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ETHNIC POLITICAL POWER IN A MACHINE CITY

Chicago's Poles at Rainbow's End

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Machine politics in Chicago has been described as a successful example of exchange theory in which political party members received benefits in return for loyalty to the party. In 1988, Erie rejected the *rainbow theory* of machine politics, arguing that the Irish received the lion's share of political benefits while other white-ethnic groups, such as Poles, were given limited and often symbolic rewards. These authors show that Chicago's Poles were not fully incorporated into the rainbow of groups that benefited from and supported the machine. This led to a pattern of independence in voting and lends considerable support to Erie's supply-side model of machine politics.

Ethnic politics is a feature of most large U.S. cities' political environments. Major white-ethnic groups have historically waged a battle for political power with other white ethnics, African-Americans, and Hispanics. The white-ethnic population in many cities today has yielded control to African-Americans and Hispanics, who wield significant power from city hall to the courthouse to the board of education. Because ethnicity has been determined to have a great impact on voting in many cities (Wolfinger 1965; Parenti 1967), a case analysis of a particular ethnic group can help to clarify the reasons why such communities achieve varied degrees of influence and recognition in city politics. Although an ethnic group can use sheer numbers and bloc voting to achieve considerable influence in a city, many small

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groups acquire vast power. For example, despite being a minority among other ethnics, the Irish were able to dominate the Democratic party in Chicago because of their English-language advantage and earlier entry into the political game. In contrast, the Poles have never held as much power in Chicago or in most other cities dominated by Irish machines (Erie 1988).

Irish and Polish candidates for office have often touted their ethnic identity as one way to have an impact on election results (Pinderhughes 1987, 244). Not only in times of political turmoil but also during the relative stability of the pluralist government system, ethnic groups influence the urban power structure, frequently as strong participants in the bargaining process. In our examination of Chicago, we show that the Polish-American vote in this city has been independent because of the inability or unwillingness of the Irish machine leaders to provide more than symbolic rewards for the Poles. Rather than being incorporated among a rainbow of voters in an Irish-dominated machine, the Poles were offered fewer incentives to be loyal to the machine over time, often resulting in unsuccessful Polish shows of independence. We examine the political power of Poles from the 1950s Daley-machine era to the present post-machine period. Through this study we try to show that Polish Americans in Chicago were on the short end of the exchange arrangements in the machine, receiving few rewards, especially as their independence from the Democratic party expanded during the Daley era.

THE CONTEXT FOR ETHNIC POLITICAL STUDIES

Ethnic politics in American cities has been an important research area for decades. Two streams of research are relevant to understanding ethnic politics. The first is the ethnic-voting-behavior model. The persistence of ethnic voting over the years gathered significant attention from political scientists. The assimilation theory of ethnic voting and its assumption about the decreasing importance of ethnic voting in proportion to a group's assimilation into the American mainstream was challenged by Wolfinger (1965). He argued that "the mobilization of ethnic political resources" (p. 903) was a more valid description of ethnic politics. He suggested that the ethnic-vote phenomenon becomes stronger among the second and third generations of voters. The more members that a particular group has among the middle class and in a political party, the stronger the support for their own ethnic candidate will be. Further, the first important candidacy for an office has lasting influence on the voting patterns of the generations to come (p. 905). D. Pienkos (1982) pointed out that during the 1960s, the *new ethnicity movement* had

significant influence on the Polish-American community. He emphasized this as one of the reasons for the preservation of the Polish ethnic consciousness of the new generation into the 1980s. Parenti (1967), on the other hand, focused on the difference between *acculturation* and *assimilation*. He suggested that ethnic or minority groups are not assimilating. These groups only accept certain elements of the national American culture while still "behaving as ethnics politically" (pp. 725-26). What little has been written about Poles suggests that the Wolfinger view may be correct: Polish Americans still vote for Poles if they have the opportunity to do so.

The second area of inquiry that bears on this study is that of machine politics and the role of groups in political machines. The theories of machine politics offer contrasting views on the political treatment of ethnic groups in machine cities. To understand the role of a group, such as Polish Americans, in big-city politics, one must analyze the political power of Poles from the contrasting views of *rainbow theorists* (Dahl 1961; Merton 1968) and *inter-governmental theorists* (Erie 1988). The rainbow theorists argue that the machine was a functional body (Merton 1968) that pursued political incorporation of many ethnic groups in the political party. In return for loyalty to the political party, machines delivered a variety of social services to ethnic immigrants, in addition to jobs, friendship, and opportunities for social and economic advancement. The rainbow coalition of mostly white-ethnic groups was sustained through a virtually endless supply of "municipal gold" (Erie 1988) that the machines controlled. This exchange system seemingly guaranteed ethnic loyalty to the machine.

