouble,
One virtue, one subversive grace
Has chiefly vexed the human race.
One whimsical beatitude,
Concocted for his gain and glory,
Has man most stoutly misconstrued
Of all the primal category —
Counting no blessing, but a flaw
That Difference is the mortal law. 4

But the lament is not that as a nation we lose the multifold character of a continent or lack architecture that affirms these qualities. We do not experience anything as a people, but only as individuals. To the corporation or bureaucracy the quality of place is merely an amenity because our mythology of collective power and metaphor of collective experience confirms their transcendence of the individual.

The child must have a residential opportunity to soak in a place, the same place to which the adolescent and adult can return to ponder and integrate the visible extensions of his own personality. Place in human genesis has this episodic quality. Knowing who you are is a quest across the first forty years of life. Knowing who you are is impossible without knowing where you are. But it cannot be learned in a single stroke. What makes the commercial ravagement of the American countryside so tragic is not that it is changed and modernized, but that the tempo of alteration so outstrips the rhythms of individual human life, and the patterns of going and returning.

Everywhere in America we continue to be enmeshed in immaturity, caught in a drama of infantile separation anxieties. Samuel Beckett, in his plays, has rightly set our quandary in an empty landscape, surrounded by a terrain that is both featureless and meaningless, where we wait at crossroads marked only by signposts for something to happen. Signposts do not make a whereness nor beliefs a whoness.

If we were all as alike as eggs it would not matter. But we live in a world where everything we do can make or unmake the possibilities for our further growth. We academic eggheads like to think that we live in a world of ideas which we invent, like we create the domestic plants and animals. But in some part of our skulls there is a wilderness. We call it the unconscious because we cannot cultivate it the way we do a field of grain or a field of thought. In it forces as enduring as climate and bedrock maintain our uniqueness in spite of the works of progress. It is the source of our private diversity. Among us, our collective unconscious seems almost to exist apart from ourselves, like a great wild region where we can get in touch with the sources of life. It is a retreat where we wait out the movers and builders, who scramble to continually revamp our surroundings in search of a solution to a problem which is a result of their own activity.

By Paul Shepard

Political Style and the Search for Black Power in Los Angeles:

Frederick Roberts and Tom Bradley

Political Style

To the untrained eye, style in politics may appear to be as random as any other kind of human behavior. It seems sensible that there should be as many political styles as there are different Americans. One would hardly assume that the late Richard Daley of Chicago's Irish Bridgeport would approach politics in the fashion of John Lindsay of East Side, silk stocking New York.

Yet, political style is clearly more than just a manifestation of the class or ethnic background of a politician. Style is a conscious and perfected effort to achieve political goals, maintain an organization, and mobilize a constituency. Richard Daley's low keyed, non-charismatic approach to the governing of Chicago suited the needs of a politician who headed an impressive party organization and who had at his disposal substantial patronage with which to maintain the faithful. There was little need to develop a slick public and media presence for a politician who already controlled the key resources of Chicago politics. Quite to the contrary, John Lindsay was devoid of virtually all of the organizational resources that Richard Daley inherited as Democratic boss of Chicago. Party machines had been defunct in New York City for decades. Statutory power had been drained slowly from the Office of Mayor in New York to the point that civil servants were effectively able to resist the efforts of the Mayor to govern. Lindsay's charismatic, media-oriented style was therefore an effort to mobilize the public so that he could gain sufficient power to govern. In both the cases of Daley and Lindsay, style was, firstly, a conscious effort to obtain political goals and, secondly, a product of a particular organizational context.

Black Political Style

Black politicians have been no less subject to these contextual opportunities and constraints which produce style. Both Black passivity and militancy have also related to the conscious efforts of Black politicians to achieve power, maintain an organization, and mobilize a constituency. With these goals in mind, Black politicians have developed particular styles within particular organizational contexts.

For example, Adam Clayton Powell, a militant and outspoken Black leader of the 1940's and 1950's was able to use the 10,000 member Abyssinian Baptist Church of Harlem as a substitute for Democratic Party support. Utilizing the pulpit of the church to disseminate his militant political message, he avoided the punishment that the Democratic Party would have ultimately meted out to an all too independent Black
man. Indeed, Powell's church became a stronger political organization in Harlem than the regular Democratic Party structure, which had been severely weakened by almost a decade of Republican rule in New York City.

Powell's militancy was then based upon the creation of a personal organization that was independent of established political parties. Although Powell's organizational base could gain him election from the predominantly Black Harlem Congressional District, it could not, however, secure for his constituency patronage or access to policy-making in Washington. Nevertheless, Powell could provide a variety of intangible benefits which maintained his organization and following. The aura of Adam Clayton Powell, openly confronting his White opponents, living the good life in a more blatant and outlandish fashion than White politicians would ever dare to do, provided to an impoverished Black community the hope that it was possible to secure the amenities of the White world.

If Adam Clayton Powell's militancy was a function of an organizational context which allowed him to successfully develop such a style, other less assertive if not passive Black political styles have also reflected the conscious efforts to gain influence and maintain a following within quite different contexts. One final example which reflects an adaptation to a different context is that of William Dawson, longtime Chicago Congressman (1943-1972) and Black leader of the Democratic machine in that city.

While Powell's militant and iconoclastic actions related to his inability to provide tangible rewards to his constituency, Dawson's passivity and low keyed stance on most civil rights issues were based upon his complete control over patronage and services that Chicago's Democratic machine had allotted to Blacks. Rather than attempt to provide symbolic rewards through a public airing of abundant racial complaints, Dawson's influence and organization were maintained by the distribution of tangible rewards that were vital to the Black citizens of Chicago. Operating as an integral part of the Chicago Democratic machine, Dawson's control extended to the most minute aspects of public services that citizens of other cities might expect to be provided by right. In essence, Dawson's ward office became the center of political life in Black Chicago, the equivalent of the welfare office, police station, and city license bureau all combined into a single unit. As an observer of Dawson's headquarters described it:

"On the bench outside his office on a typical day might be found a police captain, a couple on relief, a young Negro lawyer, an unemployed man, a politician, and a university professor."

Despite the apparent similarities, what makes Black politicians such as Powell and Dawson distinct from their White counterparts is that their styles are adaptations to contexts which are essentially defined for Blacks by Whites. Even though Adam Clayton Powell was quite militant and William Dawson was just the opposite, both men were elected to positions that were created by White politicians who had at least implicit notions of the proper role of Blacks in politics.

