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AUTUMN IN NEW YORK:

GOTHAM AND THE DECLINE OF

THE NEW DEAL ORDER (1967-1975)

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Introduction: Autumn in New York, Morning in America

In the fall of 1981, less than a year into his first term as president, Ronald Reagan visited the mayor of New York, Ed Koch, at Gracie Mansion to commemorate the approval of federal funds for the Westway Highway project. In his remarks, the president heralded the project as a beacon of the "renewal of America," through which the government would focus on cutting expenses and creating jobs. He concluded, "Let us all take heart in this country from New York's example and from this victory over the inertia of bureaucracy." Regarding the example of New York, he was referring to the fiscal crisis of 1975, during which the city came dangerously close to bankruptcy. President Reagan championed the mayor's skill in "restoring fiscal stability" and averred that the city had proved "she can live within her means." [1] When he returned to the city in early 1982, amidst a deep recession, he drew again on the city's recent history as a blueprint for national recovery and redirection. [2]

The president's speech thus served a greater, more symbolic purpose than the sole celebration of the Westway – though a worthy fete, to be fair, given the tumult and terrors of transit on the West Side in those days. [3] Reagan's deliverance constructed a narrative of the city's salvation from crisis, echoing Koch's parallel efforts to tell a story of restraint and responsibility, of private initiative and noble sacrifice, of triumph over unwieldy and profligate government. [4] As will be discussed anon, this narrative flattened the conflictual nature of New York's budget discourse and rationalized the choice to embrace a politics of austerity. Crucially,

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[1] Ronald Reagan, "President's Remarks at the Westway Highway Project Ceremony" (speech, New York City, September 7, 1981), Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5HqPeBTTNs&t=1s.

[2] Kim Phillips-Fein, *Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics* (New York: Picador, 2017), p. 303.

[3] Christopher Gray, "When a Monster Plied the West Side" *New York Times,* 12/22/2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/25/realestate/the-railroad-tracks-that-turned-a-street-into-death-avenue.html.

[4] Phillips-Fein, pp. 4-5

however, these claims provided the basis for Reagan's loftier ambitions. The president projected this retelling onto a broader national platform, announcing "a new age for the American worker." This was not simply a rhetorical flourish. He spoke, with sincere conviction, of dissembling the status quo and embracing a new politics: "Promises and programs, subsidies and studies, welfare and make work have all been tried by well-meaning individuals, but any worker knows [that] a job is the best social program there is." [5] Upon his return in 1982, he claimed, "I think we've made our choice and turned a historic corner. We're not going back to the glory days of big government." [6] Despite low approval ratings and an economic downturn, Reagan continued to articulate a new order of things – a politics and political economy defined by job creation, deregulation, and rugged individualism offered as an antidote to the statism favored by the old guard, the fading New Deal order. [7] Conversely, reflecting the staying power of the ancien regime, Reagan quoted FDR and drew upon his legacy to frame his aspiration as a course correction, an act of shrewd reason rather than a revolution: "We have every right to be proud of what we've accomplished and to have confidence in what lies ahead." [8] With inspiration from the past, Reagan charted a new course, taking his bearings from the Big Apple.

This project, too, sets its sights on New York as a central site of contention in a period of stormy weather. From the late '60s through the early '70s, the political alliance of the New Deal was "coming unstuck." [9] The nature of this unspooling is evident and well-encapsulated by the ongoings of city politics at the time, with combative and catalytic debates and trends stirring and

[5] "President's Remarks at the Westway Highway Project Ceremony," ibid

[6] "Excerpts from Address by Reagan on Role of Private Groups," *New York Times*, 1/15/1982 via Kim Phillips-Fein, *Fear City: New York's Fiscal Crisis and the Rise of Austerity Politics* (New York: Picador, 2017), p. 303.

[7] Frank Newport, Jeffrey M. Jones, and Lydia Saad, "Ronald Reagan From the People's Perspective: A Gallup Poll Review," *Gallup*, 06/07/2004; Thomas Edsall, "The Changing Shape of Power" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, eds. Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 274-275, 286.

[8] "President's Remarks at the Westway Highway Project Ceremony," ibid

[9] Jonathan Rieder, "The Rise of the Silent Majority" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, p. 243.

contesting the values, institutions, and electoral coalitions of the established order. The position taken herein is that this moment reflects less the impact of exogenous forces, less a spontaneous schism than a stress fracture; a gradual culmination of underlying tensions resulting in fragments embodied by the fiscal crisis.

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About Time: APD Scholarship and the Chronology of Politics

> *think about political time as nonlinear, multidirectional, and simultaneous … the historical as distinct from and other to the present and as a present living force* – Kathi Weeks [10]

Scholars and minds central to the genesis of political study have long theorized about political time. Max Weber described politics as "a strong and slow boring of hard boards" – a long view of gradual change requiring a concrete understanding of that which preceded and the direction toward which it progresses. Otto von Bismarck advanced an articulation of politics as "the art of the possible" – a negotiation of prior commitments, conflicts, and conceptions, and the projected imaginaries of campaign rhetoric, policy platforms, and pieces of legislation. Parsing the various threads of politico-temporal fabric is no easy feat as past, present, and future become inextricably interwoven. When we endeavor to estimate the bounds of our contemporary political moment, it is as if we are staring out from the shore, searching for a fixed point in the swirling currents. Any glimmer of stasis is an apparition. Each ripple, each undulation is but a brief glimpse of a far longer arc. Relating to this discussion, let us take the Hudson River for example. As its churning, brackish waters approach the Statue of Liberty, the river carries the offering of its tributaries, from Lake Tear of the Clouds in the Adirondacks to Spuyten Duyvil in the Bronx. The history –

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[10] Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 55.

ecological, administrative, indigenous, colonial – of the Empire State flows into New York Bay

and amalgamates with the Atlantic. To mix in the metaphor of H. Peyton Young, "We need to

recognize that the dust never really does settle – it keeps moving about, buffeted by random

currents of air." [11]

The scholarship of American Political Development (APD) offers a road map to navigate

the ever-shifting complexity of *political time*. The subfield surfaced in critical response to the

prevailing truisms of political science in the mid-twentieth century. Conventional wisdom had

proposed a chronology of politics defined by "stability and continuity." [12] The timeline was one

of *punctuated equilibrium* – continued periods of stasis, relative constancy, interrupted by

critical junctures, shocks to the system that realigned or reoriented the order of things. [13] For

those infrequent moments when major change did occur, many political scientists established

models inspired by the "behavioral revolution," understanding (strategic) individual choices as

the catalytic influences on political development and institutions. [14] This understanding was

defined as *rational choice theory*, which APD scholars critiqued for removing such actors from

the long-term, "slow-moving" processes of political change. APD scholars turned, instead,

toward history – seeking to "place politics in time." [15] Their work offered a nuanced conception

capable of accommodating the contrast of continuity and change inherent to American political

life. As Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek write, "The mode of change itself suggests a

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[11] Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), p. 133.

[12] Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 2

[13] ibid, p. 14

[14] Conversation and correspondence with Professor Ron Seyb, 04/01/24; see cited works – Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1957); Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965); Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961); David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: Wiley, 1965)

[15] Pierson, ibid, pp. 8-10

certain kind of continuity." [16] To cognize this conflicting truth – that change could be a constant – scholars sought a more detailed view using the historical record. Pierson quotes Douglass North: "Without a deep understanding of time, you will be a lousy political scientist, because time is the dimension in which ideas and institutions and beliefs evolve." [17]

Further, per Orren and Skowronek, "In APD, change is something inherent in politics as such; it is an integral feature of the juxtaposition of the patterns that construct politics historically." [18] As suggested therein, the dynamism of politics needs not preclude the formulation and use of theoretical schema, so long as we understand *order* as a baseline rather than a guiding force of politics. In other words, political life is not propelled by the seeking of order so much as it finds itself often gravitating towards order as a result of political institutions and actors' inclination toward control, as well as circumstances favorable to the creation, continuation, or conversion of order. [19] For Orren and Skowronek, *order* is defined as "a constellation of rules, institutions, practices, and ideas that hang together over time; a bundle of patterns." [20] The authors aver that the configuration of these patterns – the interlocking and overlapping of orders, or, *intercurrence* – is foundational to the aforementioned historical construction of politics. [21] This perception of *historical construction* reflects the understanding of APD scholars that "political change is always a reconstruction … changing any aspect of politics entails bumping against authority already in existence." [22]

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[16] Orren & Skowronek, p. 11
[17] Pierson, ibid, p. 1 quoting Douglass North (1999), p. 316
[18] Orren & Skowronek, p. 14.
[19] ibid, pp. 18, 92
[20] ibid, p. 14
[21] ibid, pp. 12-17
[22] ibid, pp. 21-23

Yet other theorists provide different and distinct notions of order. For example, Byron Shafer deploys order to conceptualize the eras of politics through *periodization* – creating an episodic analysis of political time. While Shafer views American political history in large chunks, he recognizes the difficulty in making decisive cleavages: "[T]here is, however, a menu of more grand dividers for American political development." He lists *national crises*, *economic transformations*, *cultural challenges*, *ideological currents*, and "sources of substantive conflict and issue evolution," for which he cites "nation-building, reconstruction, welfare statism, and cultural transformation." [23] These "dividers" may overlap, as with the Civil War (national crisis) and industrialization (economic transformation), for example. Further, Shafer emphasizes that periods are not complete reinventions of politics, but unique assemblages of "greater and lesser influences." [24] He writes, "Different influences work in different ways at different points in time, depending on what else is on the contemporary political agenda *and* on which historically residual influences have become established." [25] Where Shafer specifically uses the phrasing of *order*, he refers to *political order*, an amalgamation of the aforementioned elements and their attendant political responses, a (relatively) consistent partisan dynamic over a period of time. In this sense, Shafer's view of order is, on the surface, more akin to the punctuated equilibrium argument, yet it still embraces the intricacies of intercurrence. He acknowledges the challenges set forth by attempts at periodization and seeks to conceptualize the overlaps (and underlaps) of "grand dividers" and variable influences. His desire to periodize remains aligned with the conventional timeline approach of "connect the dots," albeit with cognizance of potentially concurrent lines rather than a singular trajectory. On the other hand, Orren and Skowronek

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[23] Byron Shafer, "Orders and Eras in American Politics," *Polity* 37, no. 4 (2005), p. 544
[24] ibid, p. 541
[25] ibid, p. 542

seemed to offer a model in the style of a sound wave: arcs in the aggregate representing a pattern or bundle of sometimes disparate points.

Andrew Polsky presents his contribution to the scholarship in a tour-de-force on the subject of *partisan regimes*, laying out some important groundwork on the *temporal logics* discussed thus far: "[s]ome scholars stress the weight of historical constants … [o]ther scholars, though, discern broad changes over time – often viewed as secular, 'modernizing' processes." [26] Polsky then proposes a third pattern (transposed and adapted from Skowronek's work on the presidency): "newly dominant parties [or party coalitions] propel bursts of broad political change and then preside over longer interludes of relative stability." [27] This is the concept of *partisan regime* – "Each episode begins with the advent of a strong party coalition and its policy innovations. Then a period of calm follows, during which the dominant party attempts to preserve its major policy achievements." [28] Polsky identifies, and interrogates, the origin of partisan regime theory alongside the *electoral-realignment synthesis*, an example of the "punctuated equilibrium" model popularized by scholars like V. O. Key, Walter Dean Burnham, James Sundquist, and James A. Reichley. [29] Polsky notes that realignment, while instructive, fails to explain certain moments of political upheaval that occur outside of an electoral context. [30] Polsky emphasizes the need for a theory that can account for the role of actors and agents beyond candidates and voters in the shaping of political order. As well, he argues (contra Skowronek and others) that partisan regimes may best be understood as "non-recurring phenomena, revealing

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[26] Andrew Polsky, "Partisan Regimes in American Politics," *Polity* 44, no. 1 (2012): p. 51

[27] ibid, p. 52, citing Skowronek, "Notes on the Presidency in the Political Order" (1986) and *The Politics Presidents Make* (1993), as well as Orren and Skowronek, "Regimes and Regime Building in American Government" (1999)

[28] ibid

[29] Polsky, ibid; James Reichley, *The Life of the Parties: A History of American Political Parties*, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), pp. 8-13; see also, David Mayhew, "Electoral Realignments," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3 (2000), pp. 449-474.

[30] Polsky, p. 53

only for what they tell us about a single period." [31] Thus, Polsky offers partisan regimes as an

"ideal type" – not a model for <u>all</u> upheaval, but an archetype for some episodes – and he

articulates a redefinition: "a political coalition organized under a common party label that

challenges core tenets of the established political order, secures effective national governing

power, defines broadly the terms of political debate, and maintains sufficient power to thwart

opposition efforts to undo its principal policy, institutional, and ideological achievements." [32]

Perhaps here we must understand *order* to have multiple manifestations and distinct

timetables. On the one hand, Orren and Skowronek, as well as scholars like Rogers Smith and

Desmond King, point us toward orders that transcend periods of partisan upheaval. [33] Smith, in

particular, characterizes some of these lasting orders as *traditions* of American politics, such as

small-l liberalism or small-r republicanism. [34] These philosophical or ideological currents are as

persistent and influential as foundational constitutional arrangements, such as checks and

balances or the Senate, which undergird the full arc of American political life, though they may

be altered to various degrees by the changing shape of power. The latter fixtures we understand

as *institutions*, deemed formal or informal by the extent to which their rules are written or not,

whether their power and enforcement comes from systematized authority or normative heft. [35]

On the other hand, we have partisan regime-type orders with more limited spells of dominance.