Erie (1988) persuasively argued, however, that the Irish were the major beneficiaries of the machine rewards. Cities had very limited supplies of rewards that could be dispensed; these often went first to the Irish, and the remaining incentives were distributed to ethnic groups on the basis of a group's contribution to a minimal winning coalition for the machine. In particular, later-arriving immigrants, such as those from Eastern Europe, including Poland, received far less valuable rewards from the machine than did the Irish. Symbolic rewards and collective legislative benefits were the norm for these groups, not jobs or political positions. This theory is based on the limited supply of benefits that the machine could dispense, which was far less than the rainbow theorists might have one believe.

We apply the theories of machine politics to our study of Chicago's Poles in an effort to sort out the relative importance of this group to the Irish-dominated Democratic machine and its power within the city. We seek to understand the political incorporation of Polish Americans in Chicago's machine, especially during Richard J. Daley's reign (1953-76) and the years immediately following it.

POLES AND THE DALEY MACHINE

The Chicago Democratic machine was conceived by Irish political bosses in the late 19th century and was actually born as a modern-day citywide machine in the 1930s. Anton Cermak, a Bohemian, brought the machine to power with his election as mayor in 1931. He is often credited as the genius behind the machine's ethnically balanced slate making that incorporated so many diverse ethnic and religious groups into the Chicago Democratic party (Granger and Granger 1987, 93). Cermak accommodated a rainbow of interests in his machine—doling out positions on the ballot among the much-needed population groups of the city (see Gottfried 1962, 222-36). In fact, during this early stage of the Chicago machine's development, inclusion of more than just the Irish was a key to its electoral success. The Irish were favored in municipal employment at least as early as 1900, when 31% of city jobs were held by Irish (Erie 1988, 60). Yet, early bosses like Roger Sullivan and George Brennan recognized the importance of new immigrants, including Poles, to the electoral victory of the Democratic party in the 1900-20s' period. Hence they worked to naturalize and register large numbers of Poles, as well as other white immigrants (Erie 1988, 12, 78), as a basis of the group's participation in political affairs. By 1930, Poles constituted about 12% of the city's population, and Cermak advanced Polish political fortunes by providing Poles with representation on the party's slated ticket (Kantowicz 1975). Of Cook County's top political positions, 6% were given to Poles (Illinois Secretary of State 1931).

POLITICAL JOBS

Poles would not receive access to most major power positions in local government. As Pinderhughes (1987, 9) noted,

the Chicago machine was a static hierarchy ruled by the Irish, managed at the intermediate levels by loyal but restive European ethnics such as Poles, Germans and other Eastern Europeans [and] . . . at the bottom of this hierarchy were the blacks who controlled the black areas.

The Irish would pick a Pole for a prominent position, such as city clerk, to encourage Polish voting for the machine slate (Rakove 1975, 96). However, not just any loyal Pole was acceptable to the machine for major positions, as Rakove (p. 97) pointed out,

A Pole who has been active in the Polish National Alliance, for example, would have much more attraction to the slatemakers than would a Polish lawyer who has had no interest in or concern with Polish affairs in the city or the county.

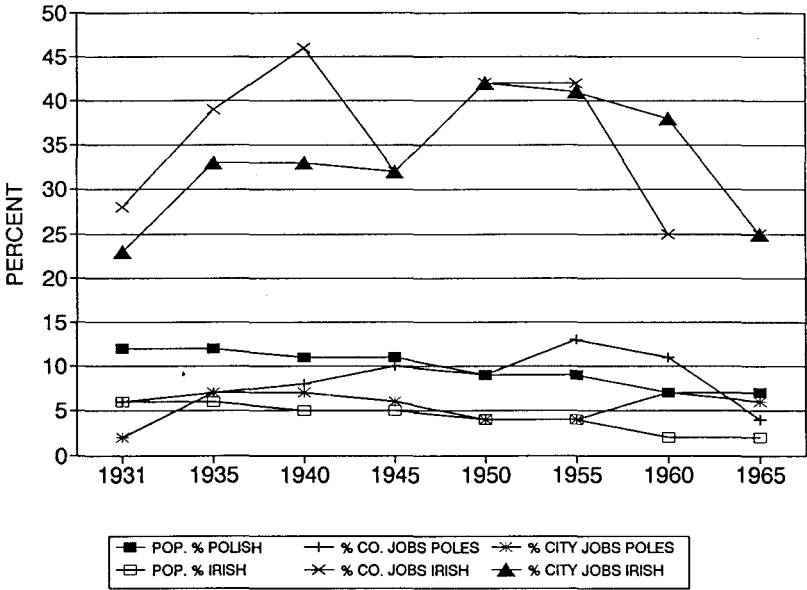


Figure 1: Polish and Irish Population and Political Positions, Chicago, 1931-1965

SOURCES: City of Chicago (1976); Illinois Secretary of State (1931, 1935, 1939, 1945, 1949, 1955, 1959, 1965).

