

## ABSTRACT

### OKLAHOMA PATRONAGE, THE POLITICAL PARTIES, AND STATE ELECTIVE OFFICIALS

By

Jean Graves McDonald

The intention of the thesis is to consider patronage in a dynamic situation. In terms of their effects on patronage, the two most important changes in Oklahoma are as follows: 1) the change from a modified one-party system to the inception of a two-party system; and 2) economic and social changes which laid the groundwork for passage of merit legislation, thus providing the change from nonmerit to merit employment of most state personnel. As a result of such changes, one would expect to find significant changes both in the dispensation of patronage and in its usefulness to the dispensers.

The possibility of making such a dynamic study is facilitated by the existing body of patronage literature, recent studies of politics in Oklahoma, and comparisons of past and present patronage practices in Oklahoma. The plan for the study is in three parts: Part one examines the relevant literature on patronage, with emphasis upon the most recent works, and delineates the scope and methods of the study. The second part describes the political situation in the state of Oklahoma, and the personnel framework in particular. The final part involves the testing of seven hypotheses and conclusions derived therefrom, in an

attempt to discover the role patronage plays for governmental and party officials in a changing situation. Comparisons with studies in Illinois, Ohio, New York and Kentucky are made throughout.

The first two hypotheses are concerned specifically with conditions expected to result from the introduction of a merit system into a strongly patronage-oriented state. The next four hypotheses center around partisan organizations (whether party-or official-centered) and patronage. The final hypothesis deals with the official for whom patronage is often most important, the governor.

The primary research tool for the thesis was the personal interview of approximately 130 state and party officials. A mail questionnaire was returned by fifty-seven percent of the county party chairman.

The following conclusions showed some contrasts, as well as similarities, between the Oklahoma research and that conducted in other states. It was found that the Oklahoma personnel system had indeed changed from a patronage system to a merit system, although points still exist in the personnel system where pressure can be applied, particularly by state legislators.

In contrast to Ohio and Illinois, the Oklahoma county party chairman generally plays a nominal or nil role in the patronage process, with few even being consulted: this was more true for Democrats than for Republicans. Patronage transactions in Oklahoma center essentially around state

elective officials, particularly governors, secondary officials, and Democratic senators. Lines of communication about jobs are more official-oriented than party-oriented for Democrats, more party-oriented than official-oriented for Republicans.

Patronage no longer fulfills traditional functions of maintaining the formal party organization through rewards and discipline and raising money. Patronage is most useful in a traditional sense to the campaign organizations of elective officials who have the power to fire as well as hire. In addition, patronage is most important as a maintainer of status for those officials who actively use it.

The governor in Oklahoma has not been effected in his relations with the legislature by the decrease in patronage appointments. Democratic governors have been slightly more effected than Republican governors by the patronage loss although in other areas than legislative relations.

The final conclusion from the data presented is that the transition from a one-party dominant system to a two-party system has as yet had little effect on the patronage system.

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To My Family

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## INTRODUCTION

With the growth of civil service systems and the withering of most urban machines, one might suppose that the importance of patronage is dwindling. Nevertheless, one of the most sensitive and controversial aspects of governmental personnel systems continues to be the method by which employees are appointed to their positions. No doubt the reason for the continuing controversy is that the groups and individuals who participate in the appointment process do so by virtue of political power. The struggle over this type of exercise of political power helps keep the personnel issue alive in many American states.<sup>1</sup>

For purposes of this study, the term patronage refers to a specific aspect of personnel hiring. In a patronage transaction an individual owes his job or appointment in the public service to party or public officials.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>That patronage is still a significant issue on the state level can easily be documented. In Oklahoma in 1971 several bills were introduced to weaken the merit system. Articles in Public Personnel Review and the section on "Development in State Personnel Systems" in The Book of the States tend to be optimistic but point out the continuing interest in the personnel systems of the states. In states such as Michigan and Wisconsin, merit systems have been strong for so many years and the system is so supportive of them that the method of appointment is a relatively closed issue.

<sup>2</sup>The definition could have been even more inclusive. In Oklahoma it was found that certain former elective officials, ex-governors or ex-legislators, could exert some influence over state jobs.

latter have either cleared the person for appointment or exerted overt influence to see that the person obtains the job. Motives for such influence may be mixed; although there may be present an element of reward for past political work or incentive for future effort, these are not necessary conditions for the existence of patronage. Other motives may include qualification for the job, philosophy of governing similar to the appointee, loyalty, common goals and rewards to relatives (nepotism). Patronage may be involved in the filling of civil service positions, and honorific as well as salaried positions are included in this definition. In addition, it includes administrative influence, i.e. department heads or personnel officers, over jobs.

The above definition excludes certain practices sometimes described as patronage transactions. For example, administrative decisions which contain elements of favoritism, such as contracts, location of highways and granting of licenses, which are sometimes considered patronage, are not included in the definition for this study. Another difference from other definitions is that formal political party organization is not necessarily involved. In various parts of Oklahoma, patronage has been less important for the party than for elected officials who build up their own following largely independent of the party structure.

The intention of the thesis is to consider patronage in a dynamic situation. In terms of their effects on patronage, the two most important changes in Oklahoma are as

follows: 1) the change from a modified one-party system to the inception of a two-party system; and 2) economic and social changes which laid the groundwork for passage of merit legislation, thus providing the change from non-merit to merit employment of most state personnel. As a result of such changes, one would expect to find significant changes both in the dispensation of patronage and in its usefulness to the dispensers. For example, a political party faced with increasing competition would be expected to be more party-centered than official-centered in its patronage dispensation than when it was the dominant party. Likewise, a minority party experiencing victory for the first time might well use patronage to strengthen the party organization and campaign organizations for officials never-before elected by Republicans. Gubernatorial appointments might be expected to be more voter-oriented than previously. Pockets of the state where the minority party has dominated or where a competitive situation has existed for some years might already use patronage in a more party-and voter-oriented rather than official-oriented way. One must remember that competition in Oklahoma, as in other states, began at the top level of presidential elections and has spread slowly to the lower echelons. Many offices remain unaffected by competition, particularly from the legislature on down. Consequently, competition means increasing competition for the national and gubernatorial elections in the state together with some party organizational competition.

For legislators and county chairmen and to some extent for secondary officials, a more important dynamic consideration is brought about by the change from non-merit to merit employment.

The possibility of making such a dynamic study is facilitated by the existing body of patronage literature, recent studies of politics in Oklahoma, and comparisons of past and present patronage practices in Oklahoma. The plan for the study is in three parts: Part one examines the relevant literature on patronage, with emphasis upon the most recent works, and delineates the scope and methods of the study. The second part describes the political situation in the state of Oklahoma and the personnel framework in particular. The final part involves the testing of seven hypotheses and conclusions derived therefrom, in an attempt to discover the role patronage plays for governmental and party officials in a changing situation.

The first two hypotheses are concerned specifically with conditions expected to result from the introduction of a merit system into a strongly patronage-oriented state. The next four hypotheses center around partisan organizations (whether party-or official-centered) and patronage. The final hypothesis deals with the official for whom patronage is often most important, the governor.

The limitations of the study should be clearly noted. First is the obvious fact that the study is limited to one state, leaving for future research the problem of an interstate

study. Other limitations result from material difficulties. For example, time and money did not permit the researcher to interview all county chairmen, and most were reached only via a questionnaire. Return on the questionnaire was 57%.<sup>3</sup> No doubt in-depth interviews would have been more valuable, but in this case could be carried out on only eight county chairmen. Of course, even when interviews were conducted, limitations arose from the attitudes of those interviewed: the subjects were very willing to talk but reluctant to deal candidly with some of the questions asked. Since patronage is a sensitive subject, it is to be expected that many replies would be guarded; it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which this would affect the results of the study. Another limitation is statistical: sometimes, the researcher found the data samples too small to provide statistically significant proof of the hypotheses. In such cases, it is stated that the data support the hypotheses but do not necessarily prove them. Perhaps the most serious limitation of the study is that a significant group was for the most part neglected: the recipients of patronage, the job-holders. The author simply did not possess the necessary resources to interview job-holders around the state.

Despite the above limitations, this study offers some

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<sup>3</sup>Tucker interviewed county central committee chairmen in nine counties in Illinois as a basis for his study; Robert Gump's rate of return on the questionnaire for county chairmen was 51% in Ohio.



important advantages. First, patronage has not been previously studied in a dynamic situation on a large scale. Although comments have been made comparing patronage in a one-party system with patronage in a two-party system, to my knowledge there has been no supposition as to what could be expected while a system was actually changing. This, in itself, could be sufficient justification for the thesis. Other significant contributions of the study are as follows: 1) It is the first work to study a state in which earlier patronage studies have occurred. 2) It replicates some of the research conducted in another state, permitting interstate comparisons.<sup>4</sup> 3) It contains a important new dimension in the study of patronage in that a thorough analysis is made of patronage transactions involving state elective officials. Of course, transactions of party officials, which constitute the usual focus of patronage research, are also studied.

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<sup>4</sup>The replication (to some extent) is of the Illinois study conducted by Joseph Tucker: "A Functional Analysis of Political Patronage in Nine Illinois Counties" (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1962). The interviews had been conducted before the Robert Gump thesis was available. William Robert Gump, "A Functional Analysis of Patronage: The Case of Ohio" (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbus: The Ohio State University, 1969). Insofar as the Ohio study replicated the research in Illinois then this study replicates the Ohio work.

## CHAPTER I

### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Patronage has been a means of hiring public personnel in America since colonial days.<sup>1</sup> Its presence was felt particularly during the nineteenth century when the democratization which spread throughout the political system at that time had an effect upon appointments. The rationale was that all men in a democracy were fit to hold public office (either appointive or elective) but that no man should serve too long. For example, the civil service reform occurring in England, encouraging the establishment of a class devoted to the government service, was considered undemocratic. Even though civil service reform began in this country in the late nineteenth century, patronage remained a common practice.

Some writings on the subject, particularly after the turn of the century, were therefore full of dismay, dissatisfaction, and even horror at patronage and the spoils

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<sup>1</sup>There are several writings which treat the history of patronage in this country. Carl Fish, The Civil Service and the Patronage (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1904); Ari Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils: a History of the Civil Service Reform Movement (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1962); and the books by Leonard White: The Federalists, 1948; The Jeffersonians, 1951; The Jacksonians, 1954; and The Republican Era, 1958. All were published by The MacMillan Co., New York.

system.<sup>2</sup> With the exceptions mentioned below, studies of the actual operation of patronage were rare. Many writers argued that patronage was detrimental to the public good. Believing that patronage employees were chosen with party consideration foremost, and without regard for ability, these writers asserted that patronage would cause incompetence, waste, inefficiency, and even corruption, in addition to high rates of turnover and absenteeism.

On the other hand, some writers and politicians praised patronage.<sup>3</sup> Again, this was without the benefit of thorough study. It was assumed that the incentive of a job automatically kindled party activism. Further, it was thought that democracy could not survive without parties; thus, the loss of patronage meant grave dangers for the republic.

There were some exceptions to the journalistic writings mentioned above. Studies of the 1930's, for example, did include scholarly research on political machines and the role of patronage.<sup>4</sup> Researchers found that

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<sup>2</sup>There are many examples of this type of writing. Volume 189, January, 1937, of The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science is devoted to "Improved Personnel in Government Service." Many of these articles in that issue possess this orientation though there are some with the opposite bias.

<sup>3</sup>William Turn, "In Defense of Patronage", in the Annals volume is one of the main defensive articles. Examples of the way politicians felt were included in the oft-quoted William Riordin, Plunkett of Tammany Hall (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948) and Edward J. Flynn, You're the Boss (New York: The Viking Press, 1947).

<sup>4</sup>Harold Gosnell, Machine Politics: Chicago Model (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1937); David H. Kurtzman,

jobs were in demand and the machines obtained real service from job-holders, including fixed contributions from all to the party coffers. At that time there were no research studies on patronage in a non-machine environment. It is not known whether the assumptions upheld by the machine studies would have been substantiated in other situations.

A study of patronage in Oklahoma was one of the first comprehensive studies of patronage at the state level.<sup>5</sup> It was primarily a descriptive work of a personnel system. Systematic hypotheses were not tested. One of its main findings, that agencies could differ in the degree of "merit" standards even within a patronage state, pointed toward new modes of thinking about patronage.

#### Modern Studies of Patronage

Frank Sorauf's study of patronage in a rural Pennsylvania county I consider to be a turning point in patronage writings.<sup>6</sup> Systematic research was conducted and for the particular case studied many assumptions about patronage

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Methods of Controlling Votes in Philadelphia (Phil.: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1935); and Sonja Forthal, Cogwheels of Democracy, a Study of the Precinct Captain (New York: The Wm. Frederich Press, 1946).

<sup>5</sup>Hubert O. Waldby, The Patronage System in Oklahoma (Norman: Transcript Co., 1950) and "Public Personnel Practices in Oklahoma State Government" (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1950).

<sup>6</sup>Frank Sorauf, "State Patronage in a Rural County," American Political Science Review, L (December, 1956), pp. 1046-1056. There are other articles by Sorauf which further expound his ideas on patronage; "Patronage and Party,"

were shown to be invalid. While the effect of the Sorauf study on other patronage research was not immediately evident, it was clear that the traditional views of patronage must be re-thought and new research must be conducted.

Sorauf discovered patronage jobs on the lowest levels could be difficult to staff. Thus, the party, in acting as an employment agency for government, was willing to hire almost anyone, regardless of party activism or even partisan affiliation itself. The profits to the party in this situation appeared marginal or even negative.<sup>7</sup>

Following the Sorauf study, other articles appeared which tested various patronage "myths". Among these was the Jonas and Jones work.<sup>8</sup> They tested the assumption (tested earlier by Faust in Missouri) that a patronage personnel system necessarily led to high turnover. It was found in the same state that the rate of turnover in patronage departments was not unduly greater than that of merit departments. Daryl Fair sought to test if the presence of a patronage system was correlated with the presence of

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Midwest Journal of Political Science, III (May, 1959), 115-126 and "The Silent Revolution in Patronage," Public Administration Review, 20 (Winter, 1960), pp. 28-35.

<sup>7</sup>Sorauf, "State Patronage in a Rural County."

<sup>8</sup>Frank Jonas and Garth Jones, "J. Bracken Lee and the Public Service in Utah," Western Political Quarterly, <sup>9</sup>(Sept., 1956), pp. 755-765. Jonas and Jones used the term "merit patronage" to refer to those systems where appointment is the usual method of hiring but qualifications for the job are the foremost interest of the appointing official.

strong political parties.<sup>9</sup> His findings concluded that the two were not necessarily interrelated.

While some writings appearing since Sorauf's 1956 article have heralded the demise of patronage, other works have pointed to the continued presence of political influence over job hiring practices.<sup>10</sup> A master's thesis by Douglas St. Angelo described the virility of patronage in a rural Indiana county.<sup>11</sup> David McCoy's dissertation reported on patronage practices in a Chicago suburb.<sup>12</sup> Allegheny County and the city of Pittsburgh were found to be sites of public job-holding by Democratic and Republican precinct committeemen.<sup>13</sup> Richard Frost found many (94%) party leaders in New Jersey believed it was part of their role to aid people in obtaining public employment.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Daryl R. Fair, "Party Strength and Political Patronage," The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly, 45 (December, 1964), pp. 264-271.

<sup>10</sup>Examples of this are: Luther Gulick, "Manpower for Government: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Public Personnel Review, 18 (January, 1957), pp. 3-9 and Warren Moscow, "Exit the Boss, Enter the Leader," in Capitol, Courthouse and City Hall, ed. by Robert L. Morlan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), p. 287.

<sup>11</sup>Douglas St. Angelo, "Political Patronage in a Rural County," (unpublished master's thesis, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1957).

<sup>12</sup>David McCoy, "Patronage in Suburbia," (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1963).

<sup>13</sup>Wm. Keefe and Wm. Seyler, "Precinct Politicians in Pittsburgh," Social Science, 35 (January, 1960), pp. 26-32.

<sup>14</sup>Richard Frost, "Stability and Change in Local Party Politics," Public Opinion Quarterly, 25 (Summer, 1961), pp. 221-235.

A dissertation by William Crotty illustrated the patronage present in the Democratic party in North Carolina.<sup>15</sup>

Samuel Eldersveld discovered in the Detroit area that even though the amount of patronage to dispense had diminished district leaders still felt it was important in the long-term maintenance of the party organization.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the comparative studies of the states . . . Southern Politics, Border State Politics, Midwest Politics and New England State Politics . . . revealed that patronage was an active force in many states. The study of party finances by Alexander Heard, The Cost of Democracy, indicated that patronage has been an important source of party money. A book on party finances in Indiana by Robert J. McNeill pointed out the importance of assessments on patronage state employees to the Democratic party.<sup>17</sup>

#### Four Important Studies of Patronage

All of the above writings have added analytic techniques and provided some substantive knowledge about patronage. It has been shown in certain instances that

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<sup>15</sup>William Crotty, Jr., "The Role of the County Chairman in the Contemporary Party System in North Carolina", (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1964).

<sup>16</sup>Samuel Eldersveld, Political Parties: A Behavioral Analysis (Chicago: Rand, McNally and Co., 1964), pp. 274-276, 342.

<sup>17</sup>Robert J. McNeill, "Democratic Campaign Financing in Indiana, 1964," (Princeton: Citizens Research Foundation for the Institute of Public Administration, Indiana University, 1966).

the uses of patronage have changed and that some of the conventional ideas concerning it were false. There have been four other works, however, which have been central to the study of patronage. These include three dissertations and one journal article.

Joseph Tucker's dissertation in 1962 studied the uses of patronage for county chairmen in Illinois.<sup>18</sup> Four major assumptions concerning the functions of patronage for political parties were tested.<sup>19</sup> County chairmen and other officials in nine Illinois counties were interviewed. The counties were selected in such a manner as to test variables which might be relevant to the handling of patronage by the party. The level of prosperity of the county, degree of inter-party competition and level of urbanization were some variables hypothesized as meaningful explanations for differences in the use of patronage for the parties.

Tucker concluded that patronage was not performing the traditional functions. He observed that patronage can have symbolic importance for the county chairmen who view

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<sup>18</sup> Joseph B. Tucker, "A Functional Analysis of Political Patronage in Nine Illinois Counties". Both Mr. Tucker and Mr. Gump (see below) utilized Robert Merton's approach to functional analysis as a framework. This analysis is particularly helpful as applied to the political machine. See Robert Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, second edition, (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957) pp. 71-82.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. He believed that recent political party literature has assumed that patronage fills four functions for the party: 1) recruiting workers; 2) maintaining party activists; 3) raising revenue for party treasury; 4) maintaining intra-party discipline, p. 30.



it as a portion of their role, and were reluctant to have patronage removed from their sphere of influence.<sup>20</sup> Tucker also found the variables he hypothesized as relevant to patronage use were actually of little or no significance.

William Gump, in a dissertation concerned with patronage in the state of Ohio, asserted that studies of patronage had been weak in certain respects.<sup>21</sup> Many were outdated, most were limited to only one state or one level of government, there was little or no comparative study, and interparty comparisons were lacking.<sup>22</sup> He believed that the Tucker thesis did not overcome these limitations because it was too narrow in scope.

Gump attempted to overcome the weaknesses of previous studies, including Tucker's, by conducting a comprehensive study of patronage practices in Ohio (a state long reputed to be patronage oriented.) Gump interviewed chairmen in

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<sup>20</sup>Thomas Page, "Merit and Patronage in State Manpower Systems," an unpublished paper presented at the 1965 International Conference on Public Personnel Administration, October 12, 1965. This paper also stresses the symbolic value of patronage for chairmen.