Powell's Congressional seat was, in fact, a result of a decision by New York Democrats to create a "Black" district. Dawson's influence continued only as long as he pleased the White chieftains of the Cook County Democratic organization.

These organizational contexts limited the ability of Black politicians to significantly alter the position of Blacks in American politics. Adam Clayton Powell could be militant but only because he was an outsider with his own personal following. He had no patronage to offer and his access to New York City and Washington policy making was limited. William Dawson could provide substantial service and patronage rewards but only as long as these material benefits did not threaten the racial status quo in Chicago. The Democratic machine was hardly in the forefront of the civil rights movement in that city.

The dilemma for Black politicians has been the following: To gain positions of authority, one had to adapt to a White-created and controlled political context. Yet, that very context limited the possibilities of racial change in American politics.

The Los Angeles Context

If style is a response to a particular political context, the organizational features of Los Angeles politics are crucial to our discussion. Although many Los Angelenos would proudly point to their politics as being unique and many Easteners would derisively agree, the relationship between political context and political style reveals the similar origins of Los Angeles politics and that of other urban areas.
Politicians in Los Angeles, as politicians in New York or Chicago, have consciously developed strategies based upon the available resources, the particular political structures, and the overall rules of their urban arena.

In Los Angeles, these resources, structures and rules were predominantly influenced by the Progressive movement in the early part of the twentieth century. Enforced non-partisanship, strong civil service, weakened if non-existent party organizations were all Progressive sponsored "reforms" which have produced a context in which politicians can secure few resources to wield power or govern. Traditional avenues of mobility provided by the political parties have therefore been absent while many political offices, even when secured, cannot supply the tangible rewards or services that are necessary for politicians to build and maintain followings. For example, in 1960 the Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles had at its disposal exempt (non civil service) positions which amounted to only 8% of all city employment, while fifty years earlier the Mayor's Office controlled 45% of city employment. In absolute terms, this has been a loss of over 5,000 jobs for the Mayor to distribute to the faithful.

Additionally, the sheer size of most electoral units in Los Angeles has made it difficult for politicians to overcome lack of party organization and resources. As a result of Progressive-inspired changes in the election laws, most local officials have been elected at large or from large heterogeneous districts. For example, the Los Angeles City Council includes only fifteen members elected from perhaps the largest council districts, in a geographical sense, in the nation. Los Angeles covers more square miles than any other American city yet it has one of the smallest city councils.

The overall result of these structural features of Los Angeles politics is a dearth of resources to bridge the gap between citizen and politician. The rewards of office, the resources of political parties, the sense of community that small uniform electoral districts can provide, are all scarce commodities in Los Angeles politics. Politicians have been left to devise other means to mobilize followings and wield power in that city.

Black Political Style in Los Angeles: Frederick Roberts and Tom Bradley

Black politicians in Los Angeles have therefore operated within a political context devoid of both the traditional resources of politics and the traditional impediments of politics. For example, party organizations not only provided mobility for a certain limited number of Blacks, but also defined the terms of Black participation. In Los Angeles, the political structures that were most closely identified with this two-faced process were missing.

This is not to say that politicians in Los Angeles developed styles totally divorced from the political context or that Black politicians were as free as their White counterparts to mobilize a wide variety of potential supporters. Indeed, the lack of traditional political resources has led most White politicians to establish ties with the public through the mass media, through the creation of issues designed to mobilize support and in turn produce these sorely lacking resources. Yet, Black politicians have been less able to respond in this fashion. The creation of new issues by Black politicians always risks potential racial polarization which, in a city with a small Black population, is a losing proposition.

It is difficult to identify in Los Angeles politics the structures and resources that other urban centers find familiar. Nevertheless, Los Angeles does possess both a context which determines general political style and stringent impediments upon Black political behavior. Whatever the Black political style, it reflects the influence of this broader context and these restrictions as they affect Black politicians.

The quite different styles of Los Angeles' two most prominent Black politicians, Frederick Roberts and Tom Bradley, are cases in point. Roberts, Los Angeles' first Black elected official, gained a well deserved reputation as an outspoken combatant for civil rights and race interests. Editor of his own newspaper, the New Age, Roberts let few hints of prejudice and discrimination escape editorial comment. The Mayor of Los Angeles, the city Board of Film Censors, the Fire Department, and even Presidents Wilson and Harding, were all warned of militant action if Black civil rights were not
respected. For example, in a tone as assertive as one could find in any Black newspaper in the country, he notified President Wilson in February of 1916 that Blacks would appropriately remember him in the upcoming presidential election. According to Roberts, “the Black man has a mighty kick coming up. He remembers that there were 69 of the race lynched during the past year; he remembers that nothing was even said about it to discourage it; he remembers that Mr. Wilson and his administration had kicked him from every position of honor and trust . . .” Roberts’ election to the California State Assembly in 1918, therefore, merely provided him a new forum to practice this unwavering struggle for Black rights.

The aura of Adam Clayton Powell, openly confronting his White opponents, living the good life in a more blatant and outlandish fashion than White politicians would ever dare to do, provided to an impoverished Black community the hope that it was possible to secure the amenities of the White world.

However, Roberts’ militancy was a function of the unique resources he possessed and a political context which could tolerate if not manipulate that political style. The key to Roberts’ success was that he needed just over 2000 votes to be elected. This was the smallest number of votes that was necessary for success in any of the Los Angeles electoral districts. For example, a Black Socialist running for City Council in 1911 made a relatively poor (and unsuccessful) showing with over 40,000 votes.

Roberts’ success in utilizing his militant style to gain elected office was therefore based upon his choice of the smallest electoral unit available and his ability to mobilize the Black population through his newspaper. His ownership of New Age allowed him to supplement the dearth of party resources and also to avoid the remaining restrictions upon Black electoral activity. The majority White population in the district had never been represented by a Black, and party leaders, left to their own choosing, would certainly not have selected him as their candidate.

Although there were clear racial undercurrents in the campaign, with one opponent reminding voters that they should be aware of Roberts’ color, successful mobilization of the minority Black community in the district and sufficient support among Whites gave the militant editor a narrow victory in a three way race. Yet, Roberts’ election did not pose a challenge to the racial status quo. His continued militancy and continued electoral success (he served in the State Assembly until 1934) were tolerated by the quick conversion of his assembly district into the sole “Black” district. When Roberts was first elected in 1918, the population of Los Angeles was less than 3% Black; the Black community comprising less than 15,000 residents. As a result of gerrymandering and other structural controls, Los Angeles would not have any other Black elected officials until the 1960’s when more than 300,000 Blacks accounted for 17% of the population. For more than forty years, Frederick Roberts and his Black successors in the 74th Assembly District would continue this militant style in the context of clear racial isolation.