These orders find lasting strength in their capacity to become institutionalized, either by

redefining the rhetorical, normative, and ideological aspects of political life or by altering the

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[31] Polsky, p. 56

[32] ibid, p. 57

[33] Desmond King and Rogers Smith, "Racial Orders in American Political Development," *The American Political Science Review* 99, no. 1 (2005), p. 75.

[34] Rogers Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (1993), p. 550.

[35] Julia Azari and Jennifer Smith, "Unwritten Rules: Informal Institutions in Established Democracies," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 1 (2012), p. 37.

structural modes of power. For Polsky, this embodies the shift of a partisan regime from a dependent variable to an independent variable in empirical analysis, deployed as such to explain the influence of regimes on the formal and informal features of American politics. [36] Additionally, APD scholars note that these non-dominant orders often bear a significant influence on politics: "It is the interests that don't fit, not those that do, that are pivotal in political development." [37] Per Pierson and Thelen, the "losers" of political contests are often the most likely to tinker with institutional arrangements and influence institutional change. [38]

Orren and Skowronek's definition of *order* thus remains tantalizingly vague and valuable at the same time; order is, at best, a "bundle of patterns" [39] and usually a parcel of paradoxes, too. As the authors describe later, "institutions do not simply come into alignment at certain times but push and pull one another through time" [40] and "orderings observed along a path are not static but dynamic constructions." [41] Still, these entities have critical effects: "Institutions participate actively in politics: they shape interests and motives, configure social and economic relationships, promote as well as inhibit political change." [42]

Reconsidering the metaphor of the Hudson, we might think again of points of confluence rendered (geographically speaking) as steady, fixed sites. Dormant and dominant currents alike collide and exchange, colliding unevenly to create lasting cascades. Even as far north as the Capital Region, tidal patterns change the water's directional flow. As such, if we are to understand orders as dynamic entities that do not simply emerge and then settle by the whimsy of

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[36] Polsky, pp. 53-54
[37] Orren & Skowronek, p. 106
[38] Pierson, p. 135
[39] Orren & Skowronek, p. 14
[40] ibid, p. 94
[41] ibid, p. 102
[42] ibid, p. 78

Poseidon but respond and reflect a multitude of factors, political and non-political, we must

consider the mechanisms of *gradual change* and *institutional development*.

In the first chapter of his book *Politics in Time*, Paul Pierson quotes Paul David,

describing "the idea of history as an irreversible branching process." [43] Pierson goes on to detail

two concepts drawn from the economic and social-scientific disciplines: *path dependence* and

positive feedback. In sum, path dependence means "particular events, once introduced, can be

virtually impossible to reverse." [44] Positive feedback, in tandem, asserts that "each step along a

particular path produces consequences that increase the relative attractiveness of that path" going

forward, regardless of the inefficiency or randomness of said path. [45] With both, early events are

especially significant, as Polsky, Skowronek, and others emphasized in regard to nation-building.

Pierson argues that path dependence and positive feedback offer a tool for political scholars to

navigate and untangle thorny collective action problems. [46] He writes, "Stickiness is built into the

design of political institutions to reduce uncertainty and enhance stability, facilitating forms of

cooperation and exchange that would otherwise be impossible." [47]

While Pierson's retooling of sociological constructs has its merits, several APD scholars

have critiqued this understanding. Orren and Skowronek write that "political order is

circumstantial, something that officials within government institutions will create or not, sustain

or not, depending on their own interests, on the available resources, and on the obstacles to

change." [48] James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen add, "there is nothing automatic, self-

perpetuating, or self-reinforcing about institutional arrangements. Rather, a dynamic component

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[43] Pierson, p. 21
[44] ibid, p. 18
[45] Pierson, pp. 17-18
[46] ibid, pp. 32-33
[47] ibid, p. 43
[48] Orren and Skowronek, p. 92

is built in; where institutions represent compromises or relatively durable though still contested settlements … they are always vulnerable to shifts." [49] In a later work, Thelen carves out a space of nuance in which maybe all of the above can be true, describing how persistent institutions are defined by cumulative, subtle changes: "[with] almost any institution that survives major socioeconomic transformation … or political disjuncture … the story of institutional reproduction is likely to be strongly laced with elements of institutional transformation." [50] Put simply, it is striking "how little and how much they have changed over time." [51] We might cede to Pierson that the range of said motion is limited or, at the least, influenced by early events. Still, Thelen emphasizes that "the factors responsible for the genesis of an institution may not be the same as those that sustain it over time," and she argues that "emphasis [on path dependence] obscures ongoing political contestation over the form of functions of institutions forged at (often distant and receding) critical junctures." [52]

Yet Pierson, to his credit, incorporates these critiques in later chapters. During his discussion of *institutional development*, Pierson offers the H. Peyton Young quote cited at the outset and makes a number of references to Thelen herself. Pierson furthers an understanding of political institutions as "the results of multiple processes, including, but not easily reduced to, the strategic choices of goal-oriented actors. Change in environmental conditions, balances of social power, or unanticipated institutional effects all can facilitate major efforts to generate institutional change." [53] Institutions, although often designed with the intention of binding

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[49] James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, "A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change," *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 8.
[50] Kathleen Thelen, "How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis" in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 230.
[51] ibid, p. 21
[52] Thelen, pp. 208, 231
[53] Pierson, pp. 134

political successors to a specific path, are subject to the kind of continuous contestation inherent to American politics, a system predicated on compromise.[54] Thus, new settlements – especially in the granular context of specific institutions – often reflect new arrangements of compromise rather than complete reconstructions.

Additionally, Mahoney and Thelen observe that "the basic properties of institutions contain within them possibilities for change."[55] The distinction here is that Mahoney and Thelen identify opportunities for development in institutional innovation, whereas path-dependence scholars emphasize the persistence of institutions, suggesting that the essential character and construction of these institutions remain the same. The authors evaluate four modal types of gradual institutional change: *displacement*, the removal of old rules and the introduction of new ones; *layering*, the introduction of new rules on top of or alongside old ones; *drift*, the changed impact of old rules due to exogenous or environmental shifts; and *conversion*, the changed enactment of old rules due to strategic redeployment.[56] Which strategies are deployed depends primarily on the preexisting political contexts and institutional characteristics, notably, the presence of strong/weak veto points and high/low levels of discretion in the executive.[57]

Mahoney and Thelen also suggest that different change agents will pursue different strategies. This leads to the identification of a parallel set of four archetypes: *insurrectionaries* seek to destroy by using displacement tactics; *symbionts* of a parasitic variety create drift by neglecting core intentions in favor of personal purpose, whereas mutualistic symbionts break and bend rules to uphold the institutional spirit; *subversives* disguise their desire to disrupt the institution by layering insidious elements on prior arrangements; *opportunists* prey on

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[54] Pierson, p. 145; Mahoney & Thelen, p. 14.
[55] Mahoney & Thelen, ibid
[56] Mahoney & Thelen, pp. 15-17
[57] ibid, p. 19

ambiguities in the interpretation or implementation of rules to convert institutions. [58] Thus, institutional change takes variable but generally predictable forms defined often by the political contexts and idiosyncratic characteristics of their conception. As Thelen writes, "One can make sense of the forms and functions these institutions have taken only by viewing them, as Pierson and Skocpol recommend, in the context of a larger temporal framework … that shaped their development." [59] Let us delve into the particulars.

Fragile Juggernaut: Conceptualizing the New Deal Order [60]

The conception of order as a "bundle of patterns" is perhaps nowhere more useful than in discussion of the New Deal order. This order, as articulated herein, began with the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and continued until the presidency of Ronald Reagan. [61] The rest is a great deal more complicated.

In the words of Jefferson Cowie, the New Deal was "less a permanent revolution than a decades-long experiment." Even still, this experimentation led "slowly and episodically, unevenly and incompletely" to the creation of modern liberalism. [62] Cowie later describes the New Deal as a "hodgepodge of programs & policies"; yet, as Orren and Skowronek's understanding suggests, the incompatibility of constituent parts is not a reason to refute order. These tensions are what "push and pull [institutions] through time." [63] Thinking alongside Pierson's metaphor of the "branching process," political change does not necessarily follow

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[58] Mahoney & Thelen, pp. 23-27

[59] Thelen, p. 231

[60] Robert Zieger quoted by Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 9

[61] Gary Gerstle & Steve Fraser, "Introduction" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, p. xiii

[62] Cowie, pp. 91-92.

[63] Orren & Skowronek, p. 94

along one precise, predestined path, but the directions and boundaries of change are often delimited by its initial organization. [64]

What did that organization look like? Gary Gerstle and Stephen Fraser write, "[t]he New Deal order never operated with the kind of precision and effortlessness implied by a word like 'system'; but it did possess an ideological character, a moral perspective, and a set of political relationships among policy elites, interest groups, and electoral constituencies that decidedly shaped American political life for forty years." [65] At the same time, deep ideological undercurrents generated conflict within the order. The perpetuation and irresolution of these tensions and trends – a mollified labor movement; the expansion of a national political apparatus seeking to manage a delicate balance of reform, democracy, and capitalism; and racial conflict, manifesting physically and ideologically – gradually produced a "framework of constraints" that spelled the end for the New Deal order. The result of these tensions can be synthesized as such: the New Deal, which sought to temper the worst flaws of capitalism, was limited in its capacity to advance more social democratic reforms and restructurings of politics and power. [66] It was limited as such because of its electoral composition and the racial antagonism of the broader culture, which limited the potential for class solidarity and caused reforms to retain a racially exclusionary quality. [67]

The next section will attempt to further elucidate the defining pieces of this order: its historical context, its network of political relationships, its ideological character and moral perspective, and the tensions that brought about its demise.

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[64] Pierson, p. 21
[65] Gerstle & Fraser, p. xi
[66] "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?", pp. 186-204; Edsall, p. 176; Cowie, p. 151
[67] Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, "The Failures and Successes of the New Radicalism" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, p. 232; Rieder, p. 245; Fraser, p. 73

The New Deal emerged at a moment of multi-valent, magnitudinous crisis for liberal democracy. [68] Dictatorships around the globe, of leftward and rightward inclination, proclaimed that the liberal state was "destined to perish" as it grappled, ostensibly unsuccessfully, with a litany of novel problems: economic transformation, labor struggles, nationalism, and international conflict amidst and in the aftermath of modernization, industrialization, and world war. [69] Citizens of democracies, too, confronted the notion that not only their governments but their governing institutions (formal and informal) "lack[ed] the power to guide action" at a moment when action was desperately required. [70] For Ira Katznelson, this fearful fervor is the essential cultural and historical context in which the New Deal must be understood. Moreover, he asserts that the emotional atmosphere was the key impetus for the New Deal's radical politics: "The collective result of the various choices and selections they made to reduce uncertainty to risk, particularly in Congress, where southern members played a disproportionate role, became, in effect, a new national state, a state with a procedural [bureaucratic] and a crusading face." [71]

Expanding on the "novel problems" of economic transformation, Michael Bernstein has noted the importance of a "transition in the structure of consumer and investment demand in the interwar period." [72] Consumers began to spend less on basic items, such as clothing and utilities, and more on "high-income" goods like household appliances and recreation. New patterns of

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[68] Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright, 2013), pp. 5

[69] "destined to perish" quoted from Benito Mussolini, *Fascism: Doctrine and Institutions* (New York: Howard Fetig, 1935), p. 10; regarding "novel problems," *Fear Itself*, pp. 36 drawing on Walter Lippman, *A New Social Order* (New York: John Day, 1933), pp. 7-8, 9-10 -and- Harold Stearns, *Liberalism in America: Its Origin, Its Temporary Collapse, Its Future* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1919); regarding "modernization," see Reinhardt Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing, History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 154-169

[70] Lippman, pp. 10-11; *Fear Itself*, p. 32

[71] *Fear Itself*, p. 34

[72] Michael Bernstein, "Why the Great Depression Was Great" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, pp. 46-48

spending compelled new patterns of investment, and new patterns of investment altered the labor

market. These tectonic shifts were felt most acutely by traditionally titanic industries of steel,

coal, etc. [73] Adjusting to such a deep-rooted dilemma while embroiled in the panic of a global

financial crisis was no easy feat. Hence, the New Deal's continued experimentation with various

mechanisms for recovery. [74] Bernstein argues that a true and holistic recovery would have

required a "general revival of all sectors" and the mobilization of "capital, information, and

confidence to retrain and reallocate" labor. [75] This state of affairs explains, in part, the

willingness of the New Deal architects and administrators to embrace unprecedented statism, but

also contextualizes the difficulties in achieving full recuperation. In Bernstein's view, the

economic stimulation of military spending and investment from World War II to the Cold War

obfuscated the absence of deeper structural change in the nation's economy – a "general

revival," as well as a retraining and reorganizing of labor – to stimulate sustainable and sustained

growth. As such, the economic woes of the 1970s are read by Bernstein as the result of

unfinished relief from the wounds of the Great Depression. [76] One could also suggest that these

woes reflect a failure to seize the opportunity for greater restructuring presented by the New Deal

– but more on this in a moment.