Figure 1 shows that early in the Chicago machine's development, the Irish established dominance over top elective and appointed positions in Chicago and Cook County governments.¹ The Irish population at the beginning of the machine era was 6%, and by 1965, it had dropped to less than 2%. The Polish population was at 12% in 1931 and dropped to 7% by the end of this period.² But Poles achieved less representational equity when comparing their share of the population to their share of political jobs, and they received far fewer jobs relative to the Irish. Poles typically acquired more jobs in county offices than in city offices. Figure 1 indicates that the proportion of top county political positions held by Poles grew modestly from 1931 to 1955 (when Daley became mayor). It then dropped to a low of 4% by 1965. The Polish proportion of city jobs was very low throughout this period and only approached the population share in the 1960s. The Irish, on the other hand, never had less than 23% of city jobs and 25% of county positions. By the Daley era the Irish held more than 40% of top political positions in both Cook County and Chicago in spite of their population share having dropped to 4%.

By the 1950s, when Richard J. Daley came to power, the Democratic party was entrenched in Chicago politics and had the use of limited resources to maintain the machine. For instance, the number of patronage jobs was reduced by 12,000 by Daley's predecessor (O'Connor 1975, 85), civil service reform was instituted, and the public employee unions and minority groups began to pressure for a greater share of the machine's resources (Grimshaw 1982, 63-65). Although the machine had 18,000-20,000 patronage jobs throughout the Daley years, few of these were given to groups in large numbers other than the Irish.

LIMITED RESOURCES

The party only engaged in selective registration and mobilization of middle-class white groups like Poles (Erie 1988, 23) because at least two circumstances had changed in Chicago. First, the Irish hold on political power was solid, and they had mobilized a selective, minimal winning coalition in their machine "rainbow." By limiting political rewards to the essential coalition, the party was able to manage its limited resources effectively (Erie 1988). The party depended on loyalty as a first principle of party membership (Rakove 1984), but the Poles were among the more restive groups—those whose loyalty to the party could not be guaranteed. The second change occurred among Poles and other white-ethnic groups who no longer were interested in the basic rewards for party membership. As middle-class home owners, many Poles were among the machine's traditional supporters who opposed property tax increases, welfare services, and patronage jobs—staples of machine operations (Erie 1988, 245). Individual Poles sought to protect their investment in a home (Granger and Granger 1987, 138) and were satisfied to receive minimal benefits from the machine—especially low taxes and segregated neighborhoods. Daley and the other Irish leaders granted these limited resources to permit continued Irish control over the key power positions of local government (Erie 1988, 246). Figure 1 displays a clear bias toward the Irish in major political positions, supporting Erie's thesis.

Other evidence supports the view that the Irish machine had limited resources that had to be controlled to maintain the machine. For example, when one examines the number of patronage positions at the height of the Daley regime, one sees that the Irish clearly needed more than positions in the city of Chicago to reward supporters. The Shakman court case³ testimony revealed that the city and park district patronage numbered about 15,500 positions, which was not enough for the Democratic faithful. Hence it was necessary for the party to control the elected and top appointive positions in

virtually all areas of the Cook County government to harvest another 6,000 jobs (Erie 1988, 153). The intergovernmental dependency was also quite established within the machine. To maintain the organization the Chicago machine needed judges and positions in state government departments such as the Secretary of State's office, the state highway department, and the state of Illinois' massive Chicago-based government offices (Rakove 1975, 112; Warden and Tatro 1988). Moreover, the machine depended on the federal and state governments for fiscal assistance and programs that could be used to reward the party faithful. These intergovernmental programs provided jobs, contracting money, and infrastructure improvements for the machine to award to friends, supporters, and the areas of the city in which they lived. The state and federal governments were especially helpful to the machine with highway, public works, airport, public housing, and social programs and policies. Without this intergovernmental support the machine's resources would have been limited.

WARD VOTING PATTERNS

Another way to look at the possibility of Polish inclusion in the Windy City rainbow is to examine several mayoral elections of this period in which Daley faced a formidable Polish challenger. In the 1955 Democratic primary and in the 1963 general election, Daley was opposed by Polish leader Benjamin Adamowski. In 1955, Adamowski challenged Daley and incumbent mayor Martin Kennelly in the Democratic mayoral primary. Adamowski had been led to believe that he was destined to hold political power in Chicago someday, and he aspired to be the first Polish mayor (Royko 1971, 51, 90). Although he did not expect to win the primary, he wanted to show the machine that the Polish voters were tired of being ignored and would demonstrate their independence from the party by voting for him (Royko 1971, 90). Adamowski lost decisively, polling only 15% of the vote. Yet, as shown in Figure 2, he carried a majority of votes in four wards with large Polish neighborhoods (Zikmund 1982, 32-33). Wards 32, 33, and 35 on the Northwest Side were much more independent than the Polish areas of the Southwest Side, where Adamowski won only the 12th ward. This primary was an early indication to Daley of the growing independence of the Polish Northwest Side. Although he carried six wards with large Polish populations, nearly all were in the southwest or southeast working-class areas of the city, where Poles' first concern was always jobs and security (although many were suspicious of Irish politicians) (Pacyga 1991, 199-201).