For a Black to run for Mayor of Los Angeles is to reject both the isolation that was imposed upon Frederick Roberts as well as the militancy that can exist as part of that isolation. As Roberts was volatile, outspoken, and unrelenting in his attacks upon his opponents, Tom Bradley, Los Angeles’ first Black Mayor, has been cool, dignified, and measured. Indeed, Bradley’s political style reflects efforts to move beyond the seques tered politics of the “Black” district. Yet, it also reflects the very tenuous position of Black politicians in citywide arenas where the Black population is a clear minority.

Bradley’s ability to win elections is based upon his success in fashioning a fairly wide coalition of voters. This, of course, means securing sizeable numbers of votes outside the Black community. While Frederick Roberts could emphasize and reemphasize issues of immediate Black concern, Tom Bradley must choose issues and present images of himself that appeal to non Blacks.

In this respect, Bradley’s three campaigns for Mayor (1969, 1973, 1977) have been struggles to prevent a racial definition of the political arena. When this kind of racial polarization occurs, a Black Mayoral candidate in Los Angeles is in trouble.
Bradley's first campaign in 1969 and most recent campaign of last spring are examples of the difficulties that Black Mayoral candidates have in maintaining and expanding an inter-racial coalition. In 1969, Bradley saw an impressive show of support in the primary election rapidly disintegrate into a final election defeat. Under the onslaught of Mayor Yorty's blatantly racial tactics, which included newspaper ads and bumper stickers with virulent racial messages, Bradley could not expand his non-Black support after the primary. In fact, only among middle and upper middle class Whites was he able to make marginal gains. Mayor Yorty had successfully linked Black militants and student radicals to his opponent. As the Mayor put it, if Tom Bradley were elected, "the militants could come down and intimidate the city council".

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Bradley's re-election campaign in the spring of 1977, although successful, revealed additional restraints upon a Black candidate in a situation where there was a potential for racial polarization. The Mayor's chief opponent, State Senator Alan Robbins, attempted to make mandatory busing and crime his major issues. The rape whistle was chosen as the symbol of his campaign and Robbins vowed to distribute several hundred thousand. These issues obviously had strong racial connotations and if Robbins could force the campaign to be defined in racial terms, Bradley could be beaten. The Mayor responded by running a low keyed, if non-existent, campaign which avoided any potential controversies. He even admitted "that the fact there was not a daily confrontation between the incumbent Mayor and ... the contenders caused less visibility in the campaign and less interest".

Although Bradley survived Robbins' racial innuendoes, two liberal Los Angeles Board of Education members were defeated by challengers closely associated with Robbins. Evidently Bradley's efforts to run a low visibility, non-controversial campaign hurt the embattled White supporters of busing. For example, the defeat of liberal School Board Member Dr. Robert L. Docter was due in part to surprisingly mixed support from the Black community.

As a Black Mayor, Tom Bradley also faces many impediments to his political maneuverability. While campaigning, he must be constantly wary that issues are not defined in racial terms; in governing, racial considerations make it difficult for him to utilize techniques that his predecessors have found successful. For example, Mayor Yorty, in his efforts to mobilize public support and therefore to govern, could make Los Angeles "the only city with a foreign policy". However, Bradley must be much more cautious in his use of the media and issues. Again, racial polarization means isolation and defeat. In this sense, Bradley cannot use a strategy which his White cohorts consciously perfect as a response to the political context. In the citywide electoral arena, Black politicians are therefore limited in the issues they may raise and the means through which they may govern.

Race, Style, and Politics

It is clear that all politicians in their efforts to secure power and to maintain a following develop styles within a particular political context. However, it has been the goal of this essay to argue that Black politicians operate under an additional set of constraints which make either open discussion or effective resolution of problems concerning Blacks difficult. Even militancy, as reflected in the career of Frederick Roberts, has often reflected isolation and powerlessness.

Despite the election of Blacks such as Tom Bradley to high public office, race remains a relevant political distinction for many Americans, one which divides the population and isolates the Black minority. As long as this continues to be the case, the style of Black politicians will either reflect this isolation or the ever present threat of it.

Historical background material contained in this essay was collected as part of a broader project on Los Angeles Black politics supported by the Haynes Foundation. The opinions expressed in the essay are, of course, those of the author.

By Michael Goldstein
Celldom

Your hemisphere of dominance,
so powerful and vast,
your subtle prison of the mind,
so treacherous and fast,
that rarely have I passed your fence
and then there was not much to find,
for you are good at hiding treasure
and making one forget
just where he thought he left the trail,
then making him regret
ever having sought the pleasure
that made him lose his goal and fail.
So every time I go I must come back
and spend another night upon the rack.

Bullets

All the things
that I most feared
to be
I am.

There's nothing that I am now
that reminds me of myself.

Sunny Side Up

A breakfast touch of Easter’s eyes
burst with sudden surprise
as you, across the table, try a new disguise.

I stare into a black sea of caffain
and thoughts that can’t be seen
penetrate into your world so small and submarine.

I spread my butter, then my jam
and eat my piece of ham.
I wonder how I got here and I wonder where I am.

By Adrienne Turcotte
In recent years both the number of welfare recipients and the amount spent on welfare have increased dramatically. So great has been this increase that some have called it a "welfare crisis." Much time and effort has been spent in attempting to explain this rapid increase in dependency despite a general rise in the national standard of living. A multitude of books and articles attempting to find the right solution to the "crisis" have been published since the early 1960s. Clearly, the welfare crisis is as much a crisis of explanation as of financing or managing the growth in dependency. One might even argue that an "explanation" of this crisis is as essential as, say, finding new funds to support the dependent or new administrative procedures to control who becomes eligible for assistance. No single interpretation of the welfare crisis has won public or academic acceptance so far, although, as we will see, there are many contenders.

The primary purpose of this book is to restate the problem of the welfare crisis so as to place it in a larger perspective. In the process of describing and analyzing the quantitative data collected for this purpose I will also arrive at several conclusions which bear on the origin, development, and future of the "welfare crisis" and on its social significance as well. But the central objective is to show that understanding the "welfare crisis" requires us to go beyond the current proponents of the debate and place the issue squarely in the global processes of modernization.