Further, the New Deal emerged during (and owing to) a unique moment in the history of

American capitalism: the eclipse of "the labor question." [77] Mass industrialization during the

Gilded Age, or the "Age of Incorporation," had generated grandiose wealth at the cost of the

republic; in sum, "the economy grew, but democracy suffered; the unrestrained capacity of the

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[73] Bernstein, pp. 34-35

[74] ibid, p. 33

[75] ibid, 46

[76] ibid, 48-49

[77] Steve Fraser, "The 'Labor Question'" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, p. 55

corporation expanded, but the rights of workers did not." [78] The very nature of the economy was drastically altered as incorporation spurred a market revolution – a nation of "Main Street" shops, localized economic actors, became one of expansive mega corporations. Although there were robust small- 'r' republican concerns about plutocracy and corruption, the ideology of "free labor" (an antecedent to "right to work" anti-unionism) prevailed, in part as a result of its complex entanglement with antebellum and postbellum racial discourse, and the polity remained divided along religious, ethnic, and class lines. [79] Class solidarity and robust unionization thus remained elusive. Through the Progressive Era, an epoch itself mired in tensions, policy erred "toward regulation (in contrast to redistribution) to balance the power between society and the corporation," thus flirting with the labor question while leaving its essential query unanswered. [80] Dreams of an "industrial democracy" fluttered about with wandering minds contemplating the possibilities of a "high-wage, high-consumption economy in which workers could be partners and consumers in the industrial enterprise, not simply raw and dispensable labor power." This dream was, however, deferred by then-dominant political actors for an attempt at "enlightened capitalism" and remained unrealized at the outset of the New Deal. [81]

As the New Deal order ascended, so too did the strength of labor. [82] From the 1930s to the 1950s, organized labor surged in density, particularly following the 1935 passage of the Wagner Act, which created the National Labor Relations Board – thus formalizing the unionization process – and actively encouraged collective bargaining. [83] Organized labor was crucial to the order and the Democratic Party's electoral viability, yet the legitimation of labor by

[78] Cowie, p. 38
[79] ibid, pp. 38-44, 60-61
[80] ibid, p. 67
[81] Cowie, p. 85; Fraser, p. 56
[82] Fraser, ibid
[83] Cowie, pp. 11 & 25

the New Deal order proved a pyrrhic victory. Labor, primarily via the "embryonic strategic alliance" of the Congress of Industrial Organizations, softened its rhetoric of class struggle/warfare in favor of claims for "security" and redirected the horizon of its vision away from "workers control." [84] Intertwining with Bernstein's analysis of the economic moment, Steve Fraser identifies a new philosophy of "mass-consumption-industrial-unionism," defined by calls for "government intervention and regulation to expand production, redistribute income, and expand mass purchasing power and government credit." [85] Cowie writes that labor was "less empowered than contained by the state," necessitating the adoption of a defensive strategy to preserve their gains. [86] Fraser, on the other hand, argues that "[a] rainbow of social and cultural anxieties…" – tensions of religious, ethnic, racial, and political tenors – "… severely limited the political influence and perspective of the CIO and New Deal." [87] In other words, the national political economy fostered a context ripe for unionization and a certain degree of "industrial democracy," but economic and cultural complexities – within the labor movement as well as the broader sphere of politics – limited the frame of possible change. Organized labor, struggling to preserve well-fought advances and reap the rewards of post-war growth for its varied membership, dulled its radical edge for reconciliation within the "dominant institutions and assumptions of society." [88]

Although touched upon above, some constituent parts of the New Deal electoral coalition require further parsing. While Fraser's analysis of the CIO demonstrates an underlying environment of friction within the (largely white) working class, the New Deal order was buoyed

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[84] Fraser, p. 57
[85] Fraser, pp. 70-72
[86] Cowie, p. 25
[87] Fraser, p. 73
[88] "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?", p. 190

by an otherwise unprecedented sense of solidarity and a coalescing of whiteness as European migrants were assimilated into urban industrial centers and the Democratic Party apparatus. [89] By and large, these citizens were effectively and efficiently brought into the political fray by machines like Tammany Hall. As James Scott details, these machines were mutually constituted by waves of migration throughout the 19th century – "the rapid influx of new populations for whom family and ethnicity were the central identifications, when coupled with the award of important monopoly privileges … and the public payroll provided the ideal soil for the emergence of party machines." [90] Reflecting its constituency, Tammany Hall espoused a part populist, part pluralist, and progressive political vision. [91] Roosevelt himself drew significant inspiration from the Tammany brand of politics, particularly their ilk of urban liberalism focused on pragmatic municipal administration as instrumental to reform. [92]

Political machines were also central to the Democratic recruitment of Black voters who relocated from the South to industrial urban hubs of the North during the Great Migration. [93] This shift did not tilt the balance in the initial elections for Roosevelt, but Black voters became increasingly central to the electoral calculus of the Democratic Party as they represented greater and greater proportions of the Northern (city) electorate. [94] Conversely, the early political coalition relied heavily on Southern Democrats, whose politics were deeply racially

[89] Cowie, pp. 22-24; Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 24-25

[90] James Scott, "Corruption, Machine Politics, and Political Change." *The American Political Science Review.* Vol. 63, No. 4 (Dec. 1969), pp. 1145

[91] Terry Golway, *Machine Made: Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern American Politics* (New York: Liveright, 2014), pp. xvii, xxiv, 1-6

[92] Terry Golway, *Machine Made: Irish America, Tammany Hall and the Creation of Modern New York Politics* (graduate dissertation at Rutgers, 2012) pp. 248-255

[93] Keneshia Grant, "'The Great Migration and the Democratic Party.'" *New Books Network*, 12 May 2020, www.newbooksnetwork.com/kenesha-n-grant-the-great-migration-and-the-democratic-party-temple-up-2020.

[94] Keneshia Grant, "Great Migration Politics: The Impact of The Great Migration on Democratic Presidential Election campaigns from 1948-1960," *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 16, vol. 1, 2019, pp. 37-39

exclusionary. [95] This uncivil union between urban, industrial, pluralist (though not wholly anti-racist) Northerners and rural, agrarian, segregationist Southerners would constrain and complicate the depth and breadth of economic reforms. [96]

Finally, the ideological character of the New Deal order projected "a role for the state that would, they believed, permit it to compensate for capitalism's inevitable flaws and omissions without interfering with its internal workings." [97] This may, perhaps, have had something to do with the connection of many "New Dealers," specifically those in and around cabinet and agency positions, to an insurgent "power bloc" of globally-facing, multinational investment firms (whose headquarters were largely located in New York). [98] These investment firms became powerful economic actors as labor-intensive industries dwindled in economic and political clout, as discussed prior by Bernstein. [99] Nonetheless, the compelling question of the New Deal, in the words of Thomas Ferguson, was "how to enact major social reforms while preserving both democracy and capitalism." [100] Administrators within the New Deal imagined themselves serving as "traffic managers" rather than central planners of the market, seeking to pioneer and perpetuate the "quasi-Keynesian growth of a big-government, social insurance state" within the bounds of American liberal democracy and without erring toward the fraught contemporary example of Soviet socialism. [101] Per Ronald Isetti, this state was "a regulatory progressive state

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[95] Cowie, pp. 22-24; *Fear Itself*, pp. 157-161
[96] Cowie, p. 126; *Fear Itself*, ibid
[97] Alan Brinkley, "The New Deal and the Idea of the State" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, p. 112
[98] Thomas Ferguson, "Industrial Conflict and the Coming of the New Deal: The Triumph of Multinational Liberalism in America" in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*, p. 23
[99] Ferguson, pp. 7-8; Bernstein, pp. 34-35
[100] Ferguson, p. 3
[101] Quote from Thurman Arnold via Brinkley, p. 94; "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" p. 192 and quote from p. 203

based in political liberalism and Christian humanitarianism," and the humanitarianism element was central. [102]

Amidst the fearful milieu of the New Deal's emergence, the affective politics of Roosevelt were integral to presenting an effective politics. As important to political action itself was a "feeling of action," and Roosevelt was successful in cultivating a national sense of an empathetic executive. [103] For one mill man in South Carolina, the President was "the first man in the White House to understand that my boss is a son of a bitch." [104] Yet this was more than an echo of the glimmers of "enlightened capitalism" glimpsed in years prior. The New Deal transformed the nature of federal power, expanded the executive branch enormously, and grappled with the ethic of individualism at a moment demanding collective action. [105] This is the second central tension. The New Deal order, seeking to "tame capitalism," created an unprecedentedly expansive role for the state and an often-unwieldy administrative apparatus, straining against long-standing American conceptions of individualism and presenting obstacles to grassroots democratic change. [106] As Orren and Skowronek write, "Institutions complicate notions of popular control … [they] come over time to affect the political perceptions of citizens as well as to constrain their action." [107] In New York, this complication would come up against the aspirations of Black & Brown New Yorkers who envisaged a pathway to inclusion in the postwar prosperity and redistributive programs of the New Deal era and order.

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[102] via Cowie, p. 140
[103] Cowie, pp. 102-103
[104] via Cowie, 101
[105] Cowie, p. 148
[106] Brinkley, p. 87; Cowie, pp. 9-11, 17-19, 26-27; "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" p. 194
[107] Orren & Skowronek, p. 79

FISSURE: Race Against the Machine

Tammany Hall and the Harlem Fox

On March 10th, 1967, J. Raymond Jones resigned from his position as Grand Sachem of Tammany Hall amidst accusations of corruption. [108] Whether he knew it in the moment or not, Jones would be the final chief in the storied history of the political machine that, per Senator Robert Wagner (progenitor of signature New Deal proposals such as the National Labor Relations Act and the Social Security Act, not to mention a Tammany man), "may justly claim the title of the cradle of modern liberalism in America." [109] Notably, Jones was not only the last ever but the first Black Grand Sachem, and, at the time, he was "considered to be one of the most powerful Democrats in the nation." [110] Yet his story is conspicuously omitted in the popular narratives of Tammany and this time. [111] Despite this lacuna in scholarship, Jones and his journey reveal something crucial about the tessellations of New York City politics during the epoch of the New Deal order.

By the time of Jones' tenure in the 1960s, the power of Tammany Hall had diminished significantly. As early as 1933, Tammany was losing its grip on New York. Per Terry Golway, "Its power base was shrinking, its leaders were divided, and its old allies were alienated or actively working against it." [112] The 1932 resignation of Mayor Walker gave credibility to long-standing critiques of corruption and patronage, which, as stated previously, had been integral to

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[108] Paul Good, "A Political Tour of Harlem: Three of the 'New Breed' Democrats" *The New York Times*, 10/29/1967, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1967/10/29/121515409.html?pageNumber=119.
[109] Golway, p. 289
[110] John C. Walter, *The Harlem Fox: J. Raymond Jones and Tammany, 1920-1970* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 11; Quote from James Booker, "J. Raymond Jones: Master Politician" *New York Amsterdam News*, 04/23/1966, https://lib-proxy01.skidmore.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/j-raymond-jones-master-politician/docview/226700405/se-2?accountid=13894
[111] Jones is not mentioned once in Terry Golway's *Machine Made*, among the more significant works on the subject
[112] Golway, p. 290

the emergence of political machines and inseparable from their progressive politics, though decisively undemocratic and inegalitarian. [113] Importantly, the methods of Tammany should not be understood as the "ignorant tools of a conspiracy organized not to bring about political change but to plunder the public treasury," but rather as a strategy emerging from a shrewd calculus in the struggle to win political and cultural power for (broadly Catholic/non-Protestant, particularly Irish) immigrants who were otherwise spurned by the established order. [114] Walker's indiscretions, however, cast a dark shadow over the Hall and made defense of the organization politically untenable. Roosevelt, whose rise to power was inextricably tied to Tammany, cut the organization from federal patronage and backed Fiorello LaGuardia in the 1933 mayoral race. [115]

LaGuardia, an Italian-Jewish Episcopalian, won the election by framing himself as an anti-Tammany candidate and drawing on the shifting ethnic composition of the city. He built an "energetic coalition" of Italian, Jewish, Puerto Rican, southern Black, and Caribbean Americans, plus reform-inclined politicos and "others who decided that Tammany did not have the answers to the questions the Great Depression posed." [116] The decline of Tammany in the 1930s, driven by shifting demographics and inertia on the essential political-economic question of the day – in the 1930s, how to resolve the Great Depression – would be mirrored in the city's financial crisis in the 1970s. Tammany, like the later power-brokers of New York, would turn to austerity in a stunning surrender of its earlier politics of urban liberalism, thus estranging critical members of its constituency. [117]

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[113] Scott, ibid

[114] Golway, p. xvii

[115] Regarding Roosevelt's connection to Tammany, see generally Golway, *Machine Made*, and specifically pp. xv-xvi, 234-269, and 297, quoting Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew*, p. 150; Walter, p. 5

[116] Golway, pp. 290, 295-296; Walter, p. 5; Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Joint Center for Urban Studies, 1970), pp. 168, 187, 202, 209-216

[117] Golway, pp 291-292

After supplanting the old guard, LaGuardia began to construct a parallel system of patronage for his insurgent coalition. [118] Here, it is important to reintroduce Mahoney and Thelen's analytical work on institutional development – a crucial framework for considering how institutions change internally while, ostensibly, persisting externally. Their work also demonstrates a useful combination of behavioral and historical political science, allowing scholarship to engage the choices of actors within their contemporaneous political contexts.