<sup>21</sup>William Robert Gump, "A Functional Analysis of Patronage: The Case of Ohio."

<sup>22</sup>John Fenton's book, Midwest Politics (N. Y.: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), had some possibilities for interstate comparison of patronage practices but it concentrates more on the comparison between patronage and issue-oriented states. His observations of patronage in the three patronage states were not based on systematic research. Another study which does attempt to compare personnel practices in three states, and patronage as an aspect of this, is the Page paper mentioned above. It is useful in establishing a framework for analysis but is again based mainly on observations; its purpose was to give an overview.

27 counties and mailed questionnaires to all other chairmen; the rate of return on the latter was 51%. County chairmen were questioned concerning their role in the dispensing of patronage for all levels of government. Results were compared with some of Tucker's findings, and inter-party differences were noted.

The findings of Gump were not surprisingly different from those of Tucker: patronage did not seem of much importance to the parties. However, county chairmen were extremely reluctant to give up their powers over personnel hiring. Gump's explanation of this reluctance was different from Tucker's. He argued that since parties at the county level are so weak and fragmented between elections, even the slightest amount of patronage could be of some use in sustaining skeletal party activity. Thus, Gump felt that patronage aided in maintaining the organization per se, while Tucker agreed that it helped the chairman maintain his position within the organization. Gump stated that he would test the variables which Tucker had tested but apparently found they were not relevant explanatory factors in inter-county differences in patronage use.

Both the Gump and Tucker theses have been important contributions to patronage literature even though neither author pursued the patronage of elective officials, particularly the governor. (Gump did interview some elective officials at the county and state levels apparently found their comments did not add to his understanding of the

patronage process in Ohio.) These officials were, on the whole, beyond the scope of their party-oriented studies.

Two research works have been completed on gubernatorial patronage; unfortunately both have been conducted on the same state and the same administration: that of Averill Harriman in New York State, 1955-1959. An article by Moynihan and Wilson, and a dissertation by Judson Lehman James both treated the patronage practices of this administration.<sup>23</sup> The James dissertation is much broader in scope and more detailed.<sup>24</sup> He was concerned with describing the uses of patronage for a strong executive in a predominantly civil service state. He also included a section on party distribution of patronage.

The Moynihan and Wilson article is concerned not only with describing the manner in which patronage was distributed by the governor but also the functions that it served for him. They see patronage as a tool for the governor which enhances his role as legislative leader and which aids him in establishing his role as party leader. It was noted that patronage does not always fill these functions perfectly, even when used carefully; still, it does have the potential for helping the governor.

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<sup>23</sup>Daniel P. Moynihan and James Q. Wilson, "Patronage in New York State, 1955-1959," American Political Science Review, 58 (June, 1964), pp.286-301.

<sup>24</sup>Judson Lehman James, "The Loaves and the Fishes: New York State Gubernatorial Patronage, 1955-1958," (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York: Columbia University, 1966).

## Theories of Patronage

Current patronage research is directly influenced by the above works. In addition, this author feels that other writings, which do not deal directly with patronage, should also be taken into account. Of particular importance are concepts which affect one's view of the patronage phenomenon in its relationship to the political system. Three theories in current political science literature are especially relevant to the study of patronage. It should be recognized that these theories are neither mutually exclusive nor all-encompassing.

The first, known as the incentive theory, emphasizes the importance of patronage for organizational maintenance.<sup>25</sup> It is recognized that different incentives have different rewards, dependent on the time, place and individuals involved. One incentive may serve various purposes and, indeed, the purposes may be conflicting. Thus, even when a leader and organization succeed in using their incentives as wisely as possible, the results may be dysfunctional for the leader and the party. Patronage, as an incentive, is never 100% effective. However, patronage may be more effective than social or ideological incentives in some

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<sup>25</sup> Chester Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968); P. B. Clark and J. Q. Wilson, "Incentive Systems, A Theory of Organization," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 6 (Sept., 1961), pp. 129-166; Frank Sorauf, *Political Parties in the American System* (Boston: Little Brown, 1964); and particularly James Q. Wilson, "The Economy of Patronage," *Journal of Political Economy*, LXIX (August, 1961).

circumstances.

A second approach to patronage systems involves the concept of political culture and its effects on political systems. This concept is invoked to explain why states differ so much in their methods of appointment and personnel practices.<sup>26</sup> It may also help to explain why within one state some departments are more subject than others to "personalized politics." Variables in the system such as socio-economic factors, regionalism, party composition, and governmental structures may aid in explaining both differences and similarities in state personnel systems. According to this view, competence or corruption may be found in either merit or patronage systems, depending on the political culture.

A third theory of patronage, concerned with individual power or influence,<sup>27</sup> offers an explanation of actions of participants at the leadership level who either

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<sup>26</sup>The main authors of works in this area are Lewis Dexter, "Organizational Climate," an unpublished paper, and Erwin W. Fellows, "Merit System Trends and Problems: Some Underlying Cultural Values," Public Personnel Review, 25 (October, 1964), pp. 228-232. There are some examples of situations which back up this theory in these articles: Wm. Jacob Bell, "A Study of Personnel Practices in a State Administration under a Merit System: The Pennsylvania Employment Security Bureau," (an unpublished dissertation, Bloomington: Indiana Univ., 1957); Lawrence Sherman Graham, "The Clash Between Formalism and Reality in the Brazilian Civil Service," (an unpublished dissertation, Gainesville: Univ. of Florida, 1965), and Howard Scarrow, "Civil Service Commissions in the Canadian Provinces;" Journal of Politics, 19 (May 1957), pp. 240-261.

<sup>27</sup>Richard Neustadt's article on presidential patronage, "On Patronage, Power and Politics," Public Administration

use patronage or attempt to retain it. Those persons involved in patronage decisions will attempt to utilize that tool to maximize their power and influence. They may utilize it as a reward or a discipline, or they may make only promises instead of concrete rewards; in all cases the leader needs to distribute patronage in such a way as to further his political gain. Thus, those concerned with a theory of power may see patronage as one ingredient of power.

#### Party Organization

The relationship between party competition and patronage is central to the thesis of this paper. It is essential to make explicit the theory of party organization utilized in this paper: the one set forth by Joseph Schlesinger in "Political Party Organization".<sup>28</sup>

For Schlesinger, the concepts of ambition theory are important in understanding American political parties. The chief assumption of such a theory is that "party organizations in democracies are dominated by their office drives". From this assumption follows various premises concerning party organization: 1) Office-seeking is of

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Review, 15 (Spring, 1955), pp. 108-114, is perhaps most important here; other relevant articles are the Moynihan-Wilson piece mentioned above and a section of James D. Barber's "Leadership Strategies for Legislative Party Cohesion," Journal of Politics, 28 (May, 1966), pp. 347-367.

<sup>28</sup> Joseph Schlesinger, "Political Party Organization," in Handbook of Organizations, ed. by James March (Chicago: Rand McNally Co., 1965), pp. 764-801.

primary importance to parties, and consequently most parts of the organization revolve around that goal; differing ambitions of officeholders produce different kinds of organizational consequences; 2) The fundamental organizational unit of the party is the nucleus: "the collective effort devoted to the capture of a single public office" (there are many organizational aspects to the nucleus;) and 3) The nucleus must cooperate with other nuclei at different times and in various ways to accomplish the nuclear goals.

Schlesinger's theory of party organization places patronage transactions in a different perspective than if one views parties in the traditional "organization chart" manner. The usefulness of this theory as an explanatory tool will be evidenced throughout the thesis.

#### Party Competition and Patronage

Although most authors dealing in the political parties include a section on patronage (or incentives, or spoils), seldom do they consider party competition and its effects on patronage. Therefore, in order to discuss current concepts about patronage in a one-party system as compared to a two-party system, one must extrapolate from various isolated statements.

V. O. Key in Southern Politics found patronage prevalent in the one-party systems of the South. In fact, it appeared to him more necessary there than in two-party

systems.<sup>29</sup> Without the party label to aid them, candidates had to promise many favors, including jobs, if elected. Frank Sorauf agrees with this description: concerning the one-party South he states,

Within these shifting, almost kaleidoscopic, factions, cohesion is maintained, not by the usual loyalties to party, but by personal friendship, magnetic leadership and the tangible rewards of favors and patronage.<sup>30</sup>

Do such statements infer that should the party system become more competitive, patronage would not be as necessary as before, or would it be used for different reasons or in a different manner than before?

In discussing the party as an interest group V. O. Key made some statements concerning party organization and patronage which might apply to changing party systems and patronage. In the dispensation of state and local patronage:

. . . the pattern of operation tends to be influenced by the character of the organization and in turn affects the character of the organization. In a state

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<sup>29</sup>V. O. Key, Jr., Southern Politics in State and Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949).

<sup>30</sup>Frank Sorauf, Political Parties in the American System, p. 24.

<sup>31</sup>For example, in traditional organizational terms patronage would be used for factional maintenance in the one-party system versus party organizational maintenance in the two-party system. In Schlesinger's terms, patronage would be used for nuclei in either system. However, in the one-party system the nucleus will use patronage to enhance its position (or win an election) as opposed to another nucleus which bears the same party label; while in the two-party system the two nuclei which are competing are probably in different parties.



or city with an atomized party the patronage of each department or agency is apt to be used to strengthen the personal following of the head of the agency concerned. As the organization becomes more unified, the tendency seems to be to bring all patronage into a single pool and to develop a systematic procedure for its allocation among the principal party functionaries.<sup>32</sup>

In so far as one-party systems might be more atomized, they might use patronage in a different manner than in systems which face competition and have to maintain a more cohesive organization.

The one case in which a test was made of the use of patronage under differing degrees of party competition was in Illinois. Tucker used inter-party competition as one of his three variables which might have an effect on functionality of patronage. The following hypothesis was presented:

Patronage distribution is more closely controlled, greater political activity on the part of job holders is demanded, more frequent use of sanctions is employed, greater stress is placed on financial contributions in two-party counties than in one-party counties.<sup>33</sup>

The assumption under which Tucker operated was that a party will make more efficient use of available patronage when facing competition than it will otherwise; when struggling for survival as a competitive force an organization will use every means to win, including patronage. This assumption was not justified by Tucker's results; he was not able to

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<sup>32</sup>V. O. Key, Jr., Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups (4th ed.; New York: Crowell, 1958), p. 387.

<sup>33</sup>Tucker, "A Functional Analysis of Political Patronage in Nine Illinois Counties."

discern obvious differences in the uses of patronage for one-party as compared to two-party counties. There was one exception: when questioned as to the value of patronage, the three chairmen who felt it was of little use to the party were all from one-party counties (two in the minority party). Six of the seven chairmen who viewed patronage favorably were from two-party counties. Size of the sample is too small to justify making generalizations, however.

Sorauf made one statement about patronage in a changing party system: a minority party which wins office will face difficulty with patronage. Such parties would be the

least able to use patronage for rebuilding. Weak parties lack the discipline, the trained leadership and the surplus of potential job-holders to use the system to their maximum advantage.<sup>34</sup>

The dominant party, on the other hand, is well equipped to use patronage. Thus, with increasing competition, the natural advantages in the use of patronage possessed by the dominant party will not quickly disappear.

Inferences may be drawn from a few articles concerning differences in gubernatorial uses of patronage in one-party and two-party states. Robert Highsaw<sup>35</sup> and Frank Sorauf both emphasize the importance of patronage to one-party governors in maintaining legislative leadership. The significance of patronage in building up factional organizations

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<sup>34</sup>Sorauf, "Patronage and Party," p. 118.

<sup>35</sup>Robert Highsaw, "The Southern Governor - Challenge to the Strong Executive Theme," Public Administration Review, 19 (Winter, 1959), pp. 7-11.

has been mentioned above.

In the study of patronage in New York state certain uses of patronage for the governor in a two-party system were demonstrated.<sup>36</sup> Moynihan and Wilson said that patronage helps the governor: 1) win votes; 2) reward party workers and 3) assemble power within government and within the party. A further use, not mentioned in the article, would be to help him implement policies.

Governors in both kinds of systems appear to be concerned with the use of patronage to enhance their position as legislative leader. A two-party governor might need patronage a little less, since he can call on party loyalty to aid in his role of legislative leader. A fundamental difference is that the one-party governor will only reward factional workers whereas the two-party governor should pay attention to party workers and leaders as well as rewarding those who helped in his nuclear organization.

Summarizing the above ideas on patronage in one-party and two-party systems, one might be able to surmise possible results of change from one system to another:

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<sup>36</sup>Moynihan and Wilson, "Patronage in New York State," p. 300 particularly. It must be added here that the governor's judicious use of patronage did not always bring about the desired results.

	One-Party System	Two-Party System
(Key, Sorauf)	Use of patronage to maintain factional organizations - intra-party nuclei	Use of patronage to maintain party organization; inter-party nuclei
(Key)	If an atomized party, then dept. head (or someone other than party official) will use patronage to strengthen following.	If party becomes more unified, there will be central allocation of patronage to party officials.
(Tucker)	Use of patronage will not be efficient.	Efficient use of patronage (but not borne out by data).
(Sorauf)	Minority party - no patronage and therefore can't develop skill in dispensing.	When minority party takes office, it is unable to use patronage effectively and the previously dominant party will continue to benefit from patronage.
(Sorauf and Highsaw, Moynihan and Wilson)	Governor will use patronage for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) legislative leadership</li> <li>2) build factional organization</li> <li>3) consolidate support among voters (although one-term requirement limits this)</li> <li>4) implementation of policy.</li> </ol>	(Moynihan and Wilson) Governor will use patronage for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) legislative leadership</li> <li>2) consolidate position as party leader</li> <li>3) reward party workers</li> <li>4) consolidate support among voters</li> <li>5) implement policy.</li> </ol>

These ideas will be referred to frequently in the following chapters, as the changing roles of patronage in Oklahoma are considered against the changing party system. Where possible, evidence will be sought to test these ideas.

## Summary of Findings

Only a few works on patronage have contributed really substantive knowledge to the field. These works attempted to determine how patronage is treated by party and elective officials. The most significant overall finding is that patronage in modern times is not fulfilling traditional functions for either parties or elective officials. Comparative works are nearly non-existent, and none consider evolutionary changes in patronage over an extended period.

The major secondary findings are:

1. Waldby - Different agencies in the same state political system and even different parts of the same agency may have different degrees of merit or patronage operations.
2. Sorauf - Parties may not use patronage efficiently and it may be dysfunctional for the users. Especially the minority party coming into power will have these difficulties.
3. Jonas and Jones - Existence of a patronage system does not necessarily mean that high turnover in employment will occur.
4. Fair - Patronage systems and strong political parties are not necessarily found together.
5. Numerous authors - Patronage, in spite of the spread of civil service systems, it still important for many elective and party officials, in their own judgement.
6. Page, Tucker - Patronage may be most important for its symbolic value: it may symbolize one aspect of leadership.
7. Moynihan and Wilson - A governor in a two party, civil service system will spend much time on patronage decisions; even if made most carefully, they often fail to enhance the governor's leadership roles.
8. Tucker - Certain variables, such as degree of party

competition, population density and prosperity of the county, are not valid explanatory factors for differences in functions of patronage for party organizations in nine counties in Illinois.

9. Gump - In Ohio there was some evidence that patronage was more important to the lower status party (Democrats) than to the higher status party (Republicans), but intra-party differences were more evident than inter-party differences.



## CHAPTER II

### SCOPE AND METHODS OF THE STUDY

The patronage literature gives us information about patronage in a few states. Although in those cases studied, patronage did not serve functions traditionally attributed to it,<sup>1</sup> still, officials did not want patronage eliminated. It is not known whether these findings apply to other states with different backgrounds.

It is the purpose of this study to present an overview of state patronage practices in Oklahoma and examine the perceptions of party and governmental officials about them. This study extends to county chairmen, state party chairmen, governors, legislators, and other elected state executives. It does not include a study of the uses of patronage at other levels . . . city, county or federal, except in passing . . . and it does not touch on judicial patronage.

Oklahoma has many advantages for such a study. The changing party system offers the possibility for a study of a dynamic situation. The author's residence in the state

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Page in "Merit and Patronage in State Manpower Systems", says this best when he states, "put in economic terms there is a declining marginal return per unit of effort through patronage systems." p. 10.





has made it convenient. It also offers contrasts to the three other states in which extensive research has taken place: Illinois, Ohio and New York. The three are considered to be in different regions than Oklahoma and regionalism is considered by Sharkansky to be a possible explanatory factor for state political phenomena, independent of economic characteristics.<sup>2</sup>

Another contrast between Oklahoma and the other three states are the industrialization factors measured by Richard Hofferbert for each state during the period 1890-1960.<sup>3</sup>

Oklahoma contrasts to the other three on the industrialization factor since they have traditionally ranked high and Oklahoma has ranked low to very low. On the cultural enrichment factor the states were relatively close in 1960 but prior to 1960 Oklahoma fell far behind the other two.<sup>4</sup>

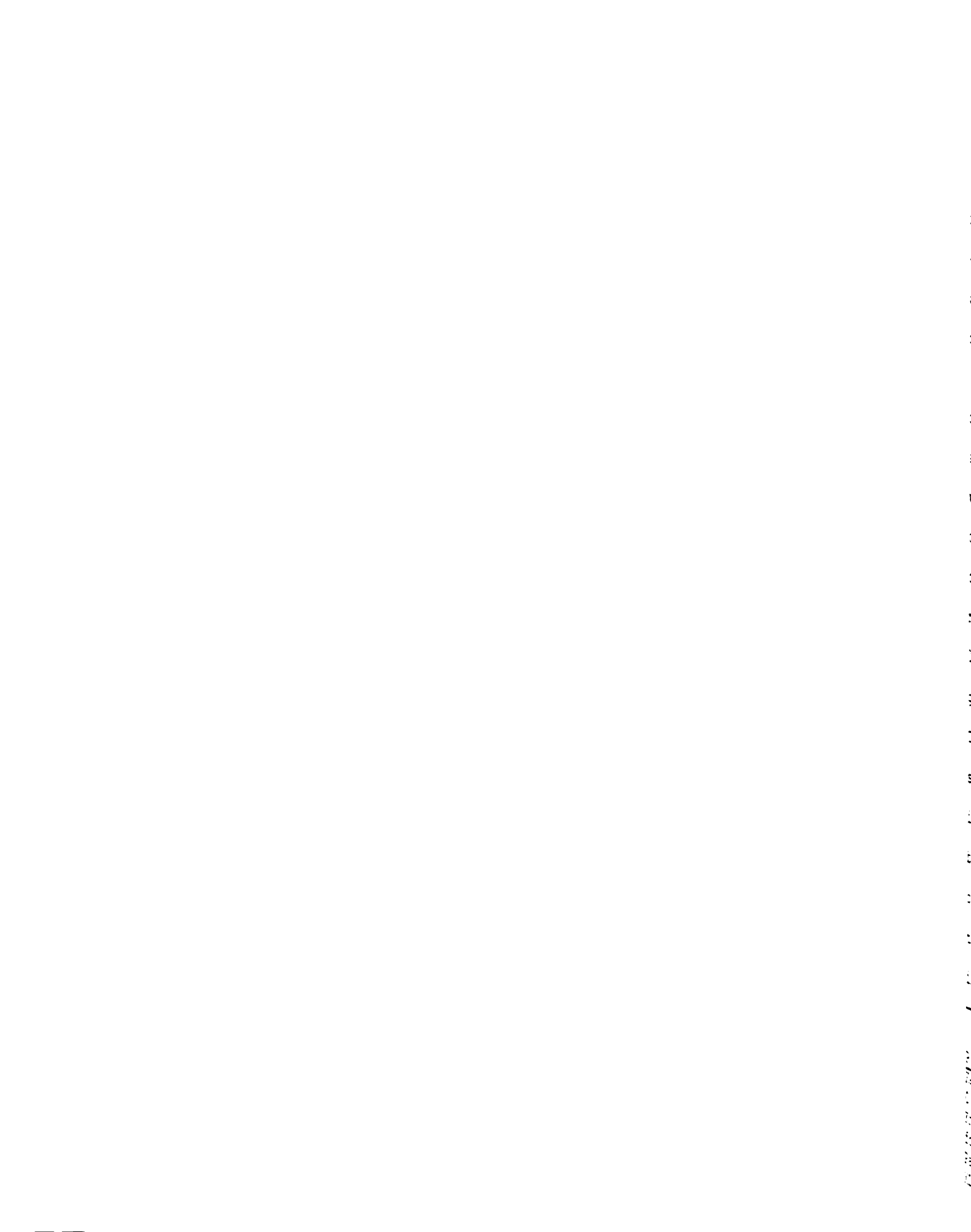
Personnel systems differ among the four states. Oklahoma in 1959 enacted merit legislation. The other states

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<sup>2</sup>Ira Sharkansky, "Economic Development, Regionalism and State Political Systems," Midwest Journal of Political Science, 12 (February, 1968), pp. 41-61. In the three demarcation of regions, Oklahoma is considered to be a part of the south or southwest; Ohio and Illinois are considered primarily north or north central and New York is north or north east. The three demarcations which he employed are: two from Harvey Perloff, et al. Regions, Resources and Economic Growth (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1962) and the other is from the United States Census Bureau.