Popular and Sociological Conceptions of Poverty

There are two basic questions which beset discussions of public assistance in the United States: (1) why are people poor and in need in the first place? and (2) what has been the collective response to these needs? These two questions have different answers and need to be answered separately, although they clearly are related. At the very least, any given explanation of the causes of poverty has implications for the decision whether any action need be taken as well as for the level at which such intervention should occur and the type of policy which would be most effective.

The problem of explaining the causes of poverty and need, of course, has long been of concern to many writers. Historically, however, there have been and still are essentially two arguments concerning the causes of poverty in advanced industrial society. The first and earliest is that the causes of poverty must be sought out in the individual characters of those who are poor. The second and more recent explanation is that there are certain structural and systemic causes of low income and unemployment which lie outside the control of the individual and can be ameliorated through proper economic and social policies. The two arguments derive from folk theories of poverty, but each has received major support in the social science literature.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

Although the first of these two explanations of poverty is the earlier, its remnants are still prevalent outside of academic circles in the United States. Originally the argument emphasized laziness and
immoral behavior as the causes of destitution. This viewpoint was most clearly stated very early in the writings of Malthus (1817) and Ricardo (1821). Later the argument shifted somewhat, especially after the introduction of psychiatry in the 1920s. This new argument essentially substituted characterological shortcomings for moral ones as the primary reason for poverty. More recently, the explicit formulation of the culture of poverty theory has transformed the argument of characterological shortcomings into an emphasis on culturological or even biological ones.

Although each of these related perspectives still has supporters, during the 1960s the culture of poverty theory received the most attention. This theory tends to see poverty as perhaps originally the creation of the social structure, but as soon becoming an integral function of the personal characteristics of the individual. These characteristics are transmitted to him through his distinctive and local social environment, milieu, or culture, thus producing apathy, isolation, or a preference for casual associations and an indifference toward achievement in the larger society. The accompanying absence of interest in improving oneself through education hinders one’s ability to climb the social ladder in terms of occupation, income, and prestige. For some writers, the culture of poverty theory also includes the notion that those entrapped in this cycle are satisfied with their life, in fact that they are enjoying their casual social relationships, their lack of responsibility, their time for recreation, sexual license, and so forth. Thus the satisfaction of the poor provides a positive barrier to changing their lives (Banfield 1968; Miller 1958).

The ability of the culture of poverty theory to explain the existence of poverty in the United States is questionable. Most empirical studies do not lend support to the theory, and its conceptual framework has also been questioned (Valentine 1968). My presupposition in this study is that structural and situational factors are basic causes of poverty and as such lead people to seek some form of financial assistance.

However, the culture of poverty theory and its antecedents have provided the major foundations for responses to poverty, dating back to the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601. On one hand, the argument has been made that since poverty is self-imposed and perhaps even a “natural” phenomenon (biological or cultural), nothing can or should be done about it. At most, only the barest necessities, with adequate safeguards against misuse, should be made available to those whose poverty may be seen as a matter of fate or God’s will, or whose conditions are truly desperate and life-threatening. This is the type of government response Piven and Cloward (1971), Elman (1966), and Bell (1965) have amply described and documented. On the other hand, if government is to take extensive action, as we have increasingly come to believe it must, these theories indicate that antipoverty policies must both be comprehensive and involve concerted (and usually expensive) attempts to make the poor better-adjusted members of society. This was, of course, one of the major goals of the War on Poverty. Ironically, its widely accepted failure may inadvertently have lent further support to its theoretical foundation, the culture of poverty theory, because the failure could be attributed to
the strength of the culture of poverty and the correspondingly inadequate funding of the antipoverty programs (Pilisuk and Pilisuk 1973). In the process, the War on Poverty helped discredit many major government responses to poverty.

The degree of governmental involvement in antipoverty efforts has been much less problematic for the other major explanation of poverty, which emphasizes the societal and economic creation of poverty and the unfortunate victims of these processes.

SOCIETAL RESPONSIBILITY

Beginning with factory and wage-and-hour legislation during the Progressive Era around 1900, and especially since the Great Depression, an increasing number of writers have pointed to a series of structural factors in industrial societies which create needs that cannot be met through income from wages. Such circumstances as climatic conditions, natural disasters, political considerations, or the absence of a subsistence economy to fall back on may create or exacerbate these structural factors. Indeed, unhealthy working conditions, industrial accidents, occupational diseases, automation, regional depressions, economic cycles of boom or bust, and occasional shortages of various forms of raw materials may create poverty even though everyone attempts to provide for himself. Unemployment, for instance, can no longer be considered just a matter of individual choice. Instead, it is largely the result of aging, the economic depression of some regions, the consequences of discrimination, or many other selective criteria outside the control of the individual. Furthermore, changes in the economic structure have led to greater demand for highly skilled, well-educated employees, which of course has meant less room for the low-skilled, poorly educated person. The effects of discrimination have therefore become more crucial and the result may in fact be a more permanent and more dependent poor population.

Many of these problems are directly linked to the process of industrialization, which implies that their solution must also be of a structural nature. Especially since the Great Depression, the responsibility for such solutions has increasingly been placed at the feet of successively more central levels of government. And as urbanization and industrialization have progressed, government has become increasingly capable of undertaking such responsibilities (Almond and Powell 1966, pp. 207-12). As a result, federal fiscal and monetary policies play a direct role in the production of both employment and unemployment in the United States today.

There seems to be sufficient evidence on these causes of poverty to warrant the conclusion that most poverty in the United States is linked to structural needs created by the industrial society. However, these needs have not been met by either private or public funds to the extent that they eliminate poverty or a sense of the gross injustice about how material benefits are distributed. Nor have any other industrial countries completely accomplished these goals, although many have been more successful than the United States.

The Ideological Uses of Poverty

For our purposes, the question of why people are poor in the United States is important primarily because the answers have been the basis for the response to poverty, a topic of primary concern in this book. In particular, the two arguments outlined above have been important in shaping policies of eligibility for the various public assistance programs.

Arguments on the causes of poverty have tended to move in one of two directions to account for both the causes of poverty and the growth of welfare: (1) the improvidence of the poor, along with the carelessness of those distributing welfare; (2) the permanency and increase of poverty owing to structural conditions and their increasing impact on the most unfortunate, along with the assumptions that welfare rates may be either only a reflection of how many are poor or a result of government manipulations in making welfare available to the poor for political reasons. The first of these arguments has generally been adopted by those with a conservative political persuasion and their argument rests to a large extent upon theoretical propositions similar to those belonging to the culture of poverty theory. Any effort to combat poverty and rising welfare rolls, then, must begin with rehabilitating and changing the poor, since they are assumed to be deficient or at fault.

