

THE
SOCIAL LIFE
OF A
MODERN COMMUNITY

By
W. LOYD WARNER
AND

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of the research staff that without their aid we would have been heavily handicapped in completing our task.

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XVIII

THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE IN THE
CLASS SYSTEM

1. Voters and Officeholders

THE political structure of Yankee City was composed of a group of officers and a group of voters. The officers were elected by the voters or appointed by other officers who had been elected by the voters. Voters were distinguished from nonvoters: the latter were people below twenty-one years of age, citizens who did not have the residence requirements, people of foreign birth who were not citizens, and residents who had failed to register or fulfill other technical requirements.

Although the voters among the three lower classes far outnumbered those in the three higher, they had a disproportionately small percentage of officers in the political hierarchy. In other words, the upper classes held a greater proportion of the higher offices than their numbers in the voting and general population would by mere chance allow them. Indeed, as the importance of the political offices increased, the proportion of upper-class officeholders increased. Class is therefore an important factor in Yankee City politics.

The political structure is ordinarily the only one which is thought of as being coterminous with the totality of the community, as distinguished from the segmentary character of other structures, such as the family, associations, and economic organizations. The functions of government in our own society are numerous; the most important ones are listed below. They are: (1) Administration of the legal sanctions, incorporated in civil and criminal codes, of the whole society. This is generally called law enforcement. (2) Protection of the community against certain crises to which its members are exposed. Such crises include fire, disease, and poverty. These functions are implied in the phrase "public safety." (3) Provision of certain monopoly services, or public works, such as water and streets and highways. (4) Absorption of the members of the commu-

nity into the traditions and techniques of the society by the use of such institutions as schools and libraries. (5) Provision and organization of recreational facilities through playgrounds and parks. (6) Local supervision of the economic structure through licensing and inspection. And (7) perpetuation and support of its own organization through elections and appointments and by taxes and bond issues.

The political structure of Yankee City helps to articulate the various internal institutions to each other through their common relation to this political structure. The governmental structure is a hierarchy of offices through which the political functions are exercised. At the top of the structure are the mayor and city council. The council has eleven elected members: six representing their respective wards, and five, the city at large. Most of the final powers of control are assigned to the council. Those concerning appropriations and the budget, appointments to office, control over the various departments and over the various boards are all lodged with the city council. The council is not a salaried group and does not give full time to its office. It is an instrument of supervision and direction which represents the community directly and has control over the whole political structure. Besides the mayor and the school board, its members are the only elected officers in the hierarchy. It has its own internal organization. It elects a president who presides as chairman at the meetings and apportions the councilors among the five standing committees which consider specific kinds of business before the council finally passes on them. These committees are public safety (fire and police departments), public service (street and highway department), licenses and recreation, general government (finances), and soldiers' relief.

The council as a whole supervises directly the work of the different departments which have specific functions to perform. In times of political crises the council may conduct public hearings in order to sound out general community opinion on the issue involved.

In addition to the departments there are the boards, which are intermediate supervisory offices whose members are appointed with the approval of the council. The members of these boards are also nonsalaried, although they employ full-time

clerks and agents to carry out their business. These boards have the power of final decision within the limits defined by their special function, but the ultimate authority rests with the council. The council has such authority because it allocates the annual funds to each board, each board has to make an annual report to the council, and all appointments of each board have to be approved by the council. The boards are (1) the water board, (2) welfare board, (3) board of registrars, (4) board of health, (5) commons commission, and (6) library board.

The school board, which is elected, has final authority in appointing the personnel for the schools. The school board prepares its own budgets but its funds must be approved by the city council. The mayor is the chairman *ex officio* of the school board and is the intermediary between it and the city council.

The final control of the city council lies in its powers to create such departments and boards as are necessary to serve the community. During the field work for this study, the council created a department of public works combining functions which were hitherto unco-ordinated among different departments. The mayor stands in relation to the city council somewhat as the corporation president does to his board of directors, inasmuch as the city council represents the community as the board of directors does the stockholders, and like the board of directors, the city council holds the purse and the power of policy making and of supervision.