<sup>3</sup>Richard Hofferbert, "Socio-Economic Dimensions of the American States, 1890-1960," Midwest Journal of Political Science, 12 (August, 1968), pp. 401-418.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. Oklahoma ranked from 36 to 26 on the second factor; Illinois was 25 to 9, Ohio was 28 to 22 and New York was 22 to 9.



were among the first to enact such laws, New York in 1883, Illinois in 1905 and Ohio in 1912. Adoption of a legal merit system does not imply that the laws will be strictly enforced or that all patronage will be eliminated. It does indicate that some elements with political strength desire to eliminate some features of patronage, however.

A contrast which is important for this study is that of competitiveness of political parties. The other states are usually rated as two-party states with a tendency toward Republicanism, while Oklahoma has been generally classified as a one-party dominant Democratic state.<sup>5</sup> The classification is somewhat outdated, as Republicans have made decided gains since 1952, winning the governorship in 1962. Democrats still predominate all offices below the governorship including the legislature and county offices. Thus, the state appears to be moving toward a two-party system although it has not, as yet, achieved that result; it is a system in flux. Since most Oklahoma officials have been Democrats, patronage here has been more official-centered than party-centered as compared with the other three states. Whether or not this factor is significant in the usefulness and use of patronage in a state may be

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<sup>5</sup>Austin Ranney, "Parties in State Politics", in Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vine, (Boston: Little Brown, 1965), pp. 61-99. V. O. Key, Jr., American State Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956); Joseph Schlesinger, "A Two Dimensional Scheme for Classifying the States According to Degree of Inter-Party Competition," American Political Science Review, XLIX (1955), pp. 1120-1128.



shown by this study.

Another advantage to a study of Oklahoma is the possibility for comparisons with the past that have not been present in the other state studies. The dissertation and book by Hubert Waldby on patronage practices and the personnel system in Oklahoma portrayed patronage prior to 1950.<sup>6</sup> At that time the "spoils" system was a way of life for many Oklahoma politicians. The Waldby study approached the subject with a "good government" orientation. It did not test attitudes or perceptions of the grantors of jobs nor did it question the usefulness of patronage for party and elective officials. It did, however, provide a detailed description of patronage practices that is still useful for purposes of comparison.

Ten years after Waldby's dissertation, the state established a comprehensive merit system. A few years later, in 1963, a master's thesis by Tucker Gibson dealt with the introduction of the merit system and its effects on the political system of Oklahoma.<sup>7</sup> Gibson conducted some interviews with knowledgeable officials and political observers but patronage was not examined relative to its functional or dysfunctional nature for parties and officials. Again,

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<sup>6</sup>Hubert O. Waldby, The Patronage System in Oklahoma and "Public Personnel Practices in Oklahoma State Government."

<sup>7</sup>Tucker Gibson, "The Political Significance of the Oklahoma Merit System," (an unpublished master's thesis, Stillwater: Oklahoma State University, 1963).

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this study, like Waldby's, is a good short descriptive work. It does provide an observation point between Waldby and the present research.

Another possibility for comparison is provided by a recent study of Kentucky politics.<sup>8</sup> Although patronage is presented as only one aspect of the Kentucky political system, the conclusions drawn about it are important for this study because of the similarities of Kentucky and Oklahoma. Kentucky, like Oklahoma, is generally classed as a border state, one-party dominant. It possessed a strong tradition of spoils and personalized politics.<sup>9</sup> In 1960 merit legislation was passed which removed, at least formally, many thousands of positions from patronage. The Malcolm Jewell and Everett Cunningham research was conducted a few years after the civil service system had gone into effect. Their findings of patronage functions, after introduction of civil service, can be compared and contrasted with Oklahoma.

Further comparisons are possible. The parties' use of patronage and its function for them may be compared with the Joseph Tucker study of Illinois and the William Gump study of Ohio. Gubernatorial patronage has a basis for

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<sup>8</sup>Malcolm E. Jewell and Everett W. Cunningham, Kentucky Politics (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968).

<sup>9</sup>Gladys M. Kammerer, "Kentucky's All Pervasive Spoils Politics", in Democracy in the Fifty States, ed. by Charles Press and Oliver P. Williams, (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1968), pp. 438-446.



comparison particularly with the studies of New York and Kentucky. Comparative studies of the effectiveness of patronage for legislators and other state elected executives in Oklahoma does not seem possible since such studies have not been conducted in other states.

#### Methods

The primary research tool for this thesis was the personal interview of public officials.<sup>10</sup> A total of 130 interviews were conducted. The sample included three state party chairmen and eight county chairmen, 47 of the 48 state senators from the 1970 legislature,<sup>11</sup> 27 of the 99 representatives from the 1970 legislative session,<sup>12</sup> the past four governors and two of their staff members, eight of the thirteen lesser state elective officials,<sup>13</sup> personnel officers or departmental executives in 13 state departments

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<sup>10</sup>See appendix for copies of questionnaire and interviews.

<sup>11</sup>There were 48 state senators serving in the 1970 session. One of the men serving had suffered a stroke and could not be interviewed.

<sup>12</sup>There was some attempt to obtain a cross-section of the House. Republicans and Democrats were both included, urban as well as rural legislators, all of the legislative leadership, new representatives as well as those with many years of experience and certain ones who had a reputation for being interested in patronage.

<sup>13</sup>Two of the executives, state auditor and lieutenant governor, were not interviewed because they employed under ten persons; one was not interviewed because his department had been placed under the merit system . . . state superintendent of public instruction; and only one of the three corporation commissioners was interviewed.

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(including all those employing more than 100 persons) and other persons reputed to be knowledgeable about Oklahoma state politics.

Because time and money did not permit it, a larger cross section of county chairmen could not be interviewed. The county chairmen interviewed were from the state's two largest counties, Tulsa and Oklahoma, and two counties adjacent to Oklahoma County, Cleveland and Pottawatomie. A questionnaire was mailed to all other county chairmen; it replicated to some degree the questionnaire which Joseph Tucker utilized in Illinois in 1962. Of the 146 county chairmen who were not interviewed, 83 or 57 per cent returned questionnaires. Nearly all areas of the state were represented equally, and 44 Republicans and 39 Democrats submitted questionnaires.

The only significant state group which was omitted from systematic study was that of administrative personnel. Admittedly, it would be advantageous to interview employees, both patronage and civil service, first because of the wealth of information which could be collected from these people and second, because no one, to my knowledge, has asked such persons questions on patronage practices since the Sorauf study in 1956. However, because of limited resources available, this could not be undertaken. In addition it appeared that such employees, whether merit or non-merit, might not feel free to talk, or frank discussion might entail reprisal. From contacts with what could have been a most valuable

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source of information, the legislative secretaries, it would appear that many workers are reluctant to say anything they feel might be either a risk to their job or a risk to their employer. Legislative employees are all patronage appointees. Therefore, employees, with a few exceptions, were not questioned on a systematic basis as to patronage practices.

In addition to the questionnaire and interview, secondary sources were utilized. The Daily Oklahoman was scanned for relevant items over a ten year period. Legislative journals, publications of the personnel department and the official state record books of governors' appointments were also studied.

The primary limitation of the study is the small number of cases in each of the categories which makes it difficult to generalize beyond the state of Oklahoma. This was also a problem in the Illinois and Ohio studies, particularly the former. Until an interstate study can be undertaken, this will continue to be a problem. Thus, this work must be treated more as a case study than a research work whose hypotheses are proved or disproved. Instead, the data either tends to support or does not support the hypotheses in each particular case. Observation is supplemented by systematic study and the expectations are of the most plausible account of what is transpiring in patronage practices in the state. This is further complicated by the possibility that the persons interviewed, and even those answering the questionnaire (although anonymity was

definitely assured, at some cost to analysis of data) might have perceived this as too sensitive a subject to deal with forthrightly. In some cases, it was obvious that the respondent or interviewee was evading the question. Most were willing to talk, however, and to the researcher, the greater difficulty might be in less obvious evasions, omitting observations that needed to be stated in order to gain a realistic picture of the system. Still, one must trust that, by interviewing enough persons, in enough different situations, a reasonable approximation to the truth can be reached.

### Hypotheses

This study will examine several hypotheses. Some of these have been tested in Illinois, Ohio and New York. Other hypotheses, particularly with regard to legislators and lesser state elective executives, have not been previously tested.

Two hypotheses are concerned with larger questions concerning the change from predominantly patronage personnel selection to predominantly merit selection. Rather than proving a causal relationship, we can only show that the Oklahoma experience is consistent with the hypothesized statements. McNeil claims that growing industrialization, population shifts, rising education and increasing affluence are reasons for pressure on the patronage system.<sup>14</sup> Page

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<sup>14</sup>McNeil, "Democratic Campaign Financing in Indiana, 1964".

mentions the increasingly specialized nature of governmental service requiring high levels of skill as a reason for the merit system.<sup>15</sup> These statements lead to the following hypothesis:

- I. The introduction of a merit or civil service system in modern times tends to be accompanied by the onset of industrialization and urbanization and rise in levels of income and education.

Another hypothesis is related to the durability of institutions and patterns of behavior. Lewis Dexter, in his writing on organizational climate, emphasizes the traditions which may develop in certain agencies which set them apart from others.<sup>16</sup> Waldby, in writing about Oklahoma, showed that certain departments in the state were more aware of the patronage system than were others; the state Highway Patrol was outstanding for its adherence to the merit system at that time, while the Highway Department was a center for patronage transactions. It would be expected that such traditional ways of handling employment would be difficult to change; patronage would still be expected to play a role in departments where it was strong before the merit system.

- II. Those departments and agencies in which patronage was the most important before the merit system will continue to be the place where patronage will be important after merit, even if violations of the merit system have to occur for this to be so.

The next set of hypotheses is concerned with patronage

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<sup>15</sup>Page, "Merit and Patronage in State Manpower Systems". pp. 10-11.

<sup>16</sup>Lewis Dexter, "Organizational Climate", an unpublished paper.

and partisan organization. The first deals with patronage and its relationship to the Oklahoma party system in which, since statehood, the Democratic party has been dominant.

- III. In a political system in which one party has dominated, patronage will be official-oriented rather than party-oriented. This has the following consequences for inter-party differences:
- a) lines of communication for patronage decisions in the dominant party will be official-oriented rather than party-oriented;
  - b) lines of communication for patronage decisions will be more party-oriented than official-oriented in the minority party.

Another hypothesis to be tested in Oklahoma is related to the Illinois and Ohio findings that patronage is not functioning in the traditional sense. In Oklahoma, the emphasis is on partisan organizations: nuclear campaign organizations of legislators, governors and other elected executives. The hypothesis below will be tested with respect to each of these and to the formal party organization.

- IV. Patronage, even where it still exists, no longer fulfills the following functions for partisan organizations: 1) recruiting workers; 2) maintaining activists; 3) raising revenue for the treasury; 4) maintaining discipline in the organization.

The transition from non-merit to merit employment would also be expected to have organizational impact on the participants in patronage transactions. In light of the official-centered nature of patronage in the state, the impact of the merit system might differ from governmental officials to associational leaders in the party.

- V. A loss of patronage from passage of a merit system with Hatch Act provisions will be perceived as less significant by county chairmen of the majority party than by its governmental officeholders; the



latter will perceive themselves as particularly affected by loss of appointments of lower state employees and contributions from them.

The function of patronage which Tucker found important for county chairmen in Illinois was maintenance of status; that is, patronage was used to impress party workers with the chairmen's influence. Page and Eldersveld emphasize the value of patronage as a symbol of leadership, since the one dispensing it feels by so doing, he partakes in a leadership task. This finding can be generalized to all persons included in the study: for example, the legislator could use patronage influence to impress voters.

VI. For party chairmen, legislators, governors and other elected executives, patronage will be more desired as a means of maintaining status in regard to their constituency than as a means of maintaining political organization.

There has been much speculation in the literature as to the effects of a loss of patronage for a governor, particularly in a one-party state. Dire consequences are predicted should patronage be diminished or eliminated.

Sorauf commented:

Since the loss of patronage will certainly affect legislative-executive relationships in states more sharply than in national government, one is justified in supposing that its further loss will make the task of gubernatorial leadership just that much more difficult.<sup>17</sup>

Robert Highsaw draws similar conclusions.

According to Kentucky Politics, introduction of the merit system diminished the amount of patronage for the

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<sup>17</sup>Sorauf, "Silent Revolution in Patronage", p. 33.

governor, but there was still enough patronage available for the governor to utilize it as a tool of party and legislative leadership.<sup>18</sup> It was found that a promise of a job or project could be as effective as a concrete offer. Whether or not this can apply to Oklahoma should be tested and therefore the following hypothesis comes from Sorauf's comment:

VII. If patronage has diminished for the governor, his influence with the legislature will have been substantially reduced.

Chapters four through nine will present the data as it relates to the above hypotheses. They will be discussed in the order presented here.

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<sup>18</sup>Jewell and Cunningham, Kentucky Politics, p. 237.

## CHAPTER III

### OKLAHOMA: BACKGROUND AND SETTING

To better understand present attitudes toward and uses of patronage in Oklahoma, some relevant background information about the state is needed. It is the purpose of this chapter to highlight those features which are pertinent to patronage practices.

Oklahoma might be characterized as a state in which industrialization and urbanization have advanced, but slowly. It possesses a population that is relatively stable, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, middle class, and conservative. It has been dominated by one political party. In these general terms it is similar to some of its prairie neighbors to the north. In politics, however, the personalized style and Democratic party dominance is more reminiscent of its southern neighbors than its northern ones. We discuss in turn urbanization and industrialization, partisan history and governmental structure and relate these to hypothesis I. which is:

- I. The introduction of a merit or civil service system in modern times tends to be accompanied by the onset of industrialization and urbanization and rise in levels of income and education.

## Urbanization and Industrialization

Urbanization came to Oklahoma more slowly than it did to much of the nation. Oklahoma had a rural majority until 1950;<sup>1</sup> the United States became an urban nation in 1920. The population of the state gradually shifted toward the cities, in particular the areas comprising the three Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the state, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and Lawton. The rural areas did not regain what they lost in emigration.

The total population of the state has remained relatively stable for several decades. Only seven counties have experienced consistent growth in the 1940-1970 period: Oklahoma (Oklahoma City), Tulsa (Tulsa), Commanche (Lawton), Cleveland (Norman), Garfield (Enid), and Jackson (Altus). But these counties have grown primarily from the loss experienced in other counties rather than from immigration from other states. Forty-four of the seventy-seven counties experienced population loss in the past decade. The state, as a whole, showed a modest population gain.

Oklahoma has also become industrialized more slowly than the nation as a whole. Industrialization took place primarily during and after the Second World War. It has continued since that time with a subsequent decline in the importance of agricultural income to the state as a whole. In 1929, the contributors of total personal income in the

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<sup>1</sup>An urban resident is defined as one living in a municipality of 2,500 or more.

TABLE 1

OKLAHOMA POPULATION: GROWTH AND PERCENT URBAN, 1910-1970<sup>2</sup>

	Total Population	Percent Growth	Percent Urban
1910	1,657,155		19.3
1920	2,028,283	22.4	26.6
1930	2,396,040	18.1	34.4
1940	2,336,434	- 2.5	37.7
1950	2,233,351	- 4.4	49.6
1960	2,328,284	4.3	61.0
1970	2,559,253	9.9	68.0

state in order of importance were: agriculture, retail and wholesale trade, and mining (oil and gas included).<sup>3</sup> In 1960 the order of contributors was trade, government, and manufacturing.<sup>4</sup> Even from 1950 to 1967 significant changes occurred in the importance of agriculture. Farming made up 50% or more of personal income in 12 counties in 1950; in 1967 there were no counties in which this was the case.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the most significant change in the state's economy has been in the growth of government activity as a

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<sup>2</sup>This chart is an update of a chart which appeared in Wayne F. Young, "Oklahoma Politics: With Special Reference to the Election of Oklahoma's First Republican Governor", (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1964), p. 38, by permission of the author.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Shu-Jan Liang, "A Method for Projecting County Income in Oklahoma," (an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1969).

contributor of personal income. There were only four counties in the state in which government-produced income decreased from 1950 to 1967. In Comanche County, the location of the Fort Sill Army Base, the governmental sector accounted for 66% of total personal income in 1967. In seven other counties, more than 50% of the total income was generated by government.<sup>6</sup> In 1960, the largest single employer in the state was Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma County.<sup>7</sup>

The importance of the federal government as an employer is also seen in the fact that federal employees in the state numbered 46,800 in 1965 as compared with 29,000 state and 54,000 local employees.<sup>8</sup> Most federal employees are under the federal civil service system and are regulated by the Hatch Act in regard to political activities and this would appear to have an affect on attitudes toward government employment and patronage in the state.

Personal income in the state has been rising in Oklahoma as it has in the rest of the country. Personal income in Oklahoma increased 162.3% from 1950-1967 but this was below the national increase.<sup>9</sup> Median family income rose

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 82-84.

<sup>7</sup>Young, "Oklahoma Politics," p. 58.

<sup>8</sup>U. S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book 1967 A Statistical Abstract Supplement (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1967).

<sup>9</sup>Liang, "Oklahoma County Incomes," p. 51.



from \$2,387 in 1950 to \$4,620 in 1960. Young states that in 1960 per capita income was \$1,848 or 83.1% of the nation as a whole. In 1941, however, it was 60.4% of the nation as a whole.

As industrialization, urbanization, and income have increased, so has the level of education for the state as a whole. This might be considered a factor which could contribute to the changing attitudes toward patronage and state employment.

TABLE 2

PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME AND MEDIAN SCHOOL  
YEARS COMPLETED, OKLAHOMA 1940-1970

	Per capita <sup>10</sup> personal income Oklahoma	Per capita personal income United States	Median years of <sup>11</sup> school completed, persons 25 years and older
1940	\$ 354	\$ 573	8.4
1950	1,143	1,496	9.1
1960	1,848	2,216	10.4
1970	3,312	3,921	12.1

It would be difficult to prove that urbanization, industrialization, increasing income and a rising level of

<sup>10</sup>U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, Survey of Current Business (August, 1941), p. 14; U. S. Department of Commerce, Office of Business Economics, Survey of Current Business (August, 1971), Washington D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1971, p.13.