The second argument has in its more extreme forms been adopted
The Extension of Social Citizenship in Modern Society

The movement towards the welfare state has been slow and halting in the United States because of the profound difficulties Americans have had in interpreting the meaning of poverty and dependency. Nevertheless, increasing industrialization and urbanization have brought some realization that the responsibility for coping with poverty cannot be left to the individual or private charity alone (see Greenberg, Street, and Suttles, forthcoming, chaps. 2 and 3; Wilensky and Lebeaux 1965). Although industrialization and urbanization created many social problems, especially those associated with old age, unemployment, disability, blindness, and child dependency, these processes also promoted other changes which made some sorts of solutions possible. In particular, a greater demand for well-educated employees, higher incomes, and a more national scale of organization, which facilitated economic growth, were very important in providing the necessary resources and capacities for attempted solutions (Almond and Powell 1966). It should be recognized, of course, that each of these changes also tended to intensify the problems of poverty for those who did not share in the improvement in education or rise in income. Large-scale economic organizations furthered economic interdependence and concentration and in time gave birth to large-scale government as a way of counteracting some of their disruptive effects. As a result, the problems of the industrial society, especially those of poverty and inequality, have increasingly been located within the political economy and have come to be thought of as the responsibility of state and federal governments (Briggs 1961).

The expansion of government activities is of course a commonly accepted observation. However, it is less frequently emphasized that such government duties are only the counterpart of citizens' rights. A number of observers have noted the way in which these changes in the economic structure due to industrialization have significantly increased the range of government capacity and responsibility and expanded the rights of the individual vis-à-vis the state. Over time, the widely recognized "modern" societies have actually seen a broadening of citizens' rights and increasing popular participation in both political affairs and central cultural institutions. The history of the United States has been one of a more or less continuous trend in this direction (Huntington 1973).

Citizenship, however, involves several different elements. Marshall singles out three as the most important: political, civil, and social citizenship (1964, pp. 71-72). Undoubtedly all three forms of citizenship have expanded in the United States. Originally the vote was granted only to property-holding white males. In recent years, only felons, the insane, and the mentally incapacitated have been legally restricted from participating in the political life of the nation.

Historically the movement toward increasing participation in political affairs was preceded by (but overlapped to some extent) the movement toward more inclusive rights of civil citizenship (Marshall 1964, p. 71): the rights...
necessary for individual freedom, liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought, and religion, the right to own property and to enter into contracts, and the right to equal justice. Neither political nor civil forms of citizenship, however, have yet been fully realized by all members of American society, and the degree to which these rights have been achieved varies among the states.

The extension of both civil and political citizenship has been followed more or less closely by the granting of what Marshall has called "social citizenship," that is, "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society." Obviously, this third form of citizenship is even less realized in the United States than the other two forms.

This secular drift in terms of increasing participation in the economy and polity is similar to Shils’ notion of changes in the center-periphery division of society, or the extent to which the central belief system and common associational forms come to be shared by larger proportions of the population (Shils 1975). The "center" is not to be understood in a geographical or physical sense but indicates the central institutions of a society, where authority is exercised and cultural symbols are created and diffused. The society is most effective when the central value system, shared by elites, is also in accordance with the central authority structure. The "periphery," in contrast, includes those who are less in touch with the center and are recipients of influence, commands, and beliefs originating in the center. Such members of a society are less affected by the central culture and authority structure (Shils 1975, pp. 3-16, 34-47).

According to Shils (1975, pp. 91-107), the expansion of the center has occurred primarily through the expansion of education and mass communication, this presupposing an economically developed society. Education and mass communication make possible closer interaction between members of a society, and the culture of the center can be more widely diffused. However, it is only in democracies with representative institutions that there is a strong possibility of expanding the center to include members of the periphery on a more equal basis. In such societies, the distance between the center and the periphery may consequently be reduced and a sense of common identity and mutual responsibility promoted. These societies Shils calls "mass societies," and I have found it preferable to use this term rather than "modernization" to indicate that economic development by itself is not sufficient.

In the mass society, where the center, or the elite, includes a wide selection of the population, and where the distance between the center and the periphery is diminished, the well-being and disposition of the periphery becomes a criterion for policy. This perception of equal "civil quality" of the elite and the masses (Shils 1975, pp. 304-6) is one of the most important foundations of the modern welfare state. And it is when the civil quality of the masses comes to be fully recognized as comparable or equal to that of the elite that Marshall’s three types of citizenship rights are likely to be equally and fully extended. For this reason, it is Marshall’s third form of citizenship in which I am mainly interested as a dependent variable. Social welfare and public assistance are forms of income which originate from such social and economic citizenship rights. On a national level, however, the actual extension of these social rights has been rather slow and uneven, although a major step forward was taken with the adoption of the Social Security Act in 1935.

The movement toward the extension of citizenship in the United States has been complicated by the fact that for a highly industrialized nation the American political system is relatively decentralized (Huntington 1973). States have jealously guarded their constitutional prerogatives to set policies in areas where the constitutional authority does not rest exclusively with the federal government (as it does, for example, in areas of defense, customs, immigration and naturalization). The degree of state and local autonomy which persists in the United States is extensive and can be seen as a remnant from a preindustrial era, when the economic systems of the different states or localities were not as interdependent as they are today. However, the widespread suspicion of government, and especially of big government, which has been an integral element of the American culture since before the Revolution, has helped maintain the political viability of the state as a unit of government.
Ironically, the federal government itself has been instrumental in maintaining and perhaps even increasing the political autonomy of the states. Thus states have been encouraged, prodded, and pushed to establish a variety of new programs or to expand existing ones into areas previously not considered the responsibility of government at all, or into areas under local government control (Stephens 1974). Much of the encouragement for such state action can be traced to federal grants-in-aid to specific state (and local) programs.16 The states also have long historical claims to independent political action, sanctioned by the Constitution. In the words of one political scientist, although they are part of the overall American civil society, the states are also civil societies in their own right (Elazar 1972, p. 2). The states have, in fact, succeeded in preserving their integrity as political units, as is indicated by the high salience of state politics to the attentive public (Jennings and Zeigler 1970). Perhaps for these reasons, state politicians and administrators often complain of undue federal interference in state affairs through the strings attached to grants-in-aid (Break 1967; Derthick 1975).