As noted earlier, Mahoney and Thelen outline four archetypal agents of change: symbionts, insurrectionaries, subversives, and opportunists. LaGuardia does not fit cleanly into any of these boxes because the institution of patronage was retained in its informal character, but not in its formal iteration. The system of patronage as a formalized institution, no longer operating exclusively as an arm of the Tammany machine, was subverted; yet its institutional character and core intention, to distribute political resources to one's constituents so as to maintain support, were upheld. In this sense, LaGuardia's efforts demonstrate *displacement* – the removal of old rules and the introduction of new ones – as well as *conversion* – the changed enactment of old rules due to strategic redeployment. [119] *Conversion* is perhaps the more apt construct for our purposes, especially given the resurgence of Tammany in the latter years of LaGuardia's mayoralty. [120] LaGuardia ran forcefully against the newly darkened image of the Hall but propagated similar tactics (to new ends). Thus, patronage – as a formal institution (initially the Tammany Hall apparatus, then LaGuardia's personalized system) and a norm structuring resource distribution and electoral engagement in New York politics – remained continuous through the waxes and wanes of Tammany's clout.

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[118] Golway, p. 292

[119] Mahoney & Thelen, pp. 15-17

[120] This is additionally true as a result of the "high level of discretion in interpretation/enforcement" present in a system like patronage – Mahoney & Thelen, p. 28

As alluded to above, Tammany Hall would resurface in the 1940s under new auspices. The boss, Carmine De Sapio, was the first non-Irish Sachem since William M. Tweed – among the Hall's more monumental figures. De Sapio represented the changing ethnic composition of New York and the ascension of "Old Tammany" sons and daughters to influential positions in the federal government. Prominent figures like Wagner and Roosevelt – through "Second New Deal" legislation such as the Works Progress Administration and the (Wagner) National Labor Relations Act – pursued a politics crucially informed by the Hall while, on the national stage, avoiding explicit association with Tammany. As the (urban) liberalism of Tammany became assimilated into public policy and the countrywide discourse, the extent of its influence went unmentioned. [121]

Owing to the altered makeup of the city, the post-1933 Tammany focused on previously tangential constituencies: Italian (also Catholic) and Black New Yorkers. [122] In doing so, Tammany propelled two major sources of tension in this period of city politics. Firstly, the emergence of Black New Yorkers as a significant constituency. Members of this electorate pursued dual, at times dueling strategies of both/either participating *in* established political institutions and/or creating their own organizations to reap rewards and resources from the otherwise exclusionary, redistributive bureaucracies of the New Deal order. More on this momentarily. Secondly, Tammany's sectarian scheme incited conflict between Jewish and Catholic New Yorkers, which was only resolved into a homogenous definition of whiteness as a result of contestation with the emergent Black electorate.

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[121] Golway, pp. 301-302; see also, J. Joseph Huthmacher, *Senator Robert F. Wagner and the Rise of Urban Liberalism* (1971)

[122] Walter, pp. 55-67 in a chapter titled "The Beginning of the End of Old Tammany and the Rise of Black Democracy in New York City"; Glazer and Moynihan, p. 213

Before the 1960s, New York City politics were characterized by this religious-ethnic

discord. [123] Strain reached a zenith with the "regular vs reform" discourse of the 1950s and early

'60s, during which Jewish and Protestant New Yorkers ("reformers") fervently challenged the

revamped Tammany Hall and the Catholic political power it symbolized. This debate had a

genuine ideological character, with "Catholic" values expressed in a religious, traditionalist ethos

and "Jewish" values composed of secularism and rationalism. [124] At the outset of the decade, the

schism appeared insurmountable, although favoring the "reform" element. In 1961, Mayor

Robert F. Wagner Jr – son of the titanic Senator, New Dealer, and Tammany man – broke with

the Hall, which had seriously bolstered his first campaign for Gracie Mansion in 1953. Wagner

rode a wave of anti-Tammany antipathy to a third and final term. This groundbreaking election

was punctuated by a shocking loss of a seat on the Democratic Party Executive Committee (at

that moment synonymous with the Hall) for Carmine De Sapio. [125] De Sapio was replaced by

Edward Costikyan, remembered as an out-and-out reformer by some, by others as a tragic figure

seeking to balance both impulses. [126] Costikyan resigned from his position in 1964 and J.

Raymond Jones was chosen, having split with De Sapio to support Wagner in the election of

1961. Jones was seen by "regulars," Black voters, and white progressives as a standalone figure

with the potential to mediate the bitter conflicts of a sparring party. [127]

Jones' involvement with Tammany embodies an aforementioned and decades-old strand

of New York Black political thought. In the late nineteenth century, the journalist and long-time

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[123] Glazer & Moynihan, pp. 299

[124] Glazer & Moynihan, pp. 292-299; Jerald Podair, *The Strike That Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean-Hill Brownsville Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 6

[125] Golway, pp. 305-306

[126] Golway treats Costikyan as "not a member of Tammany" (ibid, p. 306) while Walter takes the second position (ibid, p. 11)

[127] Walter, pp. 11-13

Booker T. Washington associate T. Thomas Fortune raised a significant claim: Black voters, particularly in New York, should split from the party of Lincoln (and Frederick Douglass) and work strategically with the Democratic Party which could, through the patronage apparatus of Tammany and other machines, provide material benefits and political power. [128] Jones, though he became politically active through the Black nationalist Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, came to view the Democratic Party and large-scale political organization as the avenue through which to pursue change on behalf of the Black cause. [129] Jones became involved with and important to Tammany Hall with the election of LaGuardia and the mayor's anti-Tammany, democratizing reform of the municipal legislature from a Board of Alderman to a City Council elected through proportional representation – each of which compelled Tammany to value Black voters more highly than ever before. [130]

During this stretch, Jones behaved as some variation of/between the *mutualistic symbiont* and *opportunist* archetypical "change agents" of Mahoney and Thelen's framework. These agents share certain features – a "high level of discretion in interpretation/enforcement" present in the "targeted institution" and a commitment to the existence, though (for opportunists) not necessarily the core premise, of the institution. The archetypes differ in the presence of strong or weak veto possibilities in the political context (in the cases of the symbiont and opportunist, respectively) and in the extent to which they cleave to the rules of the institution. [131] Jones occupies a space of ambiguity because he sought a new branch, rather than a distinct direction for Tammany.

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[128] Shawn Leigh Alexander, "The Negro in Politics," in Shawn Leigh Alexander (ed.), *T. Thomas Fortune, the Afro-American Agitator: A Collection of Writings, 1880-1928* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), pp. 27-73.
[129] Walter, pp. 2-4
[130] Walter, pp. 6, 55-67
[131] Mahoney & Thelen, pp. 23-28

While Tammany was weakened in the broader political context by the mounting challenge of LaGuardia, it remained a hierarchical institution with a considerable capacity for internal control. Black political organizations and constituents were similarly vulnerable when they entered the fray; thus, Jones had to tactfully navigate rule-breaking/bending. Additionally, the Hall's nature as a formally institutionalized system of the Democratic Party and an informally rendered structure of Irish/Catholic representation contributes to the ambiguity of Jones' position and the variety of his strategies. Jones upheld the role of Tammany as a hub of patronage and a structure through which (im)migrants to New York could find a place within the public sphere but spearheaded its drift toward the Black (non-Catholic) vote. With the ebbs and flows of Tammany in the "regular vs reform" period, Jones was at times opposed to the leadership of Tammany (specifically, De Sapio) and at others ensorcelled within it. [132] As such, Jones demonstrates Mahoney and Thelen's argument that "a dynamic component is built in; where institutions represent compromises or relatively durable though still contested settlements." [133] Just as institutions are dynamic, the actors who seek to alter them often are, too.

Jones' reign as Grand Sachem came to an end in 1967 as Republicans retook local office with the mayoral victory of John Lindsay and a new reformist figure, Senator Robert Kennedy, sought to stem the rot of corruption in Big Apple politics. Kennedy succeeded in drawing a number of Black voters away from "regular" Democrats and pinning a tag of "corruption" on Jones in what *The New York Times* described as the Senator's "drive to put all Democratic power in New York under his thumb." [134]

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[132] Walter, pp. 3- 9
[133] Mahoney & Thelen, p. 8
[134] Walter, p. 12; Good, "A Political Tour of Harlem"

With the resignation of Jones, so ended Tammany Hall – an institution that, although at that point distanced from the New Deal order, had indelibly thrust the order's ascent to the national stage and informed its urban liberal policy and philosophy. Furthermore, Tammany's demise reflected the changing organization and ideals of New York's electorate. In the same article from the *Times*, *Amsterdam News* writer and editor James Booker was quoted, "There are no power bases in Harlem any more. It's a community in political transition, and everyone up here is hustling for position." [135] Booker listed three names as younger politicians poised to take the mantle: State Senator Basil Paterson, State Assemblyman Charles Rangel, and Manhattan Borough President Percy Sutton. All of the above had been members of Jones' earlier venture: the Carver Club. [136] Jones formed the Carver Club in 1943, ten years into his involvement with Tammany, revealing once more the multitudes he contained, as well as the second strand of New York Black political thought: "building institutions of our own." [137]

Black-organized political clubs were central to the struggle for political representation and resources. [138] David Dinkins, the first Black Mayor of New York, and Constance Baker Motley, the first Black woman to be nominated to a federal judgeship, both rose to prominence under the tutelage of Jones and the Carver Club. [139] In the Brooklyn neighborhood of Bedford-

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[135] Good, ibid

[136] Booker, James. "J. Raymond Jones Master Politician." *New York Amsterdam News (1962-1993)*, 23 Apr 1966, pp. 1. *ProQuest*, https://lib-proxy01.skidmore.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.lib-proxy01.skidmore.edu/historical-newspapers/j-raymond-jones-master-politician/docview/226700405/se-2?accountid=13894.

[137] Paraphrasing Kwame Ture [née Stokely Carmichael], "Black Power" (1966). *BlackPast.org,* 13 July 2010, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/speeches-african-american-history/1966-stokely-carmichael-black-power/

[138] Frederick Douglass Opie, *Upsetting the Apple Cart: Black-Latino Coalitions in New York City from Protest to Public Office* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 34-35; Martha Biondi, "Lift Every Voice and Vote" in *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 208-222

[139] Walter, p. 13

Stuyvesant, the Thomas R. Fortune Democratic Club (eponymous) launched the career of Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman in the House of Representatives and the first Black presidential candidate. [140] Many of these organizations were brought into the fold of the Democratic establishment at the same time that Jones was. [141] But, while they lasted, they served much the same role as Tammany – distributing patronage privileges, endorsing and bolstering candidates, lobbying for political appointments, and supporting political action within the community. [142] This impulse to erect and embolden local Black institutions "dovetailed with the simultaneous emergence of black power ideologies" in 1960s Gotham. [143] These correlated threads interlaced in 1968, producing a tectonic conflict that splintered and reshaped New York politics and the New Deal order. [144]

Ocean Hill-Brownsville: "The Strike That Changed New York"

On May 9th, 1968, Rhody McCoy – a unit administrator for the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district – placed letters on the desks of 19 white teachers informing them of their termination and reassignment. [145] Come autumn, as the new school year began, 54,000 of the city's 57,000 teachers went on strike. [146] The Ocean Hill-Brownsville predicament brought to boil a simmering tension between Black and Latino (particularly Puerto Rican) communities and the white working class, which superseded the conflict between Catholic and Jewish New Yorkers, illustrated by Nathan Glazer and Daniel

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[140] Opie, p. 35 (shockingly, Thomas Fortune bore no relation to T. Thomas Fortune)

[141] Walter, p. 4

[142] Opie, p. 34

[143] Podair, pp. 5-8, quoted from p. 32

[144] Joshua B. Freeman, "'A Man by the Name of Albert Shanker'" in *Working-Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II* (New York: The New Press, 2001), pp. 215-227

[145] Podair, p. 2

[146] Podair, p. 115; Mike Stivers, "Ocean Hill-Brownsville, Fifty Years Later," *Jacobin*, 09/12/2018, https://jacobin.com/2018/09/ocean-hill-brownsville-strikes-1968-united-federation-teachers.

Patrick Moynihan, that had previously dominated city politics. [147] While the strikes themselves

stewed tensions across rather than along racial lines, the "resolution" of Ocean Hill-Brownsville

left the working-class of the city divided and crystallized a new narrative, a tale of two cities: one

Black, brown, and poor; one white and middle class. [148] This narrative, entrenched by the turn to

austerity in the light of the fiscal crisis, continues to shape New York politics to this day. [149]

Much began on that fateful day in May 1968, as civil rights and labor agendas clashed in the

classroom.