<sup>11</sup>U. S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book, 1967.



education were responsible for the change from patronage to merit systems. However, the Oklahoma experience is not counter to the expected relationship, the merit system being adopted with increasing industrialization, affluence and education.

Two Oklahoma writers argue that the relationship is causal. Tucker Gibson stated in 1963 that the good economy, the fact that few people wanted state jobs, and the modern political campaign all influenced the adoption of a merit system in Oklahoma.<sup>12</sup> Otis Sullivant, veteran Oklahoma political journalist, observed in 1967 that modern conditions and better employment opportunities with the federal government and private industry had greatly diminished the need for patronage.<sup>13</sup>

#### Regional Differences

There are some regional differences in Oklahoma economically, historically, and politically which should be mentioned because of their implications for a study of patronage. An east/west split arose out of the territorial period in Oklahoma's history. At that time, the Indian territory was in the eastern half of the state and the western half was Oklahoma territory. The eastern half of the state was settled by both Indians and white settlers

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<sup>12</sup>Tucker Gibson, "The Political Significance of the Oklahoma Merit System."

<sup>13</sup>Otis Sullivant, The Daily Oklahoman, December 31, 1967.

from the south. The east became Democratic in its voting patterns after statehood. The western half was settled more by people with northern backgrounds and at the beginning tended to be Republican. Economic differences between the two regions were also to be found; the eastern portions of the state, except for Tulsa, possessed a lower income level than the west and central regions.<sup>14</sup>

The north/south differences arose for several reasons: types of agriculture, influence of political affiliation of bordering states, and differences in economic development in the regions.<sup>15</sup> The southern and eastern regions of the state appear, to many observers, to possess a more personalized style of politics in which patronage is considered an acceptable pattern of behavior, as compared to the north and northwest sections of the state. Political observers state that the north and west are less patronage oriented. One state senator whose district lies along the southern border and west of the center of the state said the farther east one traveled in his district, the more likely one was to find patronage an important ingredient of local politics. From what interviewees said generally, the traditional regional configuration of personalized politics has remained since the passage of the merit system,

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<sup>14</sup>Samuel Kirkpatrick, et al., "Oklahoma Voting Patterns: Presidential, Gubernatorial and Senatorial Elections," for the Bureau of Government Research (Norman: University of Oklahoma, June, 1970).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

with some exceptions. The east and southeast areas of the state are still poorer and a state job is considered desirable.

The north/south, east/west regional differences are also somewhat related to those of party. The Republican party has been stronger in the north and northwest sections of the state, those areas in which patronage has not been considered as important. There are a number of factors at work here, including economic considerations, social make-up, heritage, etc., but the fact that there is more party competition here, with a tendency toward Republicanism, may play a role in determining the importance of patronage in the area. In the south and southeastern parts of the state, where personalized politics are a more usual manner of operation, the Democratic party is almost all-pervasive. Election of a Republican at any level is a rarity, except perhaps on the presidential level, as in the 1960 Nixon-Kennedy election (in which the religious factor was most important in this "Bible belt" area). The northern area of the state tends to go Republican in state and national elections, but Democrats are still elected at the county level. Thus, a certain degree of inter-party competition exists there, which might affect the absence of patronage-oriented politics.

### The Political Parties

Politically, Oklahoma has not been as homogeneous as its voting record before the 1950's would suggest. The Republican party was strong in the state before the constitutional convention of 1907. The Socialists made strong showings in some early state and national elections. The Democratic party has been dominant since statehood, however.

If one looks at a political map of the state, one finds that the Republicans have been strong in the northern part of the state along the Kansas border, about three counties deep. The Democratic counties follow the southern border two to five counties deep. Inbetween are those counties considered to be swing counties. Of these, Oklahoma County (Oklahoma City) is particularly important.<sup>16</sup>

Oklahoma has been considered to be one-party predominant. Through 1970, Democrats have won 88.2% of the gubernatorial contests, 83.3% of the senatorial contests and 62.5% of the presidential contests. Alternations of control had taken place in 11.7% of the gubernatorial contests, 18.1% of the senatorial races and 31.2% of the presidential contests through 1970.

The Republicans have been gaining strength in recent years. They have won four of the past five presidential elections. The governorship was captured by the Republicans for the first time in 1962 and again in 1966, though it

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<sup>16</sup>Young, "Oklahoma Politics," pp. 71-72.

returned to the Democrats in 1970 by a small margin. The Republicans were able to capture two lower elective executive positions in 1966 although these were lost in 1970. They were the first Republicans elected to such positions since the GOP won Corporation Commission positions in 1920 and 1928. The fourth Republican United States Senator was elected in 1968.

V. O. Key commented in American State Politics in 1956 on the plight of the Republican party in Oklahoma.<sup>17</sup> The fact that gubernatorial elections were held in off-years had hurt the Republicans, he asserted. In view of the good showing the Republicans have made in presidential elections, particularly in the past few contests, it would appear that Republicans would have done better in state elections if they could have benefited from the coattail effect.

The increases in Republican victories have been due as much to switch voting in strongly Democratic counties as to swing counties switching from Democratic to Republican according to Wayne Young.<sup>18</sup> This has been less noticeable, he feels, because these counties have remained in the Democratic column. The switch from Democratic to Republican voting has not been solely an urban phenomenon; it has affected rural areas as well. Correlations between selected socio-economic variables and party choice in recent elections show

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<sup>17</sup>V. O. Key, American State Politics, p. 42-43.

<sup>18</sup>Young, "Oklahoma Politics," chapter 5, passim.

the secret of the Republican successes seem to be in their ability to appeal to the growing middle class, urban whites within the state while retaining a modicum of appeal to rural voters.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, it would appear that the trend toward Republicanism will grow as this segment of the voters grows in numbers.

In spite of the trend, Democrats remain very strong in the state. As of January, 1969, there were 929,749 registered Democrats as compared to 269,051 registered Republicans.<sup>20</sup> This 22% Republican registration is up 5% from 17% in 1970. (In part, the low registration may be less a measure of voter preference than of the fact that most Republican candidates are unopposed in the primaries.) Only 97 of approximately 847 county officials elected in 1968 were Republicans.<sup>21</sup> This represents a steady decline in the Republican share of county officials since 1920, when they reached a peak of 378.<sup>22</sup>

The Republicans have been unable to break the Democratic hold on the state legislature. In the period 1907-1967 they controlled on the average about 18.6% of the seats in the lower house.<sup>23</sup> At present they have 21% of the house and 18.7% of the senate.

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<sup>19</sup>Kirkpatrick, "Oklahoma Voting Patterns," p. 26.

<sup>20</sup>Basil Wilson, comp., Directory and Manual of the State of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: State Election Board, 1969), p. 135.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 291-367.

<sup>22</sup>Young, "Politics of Oklahoma," p. 106.

<sup>23</sup>Kirkpatrick, "Oklahoma Voting Patterns," p. 31.

TABLE 3

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE OKLAHOMA HOUSE AND SENATE, BY PARTY

	1961		1963		1965*		1967		1969		1971	
	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D
Senate	4	40	6	38	7	41	9	39	10	38	9	39
House	14	107	25	95	21	78	25	74	23	76	21	78

\*after reapportionment

It would thus appear that the period 1952-1970 has seen more competition between the two parties on the upper levels. But below the gubernatorial level the state has continued to be dominated by the Democrats.

The Republican party organization has been strengthened in recent years by success. For many years the Republican organization was weak, however. Nuclei that formed within the party to contest elections had little hope of winning. Since there were almost no public leaders who could assume party leadership, associational leaders were in the forefront, and they were not necessarily interested in building up the party. V. O. Key and others maintained that the southern Republican leadership was content for many years to keep their party weak and in the minority so they could control whatever federal patronage might come their way. This appears to have been the case in Oklahoma. On the state and national level, their chances for electoral success were

slim except in the congressional district around Tulsa. No particular effort was made to organize rank and file Republicans. As described by Wayne Young, the leadership of the state Republican party was predominantly controlled by oil millionaires from the Tulsa area.<sup>24</sup> Honorific patronage from Washington was important to these leaders.

After World War II, changes occurred in the Republican party. Encouraged by success in the presidential elections, rank and file Republicans gained more control over the party leadership. In 1960 control of the party was taken over by Henry Bellmon, a rancher, who succeeded in organizing the party at the lower levels.<sup>25</sup> The Republicans were able to elect Bellmon governor in 1962, senator in 1968, and then won the governorship again in 1966 with Dewey Bartlett. The two Republican governors were somewhat successful in controlling the state Republican party. Henry Bellmon managed to get his candidate elected GOP state chairman, although it apparently required some effort.<sup>26</sup> According to one source, however, Bartlett's choice for the position was not elected. The selected chairman had been a congressional aide to Bartlett's 1966 primary opponent.

The structure of the state Democratic party contrasts sharply with that of the Republicans. Conscious of their

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<sup>24</sup>Young, "Oklahoma Politics," p. 144.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., chapter 7, passim.

<sup>26</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, April 21, 1963.



overwhelming strength and the weakness of the opposition, the Democrats were even more casual about party organization than the Republicans. Throughout the years of Democratic governors, the governor was naturally very important in the party power structure; however, much of the power was shared with U. S. Senators, legislative leaders and other elected officials. Unlike the Republicans, the party officials seldom exerted significant influence.<sup>27</sup> This is consistent with Schlesinger's theory of party organization. He says that, while such states lack party turnover, legal strictures on re-election mean turnover in public officials. The public leader who can win elections makes a more important contribution of leadership to the party, hence associational leaders are considered less important.<sup>28</sup> Thus, in Oklahoma, there were no political bosses in the Democratic party during this time. The influence of the governors over the party was evidenced by the fact that they were nearly always able to name the state party chairman, with a few exceptions, and controlled the delegates to the national convention.<sup>29</sup>

Losing the governorship in 1962, the loosely structured Democratic party lost the little cohesiveness that governors had been able to give it. State legislative

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<sup>27</sup>Young, "Oklahoma Politics," chapter 8, passim.

<sup>28</sup>Schlesinger, "Political Party Organization," pp. 779-780.

<sup>29</sup>Ada Evening News, December 6, 1959.

leaders gained considerable power, especially J. D. McCarty, Speaker of the House during the period 1961-1965. U. S. Senators Monroney (until his defeat in 1968) and Harris also acted as spokesmen for the party at times. It is conceivable that the late Senator Robert Kerr, perhaps as important a Democrat as ever lived in the state, might have dominated the party leadership during this period, but he died in late 1962 and left no real continuing organization. In this period of partial power vacuum, Democratic party chairmen (associational leaders) became more vocal, and ex-governors, particularly Raymond Gary, sometimes attempted to speak for the party.<sup>30</sup>

#### The Governor

Compared with chief executives in other states, Oklahoma governors do not have great legal powers. The Schlesinger power index ranked the Oklahoma governors in the middle, rating them high on budget and veto power and low on appointment and tenure potential.<sup>31</sup> Since that article was written, however, the governor has been granted the power to succeed himself for one term. Consequently, the Oklahoma governor would now rank higher on the power scale.

The Oklahoma governor is hampered by the fact that

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<sup>30</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, issues from 1962 to 1971.

<sup>31</sup>Joseph Schlesinger, "The Politics of the Executive," in Politics in the American States, ed. by Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (Boston: Little, Brown) 1965, pp. 207-237.

he is one of several elected executives. He has no control over the other executives except through the prestige of his office. When executives and the governor are of opposing parties, the division is increased. Another restriction of the governor's power is the number of appointments that must be ratified by the senate. Although the original constitution required the senate to confirm only the appointment of the State Bank Commissioner, the first legislature added several others.<sup>32</sup> Succeeding legislatures have increased the number of confirmations required. The senate almost always attempts to establish senatorial confirmation for any new position or board established; sometimes they are successful, sometimes they are not. Another limitation upon the governor's power is that major department heads are appointed by him directly in only a few instances such as Public Safety Commissioner, Bank Commissioner, Adjutant General and head of the Department of Industrial Development and Parks. Other heads are appointed by the commission or board which is responsible for the department, e.g. the Highway Commission appoints the head of the Highway Department.

The governor's informal powers to some extent help him overcome the legal limitations he faces. When the governor is a Democrat, it is customary for him to select the speaker, president pro tem and floor leaders of the

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<sup>32</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, February 22, 1963.

legislature.<sup>33</sup> In fact, it has not been unusual for the governors to try to name important committee chairmen in the legislature.<sup>34</sup> The governor's appointment of the Highway Commission is considered to be one of his greatest sources of power since it gives him some control over roads. If the governor is not pleased with the Director of the Highway Department, he can put pressure on the Highway Commissioners to replace the officer or fire the commissioners and replace them in order to appoint the man he wants. Almost every governor appoints a new Highway Commission soon after he takes office.

The governor exerts control over other department heads through his ability to appoint boards and commissions. In a recent case involving a college president with whom the governor was displeased, the governor attempted to control the board of regents in order to fire the president. The governor may also possess informal control of party leadership and appointment of key party personnel.

The power of Oklahoma governors, as in most states, is primarily dependent on the individual style of the governor and his own perception of his position and power, regardless of his party, age or background. Generally, Oklahoma governors have not been ones to rock the boat. If

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<sup>33</sup>Young, "Oklahoma Politics," p. 160. In 1971, however, the legislature organized independent of the governor. Evidently the legislators became accustomed to independence under Republican governors.

<sup>34</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, June 10, 1960.

they have exercised their power to any extent it has been to maintain the status quo rather than to innovate; there are exceptions, of course. Oklahoma, however, is generally a low pressure state and the governors have served to maintain the low pressure. This does not mean that the state has not had its share of excitement in politics.

Certain governors have had better rapport with and control over the legislature than others. Of those serving in the past two decades Raymond Gary (1955-1959) was able to exert the most control over the legislature. Gary had served as president pro tem of the senate prior to being elected governor. His successor, J. Howard Edmondson, was a reformer who won by the largest majority ever recorded in Oklahoma. His platform was to clean out the old guard and begin anew. His first session saw many measures passed, including the merit system, but from that point on he experienced difficulties. He lost ground on several issues between the two sessions and by the time the second session met the legislature was organized against him.<sup>35</sup> In his second session no reforms were pushed and the legislative leadership ran the session.

The Republican governors have not been so different from the Democratic ones; however, they have been more intent on preventing obvious tax increases. Although the first Republican governor, Henry Bellmon, was able to remain

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<sup>35</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, June, 1960.

friends with the Democratic legislators, his successor was not able to do so and did little to try to maintain good relations with them. Some of his programs were passed, however.

The present Democratic governor pushed for tax reform and increased taxes; this was passed, although not at the level he desired. While he has been more reform oriented than other governors, he has also catered to the old guard and rural element in the state. He has been most concerned with legislative relations.

#### The Legislature

The character of the legislature of Oklahoma has been formed by many of the factors which have molded other Oklahoma state institutions: the dominance of one party, the rural character and conservative nature of the state (particularly noticable before reapportionment) and the populist constitution which restricted the legislature and other branches of the government.

The dominance of the Democratic party in the legislature has diminished only slightly since reapportionment. This dominance has meant that party is not the main criterion for voting behavior. Only in rare instances does party voting occur in the legislature, although under a Republican governor it may have been more common. The durable factions

present in some states cannot be readily identified here.<sup>36</sup> Samuel Patterson conducted a study of voting patterns in the Oklahoma house, 1959, on issues on which a minority had a vote of 10% or more.<sup>37</sup> He discovered various factions at work depending on the particular issue: pro and anti-governor; metropolitan-urban, rural; welfare and labor; schools; campaigns and elections; public morals; appropriations; and taxation. On the basis of that study Oklahoma might be designated a multi-factional system. Young states that one former legislator described the legislature as possessing three major blocs; school, welfare and road users-county commissioners.<sup>38</sup>

A study of the 30th legislature, the first year after the major reapportionment of 1964, found that a rural-urban split did not develop because of reapportionment. Instead, on only two issues could such a split be identified; it was a metropolitan-urban, rural split.<sup>39</sup> Reapportionment

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<sup>36</sup>Some individuals interviewed mentioned the "knot hole gang" as a durable faction in Oklahoma. This group was the "aginner" or those men who have opposed the executive branch, regardless of party. Although it has been primarily rural legislators, some urban members have been included, particularly J. D. McCarty when he served. It has decreased in strength since reapportionment but is supposedly still in existence.

<sup>37</sup>Samuel Patterson, "Dimensions of Voting Behavior in a One-Party State Legislature," Public Opinion Quarterly, 26 185-200, Summer, 1962. Presently, an attempt is being made to replicate the Patterson study but the results are not yet final.

<sup>38</sup>Young, "Oklahoma Politics," p. 163.

<sup>39</sup>Jack R. Noble, Dale G. Parent and Teresa Ramirez,

did bring about other changes, however. Representation of Tulsa County rose from 7 in the house and one senator, to fifteen in the house and seven in the senate. Oklahoma County also gained from seven representatives to eighteen representatives and from one senator to nine senators. Leadership of the senate was affected by reapportionment after a few years. It had been traditionally rural until 1969. In that year not only the president pro tem but also the majority leader, assistant majority leader and majority whip were from SMSA's.

Prior to reapportionment, the Senate was the more conservative of the two houses, particularly on personnel and patronage matters. Today the house is cast in that role. One urban senator exclaimed that the 1971 reapportionment would mean the end of rural leadership in the house. At present it remains controlled by traditional rural Democrats.

Not only did reapportionment take place in 1964 but annual sessions of the legislature were approved in a referendum by the people in 1966. The annual sessions, reapportionment and increased salaries (\$9,000) have resulted in an active legislative body. Several persons interviewed commented on the high calibre of the recent legislators as compared with those in the past.

The Oklahoma legislators, similar to those in some

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"Oklahoma's Thirtieth Legislature", (Norman: University of Oklahoma for the Bureau of Government Research, 1966).



other states, are willing to look out for each other. The quid pro quo is an important means of accomplishing things and is an accepted practice. There are pork barrel measures which help secure funds for parks, recreation areas and special events in the legislators' districts. A Special Events Commission was established in 1969 and it obtains funds for local fairs, special shows, Indian dances, etc. in the legislator's district. The 1971 appropriation for this commission was \$71,000. (The governor is also influential in determining the appropriations.) The Industrial Development and Parks Department appropriation is also considered a pork barrel bill. The quid pro quo would appear to go further than this, however. The author was told of several instances of alleged corruption on the part of various legislators. If true, they are tolerated apparently because no legislator wants to make trouble for another legislator. At any rate, a personalized style of politics is still important for many legislator, although true of some districts more than others.

#### Elected Executives and Departments

Besides the governor, there are 13 other state elective executive officers in Oklahoma: lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer, auditor, examiner and inspector, three corporation commissioners, state superintendent of public instruction, commissioner of labor, commissioner of charities and state insurance

commissioner. Occasionally, one of these lower executives leads the Democratic ticket and the officials feel they can be independent of the chief executive.

There are at present 201 active state departments, agencies, boards and commissions in Oklahoma, plus 42 institutions.<sup>40</sup> When Hubert Waldby did his study in 1949 there were 126. A few of these are constitutional departments, independent of the legislature. The Wildlife Conservation Department is one. There have been attempts to give the Highway Department such status but they have been unsuccessful. Departments and agencies which are not constitutionally protected are subject to the desires and conflicts of the governor and the legislature. According to both the past and present Personnel Directors of the state, employees and directors of most agencies, including their own, must act according to the rules of the game if they are to survive.

#### Summary

This chapter has attempted to describe socio-economic features of Oklahoma which are relevant for a study of patronage. It was found that rise in industrialization, urbanization, level of income and level of education preceded have been found along with the establishment and growth of the state merit system. This is consistent with the findings of other states and lends confirmation to the first hypothesis.