The regulation of public assistance is no exception to this state-federal rivalry in the division of political power. At present, the federal government offers a series of public welfare programs in which the states may elect to participate to obtain federal financial support for public assistance. In return, the states agree to operate according to federal regulations for the administration of these programs. However, there is considerable room for state-by-state variation, and the states have been granted considerable autonomy in their operation of welfare programs, sometimes beyond the intent of the federal government (Break 1967; Derthick 1970, 1975).

The continuing ambivalence about the significance of poverty in the United States, evident in the difference between culture of poverty and structural interpretations of dependency, must be reemphasized at this point. The different approaches to explaining the problem of poverty have necessarily affected government responses to conditions of poverty. Each of the different explanations of poverty has been associated with certain political ideologies and, to some extent, with particular political administrations. Consequently, the changing public assistance policies have reflected theories of both individual and structural causes of poverty. Perhaps more important, federal policies have deliberately left room for state interpretations in order to entice the states to participate in the programs. In short, exponents of both types of explanation have had to be placated. We are likely, then, to observe the effects of both explanations in the diverse policies the states have adopted to deal with conditions of poverty and dependency.

This is particularly true since the political subdivisions in the United States are unlikely to move equally fast in the direction of mass society or modernization. In Shils' formulation, some states are more likely to be included in the national center while others are more nearly part of the national periphery. Consequently, states most nearly approaching the mass society type would be expected to extend primary and secondary citizenship rights to the masses most fully, while those states with small centers and great distance between the elite and the masses would be expected to evaluate policies more nearby in terms of how these protect the elite. Political scientists will recognize this type of categorization of the states as similar to Elazar's attempt (1972) to identify state political cultures. What I call mass society states correspond most clearly with Elazar's moralist state culture, while states least characterized by mass society traits correspond most closely to Elazar's traditionalist state cultures (Elazar 1972, pp. 93-102).

By any of the conventional measures of economic development — industrialization, urbanization, education, wealth, and so forth — there is great variation among the fifty states in terms of how "modern," or mass-society oriented they are. This is a point which political scientists and economists have documented well and have related to the ability to undertake public programs.17 They have not, however, clearly emphasized the degree to which states would be expected to differ in their approaches to granting certain forms of citizens' rights — that is, willingness to undertake public programs apart from availability of financial resources.

One would expect to find the greatest collective support for the economic, political, and social rights of citizens in the states with the highest overall mass society status — that is, in the urbanized, industrialized states with large professional and occupational elites, high levels of education, and high voter participation.
States that are progressive in some ways may be expected to be progressive in their welfare programs as well. In other words, such states should have high standards of welfare payments, lenient, less punitive eligibility requirements, little stigma attached to public assistance, and therefore more people receiving such aid. The major point to emphasize here is that in the mass society states public assistance itself may become a way of extending citizenship to a larger proportion of the population.

Conversely, we would expect least support for the social rights in states least characterized by mass society status. In these states public assistance is likely to be granted only or primarily to those who are already members in good standing—that is, “citizens,” or people who are included in the “center” but are poor. To a large extent this would mean that aid would be provided primarily to those who are white, native-born, and who previously have been hard-working and not destitute. Bell (1965) argues that this approach not only was prevalent very early in the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program but was necessary to make the program acceptable to the population at large, at least in some states.18

Those who are in need but do not fall in the category of favored “citizens” have for some time, in some states, been left to care for themselves, or at least have had to be in greater need before they were likely to be considered deserving. Thus aid may be available primarily or only to the respectable poor and the destitute poor. The criterion for providing assistance, then, the person’s place in the stratification system—not economic need alone, although that may be seen as a convenient index, for if economic need is very extensive the poor are likely to include some very respectable people. The best approximation to identifying such an approach to public assistance among the states may be to examine “potential need” or “potential pressure” on the welfare rolls.19

This concern with who is to be provided with aid is particularly important if there are present in the state any groups (usually racial and ethnic groups) which are not thought to be “deserving” or “full members” of the society but which are part of the periphery. If the civil and political rights of such groups are limited in a society, the social rights almost always will be limited as well. This type of discrimination may be seen as basically a premodern pattern which (presumably) declines with modernization and the development of the mass society. It is the continuation of such forms of discrimination which makes it difficult at present to classify the United States as a truly “modern” society (Shils 1975, pp. 91-107). Furthermore, the continued presence of such “guest groups” and uncertainties about their full inclusion in society are likely to place ultimate limitations on the potential for further movement of the United States toward higher mass society status and full extension of social citizenship rights.

In poor states, as well as in those with large numbers of people whose citizenship status is in doubt, there is likely to be great pressure on public assistance rolls (needs), but also a stratification approach to granting such aid—that is, restrictive policies to limit aid to those of appropriate status and to conserve scarce fiscal resources. In addition, the level of welfare benefits may also be set low in order to limit their attractiveness and discourage “misuse.” Because many of those considered “good citizens” are also likely to be poor in states with widespread need, as well as for humanitarian reasons, states with low mass society status have found themselves extending public assistance to sizeable proportions of their populations. The role of the federal government in providing special incentives for poor states to extend low levels of benefit to large numbers of poor people should not be ignored.20

In summary, then, we have two general, somewhat different prop-
ositions about how and why states differ in their responses to conditions of poverty and need. In backward states the absolute need for assistance is likely to be great, and therefore welfare rolls can be expected to be relatively large. In turn, welfare policies should be less generous and more restrictive in these states so as to insure that only those in great need obtain assistance. On the other hand, the more modernized and wealthy a state, the more likely it is that its standards of need will be high, and the more people are likely to have extensive notions of what their rights are. Therefore, public assistance rolls will also be high, but welfare policies should be lenient.

There is no confounding of these propositions in regard to welfare policies alone. The two hypotheses lead to similar predictions for the same states. However, both propositions suggest that welfare rolls will be high in both backward and mass society states — in the wealthy as well as the poor states. There are two ways of separating out the implications of these two hypotheses. First, these theoretical perspectives represent two different approaches which states or their populations may take in responding to conditions of need. A state may take a very restrictive view of the purpose of public assistance and grant aid only to those considered desperately in need. Or it may consider public assistance a way of responding equitably to broader needs than absolute destitution, such as temporary unemployment and the need to finish higher education. The two models of responding to poverty then represent a continuum of options of how and to what extent the state will respond to conditions of need. At any given time, the "mass society" approach may predominate in some states, while in other states the "stratification" approach may be emphasized.