In addition, almost the entire Northwest Side, with a large Polish population in many wards, especially the 41st, voted for Mayor Kennelly. Two other

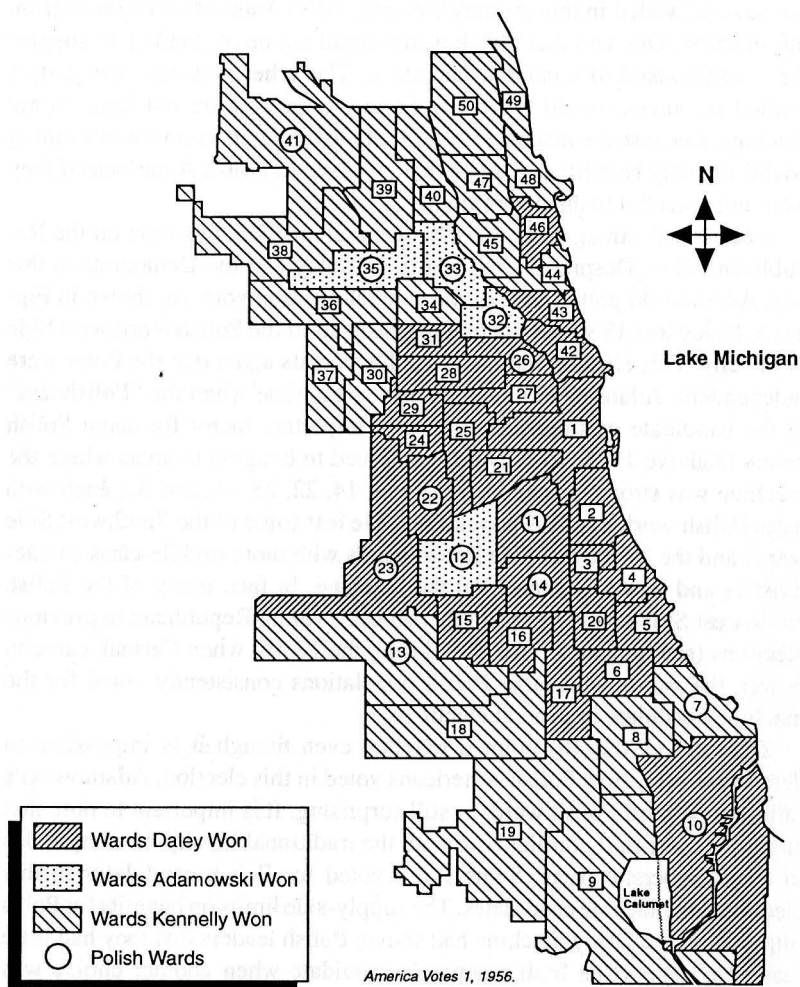


Figure 2: Voting Results of the 1955 Democratic Primary and Location of Polish Population

SOURCES: Zikmund (1982, 33); Polish-language newspaper reports.

southern Polish wards, 7 and 13, also voted for the incumbent. In effect, Daley lost the white vote in this election, and Poles were the largest ethnic group. The Polish wards happened to be those that, more than any other, rejected the chair of the Democratic party machine. Without a strong turnout by the African-American and white working class—inner-city voters—Daley would

not have prevailed in this primary election. Daley learned two lessons from this election. One was that Polish wards could not be counted on to support the machine-backed candidate anymore. The other was that the party's limited resources should not be given to groups that are not loyal to the machine. Because the machine needed only to maintain a minimum winning coalition, party benefits did not have to be given to Polish Americans if they were not essential to an electoral victory.

Adamowski ran again in the 1963 general election, this time on the Republican ticket. Despite the popularity of Daley and the Democrats in this city, Adamowski polled 44% of the general-election vote. As shown in Figure 3, Daley lost 18 wards, including nearly all of the Polish Northwest Side of the city. This election reminded the Democrats again that the Poles were independent. Adamowski's race is cited as the time when the "Polishness" of the candidate was considered a very important factor for some Polish voters (Rakove 1975, 151). Daley continued to hang on to areas where the machine was strong: wards 11 (his own), 14, 22, 25, 26, and 32, each with large Polish working-class populations. He lost some of the Southwest Side wards and the Northwest Side Polish wards with more middle-class characteristics and less dependence on the machine. In fact, many of the Polish Northwest Side wards increasingly had been voting Republican in previous elections (see Skogan 1976).⁴ But during the 1930s, when Cermak came to power, the wards with large Polish populations consistently voted for the machine candidate in general elections.