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<sup>40</sup>Chart of Oklahoma Administrative Agencies and Departments published by the Bureau of Government Research, 1971.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PERSONNEL FRAMEWORK

The history of personnel practices in Oklahoma is relatively complete up to recent times as a result of the studies of Hubert Waldby, in 1949, and Tucker Gibson, in 1963. Since these are important for background material, they will be reviewed in this chapter. It is also the purpose of this chapter to update the previous studies and present the contemporary merit-patronage balance. The question to be answered is that of Hypothesis II. Did the merit system effectively replace patronage practices, and, if vestiges of the system remain, were these in agencies traditionally patronage-oriented? The latter question is that of Hypothesis II:

- II. Those departments and agencies in which patronage was the most important before the merit system will continue to be the place where patronage will be important after merit, even if violations of the merit system have to occur for this to be so.

#### The Pre-1959 Spoils System

Before 1959 there was no formal merit system in Oklahoma except that required by federal law which covered employees in the four grant-in-aid agencies: Public Welfare, Health, Employment Security Commission and Crippled

Children's Commission.<sup>1</sup> Almost all employment in state government was employment gained by patronage. The state possessed no uniform vacation policy, no job classification system, no uniform leave policy, no retirement system and no uniform compensation plan. Waldby indicates that personnel records maintained on employees were quite poor. Salaries and employment policies varied from department to department.

According to Waldby the governor possessed ultimate power over all appointments. Most governors were besieged by office seekers. The governor's patronage adviser was his most important assistant. The latter maintained records on all appointments made and the name of the sponsor. The names and number of employees sponsored by each legislator was kept on file. When votes were needed for the governor's legislative program, the adviser used the list to pressure legislators into supporting the governor. Some governors were more effective at using the threat of firing employees than were others.

As a rule, state employees had to have a legislative sponsor, although there were exceptions.<sup>2</sup> Waldby states

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<sup>1</sup>Hubert O. Waldby, The Patronage System in Oklahoma and "Public Personnel Practices in Oklahoma State Government." The next few paragraphs are taken from both the dissertation and the book.

<sup>2</sup>I interviewed three long-time employees who were proud of the fact they had obtained their jobs without a sponsor.

that the primary qualification for obtaining a job in Oklahoma before the merit system was evidence of past political activity. Thus, employees were often required to obtain endorsement of their county central committee. Additional hirings were common at campaign time, and employees would spend their work time campaigning.

Assessments of employees was a common practice. Alexander Heard in 1960 stated that Oklahoma was one of the states where assessments were still collected.<sup>3</sup> Waldby said whether assessments were made depended on the governor. Beginning in the late 1940's assessments were made which were collected at the annual Jefferson-Jackson Day Democratic dinner. Thousands of dollars were raised each year by this method. One employee interviewed told of collecting money for her department, a large and politically important one. Everyone was required to give, but if someone could not give the assessed amount, no action was taken.

Certain departments or even divisions within departments were more political than others. Within the Highway Department, the Highway Laboratory was relatively free of political pressure. The technical skills required of these employees helped insulate them from politics. The Highway Inspection Division, on the other hand, was particularly susceptible to political pressure. The Highway Patrol maintained its own merit system. Employees who worked in

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<sup>3</sup>Alexander Heard, The Costs of Democracy (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1962), p. 132.

the headquarters of the public safety department, however, were almost all "sponsored".

While technical positions were more immune from politics than others, so were positions which required little expertise. The employees at the state mental hospitals worked under such atrocious conditions for such low pay and long hours that it was difficult to hire and keep people, regardless of whether or not they had a political sponsor. The department was happy to hire whomever they could.

According to Waldby the main "political" jobs involving campaigning on the job and necessary political sponsorship were: tag agents, district game rangers, local field employees of the Public Welfare Department, employees in the district office of the Highway Department and Tax Commission district officers.

Although the patronage system was a way of life for Oklahoma politicians for many years, it was also under attack much of the time. Waldby relates that several governors viewed it as a mixed blessing. At times they spoke out against it; almost always they subsequently used it.

Legislation to eliminate patronage and to organize the personnel system was introduced many times. Governor Robert Williams in 1919 proposed legislation to establish a civil service system. There were several such bills introduced from 1930 to 1958, but none were taken very seriously

by legislators.<sup>4</sup> From 1935 to 1941, Waldby states, newspapers and the public, particularly the League of Women Voters, were reform-oriented on the matter of personnel, but the majority of legislators were not willing to pass any such measure. By the late 1940's some prominent legislators had begun to push for reform but were opposed by the heads of the Highway Department and Board of Affairs.

#### The Passage of the Merit System Act

In the 1950's there were more serious attempts at change. In 1953 several acts were introduced to either establish civil service or prohibit political activity on the part of employees.<sup>5</sup> When Governor Johnston Murray delivered his departing message to the legislature in 1955, he voiced concern about the patronage system in the state and called for its elimination.<sup>6</sup>

One attempt at personnel reform was aimed primarily at compensation. In 1957, Governor Raymond Gary recommended that a Wage Stabilization Law be enacted. Legislation was passed and subsequently the State Salary Administration

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<sup>4</sup>One of the more interesting pieces of legislation introduced at this time, according to Waldby, was a bill which would require by law that patronage be distributed to a county on the basis of their percentage of the total vote cast for the majority party in the last general election. Senate Bill 146, 1935.

<sup>5</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives, 24th Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, Regular Session, 1953 (Oklahoma City, Okla: Leader Press).

<sup>6</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives, 25th Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, Regular Session, 1955.

Board was established.<sup>7</sup> Not only would each department of the state be required to prepare compensation plans, but classification and uniform vacation and sick leave plans were also to be prepared. The extent to which the board functioned is not known, but apparently it did very little.

In 1959 Howard Edmondson ran on a platform which included among its reforms a comprehensive merit system. After his landslide election the old guard was obliged to pay some attention to his program. Employees of certain key opposition senators found themselves fired by the governor's staff when the senate did not act on the merit bill.<sup>8</sup> Final passage of the merit bill in the senate came on the last day of the session.

Governor Edmondson commented that the bill passed because the senators were tired and ready to end the session. Another factor was a meeting he had with some of the old guard senators in which they voiced their desire for him to continue treating them like senators if the bill passed. Apparently they hoped the governor's office would continue to allow them patronage influence.<sup>9</sup> Another observer said the senators believed the act would be repealed in the next session and were not afraid of it for that reason.

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<sup>7</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives, 26th Legislature, Regular Session, 1957.

<sup>8</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, April 1, 1959 and April 22, 1959.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Governor J. Howard Edmondson, January 24, 1970.



The initial merit act was a comprehensive one. The governor was granted the authority by executive order to place under the merit system any agency he deemed necessary, including employees of elected officials. A seven member Personnel Board was to be appointed by the governor without the advice and consent of the senate. The board was to appoint a Personnel Director and with his staff establish comprehensive classification and compensation plans. Summer employees and the lowest level jobs were to be included in the classified service.<sup>10</sup>

One of the most important aspects of the bill, politically, was its "little Hatch act" provisions: political activity by state employees was to be prohibited. This act was interpreted strictly by the Attorney General and Personnel Board to mean that employees were allowed only to vote, express political opinions, and make voluntary political contributions to a party or candidate.<sup>11</sup>

A Personnel Board was appointed by the governor in July, 1959, and a set of rules was published in September, 1959. Included among the rules was hiring by the rule of three (selection of one of the three highest scores on the examination); procedure for hearings in cases of firing, demotions, discrimination, etc.; provisions for provisional, emergency and temporary employment; and uniform leave and

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<sup>10</sup>Tucker Gibson, "The Political Significance of the Oklahoma Merit System."

<sup>11</sup>Gibson, "Political Significance," pp. 12-13.

sick leave policies.<sup>12</sup> An advisory committee was established to aid the board in its initial steps. One of the members of this committee eventually became the State Personnel Director. By December an announcement was made as to which agencies would be placed under the merit system and the dates this would be accomplished.<sup>13</sup>

#### Initial Opposition to the 1959 Act

Opposition to the merit system was quick to arise. The first attack upon it was a test of the constitutionality of the law. This was done primarily by Joe B. Hunt, State Insurance Commissioner; however a state employee also filed suit as did the Corporation Commissioners. The District Court issued a temporary restraining order obtained by Hunt which would prevent the personnel board from exercising jurisdiction over Hunt and his employees. The District Court granted a permanent injunction to Hunt. The State Supreme Court reversed the lower court 6 - 3 and said the merit legislation was not an "unlawful delegation of legislative authority to the Personnel Board."<sup>14</sup> This occurred in June, 1960.

The Corporation Commission also sought recourse to the courts to avoid being placed under the merit system.

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<sup>12</sup>Oklahoma Personnel Board, "Rules of the Personnel Board," September 24, 1959.

<sup>13</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, December 2, 1959.

<sup>14</sup>Dale A. Schmitt v. Joe B. Hunt, Okla. 359P2d 198. Also, Gibson, "Political Significance," p. 61.

The primary difficulty arose from the fact that one of the commissioners was to be up for reelection, with several challengers for his position. The commissioner's political machine would be hurt if put under the merit system, it was alleged. The commissioners first asked the governor to delay placing them under the merit system until after the Hunt law suit. As he would not comply, they went to court. A temporary restraining order was issued until after the primary and the commissioner was free to use his employees for political purposes in May, 1960, should he so desire.<sup>15</sup>

In 1961 the primary opposition to the merit system arose in the legislative session. Certain senators were ready to cripple or repeal the act with any means available to them. One of the ways this was done was to introduce legislation to repeal the merit system. Another way was to attempt to kill it by extending the State Salary Administration Act which would have replaced the personnel board with an ex officio board which the senate could control. When these methods failed, Senator Ray Fine, of the opposition and an appropriations committee member, stated that riders would be attached to agency appropriations taking them out of the merit system. The house did not accept the riders, however.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, April 21, 1960, and May 28, 1960.

<sup>16</sup>Tucker Gibson, "Political Significance," p. 58; The Daily Oklahoman, February 17, 1961.

All of the attempts to eliminate the merit system failed in the 1961 legislative session. This was due to one man more than any other, the Speaker of the House, J. D. McCarty. He firmly supported the system and his control over the house was such that drastic changes would have been difficult without his concurrence.

The merit legislation was rewritten in 1961, however, to enlarge the number of employees in the unclassified service. Students and summer employees were placed in this category, giving legislators and executives some possibility for influence. Employees of the elected executives were now taken out of the merit system. A new non-competitive classification was also established for jobs calling for little or no skills: janitorial, dishwashing, etc. There were other attempts to loosen the system and give the agencies more control; this might in turn give legislators more influence. However, the governor vetoed the bill containing the above provisions. Consequently, the legislature rewrote the bill with the only major change being the enlargement of the unclassified service.<sup>17</sup>

Again in 1963, legislative attempts were made to destroy or change the merit system. Among the measures which were introduced were bills to allow agencies to fire

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<sup>17</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, March 9, 1961; Journal of the House of Representatives, 28th Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, Regular Session, 1961, H. B. 807; Gibson, p. 55. One departmental personnel director who was interviewed stated that the system would not have survived if the unclassified service had not been extended to those categories.

without cause, to establish a separate merit system within each agency, and to repeal merit altogether, (the latter was in the form of an amendment to a retirement system bill). Again, McCarty's support for the merit system was important.<sup>18</sup>

The Republican governor elected in 1962 gave his support to the merit system. He had stated in his campaign that he would retain the merit system, if elected. Once in office, however, he apparently was somewhat frustrated by the presence of Democrats in policy-making positions within the classified service. The senate minority floor leader, the governor's spokesman in the senate, introduced an administration bill which would have placed all employees making a salary of \$7,500 or more in the unclassified service. The reason given was that these were policy-making positions and should not be classified. The bill died in committee (was stricken).<sup>19</sup>

By 1965 legislative attacks on the merit system had slowed down considerably but had not disappeared altogether. H. B. 715 would have permitted state merit employees to attend precinct meetings as long as they did not hold office; it passed both houses of the legislature. The bill

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<sup>18</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, March 29, 1963 and May 10, 1963; Journal of the House of Representatives, 28th Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, 1963, H. B. 543; Journal of the Senate, 29th Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, 1963, S. B. 44, S. B. 127.

<sup>19</sup>Journal of the Oklahoma State Senate, 1963, S. B. 246.

was subsequently vetoed by the governor. "To relax the law in this regard is unwise", he said, in view of past abuses of this practice by state employees.<sup>20</sup> Other legislation of that year dealt with more technical aspects of the system.

In 1966 the governor extended the merit system to 9 more state agencies, after approval of the Attorney General's office. Most of these were relatively small agencies and only 300 employees were covered by the extension. However, some political motivation was revealed when the Grand River Dam Authority was placed under merit. The Director of the GRDA became a merit employee but the deputy director did not. The Director was the husband of the Republican state vice-chairman and he was "frozen" into his position.<sup>21</sup>

In the 1967 legislative session, there was one major attempt to revise the merit system. Representative Briscoe submitted a bill to enable agencies to establish their own personnel system and eliminate the statewide personnel board. State employees would also be allowed to participate in political activities in off-duty hours. This bill received no action in 1967 but was still on the agenda in 1968. At that time, the bill was amended in such a way to defeat its original purpose. The bill ultimately placed the Corporation Commission and Department of Education

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<sup>20</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, July 1, 1965; Journal of the House of Representatives, the 20th Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, Regular Session, 1965, H. B. 715.

<sup>21</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, January 20, 1966; April 29, 1966 and June 24, 1966.

employees under the merit system.<sup>22</sup> The Department of Vocational and Technical Education was also placed in the classified service. The governor placed the Oklahoma Bureau of Investigation in the classified service by executive order, September, 1968.<sup>23</sup>

A Wage Adjustment and Salary Act was passed in 1968. The purpose of the act was to establish an ex officio wage adjustment and salary board which, in cooperation with the personnel board, would establish a uniform compensation plan, after review of the existing compensation and classification schedule. The board is composed of nine representatives from specified agencies which are covered by the merit system.<sup>24</sup>

By 1969 the merit system was relatively established and changes advocated were only minor. In the 1970 legislative session, however, the administration introduced a bill to place the position of Chief of Highway Patrol in the unclassified service. Apparently the governor preferred that the patrol chief's superior, the head of the Public Safety Department, and himself, have more control

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<sup>22</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, January 6, 1967; Journal of the House of Representatives, 31st Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, First Regular Session, 1967, H. B. 547; Journal of the House of Representatives, 31st Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, Second Regular Session, 1968, H. B. 547.

<sup>23</sup>Oklahoma State Personnel Board, Annual Report 1968, Oklahoma City, Okla., p. 9.

<sup>24</sup>1968 Supplement Oklahoma Statutes, Annotated Classification (1968), Title 74§817.3.

over this position. The bill died in committee. A bill to place the Department of Labor under the merit system passed the house but died in the senate. A bill enabling department heads to be the final judges of the contents of merit entrance exams also passed the house and died in the senate.<sup>25</sup> Although this must be speculation it would appear that the election of Republican governors two consecutive terms after passage of merit did a great deal to preserve the system. Republicans were not likely to encourage return to a system which had aided Democrat governors and still would benefit Democrats over Republicans, and the Democratic legislature may have been less likely to attempt complete elimination of merit since Republicans were governors. By the time eight years of Republican reign was completed, the system was generally accepted by many state politicians.

#### Recent Attacks on the Merit System: The Mountford Bill

In 1970 a Democratic governor was elected after eight years of Republican rule. The Democrats appeared somewhat frustrated with what they believed were a number of Republican sympathizers in classified policy-making positions. Therefore, for the first time in several years, rather serious legislative attacks were made on the merit system.

The first attempt at change came in February, 1971, when Representative Wiley Sparkman, an advocate of repeal

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<sup>25</sup>Journal of the House of Representatives, 32nd Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, Second Regular Session, 1970, H. B. 1513, H. B. 1638, H. B. 1647.



in 1961, proposed removal of about one-third of the 944 positions in the state Health Department from the merit system.<sup>26</sup>

Other bills were introduced to change the system but none as serious as the legislation which was presented to the house in March, 1971. Joe Mountford, speaker pro tempore, and 25 other representatives, including the house speaker, introduced a bill to remove all professional persons or anyone employed in a supervisory position in state employment from the classified service. In addition, the bill would have permitted department heads to hire any employee who passed the merit examination; the rule of choosing from the top three scores would no longer apply. The bill also stated that a fired employee would have to show that the reasons for his firing were arbitrary or capricious rather than the department proving such.<sup>27</sup> One article commented, "Some Democratic legislators have privately complained about the large number of employees hired under the Republican administration and now locked in."<sup>28</sup>

As expected the Mountford bill caused a reaction, mostly negative. Ex-governor J. Howard Edmondson, under whose administration the system had begun, spoke in favor

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<sup>26</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, February 10, 1971.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., March 10, 1971; March 12, 1971.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., April 23, 1971.

of retention of the merit system in its present form. J. C. Kennedy, state chairman of the Democratic party, voiced support when he said, "Let me state here and now that the merit system originated under a Democratic governor and the Democratic party supports its continuance."<sup>29</sup> The governor was somewhat slow to react; after about a week he decided to take a public stand in favor of maintaining the present merit system. He did recommend a study of the system, however, to determine what changes, if any, were needed.<sup>30</sup> Mountford subsequently withdrew his bill but the day before Senator John L. Dahl, a first-term senator, introduced similar legislation in the senate. Since the president pro tempore of the senate was on record against such a bill, its passage there seemed unlikely.<sup>31</sup>

About a month later, Mountford again introduced legislation, this time to eliminate the present merit system and Personnel Board. They would be replaced by a new civil service system headed by a new board which the present governor could appoint. (The Personnel Board would take four years for the governor to control; there is removal of these members only for cause.) The bill would have allowed the governor the option of removing current employees he did not want, replacing them with partisans, and then

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., March 17, 1971.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., March 12, 1971.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., March 17, 1971.

freezing them into place under a new civil service plan. Although the speaker again supported this bill, the governor did not and said the best procedure was to study the present merit system before recommending change.<sup>32</sup>

Several amendments were offered to the Mountford bill by Representative John Miskelly which, in effect, transferred all present merit employees to the new civil service system. Also private secretaries to department heads, previously unclassified, would be classified.<sup>33</sup> The next day Mountford moved to withdraw his bill from consideration. He then offered a joint resolution which listed certain positions to be removed from the merit system; this would enable Governor David Hall to appoint persons of his own choosing to the specified positions. These positions included such jobs as deputy state school superintendent, deputy and director of the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, director of the GRDA, executive assistant of the Public Employees Retirement System, etc. Twenty agencies in all would be affected by the resolution Mountford said.<sup>34</sup>

The one change in the merit system which finally succeeded in passage was S. B. 335. This act removed from the merit system 36 positions in the State Superintendent of Public Instruction's office, including the deputy state

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., April 23, 1971.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., April 28, 1971.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., April 29, 1971.

superintendent.<sup>35</sup> The State Superintendent, an elected official, had urged passage of such legislation. He said he needed to be able to choose those persons occupying policy-making positions in his department.<sup>36</sup> Sponsored by the president pro tem, the minority floor leader, and the chairman of the education committee, the bill seemed assured of passage. Future policy-making positions to be created as well as policy-making positions in other departments carrying out educational programs for children were also removed from the merit system.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the merit system survived the 1971 legislative session relatively intact but not without attack. Probably the support of the president pro tem plus the outcries of other Democrats and the belated support of the governor aided in the system's survival.