Rhody McCoy, while a member of the UFT, represented the interests of the *community

control* movement more than the union itself. [150] At the time, the term "community" had no

definite political affiliation; it was "both liberal and conservative, an agent for both systemic

change and the status quo." [151] Community control, on the other hand, was decisively linked to a

specific ideological movement emerging from civil rights activists and Black grassroots

organizations. [152] Black New Yorkers, responding to what they understood as the shortfalls of the

"white-dominated educational bureaucracy" in its post-*Brown v. Board of Ed* attempts at

integration, posited community control – in which school policy would be set and steered by

members of the neighborhood, rather than the Board of Education (BOE) or the UFT – as a cure

to systematic neglect of Black students and a path toward liberatory self-determination for Black

communities. [153] This drive drew upon the ideological tenets of Black Power, which sought to

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[147] Glazer & Moynihan, pp. viii-ix; Podair, pp. 6, 113-114; Stivers, ibid
[148] Podair, pp. 6, 9, 12-13; Freeman, pp. 226-227
[149] David Ludwig, "New York's Unfinished Tale of Two Cities," *The Atlantic*, 01/01/2015,
https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2015/01/bill-de-blasio-one-year-later/383658/.
[150] Podair, p. 4
[151] Podair, p. 21
[152] ibid; Opie, pp. 67-73
[153] Podair, pp. 32-35, quote from p. 4; Opie, p. 68; Mark Winston-Griffith and Max Freedman, "Agitate! Educate!
Organize!" *School Colors*, NPR, 10/11/2019, https://www.schoolcolorspodcast.com/; Freeman, p. 217

construct thoroughly Black institutions to wrest "control over our lives, politically, economically, and psychically." [154]

This tradition of Black radicalism was not the only one present in New York at the time, but it was omnipresent in the movement for community control. [155] Altogether, this movement drew on the earlier efforts of Black New Yorkers like J. Raymond Jones to win specific resources and positions for a disproportionately underrepresented group. As Podair writes, the African American Teachers Association (ATA – an association membered by educators in Ocean Hill-Brownsville) and its broader critique of the city's public-school system was "at once an indictment of the racism of institutions – in its focus on numbers and outcomes – and an effort to achieve group power by constructing similar institutions." [156] In fact, key legislation in City Hall and Albany regarding community control progressed thanks to Jones' protégés and affiliates Basil A. Paterson, Charles Rangel, David Dinkins, and Percy Sutton. [157] Before the strike, the student body of Ocean Hill-Brownsville was 50% Black and Puerto Rican, whereas the faculty was 65% white and Jewish. [158] But notably, as a philosophy, community control rejected hegemonic conceptions and critiqued establishment values of color-blind individualism and integration in favor of a more separatist, self-determined model. [159] For many Black New Yorkers, the educational establishment (in the form of the UFT and the BOE) represented a central hypocrisy of dominant politics: "the iron fist of undeviating authority in the velvet glove of liberal pluralism." [160] Thus, community control contested power and value structures that its

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[154] Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation* [Vintage edition] (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), p. xv
[155] Biondi, "Epilogue: Another Kind of America" in *To Stand and Fight*, p. 273
[156] Podair, p. 156
[157] Opie, p. 70
[158] Podair, p. 80; statistic from Opie, p. 70
[159] Podair, pp. 7-8, 20, 153-155, and "The Rise of Community," pp. 21-47
[160] Winston-Griffith & Freedman, ibid; Podair, p. 47

movement's members saw as "white," "middle-class," and out of step with and inadequate for Black communities. Per Podair, "community control redistributed power much more than it did economic resources," explaining why some Black radicals like Bayard Rustin criticized the movement for its lack of holistic structural reform. [161]

The community control movement, while majority Black in its origin, found allies in all shades across the spectrum of New York politics. New Left intellectuals and activists linked the fight for community control to their own critiques of the "excesses of mass society in 1960s America: bureaucracy, rationalization, and impersonality" and the ideal of participatory democracy. [162] The New Left was well-aligned and allied with the grassroots ideologies of community control, with the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and other organizations actively engaged in prior conflicts alongside Black student and neighborhood associations. [163] On the other hand, elite factions in the city – namely Mayor John Lindsay's administration and philanthropic outlets of the city's business elite, like the Ford Foundation – sought economic self-sufficiency and social stability in Black communities without destabilizing the upper-echelon structuring of wealth and power. [164] Their intentions were not simply cynical, however.

Lindsay presided over a city that seemed, at the end of Robert Wagner's mayoralty, ungovernable. New York teetered on the precipice of "race riots" following the shooting of an unarmed Black teenager in 1964, major crime soared, industry and the majority-white middle class began to flee on the highways built by Robert Moses, the city's credit rating started to drop precipitously, and the Great Society's anti-poverty programs proceeded in puzzling, poorly-

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[161] Quote from Podair, p. 37; on Bayard Rustin, see Stivers, ibid

[162] Podair, quote from p. 39, generally, pp. 21, 39-40; for an essential primary source document expressing New Left ideology, see Tom Hayden, "The Port Huron Statement" (New York: Students for a Democratic Society, 1962)

[163] Opie, pp. 62-67

[164] Stivers, ibid; Podair, pp. 36-39, 77

coordinated fashion. [165] The mayor, himself a "limousine liberal" of the WASP-y upper-class and Upper East Side, forged his electoral coalition in the New York of the Black and brown poor. [166] Lindsay hoped, at all costs, to prevent full-blown racial hostilities from engulfing the city. If at times he was sanctimonious and unwilling to address the contradictions and constrictions of his upper-class compatriots, he did evince an ostensibly genuine generosity: "Those who have nothing or those who have the least should get the most even if it is everything you have." [167]

Yet his charity frequently came out of the pockets of others: "[white middle-class New Yorkers] feel he is buying racial peace for Park Avenue by giving away to Harlem what the middle class needs." [168] The city's business elite, represented in part by the Ford Foundation, joined Lindsay in his admonition of the white middle-class for evading their own responsibility in New York's racial split and stratification. Through policy experts like Mario Fantini, these charitable arms embraced a new novel strand of social work and academic thinking labeled "opportunity theory." This theory challenged the prevailing notion that poverty was a "product of individual failure" and placed greater emphasis on structural barriers. [169] Their prescription for such structural maladies was to encourage the development of grassroots organization, as espoused in the community control movement, toward the pre-stated aim of (economic) Black

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[165] Sam Roberts, "City in Crisis I," pp. 10-25, and Pete Hamill, "Power to the Rest of the People," pp. 58-61 in Sam Roberts ed., *America's Mayor: John V. Lindsay and the Reinvention of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press and the Museum of the City of New York, 2010); see also, generally: Roger Starr, *The Rise and Fall of New York City* (New York: Basic Books, 1985) and Charles R. Morris, *The Cost of Good Intentions: New York City and the Liberal Experiment, 1960-1975* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co, 1980).

[166] Phillips-Fein, ibid, pp. 34-42

[167] Former Lindsay aide, Barry Gottehrer in *The Mayor's Man: One Man's Struggle to Save Our Cities* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday: 1975), p. 206.

[168] *New York Times*, 11/02/1968, p. 43 *via* Podair, p. 36

[169] Podair, pp. 38-39; Katznelson, "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" p. 186

self-sufficiency. Again, this posturing contained conflicting intentions – both self-serving and altruistic – but placed these establishment actors in firm opposition to the white middle-class.

In the Ocean Hill-Brownsville conflict, the white middle-class and its broader interests were represented by the UFT. The UFT, like Ocean Hill itself, had a long-standing history as white, predominantly Jewish, and social democratically inclined. [170] Albert Shanker, the union's President from 1964 to 1985, symbolized the union's strong association with working-class, liberal Judaism, but also its shifting priorities. [171] As the union became enmeshed in the governing apparatus, the UFT became more focused on professionalization, winning greater resources ($), and improving working conditions, rather than radically challenging the status quo of city politics and (racial-)economic stratification. [172]

On the whole, the union's positioning on race and civil rights reflected the general sentiments of New York's white middle-class. Firstly, the UFT placed immense value on the Board of Examiners' testing system. This system was seen as purely meritocratic, capable of objectively testing "self-reliant" individuals (students and teachers alike) without fault or racial bias. Black educators, activists, and community members disputed this apparent fairness and noted wrinkles, like the disproportionately low scoring of Black teachers on oral portions of the examination. [173] Measures like these coincided with a white commitment to the "logic of the marketplace" and "color-blind individualism" that Black New Yorkers simply did not share. [174]

Secondly, the UFT and its members (writ large) ascribed the woes of Black New Yorkers to the "culture of poverty" theory opposed by the likes of Mario Fantini and espoused by others,

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[170] Opie, p. 70
[171] Freeman, *Working Class New York*, pp. 223-224
[172] Stivers, ibid
[173] Podair, pp. 51-53
[174] First quote from Nathan Glazer, "Negroes and Jews: The New Challenge to Pluralism," *Commentary* 38 (December 1964): p. 32; second quote from Biondi, "Epilogue: Another Kind of America," p. 273

like Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. This view of their students and their students'

communities prejudiced the instruction of the UFT's white teachers, which community control

advocates condemned and aimed to counter with a more localized approach. [175]

Thirdly, the UFT championed a "moderate" cultural pluralism captured by the following

quote from Glazer and Moynihan, "There are many groups [in New York]. They differ in wealth,

power, occupation, values, but in effect an open society prevails …" [176] Such an understanding

filtered through textbooks and teaching, furthering a sense that individuals of any color and

sufficient merit could overcome obstacles and reap rewards. [177]

Few, if any, of these values overlapped with those of the Black New Yorkers pushing for

community control. Preston Wilcox, an early proponent of community control, imagined a

school "sympathetically responsive to the customs and values of the community it serves." [178] In

the same article, Wilcox reflected on an earlier struggle involving Intermediate School 201. In

the words of Podair, IS 201 "represented a dividing line between the dying school integration

movement in New York and the nascent community control impulse." [179] IS 201 was intended to

draw students from across the "democratic, multi-cultural and multi-racial city," but the school,

located in the middle of Harlem, failed to attract non-Black-and-brown students as a result of

fatalistic, self-interested views held by "nice white parents." [180] Yet in 1966, Superintendent

Bernard Donovan named a white man, Stanley Lisser, to be the school's first president. The

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[175] Podair, pp. 54-56

[176] *Beyond the Melting Pot*, pp. xxiii-xxiv

[177] Podair, pp. 56-58

[178] Preston Wilcox, "The Controversy Over I.S. 201," *Urban Review* 1 (July 1966), pp. 13-15

[179] Podair, p. 34

[180] First quote from a promotional flyer: New York City Board of Education, "An Invitation to Education for a Modern World," n.d., Stutz Collection, Box 24 *via* Podair, p. 34; Chana Joffe-Walt, "Episode Two: 'I Still Believe in It,'" *New York Times*, 06/30/2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/podcasts/nice-white-parents-serial-2.html.

community was outraged. Up rose a litany of local organizations – the Harlem Parents Committee, EQUAL (a coalition of Black civil rights activists and white leftists organized by Milton Galamison, a Reverend and radical egalitarian integrationist), HARYOU-ACT (a community corporation tied to the Great Society), Massive Economic Neighborhood Development (MEND – affiliated with Galamison), the Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU, founded by Malcolm X), and the African-American Teachers Association (AATA/ATA, formed by Albert Vann and Jitu Weusi, nee Les Campbell, future teachers in Ocean Hill-Brownsville). Additionally, national though localized organizations – the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE, supported significantly by New York's own Bayard Rustin) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) – lent their support to demonstrations outside IS 201 on September 12th, 1966, the day classes were scheduled to begin. [181]

One and a half years earlier, Galamison and Rustin had organized a boycott of New York's public schools that was between 75 and 80 percent successful in Black communities compared to 44 percent effective in the city on the whole. The UFT refused to support the boycott in any official capacity, beginning the split of labor and civil rights. [182] By 1966, Black grassroots organizations and white (New-)leftists were beginning to settle on the vision of "community control," and, in 1968 with Ocean Hill-Brownsville, this vision would come to fruition. [183] For Black working-class communities and community organizations, labor had wavered too long in its commitment to civil rights. [184] With the Ocean Hill People's Board of Education led by Rhody McCoy, the community control experiment would spurn the union and

[181] Podair, pp. 24-35; Opie, pp. 67-73, Freeman, p. 217
[182] Podair, p. 31; Stivers, ibid; Freeman, pp. 217-220
[183] Freeman, pp. 217-219
[184] Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*, pp. 250-251; Biondi, "Labor and the Fight for Racial Equality" in Joshua Freeman ed., *City of Workers, City of Struggle: How Labor Movements Changed New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), pp. 130-141

resort to any means necessary to salvage "the last threads of the community's faith in the school system's purposes and abilities." [185]