Zikmund (1982, 40) pointed out that even though it is impossible to determine today how Polish Americans voted in this election, Adamowski's failure to win *all* Polish wards is still surprising. It is important to note that ethnicity came into conflict here with the traditional loyalty of many Poles to the Democratic party. Some Poles voted for Polish candidates in this election, not machine candidates. The supply-side limits on benefits for Poles imposed by the Daley machine had shown Polish leaders that they had little reason to support an Irish machine's candidate when another choice was viable. As Figure 1 reveals, although the Poles were attaining major political positions in the county and city in relative proportion to their share of the population of Chicago, the Irish were attaining far more. The Irish were but 2% of the city's population, and they still had 38% of the top city political jobs.⁵ Widespread defection of Democratic voters from Daley (many Polish Americans included) was more evident when comparing the overwhelming victory of the Democratic city clerk candidate, John C. Marcin (a Polish American), over his opponent. Again, Erie's (1988, 157) research is instructive on this election:

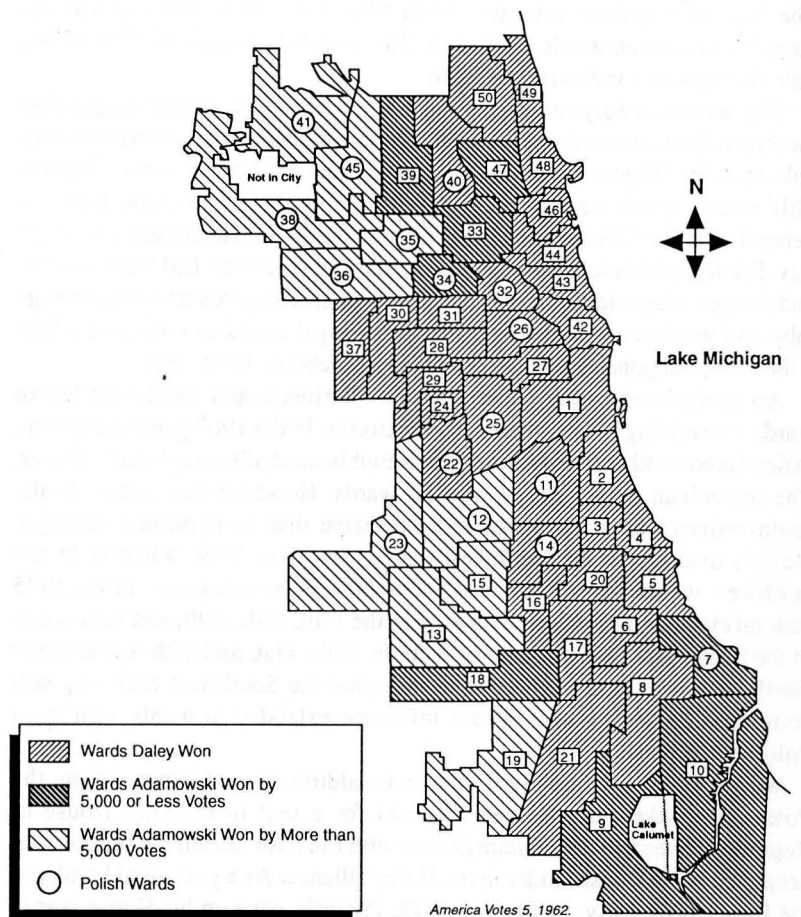


Figure 3: Voting Results of the 1963 General Election and Location of Polish Population

SOURCES: Zikmund (1982, 38); City of Chicago (1963).

In the 1963 general election, Republican candidate Benjamin Adamowski charged that Daley had fattened the city payroll at the expense of homeowners. Heavily taxed property owners responded, particularly Polish-Americans also incensed by the failure of the Irish to share power. Adamowski won the middle-class ethnic wards on the North Side, receiving a majority of the white vote citywide. Daley narrowly defeated the Polish challenger only because of a massive black vote in machine-controlled South Side wards.

The African-American voter turnout in 1963 was 50% in five key African-American machine wards (2, 3, 4, 6, 20), and Daley received 77% of this vote (Kemp and Lineberry 1982, 16).

The rainbow theory cannot explain this outcome. Only a more supply-side thesis provides adequate explanation. The machine limited the rewards available to Poles (Figure 1), failing to capture their leaders' or voters' loyalty. This ethnic revolt demonstrated the failure of the Democratic party, in general, and the Chicago machine to embrace the Polish Americans of the city. For the middle-class Polish voters, the Irish machine had little to offer, and this growing middle class had little reason to accept lower-tier patronage jobs and welfare services as payments for loyal machine voting (see Erie 1988, 164; Kleppner 1985, 84; Kemp and Lineberry 1982, 18).