Another way of separating out the implications of these two propositions is to look at changes over time. Since the United States as a whole has become increasingly modernized, so have the different states. Over time, then, states should move in the direction of mass society, or, to put it differently, their approaches should move further toward the "ideal" mass society approach — the welfare state.

If that is indeed the case, we have found a plausible explanation for the "welfare crisis" discussed earlier. It is not that more people are poor or increasingly find welfare the easy way out, or that public assistance officials have let more people onto the rolls because they are careless or fear public disorder. Instead, changing notions of what constitutes need and deservedness have increased both the number of people who may be eligible for some form of assistance despite a general improvement in individual incomes and the number of people aware of and willing or eager to obtain such benefits. In some states, this movement has been drastic; in others it is less noticeable. But all states have moved in this direction, placing a severe strain on government resources and public comprehension as well. Both seem to be major ingredients in the crisis.

One must not lose sight of the countervailing forces in American society which retard the movement toward a mass society and welfare state: the continuation of mutual suspicions between various ethnic and racial groups, the extent to which some members of the society continue to be seen as a
threat to cultural ideals, as well as the need to maintain some measure of inequality to instate the differential importance of social values and their achievement (Dahrendorf 1974). The first two of these factors are likely to limit severely the extent to which social citizenship may be extended within relatively short periods of time. The last factor places ultimate limitations on the development of the welfare state.

This study is an attempt to examine some of these issues: not only whether and how the states respond to conditions of need in their respective populations, but how that pattern may have changed over time. In the process I will also provide an interpretation of the welfare system which at crucial points departs from the explanation provided by Piven and Cloward (1971) in their widely read study. In particular, I will argue that their interpretation of public assistance as primarily, if not exclusively, a mechanism for social control of the poor is too simple-minded. Their account not only does violence to the data, but also fails to recognize—or refuses to accept as genuine—real social facts. The system of welfare, I will argue, has changed; it is less restrictive and does provide assistance to those less desperately poor than was previously the case.

By Kirsten Grønberg


Chapter 1

1. It is even possible that the “crisis” may be a function of how statistical data have been analyzed. Thus Rein and Heclo (1973) indicate that public assistance payments have decreased relative to income-security program payments. They argue that the “crisis” reflects the inappropriate tendency to blame non-white and single parents for the growth in welfare which should be blamed on the expansion in Medicare and Medicaid, as well as on the growth in social-service expenses (see also Derthick 1975).


3. I am deliberately limiting the discussion to causes associated with poverty in industrial societies, since poverty in the agrarian or feudal society often was attributed to nature, fate, or acts of God with no necessary intervention by man.

4. The explanation is recent primarily in terms of its widespread acceptance. As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, Paine (1792, new edition 1894), Owen (1817), and Godwin (1820) advanced essentially the same argument about why poverty existed and how government should respond to it.

5. Mohl (1972), however, found evidence of a culture of poverty perspective in early America.


7. This notion is related to Rainwater’s (1970a, pp. 21-22) apotheosizing perspective—a view of the poor as the natural or heroic man.


9. See Alger et al. (1906-7), Addams (1903), United States Bureau of Labor (1910-13), Seager (1921), Downey (1924), Weiss (1918-35), Hurry (1917), and Robinow (1913).

10. This remains true although both the USSR and Communist China maintain subsistence economies to fall back on.

11. Durkheim (1964), for example, was one of the first sociologists to point to the changing forms of solidarity in societies experiencing increasing division of labor—e.g., industrialization.


13. Thus in 1860 only about 17 percent of the total population of the United States was eligible to vote (Gendell and Zet­terberg 1964, p.5; also reported in Ben­rix 1968, p. 75).

14. This use of the term “mass society” is quite different from that of William Kornhauser (1959), which emphasizes negative and anti-democratic tendencies in modern societies. I believe that Shils is correct in criticizing Kornhauser and his followers for an overly simple interpretation of modern processes, which fails to distinguish between democratic and totalitarian societies. The former type of society is characterized by short distance between the center and periphery, while the latter tend to have restricted centers far removed from the periphery (Shils 1975, pp. 34-47).


16. For discussions of the importance of such federal grants-in-aid for the viability of state governments and the type and extent of their activities, see Bahl and Stohl (1965), Break (1967), Clement (1962), Critenden (1967), Der­thick (1970, 1975), Gayer (1972), Gram­lich (1968), Osman (1966), Pogue and Sgonitz (1968), Smith (1966), Steiner (1968), and Williams (1974).


18. Bell illustrates this point in her study of the “suitable home” clause in the ADC program. She especially emphasized how the states originally used the clause to limit ADC to the respectable poor: white, middle-class widows, especially war widows, with small children. Piven and Cloward (1971) also documented restrictive eligibility requirements which, as they argue, operate to exclude blacks from public assistance, especially in southern agricultural states.

19. For a study which is a direct attempt to deal with this issue, see Tropman (1974). See also Tropman (1973).
In cooperation with International Student Advisors of Japan, Pitzer is offering a program in English as a Second Language to visiting Japanese students, according to James B. Jamieson, vice president and professor of political studies.

This fall, seventeen students from Tokyo are enrolled in the ESL program, which is designed to provide students with communication skills that will prepare them for entry into an American college or university. The ESL program does not offer credit.

The students will receive 25 hours of intensive language training each week through the courses “American Culture and Customs”; “Grammar Structure and Form”; “Oral/Reading/ Writing Skills”; and “Listening Comprehension.”

Patsy H. Sampson has been appointed dean of faculty and professor of psychology beginning this fall, replacing Albert Schwartz, who has returned to the classroom as associate professor of sociology as well as serving as acting director of student services. Ms. Sampson brings a wealth of professional experience, among which are coordinator of adolescence research, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and psychologist, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Pitzer’s first convocation of the year featured the College’s founding president, John W. Atherton, speaking on “Poetry: Patterns of Possibility.” A poet and the author of several short stories and articles, Atherton’s work has appeared in Saturday Review, New Yorker, Yale Review, and several anthologies.

He is dean of liberal studies and professor of English at the University of New York in Brockport, and president emeritus of Pitzer College. The convocation marked Atherton’s first return to the campus since his resignation as president in 1970.

Glenn Goodwin, associate professor of sociology, presented a paper on “Applied Sociology and the Profession: A Reconsideration of Emphasis” at the National Meetings of the Society for the Study of Social Problems in Chicago. Co-presenter of the paper was Merl Coon.