McCoy, in the framework detailed by Mahoney and Thelen, can best be described as a parasitic symbiont. Again, we are dealing with a change agent operating within multiple institutions – the United Federation of Teachers and the public-school system, entangled but distinct. Regarding the union, McCoy appeared uninterested in either preserving the institution or following the rules of the institution. In this sense, he would seem to be an insurrectionary, with the attendant characteristics of political and institutional context – weak veto possibilities in the former, as the city government devolved power to the local board, and a low level of discretion in interpretation/enforcement within the UFT – mostly passing muster. Yet if we consider the public-school system as the targeted institution, we can highlight the existence, though underuse, of strong veto possibilities for Lindsay and the city's Board of Education, as well as the high level of discretion offered to the local board by way of decentralization legislation. [186] McCoy's behavior as a parasitic symbiont – defined by one's objective to preserve the institution (the public school system) and one's refusal to follow the rules of said institution – can be well summarized in the following quote from Podair, "He was a black man with a reputation for quiet independence and an unwillingness to play by bureaucratic rules." [187]

In three months, from September to November 1968, the UFT struck thrice. [188] This short time was incredibly tumultuous, chaotic, and at times violent. [189] By the end, the UFT saw the majority of its initial goals reflected in the strike's settlement – state trusteeship over the district,

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[185] Opie, pp. 70-71; quote from Rhody McCoy, "A Plan for the Experimental School District: Ocean Hill-Brownsville," August 1967, Board of Education Papers, Shapiro Collection, Box 8 *via* Podair, p. 86
[186] Mahoney & Thelen, ibid, pp. 19, 23-28
[187] Podair, p. 4
[188] Podair, pp. 116-122; Freeman, pp. 224-226
[189] Podair, p. 117

lasting suspension of the local board, reassignment of the terminated teachers, and suspension

power if any BOE employee harassed a union member. [190] But in winning the battle over Ocean

Hill-Brownsville the UFT had incited a new, intransigent clash: "Union concepts of security and

seniority were formulated in the period of struggle between company and union. Now the

struggle is between the Negroes and the union. It is [the BOE's] position that a basic conflict

exists between labor union concepts and civil rights concepts. Something has to give." [191]

Though the UFT and organized labor seemed triumphant, Ocean Hill-Brownsville left an open

wound festering and a central question unanswered (or at least unsatisfied): "What principles

would govern the distribution of resources in a 'fair,' 'just' city?" [192] The events of 1968

foreclosed the social democratic vision of multi-racial class alliance posited by New Leftists, as

well as the older, New Deal order-aligned vision of liberal, color-blind pluralism. [193] Per Mark

Winston-Griffith and Max Freedman, "If Ocean Hill-Brownsville had exposed the hypocrisy of

old-school liberal politics, the fiscal crisis signaled their collapse." [194] With the schism of

organized labor and working-class communities of color, white and Black, liberal and (more)

radical – New York would face an "onslaught of austerity" without powerful, collective voices to

advocate for an alternative. [195]

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[190] Freeman, p. 225

[191] New York City Board of Education President John Doar in an interview with *Fortune*, January 1968 (partially republished digitally, 01/20/2013, https://fortune.com/2013/01/20/the-deeper-shame-of-american-cities-fortune-1968/), p. 37

[192] Freeman, p. 227; quote from Podair, p. 5

[193] Podair, p. 212

[194] "Agitate! Educate! Organize!", ibid

[195] Stivers, ibid; Marc Kagan, "More Austerity Coming? Lessons from New York's 1970s Fiscal Crisis," *New Labor Forum*, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, 03/10/2023, https://newlaborforum.cuny.edu/2020/10/03/more-austerity-coming-lessons-from-new-yorks-1970s-fiscal-crisis/.

FRACTURE: Fiscal Crisis and the Turn to Austerity

In contrast with the racially charged tensions of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, "the [fiscal] crisis provided a way to change the politics of the city in profound ways without ever talking about race or class explicitly." [196] But, as Kim Phillips-Fein's book *Fear City* elucidates, local liberals who subscribed to the New Deal brand of politics chose austerity – and her work strongly argues that this was a choice rather than a necessity of accounting – as much as the national conservatives who forced their hand. [197] As such, this was both the triumph of exogenous, oppositional forces seizing on opportunity and the surrender of endogenous actors reacting with fear to their foundational arrangements slipping away. These liberals, with nervous and helpless anticipation, sensed that the conditions of the New Deal order were dissolving with perilous, though somewhat self-inflicted, trends of deindustrialization, white flight, racial conflict, and a weakened labor movement. Deindustrialization was particularly pernicious. The city's robust public investment – in health care, the arts, education, transit, and housing – was enabled by a strong, industrial economy. [198] In the postwar years, almost half of the city's workforce was blue-collar, with about a third employed in manufacturing. From the waterfronts of Brooklyn to the back alleys of Manhattan, the city's map was dappled with small factory shops. [199] And then, from the end of World War II to the mid-sixties, the shape of the city changed tremendously. Industry was spurned for a "service"-based economy, driven in part by

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[196] Phillips-Fein, p. 8

[197] Phillips-Fein, pp. 2-3, 9-10

[198] Phillips-Fein, pp. 18-19; Freeman, *Working Class New York*, p. 7

[199] Joel Schwartz, *The New York Approach: Robert Moses, Urban Liberals, and Redevelopment of the Inner City* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993), p. 248; Roger Starr, *The Rise and Fall of New York City*, pp. 68-70

the shifts in consumer habits bubbling beneath the Great Depression. [200] No man was more responsible for the alteration of the city than Robert Moses; he pursued the vision of a "clean" city at the cost of the white working class and poor people of color who had the misfortune of muddying his view. [201] Yet in a bitter twist of fate, the highways he constructed would facilitate the exodus of the well-to-do white New Yorkers (and their tax dollars) for whom he tried to improve the city. [202]

As industry drifted away, job loss worsened and the Black and brown working-class – through the patronage apparatus captured and transformed by the likes of J. Raymond Jones – found gainful(ish) employment within the public sector upon which they relied already for critical social services. [203] Thus, the city's generous welfare "state" became increasingly understood by the white middle-class in racially polarized terms just at the moment when working-class Black and brown New Yorkers began to reap greater and greater rewards within a system from which they had long been excluded. [204] Further, the white-collar elites of the city continued to bemoan the size of city government as an untenable weight on the budget. [205]

Their opportunity to make this case decisively would emerge with the fiscal crisis. For much of the post-war era, despite the challenges of Robert Moses and Wall Street, New York City had remained a working-class town, bestowing a promise upon its least fortunate: the right

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[200] Eric Lichten, *Class, Power and Austerity: The New York City Fiscal Crisis* (South Hadley: Bergin & Garvey, 1986); Schwartz, pp. xv-xxi, 108-260, 295-305; Starr, pp. 68-83; regarding consumer habits – Bernstein, ibid, pp. 46-48

[201] Podair, p. 11; see generally, Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974), and Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961)

[202] Phillips-Fein, p. 20

[203] Phillips-Fein, pp. 21-22; Podair, p. 18; Freeman, p. 197

[204] Phillips-Fein, pp. 22-23; Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*

[205] Freeman, pp. 256-258; Phillips-Fein, pp. 19-20

to a city, to its services, to the vision of urban liberalism. [206] With the fiscal crisis, this promise

and this vision were shattered beyond repair.

<div align="center">…</div>

Phillips-Fein emphasizes that the nature of this crisis was not simply local but national.

She writes, "America's political system failed to adequately confront [racial fears and hostilities

resulting in white flight], just as it failed to confront the urban poverty that was the result of

capital flight and deurbanization … the city turned to debt in an effort to sidestep an open debate

over whether it could continue to make good on its effort to carve out a distinctive set of social

rights." [207] Unable to solve these greater national dilemmas, municipal politicos like Robert F.

Wagner and John Lindsay borrowed more and more to postpone the day of reckoning. [208] Their

boldness, perhaps brashness, in doing so presumed that there would always be a safety net – that

the state and national coffers would never run dry. [209] While one might look back and label their

faith as shortsighted, we must remember the context of the Great Society. As Katznelson

observes, the Great Society was seen as an "'opportunity' to achieve the social democratic

potential of the New Deal." [210] While Katznelson provides a valuable interrogation of whether

much of an opportunity existed, the conviction that this opportunity was still available proved

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[206] See generally: Freeman, *Working Class New York*; David Harvey, "The Right to the City," *New Left Review* 53, September-October 2008.

[207] Phillips-Fein, quote from pp. 6-7, see pp. 15-22 for further detail on historical antecedents of the crisis; see also Katznelson, "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" (p. 186 and generally), Isserman & Kazin, p. 232, Rieder, p. 245, Fraser, p. 73, and Edsall, p. 176 in *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order*; Roger Starr, *The Rise and Fall of New York City*; Charles R. Morris, *The Cost of Good Intentions*.

[208] Phillips-Fein, pp. 29, 32-37, 42-43; Sam Roberts, "City in Crisis I" in *America's Mayor: John V. Lindsay and the Reinvention of New York*, pp. 12-13, 16-23

[209] Phillips-Fein, p. 89;

[210] "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" pp. 185-186; quotation of 'opportunity' references Daniel Patrick Moynihan's quote "an immense opportunity to institute more or less permanent social changes – a fixed full employment program, a measure of income maintenance – was lost…" in *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding: Community Action in the War on Poverty* (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 193

vital to Wagner and Lindsay's enduring belief in borrowing against the future. Practically and financially speaking, the money was important as well; the city saw its state and federal funding increase by 172 percent between 1965 and 1969. [211]

But, most notably, the mayors saw within the Great Society an ideological renewal and re-emphasis of the very principles upon which the city's politics were based. As Phillips-Fein writes, "The problem was that New York City had too big a heart: it had adopted wholesale the priorities of the Great Society, seeking to go even further than the federal government in its efforts to fight poverty." [212] Katznelson further details that the ambitious priorities of the Great Society were out of step with its prescribed (and proscribed) solutions. [213] The Great Society could not and did not fundamentally restructure the American political economy, instead opting to "enhance economic opportunity at the interface of structure and behavior." [214] Drawing on sociological understandings, personified by Moynihan, the Great Society created agencies and policies aimed at individual, rather than institutional reform. However, the underlying tensions and the limitations of the New Deal order and urban liberalism were deeply structural. Left unresolved, the order could neither achieve its full social-democratic potential nor defend itself from the attacks to come.

Simultaneously, significant critiques from the Right emerged on the state and national levels. [215] In 1972, President Nixon pronounced the death of the Great Society and proclaimed he

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[211] Ester Fuchs, *Mayors and Money: Fiscal Policy in New York and Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 160.

[212] Phillips-Fein, p. 84

[213] "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" p. 187

[214] "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?" quote on p. 202, see also pp. 198-204

[215] See generally: Rieder, "The Rise of the Silent Majority," pp. 243-268, and Edsall, "The Changing Shape of Power," pp. 269-293; Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015) – specifically Chapter 5, "The Birth of Populist Conservatism," pp. 187-216; Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2009), pp. 4-5

would end the "era of permissiveness." [216] The president critiqued the pampering nature of government largesse, and he both capped and redesignated War on Poverty grants, instead sending block grants to state governments for distribution at their discretion. [217] Governor Nelson Rockefeller, who had long paved a path for (moderate) Republicans to work within the framework of the New Deal order, began to drift toward the burgeoning anti- "liberal largesse" politics of the New Right as he fretted, like Lindsay, over the potential for mass corporate exodus from New York. [218] "Rocky" became Vice President to Gerald Ford in 1974, following his own exploration of a run for president in 1973 amidst the Watergate scandal. [219] Ford, despite a public image as a pragmatic moderate without "vigorous ideology," was firmly aligned with the New Right in his staunch opposition to the Great Society; he decried Democrats as the "party of Big Business, of Big Government, of Big Spending, of Big Deficits, of Big Cost of Living, of Big Labor Trouble, of Big Home Foreclosures, of Big Scandals [unironically], of Big Riots in the Streets and of Big Promises." [220]

Ford's politics were, by and large, defined by an unwavering personal belief in fiscal responsibility. Potentially, his first great achievement to this end was rectifying the finances of his fraternity, Delta Kappa Epsilon, at the University of Michigan. [221] Within his cabinet, Ford was surrounded by insurgent conservatives: then-Chief of Staff (COS) Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy

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[216] "President Pledges an End to 'Era of Permissiveness,'" *New York Times*, 11/10/1972, https://www.nytimes.com/1972/11/10/archives/president-pledges-an-end-to-era-of-permissiveness-in-preelection-in.html?smid=url-share.

[217] Phillips-Fein, p. 25

[218] Phillips-Fein, p. 94; McGirr, pp. 188-189

[219] Phillips-Fein, p. 70

[220] Phillips-Fein, pp. 92-93 quoting from Geoffrey Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 346, and Don Oberdorfer, "He [Ford] Wants to Be Speaker of the House," *New York Times Magazine*, 04/30/1967

[221] Phillips-Fein, p. 93, citing Yanek Mieczkowski, *Gerald Ford and the Challenges of the 1970s* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005), p. 73.

COS Dick Cheney, Ayn Rand devotee and chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, Alan

Greenspan, and Treasury Secretary William Simon, known as "the Vince Lombardi of Wall

Street." [222] Each and all saw the fiscal crisis of the city as an unmissable political opportunity

with profound national implications. The crisis was a refutation of postwar liberalism writ large,

and the federal response had to reflect the administration's plans for the entire country's future.