However, the year was not to end without additional attempts at change in the merit system. These came primarily through the Attorney General's office. In October, 1971, the Attorney General's office issued a memorandum to the Personnel Board which stated that in hearings before the board dealing with discrimination in hiring, the burden of proof had to fall on the employee rather than the employer.

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., June 3, 1971.

<sup>36</sup> Speech by Leslie Fisher, State Superintendent of Public Instruction before the Cleveland County Democratic Women's Club, May 13, 1971.

<sup>37</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, June 3, 1971.

This was in direct contrast to the previous policy of placing the burden of proof on the employer. The Assistant Attorney General stated that the ruling applied to hearings on dismissals, transfers and other actions, as well as discrimination.<sup>38</sup> The reaction to the memorandum was marked; one long-time board member felt this would deter the effectiveness of the merit system and open the way to mass firings.<sup>39</sup> The Republican state chairman decried the issuance of the memorandum.<sup>40</sup> The governor gave support to the merit system in response to the Republican chairman's statement but added that the merit system was not perfect.<sup>41</sup> In early November the Democratic president pro tem wrote a letter to the Attorney General contending that the memorandum "would prohibit the imposition of an impossible burden of proof on a discharged state employee to prove that the agency should not have fired him."<sup>42</sup> A formal opinion on the matter was issued by the Attorney General in December in which he reversed the earlier memorandum and said burden of proof lies with the state.<sup>43</sup>

The 1972 legislative session saw no important reform in the merit system although there was an attempt to exempt

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., October 21, 1971.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., October 23, 1971.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., November 4, 1971.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., December 11, 1971.

the Highway Department from certain sections of the Merit System over a three-year experimental period.<sup>44</sup> This did not pass, however.

The political activities section of the merit act was upheld by a three judge Federal Court in February, 1972, and it was noted that

. . . the Oklahoma Legislature has the power to regulate within reasonable limits, the political conduct of state employees in order to promote efficiency and integrity in the public service.<sup>45</sup>

In this particular case, three Corporation Commission employees had sued on the grounds that the law was an encroachment on the First Amendment and an abridgement of their constitutional rights.

#### Present Status of the Merit System

After twelve years of operation the merit system, while not without criticism and attack, is still in operation. A revised set of rules was published in January, 1971. The annual report for 1970 showed 29,108 applications received, 18,494 written examinations given and 11,192 names placed on the registers.<sup>46</sup> In 1960 6,580 examinations were given. By 1963, 8,565 were administered and 6,258 names were placed on the register.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., February 8, 1972 and March 14, 1972.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., February 16, 1972.

<sup>46</sup> Oklahoma State Personnel Board, Annual Report 1970, Oklahoma City.

<sup>47</sup> Oklahoma State Personnel Board, Annual Report 1968, Oklahoma City.

One hundred thirty nine hearings had been held by the Personnel Board through December 31, 1970 on dismissals, demotions, suspensions, discrimination, etc.<sup>48</sup>

Of the forty-two state institutions all but the eighteen state colleges and universities are covered by the merit system. Forty-six state agencies and departments aside from institutions are included in the merit system.<sup>49</sup> (See appendix for a list of those agencies under the merit system.) The author counted 155 departments, boards and commissions and interstate compact offices which are not under the merit system.<sup>50</sup> Most of those not covered are relatively small. Of those outside the merit system, the Wildlife Conservation Department is the largest (243 employees). Since 1964, however, the department has maintained its own merit system for game rangers.

The number of paid state employees not covered by the merit system, aside from higher education, is relatively small. Jerry Scarborough, writing in May, 1970, said that in April, 1970, there were 37,183 full-time equivalent employees (based "on total man-hours divided by a 40-hour week"). Total state employment was listed at 46,801. Of the number of full-time equivalent employees, 16,733 were

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<sup>48</sup>Annual Report. 1970.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Anna Walls, comp., Oklahoma State Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Courts, Institutions, Legislature and Officers as of June 26, 1970 (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Legislative Reference Division).

employed full-time at the state institutions of higher education.<sup>51</sup> These jobs are generally considered outside the realm of political influence. The 1970 annual report for the Personnel Board presented an average number of employees working in all merit departments except personnel; this figure was 10,208.25. It is not known what the full-time equivalent figure would be as temporary and part-time employees are included. Therefore, one can arrive at the number of paid state employees not under the merit system, which is only approximate: 2,242. While the number is undoubtedly larger than that, especially if one considers honorific jobs, one can say that the number of non-merit, non-higher education employees is relatively small in the over-all picture of state employment.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, May 10, 1970.

<sup>52</sup>Oklahoma Personnel Board, Rules 1968, 2110.1. Positions in the unclassified service include the following: 1) persons chosen by election to office and their employees except all of the employees of the Corporation Commission and the employees of the Department of Education (now revised); 2) members of boards and commissions, heads of departments required by law to be appointed by the governor; 3) one principal assistant or deputy and one private secretary for each head of a department appointed by the Governor; 4) all employees in the office of the governor and required by law to be appointed by him; 5) judges, referees receivers, jurors, etc.; 6) officers and employees of the Oklahoma Legislature; 7) all officers and employees of the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, State Board of Education, Division of Vocational Education, and all employees of public school districts; 8) patient and inmate help in the state institutions; 9) persons employed in a professional or scientific capacity to make or conduct a temporary and special inquiry, investigation, or examination on behalf of the legislature, or by authority of governor; 10) officers and members of the Oklahoma National Guard; 11) persons engaged in public work for the state, but employed by





The personnel board and department have not been without their problems over the years. The board launched the system with very little preparation and had to establish classification plans and examinations without much background. In an interview in 1962 Mr. Wallace Keating, then Personnel Director, stated several problems of the system at its inception: 1) failure to make long-range plans prior to adoption of merit; 2) lack of trained personnel to administer the law; 3) finances; and 4) limited time in which to prepare for the operation of the merit system.<sup>53</sup> The system became effective in July 1959, and only 14 persons were available to work on establishing the new system. These included three classification technicians. Mr. Keating said most of the original job classification was "merely stop-gap attempts."<sup>54</sup>

In February, 1970, Mr. Keating elaborated on some of the problems of the department. Primarily he believed the

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contractors when the performance of such contract is authorized by the legislature; 12) election officials and employees; 13) temporary seasonal farm laborers or other farm help engaged in farm production or harvesting, not to exceed 120 days in any year; 14) professional trainees during their course of training; 15) laborers, semi-skilled and skilled craftsmen temporarily engaged for purposes of building, renovation, etc. and paid on an hourly or piecework basis, if request is approved by State Personnel Board; 16) seasonal employees employed during period May through October 15; 17) students on part-time basis regularly enrolled in institution of higher learning. The last do apply to Employment Security Commission, Department of Health, Civil Defense Agency and grant-in-aid functions of Welfare Department.

<sup>53</sup>Tucker Gibson, "Political Significances", p. 16.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

the department needed more money to hire additional staff. While other states spend \$28 to \$29 annually per employee to operate merit systems, Oklahoma spends about \$15 per employee. "This state's merit office has 29 employees and should have 58 to meet the national average."<sup>55</sup> The system has been financed by assessment of agencies covered on a pro rata basis.

Mr. Keating, the Personnel Director, was recruited from private industry. He served from the inception of the system to 1970, at which time he became director of the Iowa merit system.<sup>56</sup> His replacement was Keith Frosco who had been senior analyst on the staff with nine years service.

In an interview in January, 1970, Mr. Keating seemed to feel that over-all the system was functioning well. He said he had always received good support from the governors. His and the departments' relationship with the legislators had been a learning process on both sides. He believed communications between legislators and his office had improved greatly over the years. He did not feel that the system was being evaded to any extent. However, he did voice the philosophy that in order to survive one had to play the rules of the game; perhaps he meant by this, one has to bend a little.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, February 22, 1970.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Interview with Wallace Keating, January, 1970.

### Vestiges of Patronage in the Present Merit System

How has the merit system been working in reality in Oklahoma? The annual reports all appear efficient and look as if the system is operating smoothly. In some states, however, authors have written about ways to circumvent a merit system in order that patronage influence may be continued. Has this been the case in Oklahoma? Are party and public officials able to use the merit system to their own ends? These are difficult questions to answer, primarily because persons interviewed do not always feel free to talk about such matters.

In order to obtain some perceptions of operation of the merit system fourteen department officials or personnel officers were interviewed.<sup>58</sup> One way to determine the viability of the merit system was to determine how the departmental officials perceived requests from elective and party officials who might seek to influence hiring practices.

Departmental representatives were asked whether or not they were contacted directly by legislators concerning employment for constituents. All but one of the 14 said that legislators made some inquiries about jobs. Three of

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<sup>58</sup> Representatives interviewed were from the departments of Agriculture, Banking, Corrections, Employment Security Commission, Health, Highway, Mental Health, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, Industrial Development and Parks, Public Safety, Tax Commission, Welfare and Wildlife. The Industrial Development and Parks Department was separated in 1972 into the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the Oklahoma Industrial Development Department.

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the departmental officials said such inquiries were seldom made. For the others, requests were occasional or often. Three stated that they were happy to have names recommended, whether it be from legislators or others, and one of these said he sometimes calls legislators to obtain their recommendations. One person interviewed stated that about one-third of the legislators were "very interested in hiring, dictating salaries and protecting those who don't qualify." These legislators were mainly the old-timers, he said, and he believed that the next ten years would see the elimination of such pressure. This statement was exceptional, however, for those interviewed.

In general, then, legislators appear to the department officials as interested in employment but pressure is not brought to bear with the one exception. Some interviewed mentioned that legislators had learned they could not budge the department on a personnel decision. They admitted it was nice to be able to place responsibility for personnel on the merit system. Jobs outside the merit system, such as summer jobs are in a different position (unclassified) and departmental representatives are more apt to pay attention to legislative desires here.

The departmental representatives were also asked about contacts from the governors concerning personnel. *Four* stated they had never had such contact, four said such *contact* was seldom (maybe once over the years) and three

said occasional inquiries were made.<sup>59</sup> No one could say they had frequent contacts from governors about personnel. Some of these men had served long before the merit system was initiated.

While interviewing one departmental official, however, the governor's personnel aide called and inquired about summer employment for students. The aide was told that two positions had been allotted to each legislator and this would apply to the governor also. The official assured me that there would be no further pressure from the governor's office.

As to contacts by the other elected executives, three departmental officials said there had been none, four said only occasional, and the others did not discuss this. Apparently, those executives are not an important source of inquiries about jobs.

When asked if party officials ever contacted them concerning state jobs, no one interviewed answered in the affirmative. According to the departmental officials, the parties are not directly interested in making requests for employment.

State legislators would thus seem to be the only important source of interest in hiring practices of the departments. And even there, the departmental officials did not perceive this interest as being out of line, with the

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<sup>59</sup>Departmental representatives interpreted this question as meaning direct contact by the governor himself, rather than his office, I believe. It may be that there have been more contacts from the governors' patronage aides.

one exception.

The agency representatives were also questioned about ways to evade the merit system. Most of them perceived the system as working smoothly with a minimum of evasions. The hiring of temporary and emergency employees is not a means of evading the system according to these persons. "If we hire an emergency employee it is for a real emergency", was a common reply. If evasion occurs at all it is more likely to be in classification; positions can be classified so broadly that almost anyone can fill them. Also a classification may be written around a particular individual. Another way of evading the system mentioned was that of hiring a person in the capacity of one position, say, laborer, because they could not meet higher requirements, and then putting them to work in a higher position, steno clerk for example. The transfer may also be used to evade the system. A person may be transferred to a place where they do not want to work in order to get them to resign. Or if a person does not score well in a populous county, but their score is among the top three in a sparsely populated county, they may be first assigned to the latter county and then transferred to the more populous one before they have gone to work in the rural one.

The Highway Department, one of the most political in personnel matters in the past, is claimed now to be relatively free of patronage influence. The personnel director stated that an aid to implementation of a sound



merit system was a formula established about the same time as the merit system. The formula determines the number of jobs any one county is allowed. It is a means of eliminating the hiring of many more employees than are needed in counties at campaign time. However, as in the past, the county road foreman meets a prospective employee who is then hired by the division engineer. If violations of the merit system occur, it would probably be at this level which would be difficult to substantiate. The personnel director for the department said that qualifications for county road foremen are now strictly enforced. The recent attempt by the Highway Director, through the legislature, to obtain some reprieve from the merit system, was not done to expand patronage but to give the department more flexibility in decreasing positions I was told.

The Corrections Department is another department in which it would be difficult to check on employment practices. Although the departmental representative interviewed said that the merit system was being adhered to, the warden of the state penitentiary is still the one who does the hiring. If evasions of the merit system occur, it is at that point. It has been traditional for the state senator from that county to control jobs through controlling the warden. In 1963, the Republican governor appointed a new warden of which the senator from that district approved; reportedly he had been unhappy with the previous warden.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, January 18, 1963.

When the head of the Department of Corrections was fired in 1970 he made accusations of patronage at the penitentiary. He did not substantiate these charges, however.

Other departments appear successful in their efforts at enforcing the merit system. However, two exceptions can be noted. The Department of Industrial Development and Parks has had a difficult time instituting the merit system. Our respondent maintains it takes time for change and in ten more years the system should be working well. In certain areas of the state it has been harder for the tradition to die than in others. In the eastern and southeastern parts of the state, particularly, where a state job is more valuable and where personalized politics has been the tradition, there is more pressure on park superintendents for jobs. Some park superintendents can operate more independently of political pressure than can others, said the respondent, regardless of the region of the state in which they are located. Evidently, the important variable here would be the personality of the superintendent.

The other department which appears to still be under some patronage influence is that of welfare, and this has traditionally been so. The Welfare Department, however, is in a special position in that the Director was given constitutional authority over the hiring of personnel in the 1930's and this still holds.<sup>61</sup> Thus, even though the

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<sup>61</sup>State Election Board, Directory and Manual of the State of Oklahoma. 1936 Referendum: The main issue at the

department is under the merit system, the director is in a specially protected position in regard to personnel. The Welfare Department is not willing to admit any deviations from strict merit procedure. However, three past and present employees in the department believed that the department is willing to make exceptions when pressure is brought to bear. Comments by legislators bear this out.

One employee said that for the most part persons who went through their senator to obtain a welfare job would receive a standard letter of recommendation to the state welfare office. But if the applicant was a person of special interest to this senator, the senator would go directly to the Welfare Director and the Director would find a job for the individual.<sup>62</sup> The department is the largest in the state employing an average of over 4000 in 1970. It may be that the actions of this department are more obvious than others. The persons willing to talk about evasions in the welfare department emphasized that these were the exception rather than the rule. That some attention is paid to political influence in job hiring practices in the department appears

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time was the attempt to earmark the sales tax for the Welfare Department. This passed as did other issues pertaining to the department. State Questions 225 and 226 passed July, 1936.

<sup>62</sup>The author was sitting in a senator's office waiting for an interview. The senator's secretary called the county welfare office in the senator's district and said the senator would like to know the names of the applicants for a vacant welfare job. She also said the senator had some names of his own he would like them to consider.

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evident.<sup>63</sup>

Other accusations about the continuance of patronage influence have been made in newspaper articles from time to time, particularly when someone resigns or is fired. Other persons interviewed by the author would occasionally mention agencies they believed were examples of remnants of patronage influence. To check on the validity of such comments is difficult, however.

It would appear that the merit system in Oklahoma through 1970 has replaced the patronage practices of the pre-1959 period with but relatively few exceptions. As one long-time legislator commented, the present system is a tremendous change from the personnel system which existed before 1959; this is the main feature to observe.

#### Present Non-Merit Positions

The number of paid positions outside the merit system (excluding university positions) is relatively small, as shown above. Those unclassified positions listed previously, along with the exempt positions, and those not placed under the merit system by a governor's executive order, comprise

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<sup>63</sup>Ray Parr, a long-time journalist-observer of the state senate said this in his Sunday column, March 21, 1971, "I don't see how Lloyd Rader (director of the state welfare department) would have any kicks about the present merit system. There never was a merit system that could keep Rader from doing about what he wants to do over there in the welfare department . . . All Rader has to do is snap his fingers and both houses of the legislature let out a loud Aye before they even read his bills. He is a political genius, as well as a fine administrator."

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the bulk of the non-merit jobs.

For the governor, the establishment of a merit system meant that lower positions were no longer available for the governor's influence, at least in theory and, apparently, in practice. However, according to the perceptions of the departmental officials interviewed, some of whom had been working for many years, the governor's were not much interested in these lower jobs anyway. According to Waldby, though, the governor's ability to influence such appointments was an important asset for him.

The governor's power to appoint persons to higher policy-making positions, mostly non-paying, has not changed to any extent since the merit system was established. These are the important appointments: board and commission positions, some department heads, and his own staff. The governor's powers here would appear invaluable to him.

TABLE 4

NUMBER OF APPOINTMENTS RECORDED FOR RECENT GOVERNORS<sup>64</sup>

J. Murray (1959-1955)	R. Gary (1955-1959)	J. Edmondson (1959-1963)	H. Bellmon (1963-1967)	D. Bartlett (1967-1971)
617	931	733	1,015	869

Source: Record books 4, 5 and 6: Governor's appointments, Secretary of State's office, State Capitol Building

<sup>64</sup>These appointments did not include honorary colonels and majors. The theoretical number of appointments open to any one governor will vary from year to year depending on the number of resignations, deaths, etc. of current board members and depending on the number of new agencies created and old ones which are abolished.

As can be observed from the table, the governor's influence over the more important, policy-making positions has not decreased since 1959. The governors have continued to hire personnel or patronage advisers. The three ex-governors interviewed all said they were besieged with job seekers at the first of their term. One governor said that the merit system was a help to him in that he could tell many of the applicants they would have to take the merit examination.

It has already been shown that, at least according to upper level employees in departments, state legislators are still interested in jobs for constituents even though they do not appear to exert great pressure on the departments.

There are still certain positions in their constituencies which are controlled by the state senators: 1) car license tag agents; 2) county election board secretaries; and 3) county tax equalization board secretaries. These are positions over which the senator may have complete influence, if he so desires.

The senators maintain their control over county election board secretaries through their appointment of the Secretary of the Senate who is also Secretary of the State Election Board. At one time governors could occasionally appoint county election board secretaries over the protest of senators. This has not been possible for recent governors, however.



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Tag agents and county tax equalization board secretarial appointments are formally made by the Oklahoma Tax Commission. The Tax Commission has, by custom, allowed the state senators to appoint these persons. Consequently, appointments to the Tax Commission are jealously guarded by the senators; they want to maintain the control over these local appointments.

In metropolitan areas the local Democratic senators must agree on these appointments. However, they may appoint a sub-agent in their own district.

All elected executives except the Corporation Commissioners and, to a limited extent, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, are allowed to control the jobs within their departments. For the most part, however, the number of employees is small. The office of the State Examiner and Inspector did employ 100 persons in 1970; this was the largest department of any of the executives. All of the others (merit departments not included) each employ under 50 persons. Still, this gives the elected executives a source of influence which is important to them.

The parties, as such, do not have direct appointive powers but must go through elected officials. County chairmen supposedly can recommend one member of the county election board to represent their party; this is their only real appointment. The degree of influence of a county chairman over jobs will depend on personality and background, desire to influence, traditions of the area, and the strength of

elected officials in the county.

#### Interstate Comparisons

Kentucky instituted a merit system for state employees about the same time that Oklahoma did . . . one year later in 1960. Malcolm Jewell and Everett Cunningham evidently believe that the merit system has been working fairly effectively in Kentucky. They write that the merit law eliminated 12,000 jobs from patronage influence. "At present (1968) there are about 4,000 jobs out of 20,000 that are not covered by the merit system."<sup>65</sup> As in Oklahoma some of the unclassified jobs were board and commission appointments and policy-making jobs. Unlike Oklahoma, the great bulk of these jobs (about 3,000) were unskilled laborers and light equipment operators in the Highway Department. Seasonal jobs in the Parks Department and Highway Department were also considered patronage jobs. As in Oklahoma, the rule of choosing one of the top three scores on the examination is in effect. This means there is occasionally some room for influence by a party chairman, or public official.