An analysis of voting patterns in the Northwest and Southwest Polish wards is revealing in two other Daley victories. In the 1967 general election, Daley faced another Polish-American Republican challenger, John L. Waner. The incumbent mayor easily won all wards. However, his victory in the southwestern wards was much more decisive than in northwest Chicago. Daley's average in the southwest wards was over 70%, whereas in the northwest wards, his support was below 60% in several cases. In the 1975 general election, Daley won over 80% in the 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th wards of the Southwest Side but only 68% in the 35th, 41st, and 45th wards of the Northwest Side. It is instructive to note that the Southwest Side was still dominated by Irish bosses whose influence extended to wards with large Polish populations.

Mayor Daley continually tried to win additional confidence among the Poles. He backed ally Roman Pucinski for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1958. Pucinski won with the Irish machine's support and became a vocal Polish leader in the Daley alliance. As a gesture of loyalty to the Democratic party machine in 1972, Pucinski gave up his House seat to make room for another of Daley's favorites, Frank Annunzio, who had lost his congressional seat through reapportionment. Pucinski eventually became alderman of the 41st ward, but the Polish community remained dissatisfied with his "demotion." (The Irish were always more interested in local office in Chicago; Poles were less so.)

This disappointment with the machine and the growing independence of many Poles surfaced again after Daley's death, when Pucinski made his own bid for mayor in the 1977 Democratic primary. He received substantial support from divergent Polish interest groups that were less visible and less powerful when the machine was strong but that came forth to back Polish candidates during difficult periods of political transition and turmoil.

In the primary Pucinski opposed Acting Mayor Michael Bilandic, the machine-backed candidate, and State Senator Harold Washington. Bilandic won the nomination by the narrowest of margins, 51.1%. Pucinski's showing was strong—33% of the Democratic vote—but this was less than Adamowski had polled 14 years earlier. Figure 4 reveals that the seven wards that he carried were all Polish Northwest Side wards. He did not receive a plurality in the Polish wards of the South Side. Because Pucinski received a majority or plurality in seven Northwest Side wards and was the alderman of the 41st ward, this vote seems to fit the pattern of a “friends-and-neighbors” vote (Zikmund 1982; Key 1950, 37-41). This primary election does not represent a wholesale revolt against the machine (since the Southwest Side wards went for Bilandic), but it does support the view that the machine had few resources to offer to the middle-class Polish wards that had grown so restive and independent in their voting. (These wards also have large numbers of German and Italian residents; therefore, the independence of the vote in this ward must be attributed to a combination of Polish and other white-ethnic voters.) Polish power was less significant than it could have been had all Poles united behind a well-respected Polish leader. Many Poles appeared to have stayed loyal to the machine that had found a few rewards to appease them—notably, lower taxes, segregated neighborhoods and schools, and good services to their neighborhoods (Erie 1988, 164).

POLISH POWER IN THE POST-MACHINE ERA

A number of political groups often promote or support Polish Americans for city positions today, including the Polish-American Police Association and the Advocate Society, which represents Polish lawyers and sponsors Polish-American judges. The list of judges in the city of Chicago usually contains about 20 or so Polish names. For example, it is not uncommon in the city traffic court to hear Polish-speaking judges, lawyers, and police officers. One of the oldest Polish-American social organizations—the Polish Women's Alliance—often joins in sponsoring political candidates (*Dziennik Zwiazkowy* 1987a, 1). Among other Polish interest groups, the Chicago Society, an organization of Polish business people, and the Polish-American Business Association are able to provide substantial financial support for an ethnic candidate. Further, the Polish-American Political League, founded for the purpose of electing Adamowski in 1963, is still influential and helped organize Pucinski's mayoral campaign in 1977. Yet, the success of these interest groups in promoting Polish goals has been largely limited to either