The mayor, an elected, salaried officer, gives full time to the office. His relations to the city council are well symbolized by the ritual performed at all meetings of the council when he is in attendance. The president of the council, while in the chair, appoints a committee of two to escort the mayor into the chamber. There he is given a place at the foot of the table with the president of the council at the head and the other councilors seated along the sides. The language used by the council and the mayor is also significant to show the relation of each to the other. Thus the mayor "proposes to the city council," or he may "recommend to the city council"; we also hear "on plea of the mayor, the city council considered" and "the mayor hopes the council will not oppose." On the other hand, the council in making its decisions "orders" or "instructs" the

mayor as to its will. The mayor makes recommendations to the council which the latter may either accept or reject. He is expected to bring before the council all business which belongs within the functions of the political structure. The mayor has direct and defined relations with all the administrative boards and departments since he is the liaison officer between these and the city council. As the chairman *ex officio* of most of the boards, he presides at their meetings. He ordinarily appears before the council as a representative of the boards. By reason of his central position in the political structure, which both serves and is identified with the community, he obtains a central position in the life of the community. This is expressed especially in times of crisis when certain actions beyond the strict functions of the political structure are necessary to organize the community. The activities of the mayor who was in office during the World War, and the behavior of the mayor during the early years of the depression, were examples of the mayor functioning as the leader of the community in behavior which was in large part not politically defined.

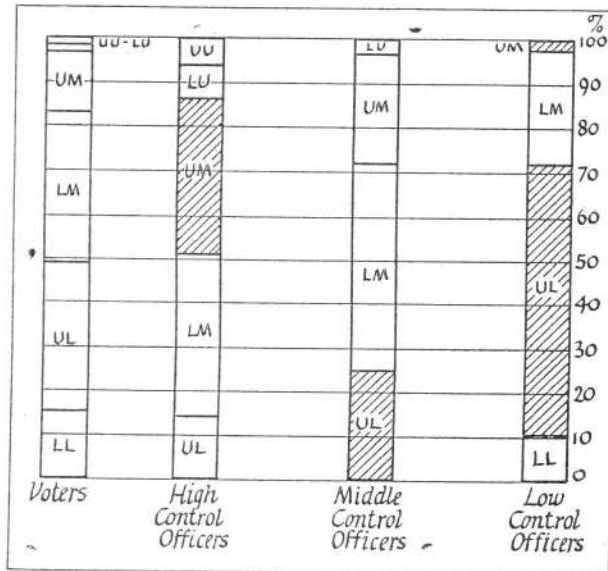
One more group of offices in the political structure remains to be considered. These are the auxiliaries of the executive function of the mayor, and consist of the following: (1) city clerk; (2) city auditor; (3) city solicitor; and (4) treasurer and collector. These offices are all appointive and full-time; they have specialized functions in the political structure as a whole. The officers who fill them are underfunctionaries who keep the political structure running and help provide continuity to the city government.

Let us now examine the structure in terms of the kinds of people in the community who are voters and those who control and operate the political hierarchy.

The voters in the Yankee City political organization were unequally distributed throughout the several classes. The lower-middle class and the upper-lower class possessed about an equal number of voting citizens. (See column at the left of Chart XXXV.) There were 2,161 (34.34 per cent) voters in the lower-middle class, and 2,151 (34.19 per cent) in the upper-lower class. The lower-lower class had the next largest percentage of voters (14.49 per cent), but far fewer in number (912) than its percentage of the total population. Although

the upper-middle class had approximately 10 per cent of the population of Yankee City, it possessed 14.11 per cent (888) of the voters. The lower-upper class had the fifth largest percentage of voters, 1.61 per cent (101); and the upper-upper class had the smallest percentage of voters, 1.26 per cent (79).