As in Oklahoma, a little Hatch Act is in effect. Jewell and Cunningham stated that the county party chairmen perceive merit employees as being "of little value as political workers." They may "hide behind the merit system"

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<sup>65</sup>Malcolm Jewell and Everett W. Cunningham, Kentucky Politics, particularly pp. 42-45, 67-70, and 233-237. This particular quote is from p. 43.

when the party asks them to do a political job.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, it would appear, at least on the face of things, that the Kentucky merit system and the Oklahoma merit system are both similar in being relatively effective in eliminating patronage influence. This extends to the reduction in job patronage for the governor as well as for the parties in Kentucky.

Compared with Illinois and Ohio whose merit systems have been in effect nearly a half century longer than Oklahoma, there is superficial evidence that Oklahoma has a more effective merit system. In Ohio, positions existed under the civil service system over which the county chairmen could have some degree of influence. However, once partisans were placed in such positions, they could no longer be active politically due to civil service regulations. Thus, chairmen did not like to use this source of patronage, although they did so when necessary.<sup>67</sup>

Illinois, according to Joseph Tucker in 1962, possessed several personnel systems. This makes it difficult to compare with Oklahoma. A large number of employees in Illinois were exempt from civil service . . . over 10,000 altogether. The "actual number of positions available for patronage appointment are considerably less than the total number of exempt positions in the state service."<sup>68</sup> That

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>67</sup>William Robert Gump, "A Functional Analysis of Patronage: The Case of Ohio".

<sup>68</sup>Joseph Tucker, "A Functional Analysis of Political Patronage in Nine Illinois Counties", chapters 3 and 6.

county chairmen had a number of positions over which they could exert some influence was evident, however, although it varied from county to county. Oklahoma has been able to make rather substantial changes in its personnel system in the past twelve years as compared with the patronage system of 1950 which Waldby described. This does not mean the system has not been without its share of difficulties from without and within. It has received the support of many politically important persons, however, which has been invaluable. In addition, a lack of demand for state jobs, together with industrialization, urbanization, better economic conditions and a higher level of education, have probably done much to help the system survive.

#### Continuance of Agency Patronage Practices

Hypothesis II stated: "Those departments and agencies in which patronage was the most important before the merit system will continue to be the place where patronage will be important after merit, even if violations of the merit system have to occur for this to be so."

Waldby found the main political jobs to be tag agents, district game rangers, local field employees of the public welfare department, employees in the district office of the highway department and tax commission district officers. The evidence in respect to them is mixed. Most of these jobs, at least from the evidence obtained in interviews, now appear to be relatively non-political. This is the case with employees of the Highway Department (although there may be a few exceptions) and Tax Commission, and to

some extent, game rangers. On the other hand the tag agents are still political appointees and thus active, and, as noted above, welfare employees and park employees are still subject to some political influence.

Part of the reason for this change has been because the little Hatch Act provisions of the merit act appear to be strictly enforced for merit employees. Two cases in which violations were objects of legislative investigations both arose when the system was still young. In 1960 Senator Fine charged that certain merit employees had campaigned for his opponent and thus violated the Hatch Act provisions. An investigation was conducted by the Personnel Board in July, 1960. Four state employees were found guilty of violation of the act and were fired.<sup>69</sup>

In 1961 a legislative investigating committee discovered violations of the political activities section in the State Examiner and Inspector's office. (The violation occurred while the office was under the merit system; in 1961 it went into the unclassified service.) The employees said they were unaware of violating the merit rules. The legislative committee recommended education of state employees as to the limited political activities they were allowed to undertake.<sup>70</sup> More recent alleged violations have involved Corporation Commission employees.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup>Gibson, "Political Significance," p. 31.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

<sup>71</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, October 21, 1971.

Perhaps one of the main reasons the tag agencies have remained patronage positions is the lack of support for changing them. Waldby stated in 1949 that

. . . very few persons conscientiously argue that the job of issuing licenses to automobile owners can be better administered under the present system than it would be if the duty were given to a regularly elected county official such as the county clerk.

This still holds true today and there is no movement underway to change things. In addition, of course, the appointment of tag agents is something the state senators do not seem anxious to give up.

The reason the tradition of patronage has held up in the welfare department more than in others would appear to center on the personality of the director; he apparently is willing to see that legislators and others receive small favors in exchange for continued support of the Welfare Department. The directorship has remained under the same individual through several changes in administration.

#### Summary

The major finding of the chapter is that the merit system has effectively replaced patronage practices since the 1959 act was passed. The survival of the few remaining patronage agencies is not completely related to traditions of patronage. Other aspects, such as the agency's mission or leadership are at least as important as traditions of patronage in accounting for the continuance of these practices.

## CHAPTER V

### PARTY PATRONAGE AND COMMUNICATION

This chapter is designed to test hypotheses III, that patronage is official-centered rather than party-centered in the dominant party when a fully competitive party system does not exist. The full hypothesis is:

- III. In a political system in which one party has dominated, patronage will be official-oriented rather than party-oriented. This has the following consequences for inter-party differences:
- a) lines of communication for patronage decisions in the dominant party will be official-oriented rather than party-oriented;
  - b) lines of communication for patronage decisions will be more party-oriented than official-oriented in the minority party.

Although Oklahoma is moving toward a two-party system, it has not yet reached that goal. This chapter attempts to discover contrasts between the majority and the minority party's dispensation of patronage and whether lines of communication concerning patronage decisions differ between the two parties. The latter points may be related to changing organizational structure in response to the changing competitive nature of the parties.

The Oklahoma political system has been dominated by one political party since its early statehood (1907). This dominance has been particularly true of all elective officials below the governor.

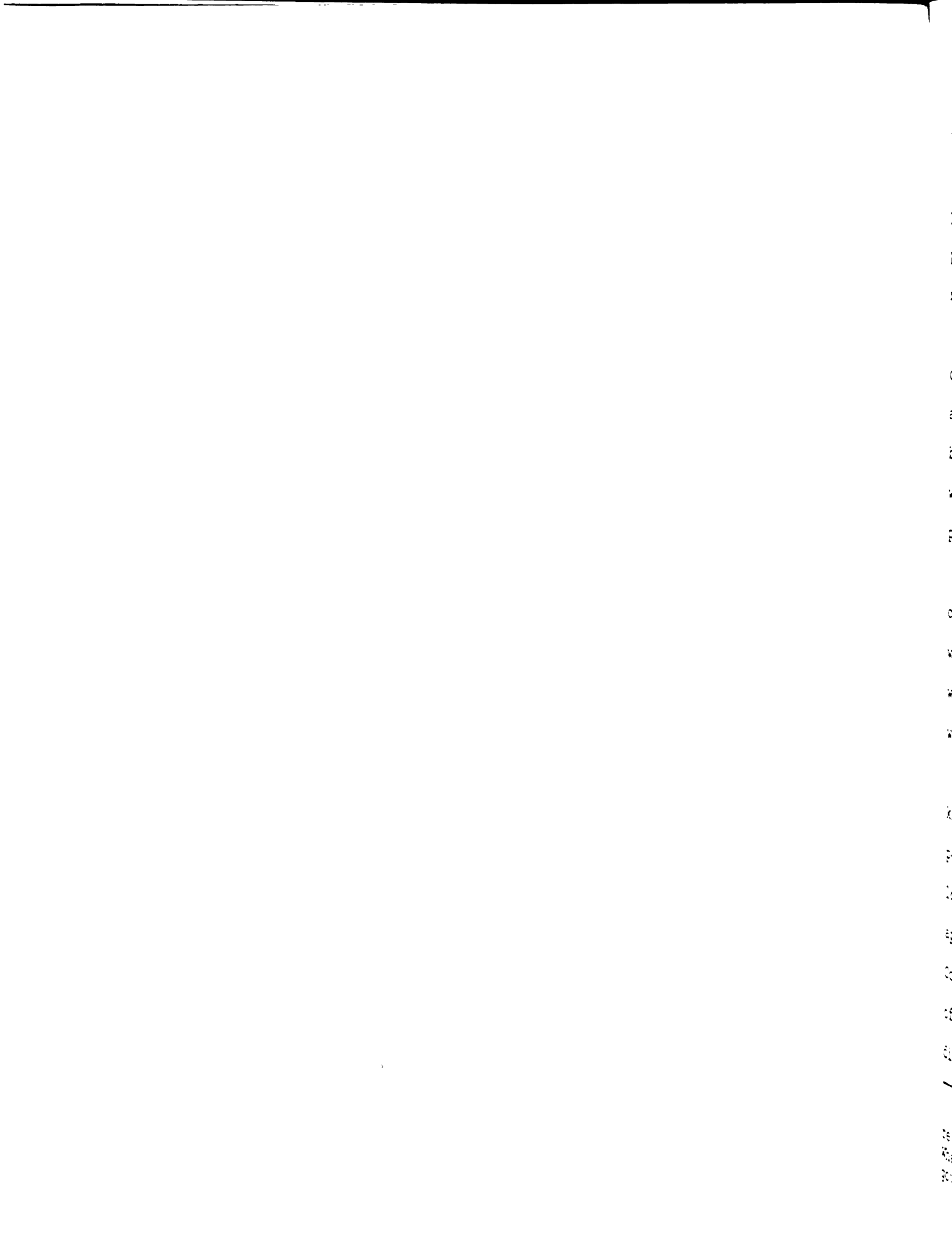


The Democratic party dominance has contributed to the weakness of that party's structure. The party has not had to organize for competition until recent years. Most elections were essentially won in the Democratic primary. During the primary, party officials have been hesitant to support and expend resources in favor of one Democrat over another (although this sometimes occurs). Therefore, the nuclei of Democrat candidates rely only slightly on formal party resources.

Public leaders rather than associational leaders control power in the party. Since the public leaders achieve victory relatively independent of party resources, they have no compulsion to share power with associational leaders over such things as appointments. Although in most governmental units the party leaders are dependent on public leaders to make appointments, the role of the party leaders in Oklahoma would appear to be exceptionally weak due to deteriorated party conditions. It is conceivable that this might change with increasing competition, although Schlesinger sees the associational leader as not necessarily dominant even under conditions of competition.

#### The Role of Democratic Party Officials in Patronage Transactions

It was posited above that because Democratic party officials are weak compared with Democratic elected officials, this weakness would extend to patronage influence. Comments of various Democratic officials substantiate



this observation.<sup>1</sup>

A former Democratic state chairman, who served both prior to and after passage of a merit act, bemoaned his party's condition. He noted that, while party officials might be consulted on some national appointments in the past (depending on the U. S. Senator or Representative holding office), they have generally not been considered in state appointments. He believed one reason the Democrats had been losing statewide elections was because party officials were asked to "carry the whole load" without concomitant patronage rewards.

It was his observation that elected officials usually contacted state agencies directly about hiring a constituent without obtaining party clearance. He could not recall, while he was state chairman, a single state appointment which the state central committee was asked to approve.

This man believed that party officials were more knowledgeable than elected officials as to which local people were loyal Democrats. Elected officials have people loyal to them, not the party; party leaders believe the appointment of such people may weaken the party's strength. Conflicts and misunderstandings between elected and party officials on personnel affairs were mentioned by other individuals interviewed. Party leaders might, at the least,

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<sup>1</sup>These observations, with two exceptions, were recorded in 1970 when a Republican governor was in office. Whether or not the situation has changed with a Democrat governor is not completely known.

like to be shown some consideration on appointments; at the other extreme, they might want final clearance on most appointments. In a system in which public leaders are dominant over associational leaders, this latter wish is not likely to be granted by the public leaders.

The present Democratic state chairman, though not quite as vehement as the first, was in basic agreement with him. He remarked that obviously the state central committee has had little part in clearing state appointments. Under Republican governors liaison between Democratic legislators and the state headquarters concerning jobs was almost non-existent, he said. This chairman was particularly concerned about the insignificant role county chairmen had played in job clearance. He expressed hope this would change with a Democratic governor in office.

A county chairman who served in the late 1960's stated his belief that patronage has been almost entirely senator-oriented in Oklahoma. He added that this did depend on the senator. In a four and one-half year term, this county chairman filled two positions for county election boards and named a few persons to welfare jobs.

Another Democratic county chairman interviewed stated that he was not concerned with patronage and thus, did not care if patronage was official-centered. He did observe that it is official-centered. This was qualified by the statement that there are people around every office holder who can exert influence over who obtains state jobs as well

as other matters; a county chairman, if he is interested, may be such a person. This particular chairman said he was not interested and was never asked for state references; his county was one of the most populous in the state.

A Democratic county chairman from a less populated county supported the comments of others, saying that patronage is not available for the county chairman. It was his opinion that in the 1930's county chairmen did have more contact with patronage; this is no longer true.

One ex-county chairman seemingly had possessed more patronage influence than others interviewed. He stated that he had been able to utilize the hope of patronage as an incentive for party workers. Perhaps the nature of party competition in his county gave him more influence than the usual county chairman; he held office in a strong Republican county with a Republican state senator under a Republican governor. A newspaper article in 1964 told how this particular chairman was able to appoint the Democrats on the county election board.<sup>2</sup> Had a Democratic senator held office at the time, the power of the county chairman undoubtedly would have been diluted.

An observer of Oklahoma politics mentioned, in an

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<sup>2</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, March 2, 1964. The Republican governor and senator from the county were both frustrated by this experience. Otis Sullivant, author of the article, wrote "The situation speaks of the basic issue of control of the election machinery in the state. Democratic governors have been frustrated in trying to correct situations in various counties, and a Republican governor has little chance to influence other than to speak out."

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interview, the problems the Democratic party had faced. One such problem was that Democratic governors used their people in the counties for appointments and personnel clearance instead of party workers.

The consensus of the interviewed individuals was that the Democratic party is weak in the patronage process vis-a-vis elected officials. This point of view was also reflected by Democratic county chairmen returning questionnaires, who commented on their lack of patronage influence.

One chairman with six years tenure wrote,

this entire questionnaire pre-supposes facts not in existence. I, as county chairman, have virtually nothing to do with patronage and I do not want to be involved.

Another states, "You're [the questionnaire] assuming too much power for a county chairman." One reported, "we do not have any patronage contributions or influence in our county."

Another with six years service remarked, "I have no dealings with job fillings."

Other Democratic county chairmen included such comments as these: "I have no jobs to distribute"; "patronage has not yet entered into any of my activities as county chairman"; "nobody pays any attention to it [patronage] as far as I can tell"; "our county is very thinly inhabited and patronage is not expected by party officials"; "this [patronage] simply has not been exploited by the Democratic party in this area; and [about patronage] "they do not ask me or consider my recommendations."

About one-fourth of the chairmen believed patronage was important for them, however. This will be discussed in chapter eight.

Only one chairman specifically mentioned patronage strength of state senators and representatives. (Patronage) "should be important but representatives and senators use this for personal gain . . . the chairman is by-passed."

The above remarks and comments would indicate that Democratic county chairmen are often by-passed in the patronage decision-making process. There are other indications of a weakened role for Democratic associational leaders in patronage transactions.

In the questionnaire county chairmen were asked if there is anyone else in the county who can influence employment on the state level. Twenty-two Democrats replied yes, four no, and thirteen either did not know or did not answer. Of the Democrats who answered positively, state senators and representatives were mentioned much more frequently than any other group. Thus, the Democratic county chairmen perceive state senators and representatives as important in patronage matters. This does not rule out participation of county chairmen, but it does show they perceive themselves as sharing power.

Another question asked of county chairmen was whether or not it was difficult for chairmen to find employees to fill low-paying, low-status jobs. This was asked because if such jobs are hard to fill, patronage power is diluted;





TABLE 5

POSITION OF PERSON POSSESSING JOB INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTY  
ACCORDING TO DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN

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State senator	13	some mentioned both
State representative	11	
Other public officials	4	
The other party	2	
Private individuals	3	

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chairmen become recruiters rather than officials with a ready source of workers from whom to reward the party faithful.

Answers to this question were different than anticipated. The respondents were presented with three choices . . . yes, no and don't have any. The majority of Democratic county chairmen marked the category "don't have any"; twenty-two or 56% did this. Of the remaining chairmen, five replied it was not difficult, six said yes it was and six gave no answer. One Democrat remarked, "I have not been asked."

Perhaps it is at this point that the influence of the merit system is felt. Most of the lower-paying, low skilled jobs are covered by the merit system under the non-competitive merit category. However, according to agency officials such jobs are difficult to fill and suggestions for employees are welcome from any quarter. That

chairmen of both parties are not using this source of influence (perhaps of little political value because of the low campaign skills of such workers) would appear evident from the responses.

The evidence presented so far would appear to substantiate the hypothesis that for Democratic county chairmen patronage is not an important part of their job. What little patronage is available appears to be under the control of Democratic state senators or representatives: that is, office holders (as was hypothesized).

#### Republican County Chairmen

The Republican party chairmen, while lacking competition from Republican legislators in dispensing rewards, do not possess significantly more patronage influence than the Democrats. Thus, hypothesis III is not upheld for the minority party.

Republican county chairmen who wrote comments on their questionnaires said: "I have been county chairman for six years and have not had enough political patronage to make it worthwhile to mention"; "we have no patronage job-holders in this county who are Republican" (that comment was echoed by four others); "being a rural county we have very, very few jobs to fill"; "the patronage system has very little to do with the performance of my job." One new county chairman had not been asked to recommend people for jobs. He believed the governor's county campaign manager was far more effective at influencing jobs

than he himself was. As with the Democrats there were exceptions to these statements, but fourteen indicated very little or no patronage available to them. Perhaps, a Republican governor notwithstanding, Democratic office-holders have possessed power so long that some Republican party officials continue to be left out of patronage transactions.<sup>3</sup> Again, there were a few exceptions to this statement, but these also conform to the finding that patronage is office- rather than party-oriented.

A chairman from a less populated county had been asked by the governor's office to clear some persons for jobs. He was an old friend of the governor's. He also said that several other prominent Republicans lived in that county and he felt they would be contacted by the governor's office also. The present and ex-county chairmen of a strong Republican county both had had chances to participate in patronage decisions; again, both were acquainted personally with the governor. The ex-chairman had been in office in 1968 when a Republican president, Republican U. S. Senator and Republican governor were in office. He was the only party official interviewed who related that large numbers of people had come to county headquarters everyday in 1969

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<sup>3</sup>The Republican state chairman mentioned that Democrats had been in office so long that when vacancies occurred in welfare offices, for example, the agency involved would call Democratic legislators and ask for recommendations and fill the job before Republicans knew an opening existed. No sanctions would be applied in the case of the welfare department since this is considered fairly normal behavior.

(after Nixon's inauguration) hoping to obtain a job, particularly at the federal level.

A Republican chairman from a metropolitan county indicated he had had some opportunities for job clearance; again, he knew the governor and U. S. Senator personally. Thus, most Republican chairmen interviewed (as opposed to those who answered questionnaires) believed they played a role in the personnel process, primarily by recommending or clearing people for the governor's office. They did not claim that state jobs were unavailable for Republicans in their counties as many of the questionnaire respondents did. Nearly all did know the governor personally and felt free to communicate with him on job matters. The Republican state chairman also acknowledged some role in patronage matters. Not only was he sometimes asked to clear personnel but also he sent lists of available state jobs to all county chairmen.

The responses of Republican county chairmen, when asked about other individuals in the county who might have patronage influence, were similar to those of Democrats.