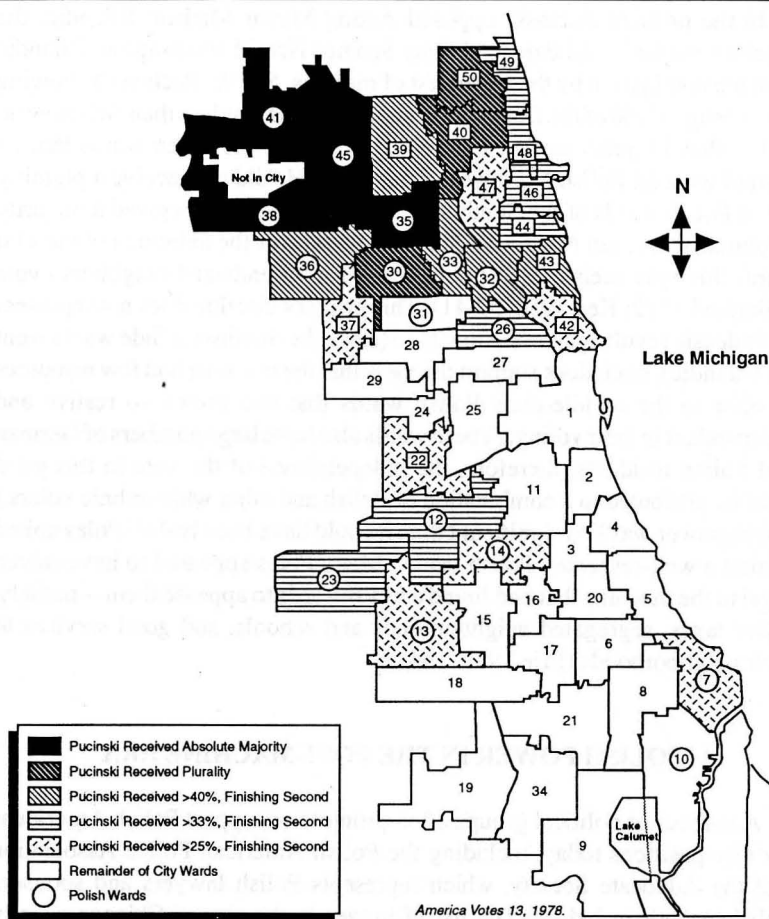


Figure 4: Pucinski Electorate by Ward, 1977 Democratic Primary for Mayor and Location of Polish Population

SOURCES: A. T. Pienkos (1978, Appendix 1g); City of Chicago (1973).

symbolic actions (such as renaming streets after Polish heroes or establishing Polish Constitution Day) or the support of Polish-American representation in certain middle-level positions in the Chicago power structure. This further supports the limited supply-side thesis of Polish politics in Chicago.

The Polish voting community was mobilized in February 1987, when Mayor Harold Washington endorsed a Hispanic candidate, Gloria Chevere, over incumbent Walter Kozubowski for city clerk. The Polish community

reacted angrily to this attempt to remove a "symbol" of Polish power. The Polish National Alliance (PNA), the Polish Roman Catholic Union, many Polish politicians, and smaller Polish-American organizations gathered their forces in support of Kozubowski. During a joint meeting of these Polish groups, PNA president Aloysus Mazewski stressed that

the two candidates, Walter Kozubowski for city clerk and Roman Pucinski for alderman of the 41st Ward are especially important for Polonia in the upcoming elections. They are proven, qualified people and what is most important, they come from our ethnic group and we must do everything we can to make sure that they defeat their opponents. . . . We cannot let ourselves be ignored and pushed around. The widespread participation of us all in the election on February 24, especially our voting for the Polish-American candidates of the Democratic Party, will be the best evidence for all who take us for granted that Polonia will not let anyone ignore it and will show solidarity in support of its candidates. (Authors' translation from *Dziennik Zwiazkowy* 1987a)

Kozubowski, a political protégé of 14th ward Irish leader Edward Burke, had been rather reluctant to get involved with the Polish community in Chicago before 1983, but since the election of Washington, he had been showing new interest in the Polish community by accepting most invitations to attend Polonia's cultural and social events such as the Polish Constitution Day celebrations (*Dziennik Zwiazkowy* 1987b). Kozubowski was renominated by a small margin—he polled 49% of the Democratic vote compared to Chevere's 43%. This primary battle must be understood in the context of Chicago's changing racial politics. It was important for the African-American mayor to reach out to the growing Hispanic population and to offer this community an important position in the Chicago government. Poles had not supported Washington in his 1983 election, and Poles were unlikely to support him this time around. Washington would lose few white-ethnic voters because he sought to dump Kozubowski from the ticket.

PUTTING THE POLISH EXPERIENCE IN CONTEXT

Our research on Polish politics in Chicago was undertaken to understand two questions related to urban politics. First, did Chicago's Poles continue to vote for Polish candidates as the Polish population became more middle class? Second, were Polish benefits from, and support of, the Chicago machine consistent with the rainbow theory of machine politics? The answer to the first question seems to be a qualified yes. Voting results across wards from 1955 to 1977 showed that the Polish wards of the Northwest Side tended to vote for Polish candidates rather than for the machine candidate for mayor.

These wards are more middle-class communities, with a fair number of German and Italian residents along with the Poles. The ward voting behavior was defiant of the machine (1963), independent, and neighborly (1977). In contrast, the Southwest Side wards with large Polish populations tended to reject the Polish candidate and follow the lead of their Irish ward bosses. Although these southern wards did not consistently support the Polish candidate for mayor, they are also more working-class environments.