Richard Tsujimoto and Peter M. Nardi co-authored two articles based on their collaborative research which were presented at national meetings this summer. “A Comparison of Kohlberg’s and Hogan’s Theories of Moral Development” was delivered at the annual meeting of the Western Psychological Association in Seattle. “The Relationship of Moral Maturity and Ethical Attitude” was presented at the American Psychological Association in San Francisco. Tsujimoto is assistant professor of psychology and Nardi is assistant professor of sociology.

Patricia Gamble Hecker of St. Louis, Missouri, has been elected to a four-year term on the Pitzer College Board of Trustees.

A native of St. Louis, Mrs. Hecker is a founding member, Board of Directors, Wild Canid Survival and Research Center; serves on the Board of Directors for the Mycenaean Foundation, Inc.; is president of the Decorative Arts Society, Friends of the St. Louis Art Museum; and is a member of the Board of Managers, St. Louis Zoo Association.
... A $15,000 research grant from the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation of New York enables Robert S. Albert to continue his research on families of exceptionally gifted children. He is currently interviewing families of mathematically precocious offspring. Albert's article on "Observations and Suggestions Regarding Exceptional Children and Their Families" will appear in a forthcoming issue of the Gifted Child Quarterly. He will also chair a session and present a paper at the October meeting of the National Association for Gifted Children to be held in San Diego. Albert is Professor of Psychology.

... Through the generosity of the late Frederick Salathé, Jr., former member of the Pitzer Board of Trustees, the Frederick Salathé, Jr. Fund for Music and the Cultural Arts provides for a variety of exhibitions, performances, and aesthetic interests. This fall, the committee for the Fund announces a program on "Change and Transformation in Western Art, Architecture and Literature" with lectures in music, art, and literature. Lectures are open to the public without charge and are held in the Founders Room, McConnell Center. Information on times and topics may be obtained by calling 714-626-8511, ext. 3145.

... The Harry G. Steele Foundation of Newport Beach, California, has awarded $74,938 to Pitzer College for scholarships. The grant will be used to establish the Harry G. Steele Foundation Scholarship Fund for the benefit of students requiring financial assistance during the 1977-78 academic year. President Robert Atwell accepted the gift on behalf of Pitzer College and praised Board members of the Harry G. Steele Foundation for their "outstanding support of private higher education and their important contribution to the Pitzer College scholarship program."

... Sheryl Miller, associate professor of anthropology, spent August and September in Africa, excavating Later Stone Age sites in the Rift Valley of Kenya and on the East African Plateau. Associated with a project organized by the University of Massachusetts at Boston, which conducted a large scale site survey in Kenya last year, Miller gathered research data emphasizing the ecological relationships of recent stone age people in that area with that environment.

While in Africa, she presented a paper summarizing her research on the Later Stone Age of Malawi, at the Pan African Congress for Prehistory and Quaternary Studies international meeting.

... John R. Rodman, professor of political studies, delivered a paper at the annual meeting of The American Political Science Association this fall in Washington, D.C. on "Ecological Resistance: John Stuart Mill and the Case of the Kentish Orchid." In November, Rodman will participate in the Sixth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences to be held in San Francisco.

... Appointments of three new full-time faculty members and one part-time faculty member have been made for the 1977-78 academic year. Winford Naylor, assistant professor of economics; Richard Poppen, instructor in mathematics; and Robert Garratt, visiting assistant professor of English, join the full-time staff, with JoAnne Hayakawa as assistant professor of art teaching part-time.

... Clyde W. Ericksen, professor of biology, presented a paper at the 20th Congress of the International Association of Theoretical and Applied Limnology at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. Co-authored with C. Robert Feldmeth, the paper was titled, "An Hypothesis to Explain the Distribution of Native Trout in a Drainage of Montana's Big Hole River."
Pitzer College is one of four colleges in the United States selected by the National Association of Bank Women to offer a degree for women in the banking industry.

The NABW/Pitzer program is designed expressly for the woman who is committed to a full-time career in banking and who wishes to pursue a bachelor's degree in a management-related field without interrupting her career.

Pitzer is the only college on the West Coast participating in the NABW program.

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded a grant of $49,060 to Pitzer College to develop interdisciplinary humanities courses especially directed toward the older student entering or returning to college after a number of years away from formal education.

Three seminars to be offered during this academic year — "Symbols of Change and Transformation in Western Art and Architecture," "Culture and Society in Renaissance England," and "Chaucer and Joyce" — have been developed especially for Pitzer's New Resources students under the NEH grant.

Laud Humphreys, professor of sociology, attended meetings of the Society for the Study of Social Problems in Chicago this fall, and as chairman of the Committee on Standards and Freedom of Research, Publication, and Teaching of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, chaired an open meeting of that organization. Discussion centered on the role of the SSSP in the Council of Learned Societies on Academic Freedom.

A paper by Helia Sheldon, associate professor of Spanish, was accepted for presentation at the Contemporary Methods of Literary Analysis: Third Colloquium on Hispanic, French, and Italian Literature in New York. The title was "La aventura del heroic mitico en Los dias Terrenales."

Ms. Sheldon interviewed Margarita Garcia Flores for Radio Universidad on the "Third World Women and Their Role in the Founding Convention of National Women's Studies Association." The interview, conducted by Ms. Sheldon as a delegate from Pitzer College's Women's Studies Field Group, will be published by Fem, a feminist publication in Mexico City.

Andrew W. Zanella, assistant professor of chemistry, has been admitted to membership in Sigma Xi, Scientific Research Society of North America. His most recent publication is "Intramolecular Hydration of Nitriles Coordinated to Cobalt (III). Formation of Five- and Six-membered Chelated Amides," which appeared in the August issue of Inorganic Chemistry.

Applications for admission to Pitzer increased 17.5% last year over the preceding year. Pitzer's freshman class this fall is 208, about 11% larger than the one which entered in 1976. According to William R. Lowery, dean of admission, "This increase in selectivity comes despite increasing prices for higher education, and is a tribute to Pitzer's steadily growing reputation as a challenging, demanding, productive college." About 35% of this year's freshman class are men.

Dorothea Kleist Yale, professor of German, has been awarded a Mellon Foundation grant to develop teaching modules in the field of Women's Studies. Under the general heading of "The Character and Status of the German Woman in Recent History," she will offer seven topics, including "The Feminist Movement During the Second Empire" and "The Role of Motherhood in Nazi Germany."