William Simon testified to the Senate Banking Committee that any aid package must feature

caveats "so punitive that no other city will be tempted to turn down the same road." [223] Despite

some early flirtation with providing unfettered aid to the city, Ford and his cabinet committed to

this absolutist hardline stance: any assistance to the city without strict terms could only establish

a dangerous precedent, tie the national financial system to New York's impending collapse, and

delay the foreordained. No federal bailout would come until the city slashed its spending by

gutting public services. [224]

Ford's reluctance was exacerbated by a second, intertwined dilemma. Banks, particularly

those located in New York, had for years permitted and underwritten the city's debt. Lending

funds and purchasing municipal bonds was mutually advantageous – providing high-interest, tax-

exempt, and ostensibly low-risk investments to financial institutions. [225] These institutions also

saw their practice as a moral imperative, "fulfilling a valid social role in supporting this big,

dynamic, important city." [226] However, in the mid-70s, this commitment waned as globalization

and deregulation provided alternative opportunities for tax-free, highly profitable investments, all

[222] Phillips-Fein, pp. 94-96; quote from "William E. Simon: A Candid Conversation About Money, Energy and Hard Times in the Seventies with the Outgoing, Opinionated U.S. Secretary of the Treasury," *Playboy* [!], May 1975.
[223] "President Sees No 'Justification' for Help to City," *New York Times*, 10/10/1975, https://www.nytimes.com/1975/10/10/archives/president-sees-no-justification-for-help-to-city.html?smid=url-share.
[224] Freeman, pp. 259-260; Phillips-Fein, pp. 97-100
[225] Freeman, p. 257
[226] Phillips-Fein, p. 74

while cities like New York sought to borrow more and more. Worldwide troubles predisposed

the financial sector to caution, and the state of New York's finances were deeply concerning.

Having already borrowed more than a billion dollars from commercial banks, the city asked for

an additional five billion in the fall of 1974. [227] Leaders of the white-collar world, knowing they

held the capacity and capital to resolve New York's budgetary woes, seized upon this moment of

vulnerability to demand long-desired reforms (which aligned with the Ford administration's

political objectives): "less and less costly government," significant cuts to public services, and

weakened protections and privileges for municipal unions and the working-class, generally. [228]

Yet New York's turn to austerity was not simply spurred by the opportunism of national

conservatives and local financial elites. Growing publicity of the city's liability produced

widespread uncertainty: "fear of bankruptcy took on a life of its own." [229] In the elegant words of

Steve Clifford, a staffer in the office of Comptroller Harrison Jay Goldin and the rare example of

a long-haired hippie with a degree from the Harvard Business School, "the city is fucked." [230]

The New York Times opined that "this city is sliding into bankruptcy with dismaying speed." [231]

State Senator Roy Goodman provided an alarming diagnosis: "The city is a sick patient with a

rapidly spreading form of financial cancer." [232] Even Mayor Abraham Beame, a product of the

Big Apple's public education system and civil service, could not overcome the citywide

emotional fervor. Choking back tears, he announced on November 23rd, 1974, that he would

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[227] Freeman, pp. 256-257; Phillips-Fein, pp. 75-77

[228] Freeman, pp. 257-258; Phillips-Fein, pp. 79-81

[229] Phillips-Fein, p. 67

[230] Quote from Clifford to Roy Goodman, 11/21/74, "The Fiscal Crisis," in SEC FOIA Request Box 1, 215 *via* Phillips-Fein, p. 6; see also, Phillips-Fein, pp. 61-64

[231] "Near-Bankrupt City," *New York Times*, 11/04/1974, https://www.nytimes.com/1974/11/04/archives/nearbankrupt-city.html?smid=url-share

[232] "News Release for State Senator Roy M. Goodman," 11/26/1974, SEC FOIA Request, Box 1, 340 *via* Phillips-Fein, p. 68

drastically reduce the budget by dismissing 1,510 city workers and freezing hiring for vacant

posts. [233] Weeks later, that number would balloon to 3,725 with 2,700 more required to retire. [234]

While many of the dismissed employees and their fellow citizens would stage significant

protests, rejecting New York's betrayal of its urban liberal promises, their efforts served to stoke

the fire of fear permeating within and without the city limits. [235] As if written by Shakespeare

himself, the tragic irony of the New Deal order is this: things truly fell apart as the result of a

climate of fright parallel to that which propelled its ascendance. [236]

Full-blown austerity was brutal. On June 11th, the city was scheduled to repay $792

million without, at the time, nearly enough to do so. As the day of reckoning approached, Mayor

Beame purportedly voiced to President Ford that the city was already reeling, teetering on the

precipice of "social chaos," due to cuts. [237] Rockefeller's successor, Hugh Carey, who began his

term as governor with a reluctant but steadfast avowal that "a government without self-control

can do nothing and help no one," concurred with the Mayor's assessment and argued that the

administration's unwavering demands for further cuts were merciless: "Must a city rot?" [238] In

the absence of federal assistance, Carey and his advisers stepped in. They devised the Municipal

[233] Maurice Carroll, "Beame Cuts 1,510 Workers and Imposes a Job Freeze to Save City $100-Million," *New York Times*, 11/23/1974, https://www.nytimes.com/1974/11/23/archives/beame-cuts-1510-workers-and-imposes-a-job-freeze-to-save-city.html?smid=url-share.

[234] Fred Ferretti, "City, in Dismissing 3,725, Includes 1,100 in Schools, 900 in Uniform; Will Force 2,700 Others to Retire," *New York Times*, 12/12/1974, https://www.nytimes.com/1974/12/12/archives/city-in-dismissing-3725-includes-1100-in-schools-900-in-uniform.html?smid=url-share.

[235] New York Police Department/Council for Public Safety, "Welcome to Fear City: A Survival Guide for Visitors to the City of New York" (1975), accessed online via *Research and Destroy New York City*, https://researchdestroy.com/welcome-to-fear-city.pdf.

[236] See Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself*

[237] Phillips-Fein, p. 102, citing the notes of White House Press Secretary Ron Nessen (05/13/1975)

[238] "Text of Carey's State of the State as He Delivered It to the Legislature," *New York Times*, 01/09/1975, https://www.nytimes.com/1975/01/09/archives/text-of-careys-state-of-the-state-message-as-he-delivered-it-to-the.html?smid=url-share; Frank Lynn, "Carey and Mayor Express Anger," *New York Times*, 05/15/1975, https://www.nytimes.com/1975/05/15/archives/carey-and-mayor-express-anger.html?smid=url-share.

Assistance Corporation as a vehicle to raise funds for repayment, granting "Big MAC" –

membered by the city's financial elite – control over the city's bond sales and stock transfer

taxes, as well as authorization to reject any further borrowing. [239]

Almost immediately, the city erupted into protest, with actions led by various unions

threatened by the mass layoffs to come with the arrival of a new fiscal year on July 1st, 1975. [240]

Beame, desperate to quell tensions and at best acquiescent to the calls for more cuts, tried

unsuccessfully to reverse course and return gains to the unions. He was rebuked within two

weeks. Both the financial community and the unions intensified their demands, but MAC held

the upper hand. The unions' militancy depreciated their esteem in the eyes of "mainstream

liberals," and leaders within the union grew worried that the potential city default would hurt

more than help their bargaining position. By late July, labor had come to the negotiating table,

hoping to preserve whatever benefits they could. [241] A few months later, the public sector unions

demonstrated their utter desperation and defeatist read on the situation by purchasing MAC

bonds with their members' pension funds, saving the city from almost certain collapse. [242]

During this stretch, the advocates of austerity took advantage of their leverage over (dis-)

organized labor and attacked "other sacred cows of New York social democracy": public transit,

CUNY, and rent control. [243]

In the fall of 1975, with the city still strapped for cash, Ford's position was bankruptcy or

bust. [244] MAC appeared inept; thus, Carey again proposed a "solution": a new state agency called

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[239] Freeman, pp. 260-261; Phillips-Fein, pp. 111-128
[240] Freeman, pp. 261-262; Phillips-Fein, pp. 130-132
[241] Freeman, p. 262-263; Phillips-Fein, pp. 135-144
[242] Freeman, pp. 267-268; Phillips-Fein, pp. 153
[243] Freeman, p. 264
[244] "Ford to City: Drop Dead," *New York Daily News*, 10/30/1975 – republished in part on 10/29/2015, https://www.nydailynews.com/2015/10/29/ford-to-city-drop-dead-in-1975/. Ford had imparted the same sentiment for months before, but this headline remains its most infamous manifestation.

the Emergency Financial Control Board. The EFCB – made up of seven members, including the governor, state comptroller, mayor, city comptroller, and three private citizens (all of Carey's picks were corporate leaders) – would take full control of the city's finances. [245] In a stunning embodiment of the fiscal crisis' forced "rationalism," an unnamed MAC director defended the EFCB, "It's not an assault on home rule [a long-standing, continuous aspiration for the city to wrest financial control from the state]. It's the facts of life." [246] This common, enduring perception of the crisis and its resolution as preordained belies the truth of the matter: "The framework of 'crisis' and the power that debt grants creditors generated a sense of inevitability, making it seem that there were no alternatives." [247] Of course, there were; but, the plausibility of such imaginaries – the preservation of key aspects of New York's urban liberalism/ social democracy, an unconditional federal or state bailout, further borrowing or forgiveness from the banks – had been foreclosed.

The fiscal crisis culminated contestations to the New Deal order from within and without: deindustrialization, globalization, weakened labor, white flight, racial conflict, and critiques of the "big-government, social insurance state." [248] Deindustrialization, deurbanization, and white flight drove tax revenue away from the city – causing City Hall to borrow more and more, forging a vulnerable relationship with lenders whose commitments and contexts changed. Weakened labor and racial conflict left urban liberalism without energy or solidarity among its typical defenders: the working class, people of color, and elite liberal politicians. All the while, the New Right rose in a fervent foray against the New Deal order, seizing upon opportunities like

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[245] Phillips-Fein, pp. 152-153

[246] Steven Weisman, "Governor Is Considering a Session on Fiscal Panel," *New York Times*, 08/30/1975, https://www.nytimes.com/1975/08/30/archives/governor-is-considering-a-session-on-fiscal-panel-governor-plans-to.html?smid=url-share.

[247] Phillips-Fein, p. 304

[248] "Was the Great Society a Lost Opportunity?", p. 203

the fiscal crisis to proselytize and actualize their objectives. With the turn to austerity, the politics of city and country were radically transformed. New York had avoided bankruptcy, but the New Deal order had not. [249] It was autumn in New York; it was morning in America.

…

In conversations with fellow historians and in the opening chapter of *Fear City*, Phillips-Fein frequently frames the fiscal crisis in terms of "narrowing vision." [250] She writes, "the fiscal crisis involved discarding a set of social hopes, a vision of what the city could be," "the budget comes to life as a place where opposing visions of the city's future were contested," and "the promises and visions of an earlier era had come up against their limits." [251] This framing, as well as this moment in political time, lends itself to analysis within an American Political Development context. The New Deal order, understood through the prism of Andrew Polsky's conception of *partisan regime*, was "a political coalition organized under a common party label that challenge[d] core tenets of the established political order, secure[d] effective national governing power, define[d] broadly the terms of political debate, and maintain[ed] sufficient power to thwart opposition efforts to undo its principal policy, institutional, and ideological achievements." [252] Recalling Orren and Skowronek's definition of order as a "bundle of patterns," we can conceptualize these founding contradictions as part-in-parcel of the "the interests that don't fit," the tensions that "push and pull [institutions] through time." [253] These tensions – the vulnerable position of labor, the ideological challenge to preconceived American

[249] Phillips-Fein, pp. 4, 301-316

[250] Dylan Gottlieb and Jessica Levy, "Kim Phillips-Fein on the Fiscal Crisis and Austerity Politics in New York City," *Who Makes Cents?: A History of Capitalism Podcast*, 06/01/2017, https://whomakescents.libsyn.com/kim-phillips-fein-on-the-fiscal-crisis-and-austerity-politics-in-new-york-city.

[251] Phillips-Fein, pp. 3, 5, and 14 (respectively)

[252] Polsky, ibid, p. 57

[253] Orren and Skowronek, ibid, pp. 14, 94, and 106 (respectively)

notions of statism and individualism, and the uncivil union of Northern and Southern Democrats – reinforce the emphasis that Pierson placed on the early steps of a particular political/historical path, as well as the notion that the "branching process" of history is always, to an extent, bounded. [254] Considering the 1960s' challenges to the established order, we might also return to Thelen's understanding that "[with] almost any institution that survives major socioeconomic transformation … or political disjuncture … the story of institutional reproduction is likely to be strongly laced with elements of institutional transformation." [255] In sum, the New Deal order as it approached the fiscal crisis reflected the view that "where institutions represent compromises or relatively durable though still contested settlements … they are always vulnerable to shifts." [256]

Thus, Phillips-Fein's framing of an earlier era faltering at its pre-inscribed limits falls in line with and becomes clarified by American Political Development scholarship. How does an order fall apart? Reflecting on the fiscal crisis, we see the tensions central to the construction of the New Deal order producing gradual shifts and institutional transformations that catalyze and culminate in the order's collapse. Such splinters are not spontaneous; they simply show that "the dust never really does settle." [257] Orders are rarely, if ever, built to last; certainly not to remain static. The tensions within their construction are what compel their development. As such, the story of the fiscal crisis is the story of an order in decay and dissolution. While pieces of its constituent parts would, like compost, encourage outgrowths and invigorate new developments, its essential character was resolutely, irreparably concluded.