As to the second question, we showed that the Polish support of the machine reflected a lack of political incorporation for many Poles after the 1930s. The rainbow theory of Chicago machine politics must be questioned in light of the political jobs and limited resources that the machine dispensed. Poles were the largest of the white-ethnic groups in Chicago but were given only a small share of top political positions in county and city governments. With the machine allocating up to 40% of these top jobs to the Irish, not only were Poles left out of a larger share but so were most other white, African-American, and Hispanic groups in the city. Moreover, the county and city government jobs were but one aspect of machine resources that were disproportionately given to the Irish. The Chicago machine also relied on the state and national governments to provide programs and fiscal assistance that could be used to enlarge the machine's resources and to reward groups according to their contribution to the minimal winning coalition. We find the rainbow theory to be an inadequate model for Chicago's politics during the Daley years and beyond. Alternatively, we believe that Erie's (1988) supply-side, intergovernmental model is more appropriate to understanding machine politics during much of this period.

We do not argue that the Poles were disproportionately discriminated against in the allocation of spoils in the Chicago machine. Rather, we believe that the Irish sought to harvest the lion's share of resources, especially top political positions, for themselves, thereby reducing the incorporation of most other groups into Chicago's political arrangements. The Poles were useful to observe because of their larger population proportion and because of the interesting electoral challenges by Polish leaders. From the 1970s onward the actions of the Irish-dominated machine must be viewed from the perspective of changing racial politics in the city. The political and socioeconomic relationships between whites and African-Americans came to define the city's politics. Challenges to machine dominance by independent whites and African-Americans, the election of Harold Washington, and the white-ethnic battles with minority leaders have all but rendered the Irish dominance of Chicago politics a moot point.

However, throughout the period that we examined, Poles did not fare as well as the Irish in local politics. This led to more independence in voting and displays of support for Polish candidates for major offices. Poles were not equal partners with the Irish in the operation of the machine. With political power disproportionately in the hands of Irish politicians, we conclude that the rainbow theory does not fit the experience of Chicago's Polish Americans.

NOTES

1. The positions that are reported here are all elective positions in Cook County government, Chicago government, the Metropolitan Sanitary District, and the top patronage appointive positions in these governments. We classified officeholders as Polish or Irish, according to their surnames. The data are taken from the *Illinois Blue Book*, published by the Illinois Secretary of State (1931, 1935, 1939, 1945, 1949, 1955, 1959, 1965). The volumes stopped reporting detailed lists of major officials in later years.

2. Population percentages for the Irish and Polish are drawn from the classification "foreign stock," which includes foreign-born residents, the native-born children of parents born in the same foreign country, the native-born children of parents born in different countries (classified according to the father's country of birth), and the native-born children of a native-born parent and a foreign-born parent (classified according to father's country of birth). The 1940 data were estimated from other information reported in the census. This is an accurate, although conservative, measure of ethnic populations in a city. Even if one uses the self-identification data collected by census officials and sums both single and multiple ancestry, the Irish figures do not exceed 10%, and some multiple-ancestry individuals are completely ignored. The source for these data is City of Chicago (1976).

3. *Shakman v. The Democratic Organization of Cook County et al.*, no. 69 C 2145, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division.

4. Since we do not have individual-level voting data, we can only speculate about a particular group's (such as the Poles) voting behavior during ward elections.

5. The Irish share of the population is based on foreign stock.

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RACE AND VOTING

Continuity and Change in the District of Columbia

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Racially patterned voting can be spurious (based on racially neutral criteria), racist (based solely on race), or racial (based on political, tactical, symbolic, or value-based deliberations in which race is an important consideration). In this article the author assesses the relationship between race and voting in the 140 precincts of the District of Columbia, focusing on competitive elections between 1978 and 1990. Race is an extremely potent and tenacious factor in structuring electoral patterns, but this reflects context-specific calculations mediated by strong group identity and shared assessments of the political environment.

The growth of black majorities in a number of large American cities is one of the signal demographic shifts of recent decades, and it has been paralleled by a striking increase in the number of black officials. The demographic and the political changes, in large measure, go hand in hand. Of the 24 congressional districts represented by blacks in 1990, only 2 had 1980 populations of more than 50% white, and all but 2 were located in large cities. In 1990, the 33 medium-to-large cities with black mayors averaged 48.2% black and 45.4% white.¹

The tendency of white and black voters to support candidates of their own race has been pronounced. When running against white candidates, blacks who win office usually build their electoral coalitions on a core of nearly unanimous support from black voters. Where blacks continue to be a minority of the voting public—as in Los Angeles—electoral success has depended on expanding that coalition to include some liberal whites and other ethnic minorities. Opposition to black candidates often has been racially patterned as well; in some cases, the evidence suggests that some white citizens who

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