In order to clarify our analysis of the political hierarchy, we must distinguish three classes of office in the political structure: (1) offices of high control where there are final authority



XXXV. *The Class Composition of the Officeholders and Voters*

and broad supervision, i.e., the city council, the mayor, and the several boards; (2) offices of mediate control, where authority and supervision are limited, i.e., auxiliary executive offices, heads of departments, and agents of the several boards; and (3) administrative subordinates who are the employees of the various departments.

Let us examine the relation of the six classes to these various types of offices. There were 136 persons who held office in the city government during the years 1930-31. They were distrib-

uted among the three major classes as follows: upper, 6 per cent; middle, 53.60 per cent; lower, 40.40 per cent. There were 2.30 per cent of the offices held by upper-upper people; 3.70 per cent by lower-upper people; 19.10 per cent by upper-middle individuals; 34.50 per cent by lower-middle-class people; 35.30 per cent by upper-lower people; and 5.10 per cent by lower-lower individuals. The upper class held twice as many political posts in the city as its proportion of the total population. The upper-middle class occupied about twice as many offices as its proportion in the community; the lower-middle class and the upper-lower classes, somewhat more than their proportion of the total population; while the lower-lower class had about one fourth as many offices as its proportion of the general population.

The disproportions of the several classes in the political hierarchy become more apparent when the three types of control—high, middle, and low—are examined. In the high control group, the class proportions were as follows: 14.30 per cent from the two upper classes; 71.40 per cent came from the two middle classes; and 14.30 per cent from the two lower classes. The upper-upper class held 6.10 per cent of these offices; the lower-upper 8.20 per cent; the upper-middle 34.70 per cent; the lower-middle 36.70 per cent; the upper-lower 14.30 per cent; and there were no lower-lower people in these positions. Over 85 per cent of the high control offices were in the upper and middle classes (see Chart XXXV).

In the mediate control group, the class percentages were as follows: The two upper classes had 3.20 per cent of the offices; the middle classes had 71.80 per cent; and the lower classes 25 per cent. There were no upper-upper-class people in these positions. Twenty-five per cent of these positions were occupied by upper-middle-class people; 46.80 per cent by lower-middle people; 25 per cent by upper-lower people; and there were no lower-lower-class people in the offices of mediate control. In the mediate control group, the middle class maintains the same high proportions as in the high control group, the upper-class representation falls off sharply, and there is corresponding gain in the upper-lower class.

In the lowest and subordinate group of officers, the class proportions continue to shift. The two upper classes were not

represented; the two middle classes held 27.30 per cent of the offices; and the two lower classes, 72.70 per cent. Only 1.80 per cent of the officers in this lowest political stratum were upper middle; 25.50 per cent were lower middle; 61.80 per cent were upper lower; and 10.90 per cent were lower lower. Most of the firemen and policemen belong in this category.

In summary it can be said that the upper classes, together with the upper-middle class, dominate the high control offices. They have a proportion of these offices far out of keeping with their representation in the general population. The mediate control offices tend to be upper-middle and lower-middle class, while the subordinate offices tend to belong in the order named to the upper-lower, lower-middle, and lower-lower classes.

The positions of sixteen members of the city council in office during 1930 and 1931 were examined to determine their place in the class system. Of these, 6.40 per cent were lower upper; 18.70 per cent were upper middle; 43.70 per cent, lower middle; and 31.20 per cent, upper lower. There were no upper-upper or lower-lower persons in the council.

The personnel of the school board was also examined for the class status of its several members. Because of the high importance of the educational structure in American society, the class position of the members of this board is of obvious importance. One member of the board was upper-upper, one lower-upper, five upper-middle, and one lower-middle. No members of the two low classes served on the school board. It is perhaps significant that the two unsuccessful candidates in the election in which these members took office were both of the lower-middle class. The library board, which had a high symbolic function in the community, was, unlike the school board, an appointive group. But it, too, shows just as strikingly the disproportionate representation of the several classes. There was one upper-upper person on the board, two lower-upper, six upper-middle, and one lower-middle person. The single representative of the lower-middle class was the priest of the Greek church. He was placed there deliberately because of his position as the head of one of the ethnic churches in order that the "foreign interest" might be represented on the library board.