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[254] Pierson, ibid, pp. 17-18
[255] Thelen, "How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis," p. 230
[256] Mahoney & Thelen, "A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change," p. 8
[257] Pierson, p. 133

CODA: Community Gardens, Urbicide, & Continued Austerity

Following the fiscal crisis, much of New York became a "ghost city." [258] The streets,

lacking vitality and littered with trash, looked the way their residents felt: despondent, discarded,

and ailing. The Fairytale of New York had wilted into A Tale of Two Cities. [259] In some parts of

the city, shiny towers sprouted up as beacons of the up-and-coming neoliberal New York. On

42nd and Lex, across from Grand Central, the Commodore Hotel – named for Cornelius

"Commodore" Vanderbilt – was shuttered and stripped of its stone façade, replaced by

glimmering glass. The Grand Hyatt New York (now the Hyatt Grand Central New York) was

developed tax-free by a twenty-nine-year-old Donald Trump in 1976 and stood for the city's

newfound outlook: "Give me your rich!" [260] In the rest of the city, New York was becoming

poorer, dirtier, and more dangerous. [261] These trends, though not exclusively so, were classed

and racialized phenomena, with roots in the city's past and bearings on its future. [262]

Throughout neighborhoods like Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, vacant lots, cracked pavement, and

treeless blocks could best have been described as sites of urbicide – racialized geographies

damaged by "environmental, social, and infrastructural decay … incarceration, deportation,

pollution, and displacement." [263] Whether one uses the above formulation or frameworks such as

environmental injustice or food in-security/sovereignty, the legacies of anti-Black racism were

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[258] Phillips-Fein, p. 69

[259] Admittedly, The Pogues did not paint the prettiest picture; Podair, pp. 8-20

[260] Freeman, pp. 289-305; Phillips-Fein, pp. 256-259, quote from Felix Rohatyn, Address to a Conference on a National Policy for Urban America sponsored by CCNY, 05/21/1976, cited on p. 259

[261] Phillips-Fein, p. 295

[262] Freeman, pp. 294-296; Phillips-Fein, pp. 305-306; Podair, pp. 213-214

[263] Katherine McKittrick, "On plantations, prisons, and a black sense of place" *Social & Cultural Geography* 12, no. 8 (December 2011), p. 951

undeniably visible on the map. [264] Prior to and through the fiscal crisis, the scars of divestment

and urbicide were tended to by New Yorkers like Hattie Carthan, a sexagenarian Black woman

who noticed in 1964 that only three trees remained on her block, Vernon Avenue, in Bed-Stuy.

Carthan singlehandedly organized her neighbors to raise funds for purchasing and planting trees,

eventually convincing Mayor Lindsay to roll out a tree-matching program through the Parks

Department. [265] Later, she marshaled her resources into the Neighborhood Tree Corps, an outfit

of local kids learning to nurture young trees to maturity for three to five dollars a week. [266] The

first four trees planted by Carthan and her block association soon became 1500, and Carthan

became known as the "Tree Lady" of Brooklyn.

In 1968, the Tree Lady delivered her tour de force. The City Planning Commission had

approved the demolition of four abandoned brownstones across from Tompkins Park – now

named after a fellow community icon and friend of Hattie, Herbert Von King. In front of the

buildings grew a century-old magnolia, a tree usually not seen north of Baltimore. Carthan

formed the Magnolia Tree Committee and raised $7000 to protect the tree and establish it as a

city landmark. [267] The magnolia still grows and remains the only living thing in New York City

with landmark status. As for the brownstones behind it, she convinced the city to sell them to her

for $1200, significantly short of their initial $25,000 asking price – "I told them I was born poor,

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[264] Regarding "environmental justice," see Robert Bullard, "Environmental Justice: It's More Than Waste Facility Siting," *Social Science Quarterly* 77, No. 3 (September 1996), p. 493; regarding "food sovereignty," see the Declaration of Nyéléni from Nyéléni 2007, the World Forum for Food Sovereignty: https://nyeleni.org/IMG/pdf/DeclNyeleni-en.pdf.

[265] Fred Ferretti, "Urban Conservation: A One-Woman Effort," *New York Times*, 07/08/1982, https://www.nytimes.com/1982/07/08/garden/urban-conservation-a-one-woman-effort.html.

[266] Kenneth Nolan, "Bed-Stuy Children Learn How to Nurture Trees," *New York Times*, 01/09/1972, https://www.nytimes.com/1972/01/09/archives/bedstuy-children-learn-how-to-nurture-trees.html.

[267] Edwin Lake, "A Magnolia Grows in Brooklyn With Help From the 'Tree Lady,'" *New York Times*, 24 Jul 1977, https://www.nytimes.com/1977/07/24/archives/brooklyn-pages-a-magnolia-grows-in-brooklyn-with-help-from-the-tree.html.

I live poor, and I'm going to die poor. I don't beg. But these are for the community. I asked [the government] to help me." [268]

As "Hattie's Army" marched along their newly forested front, another arm of the blossoming movement of radical gardeners began to branch out. Liz Christy and a band of neighbors – including Amos Taylor, Martin Gallent, and Don Loggins – started tossing seed bombs at vacant lots in Manhattan's Lower East Side, hoping to incite "a literal grassroots revolution." [269] Christy and her group of self-proclaimed "Green Guerillas" coordinated a clean-up of a trash-filled lot on the corner of Bowery and Houston. In April 1974, after the press denounced attempts to evict Christy and company, the city offered a $1 lease. The Bowery-Houston Community Farm and Garden, the first with municipal approval, propelled a wave reaching its peak in 1985 (the year of Christy's death) with one thousand community gardens sprouting up throughout the Big Apple. [270] Gardens became multi-cultural hubs of radical community organizing and schools of horticultural knowledge, transforming a grim, decaying grid of gray into a gorgeous canvas dappled with dots of green. [271] In 1978, the city launched the GreenThumb program, providing resources and planning through HUD and the Parks Department, and community gardens continued to bear fruit. [272] In 1999, community gardens encountered the same serpent that first sowed dissent: austerity.

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[268] "Urban Conservation: A One-Woman Effort," ibid

[269] "Our history," *Green Guerillas*, https://www.greenguerillas.org/history; see generally, Malve von Hassell, *The Struggle for Eden: Community Gardens in New York City* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2002)

[270] Ranjani Chakraborty and Melissa Hirsch, "How radical gardeners took back New York City," *Vox*, 06/08/2021, https://www.vox.com/videos/2021/6/8/22524208/how-radical-gardeners-took-back-new-york-city.

[271] "Garden History," *Liz Christy Community Garden*, http://lizchristygarden.us/; Laura Saldivar-Tanaka and Marianne Krasny, "Culturing community development, neighborhood open space, and civic agriculture: The case of Latino community gardens in New York City," *Agriculture and Human Values* 21 (2004), https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/B:AHUM.0000047207.57128.a5.

[272] "History of the Community Garden Movement," *New York City Department of Parks and Recreation*, https://www.nycgovparks.org/about/history/community-gardens/movement.

In 1993, Rudy Giuliani ran to unseat David Dinkins, protégé of J. Raymond Jones and the city's first Black mayor. Dinkins' mayoralty came to a bitter end as Jewish and Black communities clashed (again) in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Crown Heights. [273] Evoking the legacy of fiscal crisis and Fear City, Giuliani promised to increase police funding, thus birthing the "broken window" theory, as well as increase the city's profitability through privatization. [274] Among his primary targets, somewhat peculiarly, were the community gardens cultivated by Carthan and Christy. [275]

While in office, Giuliani treated the gardens no differently than the vacant lots that preceded – simply undeveloped opportunities for business to bloom. Who cared for the crops or the community? There were corporations and capital to court. The mayor's approach, intertwined with his policies of policing, reflected what Don Mitchell referred to as "the annihilation of space by law," a process by which major cities sought to make every inch of their landscape and every aspect of their economy "attractive to both footloose capital and to footloose middle classes," as globalization and deurbanization created opportunities everywhere elsewhere. [276] In this effort to

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[273] "Crown Heights: How it Happened," *New York Amsterdam News*, 07/03/1993, pp. 53. Accessed through ProQuest via Scribner Library.

[274] Amanda Luz Henning Santiago, "How Rudolph Giuliani became New York City's mayor," *City & State*, 10/15/2019, https://www.cityandstateny.com/politics/2019/10/how-rudolph-giuliani-became-new-york-citys-mayor/176823/; Shankar Vedantam et al. "How A Theory Of Crime And Policing Was Born, And Went Terribly Wrong," Hidden Brain: *NPR*, 11/01/2016, https://www.npr.org/2016/11/01/500104506/broken-windows-policing-and-the-origins-of-stop-and-frisk-and-how-it-went-wrong; personal conversation with *Rudyland* (2001) director & writer, not to mention my best friend's father, John Philp

[275] Christopher M. Smith and Hilda E. Kurtz, "Community Gardens and Politics of Scale in New York City". *Geographical Review* 93, no. 2 (2003), pp. 193–212, doi:10.1111/j.1931-0846.2003.tb00029.x; Lynn Staeheli, Don Mitchell, and Kristina Gibson "Conflicting rights to the city in New York's community gardens". *GeoJournal* 58, no. 2/3 (2002), pp. 197–205, doi:10.1023/B:GEJO.0000010839.59734.01.

[276] Don Mitchell, "The Annihilation of Space By Law: The Roots and Implications of Anti-Homeless Laws in the United States," *Antipode* 29, no. 3 (1997), p. 305

foster "livability," cities turned to tax and (de)regulatory incentivization, investment in amenities and attractions, and criminalization of "poor" behaviors, such as sleeping on park benches. [277]

This thinking continues to undergird the governance of New York. Although calls for a renewed urban liberalism surface from time to time, neoliberalism and austerity, particularly the fear of budgetary imbalance, still dominate the political conversation. [278] A few months ago, having underestimated revenue projections by the small sum of $3 billion, Mayor Eric Adams fashioned a new budget crisis. [279] When the threat still appeared real and grave, Adams cited two sources for the predicted deficit: first, the city's spending on care for recent migrants, and second, cuts to federal pandemic aid. These entangled patterns of demographic flux, increased demand for public services, decreased federal funding, and a revenue shortfall recall some driving causes of the 1970s fiscal crisis. In September, the mayor ordered 5% cuts to all city agencies. In November, further cuts struck libraries, youth services, and education. Even key fixtures of "livability" projects took a hit; the NYPD and the Department of Sanitation each faced significant cuts. [280] Adams did not appear, at least in the public eye, to consider for a moment that spending cuts were unnecessary.

Thus far, Adams' mayoralty has been defined by high-profile blunders, allegations of corruption, and a tough-on-crime stance that is out of touch with many of the city's more liberal constituencies. [281] The City Council, which has often clashed with Adams on major issues,

[277] Mitchell, ibid, pp. 304-305

[278] Bill de Blasio and "New York's Unfinished Tale of Two Cities," ibid; Mike Wallace, *A New Deal for New York* (New York: Bell & Weiland Publishers/Gotham Center Books, 2002)

[279] Michelle Bocanegra, "NYC Council estimates $3B more in revenue for upcoming fiscal year," *Gothamist*, 03/03/2024, https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-council-estimates-3b-more-in-revenue-for-upcoming-fiscal-year.

[280] Elizabeth Kim, "Libraries, summer school, police and composting face cuts amid NYC budget crisis," *Gothamist*, 11/16/2023, https://gothamist.com/news/libraries-summer-school-police-and-composting-face-cuts-amid-nyc-budget-crisis.

[281] Michael Powell, "How It All Went Wrong for Eric Adams," *The Atlantic*, 03/21/2024 https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2024/03/eric-adams-new-york-destiny/677821/.

strongly criticized the mayor's proposal, expressing dismay at the cuts' disproportionate impact on vulnerable New Yorkers and asserting that the administration's mismanagement of the budget was truly to blame. [282] Per Phillips-Fein, the budget persists as a site "where opposing visions of the city's future [are] contested." [283]

Whether or not national politics have seen a reordering since the "Reagan revolution," New York remains decidedly constrained by the phantoms of the fiscal crisis. So long as City Hall stays ghouled, the fear of a return to the nightmarish 1970s will always take precedence over the dream of a renewed commitment to the social democratic promise of the New Deal order: stable prosperity sustained by a robust set of public goods and services correcting for the inevitable flaws of capitalism. [284]

[282] Katie Honan, "Council Slams Mayor for Scapegoating Migrants to Justify Budget Cuts," *The City*, 12/11/2023, https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/12/11/budget-cuts-city-council-slams-eric-adams/; [Council Speaker] Adrienne E. Adams and [Finance Committee Chair] Justin Brannan, "Op-Ed: NYC needs a different budget approach," *AM New York*, 12/07/2023, https://www.amny.com/opinion/nyc-needs-a-different-budget-approach/.
[283] Phillips-Fein, p. 10
[284] Brinkley, "The New Deal and the Idea of the State," p. 112