Sixty-one of the 136 persons in the political service of the city were native, and 75 were ethnic. Of the ethnics, 65 were

Irish, 5 French, 1 Jewish, and 1 Greek. The Armenians, Italians, Poles, Russians, and Negroes had no representatives. The Irish had a higher proportion of members in the city's political organization than did the natives. Although the Irish outnumbered the natives in the city service, the natives had twice as many representatives in the high control group of offices as the Irish, about the same number in the mediate group, and about half as many in the administrative subordinate group of offices. One of the members of the library board was Jewish, and another was Greek. French Canadians were largely in the subordinate groups.

2. Crime (Arrests) and Class

Class and ethnic factors are very important in determining liability to, and protection from, arrest by the local police in Yankee City. The person most likely to be arrested in Yankee City is a Polish lower-lower-class male around thirty years of age. If the Pole were in a higher class he would be less liable to arrest. The person least likely to be arrested is an upper-class or upper-middle-class female Yankee below twenty years of age. As we have said earlier, our interview records show that a man's position in a higher class helped protect him from police interference, while a less powerful position in a lower class made him more vulnerable to police action. It may be argued that the members of the lower classes are more inclined to break the rules of the community, but the interviews demonstrated that the same acts committed in the higher and lower classes resulted in fewer arrests for those who were better placed socially. An upper-class position protects a person from many undesirable experiences in Yankee City, one of them being haled before a judge and acquiring a police record.

From an analysis of the arrests over seven years, we found that the males had the highest percentage of those arrested: 89.06 per cent were males and 10.94 per cent were females. The median age for first arrest for males was 29.50 years; and that for females was 31.70 years.¹

1. Over 20 per cent (20.26 per cent) of the males were first arrested before they were eighteen years of age and 22.08 per cent of the females were arrested before they were eighteen years old; 9.25 per cent of the males were first arrested between the years of eighteen and twenty and 2.60 per cent of

The highest percentage of the population of any area that had been arrested came from Middletown and Uptown. Downtown and Riverbrook ranked third and fourth. Newtown, Homeville, and Hill Street were significantly low.² In other words, the areas in which the higher classes live tend to have fewer arrests, and those sections where the lower classes reside have higher crime records.

The ethnic groups, as Table 34 shows, form a larger percentage of those arrested by the police of Yankee City than do the Yankees: 60 per cent of all those arrested are ethnics, and 40 per cent are natives. It will be remembered that the Yankees comprise 54 per cent, and the combined ethnics 46 per cent, of the population of Yankee City. It is clear that the members of the ethnic groups are more liable to arrest than are the Yankees.³

The newer ethnic groups and the Negroes, both tending to be lower class, are the ones who are most liable to arrest. This is true for all groups except the Armenians who have the lowest percentage of arrested individuals. The full explanation for the low rate of arrests for the Armenians cannot be given; they were, however, slightly higher in class than most other ethnic groups and were a closely organized community. Furthermore, they were better related than the others to the larger Yankee community through their affiliation with Protestant churches.⁴

the females; 21.53 per cent of the males were arrested between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-nine years, and 18.18 per cent of the females; 24.24 per cent of the males were arrested at the age level of thirty to thirty-nine years, and 36.36 per cent of the females were first arrested at this time. This last is the only age level in which the proportion of females arrested is higher than the proportion of males. Approximately 25 per cent (24.72 per cent) of the arrested males were forty years and over; and 20.78 per cent of the females were arrested at that age.

2. Across the River (1.30 per cent) and Oldtown (0.60 per cent) were also low, but our figures are incomplete for the arrested in those areas, since part of those who were arrested were taken to other courts.

3. The ethnic affiliation of 0.99 per cent of those arrested was unknown.

4. There was a higher percentage of the Polish population arrested than any other ethnic group: 13 per cent of the members of this group had been arrested. The Russians were second: 12.77 per cent had their names on the police records. The police had arrested 9.51 per cent of the Italians. The Negroes ranked fourth for the percentage of their population which had been arrested: 8.75 per cent. There were 6.31 per cent of the Greeks, 5.32 per cent of the French Canadians, and 4.79 per cent of the Jews who had been arrested; 3.91 per cent of the Irish, 3.07 per cent of the Yankees, and 2.85 per cent of the Armenians.

TABLE 34
Crime and Ethnic Group

	Presence		Absence		Total	
Native	59.12	3.07	54.45	96.93	53.80	9,030
Total Ethnic	59.89	5.55	44.92	94.45	45.55	7,646
Irish	21.76	3.91	23.57	96.09	23.49	3,943
French	11.02	5.32	8.65	94.68	8.73	1,466
Jewish	2.68	4.79	2.35	95.21	2.97	397
Italian	3.81	9.51	1.60	90.49	1.69	284
Armenian	0.99	2.85	1.49	97.15	1.47	246
Greek	3.67	6.31	2.40	93.69	2.45	412
Polish	12.43	13.00	3.66	87.00	4.03	677
Russian	2.54	12.77	0.77	87.23	0.84	141
Negro	0.99	8.75	0.45	91.25	0.43	80
Unknown	0.99	6.42	0.63	93.58	0.65	109
Total		4.22		95.78		16,785
		708		16,077		

The two upper classes accounted for less than three fourths of 1 per cent of those arrested; the two middle classes, for about 10 per cent; and the two lower classes, for approximately

90 per cent of the crime in Yankee City⁵ (see Table 35).

All of the causes for arrest in the three upper classes were petty ones. Some of them were for driving and parking offenses. One of them developed from a quarrel over a dog, and there were other minor offenses. The crimes in the lower class

TABLE 35
Class and Crime

	Presence		Absence		Total
UU	.43	1.24	1.50	98.76	1.45
		3		239	242
LU	.28	0.76	1.63	99.24	1.57
		2		260	262
UM	1.84	0.76	10.68	99.24	10.30
		13		1,702	1,715
LM	7.80	1.17	29.27	98.83	28.96
		55		4,665	4,720
UL	24.96	3.22	33.22	96.78	32.88
		176		5,295	5,471
LL	64.69	10.77	23.70	89.23	25.44
		456		3,778	4,234
		4.24		95.76	
Total		705		15,939	16,644

ranged from the most serious, such as rape and theft, to the least serious, such as drunkenness and improper driving of automobiles.

Eleven per cent of the lower-lower class and 3 per cent of

5. Approximately 65 per cent (64.69 per cent) of all those arrested were in the lower-lower class; 24.96 per cent were in the upper-lower class; 7.80 per cent were in the lower-middle class; 1.84 per cent were in the upper-middle; 0.43 per cent in the upper-upper; and 0.28 per cent in the lower-upper class.

the upper-lower class had records of arrest. One per cent of the lower-middle class had their names on the police records and less than 1 per cent of the lower-upper and the upper-middle were recorded. Only two of the lower-upper class had their names on the police records. Three of the upper-upper class had been arrested by the police. All five of these cases were minor violations. Thirteen of the upper-middle class had been arrested. Each of these cases was for a minor infraction of the law.

Sixty-three per cent of all the arrests of the lower-lower class were ethnic, and 37 per cent were native. In the upper-lower class, 63 per cent were ethnic and 37 per cent were native. In the lower-middle class, 49 per cent were ethnic and 51 per cent were native. In the upper-middle class, 15 per cent were ethnic and 85 per cent were native.

Since the ethnic population of the lowest class was only 56.57 per cent of the stratum, it holds that being an ethnic in that class (many of them foreign-born) contributed to a man's chance of arrest; this chance became less in the upper-lower class and disappeared in the lower-middle class. The Yankees in this class had a higher rate of arrest, but in the upper-middle class the ethnics again were more liable to arrest. The discrepancy in the lower-middle class is more than likely accounted for by the extreme emphasis placed on being "respectable" and Yankee by the ethnics in that class.