Twenty-six Republican chairmen said others could influence jobs, six replied no and twelve did not answer or did not know. For the Republicans, tenure made some difference in the answer given (it did not for the Democrats). Eighty-nine per cent of those with five or more years of service said yes and only fifty per-cent

TABLE 6

POSITION OF PERSON POSSESSING JOB INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTY  
ACCORDING TO REPUBLICAN CHAIRMEN

---

State senator	11	
State representative	10	some mentioned both
Other public officials	7	
The other party	2	
Private individuals	3	

---

of the new chairmen so responded.<sup>4</sup>

The Republican County chairmen believed state legislators were influential in personnel matters. Most of the Republican county chairmen are represented by Democratic legislators. The bulk of Republican legislators are from Tulsa and Oklahoma counties; chairmen there were interviewed. Consequently, for most Republican respondents to the questionnaire, the legislators mentioned would be Democratic.

When questioned about low level jobs Republican responses were again similar to those of Democrats. Of the forty who answered, 68% said they did not have any such jobs; 20% said such jobs were hard to fill. Only one Republican chairman said it was not difficult to fill these positions. Thus, Republican chairmen, to a slightly greater

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<sup>4</sup>Tenure breakdown was as follows: Republicans; one year or less = 20, two-four years = 15, five or more years = 9; Democrats: one year or less = 11, two-four years = 15 and five or more years = 13.

extent than Democrats, perceive that there are no low paying, low status jobs over which they can wield patronage influence.

The Republican county chairmen, thus, were not so different from their Democratic counterparts in their perception of the amount of patronage influence they possessed. The primary differences were: 1) Republican county chairmen were slightly more insistent that they had no patronage influence; 2) Republican chairmen interviewed (three from counties in or close to the state capitol, one from a strong Republican metropolitan county) gave more indication than Democrats that they did have patronage influence, primarily due to acquaintance with the governor.

#### Chairmen and Job Inquiries

In spite of a lack of patronage for both parties as compared with states like Illinois and Ohio, the county chairmen of both Oklahoma parties report receiving inquiries about state jobs from constituents.<sup>5</sup> Seventy-five per cent of the Republicans (thirty-three) as compared with 69 per cent of the Democrats (twenty-seven) had job inquiries. In Illinois all chairmen interviewed had many job applicants. Tenure appeared to affect Democrats' perceptions of job applications more than it did Republicans. Fifty-five per cent or six of the new Democratic chairmen said people

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<sup>5</sup>Kentucky is more similar to Oklahoma; the governor's man in the county rather than the county chairman is often the one to possess patronage influence.

TABLE 7

## TYPE OF JOB ABOUT WHICH APPLICANT INQUIRED

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	Republicans	Democrats
Boards and Commissions	22	11
County Election Board	13	16
Janitorial positions	8	7
Temporary	10	6
Car Tag Agents	6	11
County Tax Equalization Board	2	8
Welfare Department	3	9
Corporation Commission	0	3
Highway Department	5	1

---

inquired about jobs; 85 percent or eleven chairmen with five or more years of service responded positively.

It would appear that county residents believe county chairmen are one source of information and/or influence about state jobs, as reported by the county chairmen.

Conjectures may be asserted about inter-party differences. Board and commission inquiries may have been greater for Republicans considering a Republican governor held office at the time. Differences in inquiries about county positions . . . tag agent, election board and tax equalization board . . . may most readily be explained by Democratic dominance in senatorial and county offices. It would be more effective, prospective employees may feel, to approach Democrats rather





than Republicans.

Republicans may have received more requests for temporary jobs because these go mainly to college students. The higher SES level of Republicans possibly means greater acquaintence with college students and vice versa.

Summarizing, it would appear that limitations on patronage influence exist for chairmen of both parties. Democratic chairmen are limited by the weakness of the majority party in a dominant one-party system and by the strength of Democratic officials, particularly legislators, in the personnel process. Republicans are limited by the strength of Democrats, even when serving under a Republican governor. For both groups, however, there are occasional opportunities to attempt to aid persons who approach them about state employment.

If this situation is changing under conditions of changing party competition, the change is mainly that Republicans now have some chance at patronage whereas previously they had none at the state level. In counties where the Republicans have little foreseeable chance at becoming competitive at any level the chairmen will feel limited even though the party is making statewide advances. It would be useful to know if Democrats are given more responsibility for patronage appointments in counties where they face more competition, but this cannot be determined from the questionnaires, since the respondents were assured of anonymity.

### Lines of Communication

It was hypothesized that lines of communication about patronage differed between the majority and minority party. This next section will attempt to examine communications as reported by interviewees and respondents and to evaluate inter-party differences, if any. Can the effect of increasing competition be seen here?

When persons approach the county chairmen for advice and aid in obtaining a state job, the chairmen may either take no action or may try to help the person in some way. Of the Democratic respondents, all twenty-seven who received job inquiries reported they recommended the inquirer for jobs. Twenty-nine of the thirty-three Republicans with inquiries recommended applicants; those who did not recommend gave no explanation for their action. One Democrat responded that he did recommend "if they are qualified and have been active Democratic party members." He then said, "we usually start by recommendations from the precinct, county and state chairmen for each job." He was the only Democrat who mentioned such organization. One Republican responded similarly. He wrote that he "must get approval of the county central committee before any recommendation is made." These two chairmen were the exceptions in both parties.

The lines of communications upward from the county chairmen to different individuals and agencies can tell us

something more about the nature of the patronage process in the two parties. It might also show which officials the chairmen think are influential enough to contact about jobs. The following table record the lines of upward communication for county chairmen of both parties.

TABLE 8  
TO WHOM DO YOU RECOMMEND JOB APPLICANTS?  
% OF THOSE RECOMMENDING<sup>6</sup>

	Democrats	Republicans
Appropriate agency	21 (77%)	21 (72%)
Governor's office	4 (15%)	12 (41%)
State senator	17 (63%)	8 (28%)
State representative	16 (59%)	2 ( 6%)
State party chairman	4 (15%)	20 (62%)

A substantial number of Democratic and Republican chairmen reported recommending applicants to agencies. Apart from this similarity, upward lines of communication differ for the two parties. A Republican governor held office when responses were submitted. Therefore, as expected, more Republicans than Democrats referred applicants to the governor's office. It is surprising that any Democrats made

<sup>6</sup>Others mentioned were: governor's county campaign manager (2); "anyone deemed helpful"; "road commissioner of the county"; U. S. Senator; congressmen; anyone. More than one person could be named so that totals do not add up to 100 percent.

reference to the Republican governor. Perhaps they wanted to use this source of power to help individuals obtain jobs; also, these Democrats may have known the governor.

Another contrast appears in the referral to state legislators. Democratic county chairmen were more apt to refer the applicant to either the senator or representative (particularly the former) than were the Republicans; as mentioned earlier, most of the Republicans were serving with Democratic legislators. That eight Republicans mentioned state senators may be due to either the presence of a Republican senator or awareness that legislators are a source of power in personnel matters.

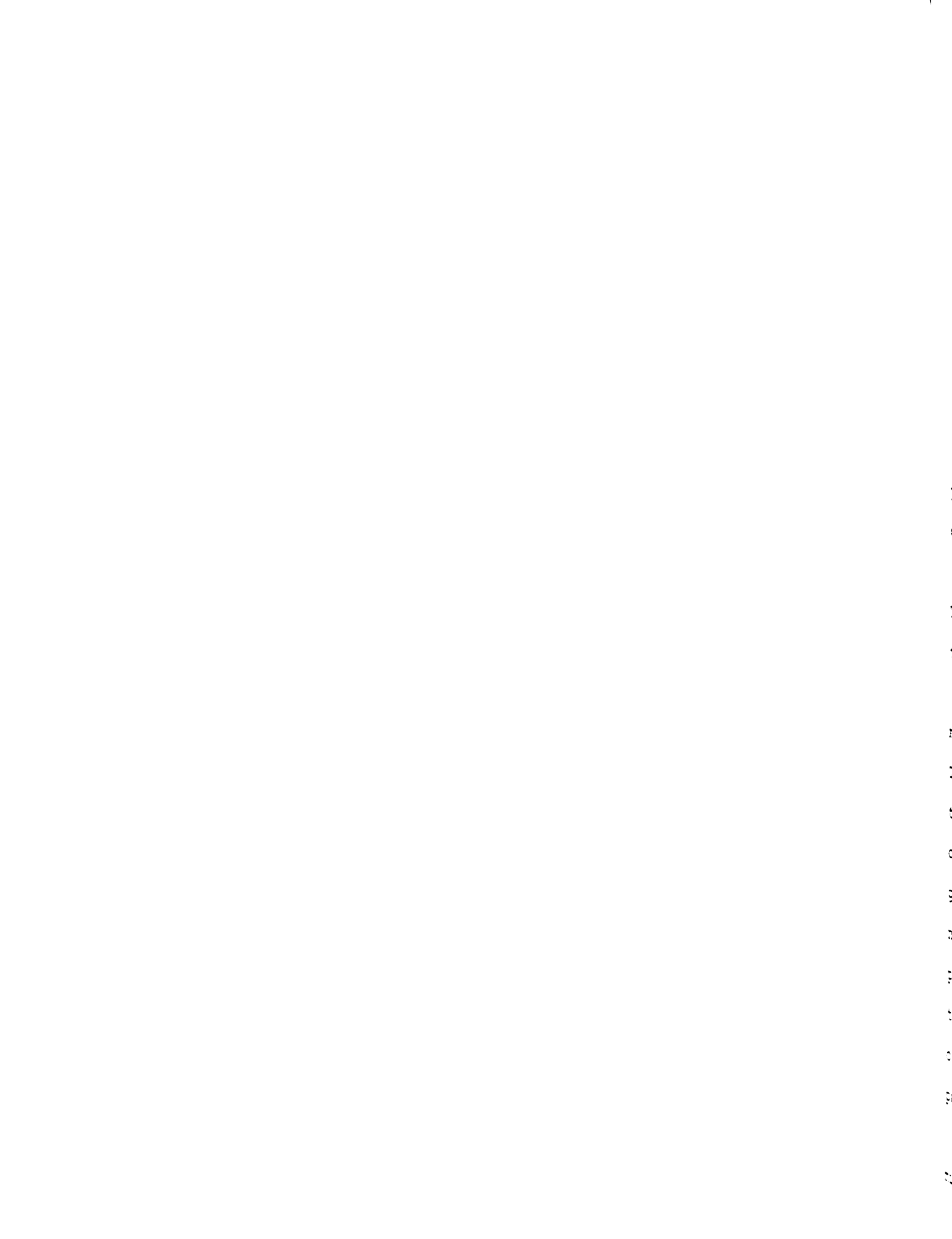
The small number of Democrats who refer applicants to their state party chairman differs markedly from the Republicans. Only four of the Democratic chairmen feel their state chairman is important in the patronage process. It is not surprising that so few consider him influential; from all indications the Democratic state chairman has played a very inconsequential role in patronage matters. He has been dwarfed by the Democratic governor and state legislators. The Republican state chairman, as stated above, supplied his county chairmen with periodic lists of available state jobs. This indicates some interest in patronage, to which the chairmen may respond in kind.

Lines of communication about patronage are more official-oriented for the Democrats, particularly from the chairmen to the legislators. The Republicans, on the other

hand, are more party-oriented. They are official-oriented in the sense that they go through the governor's office but this is almost certainly because of the Republican governor.

Both parties' chairmen, however, believed it proper to contact an agency concerning an individual who had inquired about a job. This is particularly interesting in light of agency officials' perceptions of calls from party chairmen as stated in chapter four. Departmental officials claimed they were never contacted by party chairmen; yet over 70 per cent of the recommending chairmen responded that they had referred persons to agencies. Some of the chairmen interviewed also remarked on contacts with agencies about personnel matters. One state party chairman claimed he occasionally called agencies. Thus, there is a discrepancy between perceptions of agency officials and party officials. One explanation might be that county chairmen do not identify their positions when calling about personnel matters; they call as an individual. Party activity, consequently, would not be noticed by agency personnel. However, it would seem likely that the state chairman's name would be recognized when he made a call.

Another explanation might be that party officials contact local field representatives such as the district road commissioner or the county welfare office rather than contacting the state headquarters. If this were the case then the people interviewed in the state departments would probably have no knowledge of such contacts. It might also



be possible that some chairmen meant they simply told applicants to contact the agency rather than making the contact themselves.

Lines of downward communication to the chairmen also differ between the two parties. Chairmen were asked whether or not governmental and party officials ever contacted them concerning recommendations for persons for state jobs. Thirty-one of the Republicans or 70 percent answered affirmatively. Only ten Democrats or 25 percent responded positively. One Democratic chairman commented, "Such requests are mainly to double check information which they (the governmental and party officials) may already have." That so few Democrats are contacted is again indicative of their weak position in patronage matters.

Republicans, as might be expected, were contacted more frequently by the governor's office than were Democrats. The Republican chairmen interviewed also mentioned this contact. One does wonder about the thirty Republican county chairmen (out of forty-four) who were not contacted by the governor's office. As far as can be determined, there is no common characteristic - geographical, inter-party competition level or other - which would provide an explanatory factor for these thirty. According to the governor's office, recommendations were being obtained from all Republican county chairmen.

That more Democrats than Republicans reported communications from legislators is not surprising. The number



TABLE 9

ARE YOU ASKED FOR RECOMMENDATIONS BY PARTY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS?<sup>7</sup>

---

	Democrats		Republicans	
	number	% of total Dems.	number	% of total Reps.
Governor's office	1	2.6%	14	32 %
State agency	4	10 %	2	4.5%
State senator	8	20 %	3	6.8%
State representative	8	20 %	2	4.5%
State party chairman	7	18 %	27	61 %

---

of Democratic legislators is much greater than that of Republican legislators, so that many more opportunities are present for communication. Of course it would not be expected that Republican chairmen would be contacted by Democratic legislators. Nor is it surprising that the number of Democratic chairmen contacted by their legislators is relatively small. Legislators have supposedly traditionally handled patronage matters themselves rather than through the party.

It has been observed that upward communication between county chairmen and the state party chairmen reflect

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<sup>7</sup>The number of Democrats responding positively to this question was so low that it seemed more meaningful to use the percentage of total Democrats and Republicans rather than percentage of those who were asked.

inter-party differences. Similarly, downward contacts on patronage show a contrast between the two parties. The number of Republican chairmen asked for recommendations by their state chairman was nearly four times the number of Democrats asked. This finding, again, is not unexpected considering the Republican state chairman's efforts to keep county chairmen aware of state job openings. Also, the fact that Republicans were in power after so many years of Democratic rule seemed to contribute to their awareness of patronage possibilities and advantages. Democrats today may share this same awareness.<sup>8</sup> The Republican state chairman, particularly was concerned about involving county chairmen in the patronage process. There may be some personality factors involved here; however, it would seem that the Republicans have to be more aware of the importance of party machinery considering their minority status.

Neither party's county chairmen received much contact from state agencies. This corresponds to the general tone of agency representatives interviewed who seemed to prefer no party contact.

In conclusion it would appear that referral from chairmen to officials and referrals from officials to chairmen are more party-oriented for Republicans than Democrats.

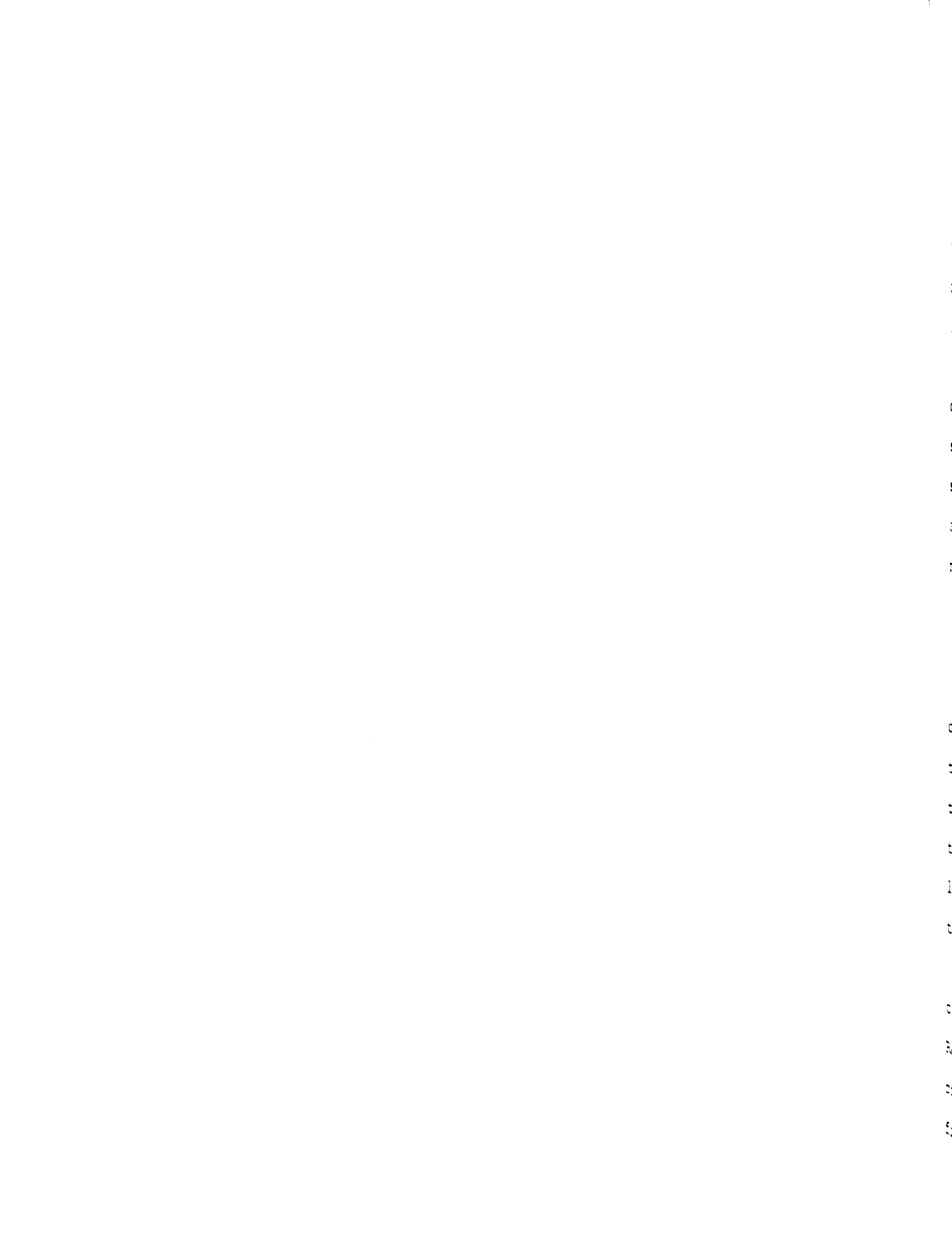
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<sup>8</sup>Such problems include these: how do you discover and hire people who are loyal workers and with similar policy orientations to the administration when the party is not accustomed to such a task. The Democrats were out of office for only eight years so their problems were not as great as those facing the Republicans in 1963.

The Republicans, of course, were official-oriented in the sense that referrals were made to and from the governor's office; however, this would seem to be entirely dependent on the Republican governor being in office. Democrats have been more official-oriented, particularly with legislative officials. This, of course, results from there being so many Democratic legislators.

These conclusions were substantiated by statements of interviewees. Some of the Democratic county chairmen interviewed referred applicants to agencies and some to legislators; three of them mentioned both. Only one Democratic chairman stated that the state party chairman contacted him on personnel matters but that was in the early 1960's. The others were asked very seldom or not at all to recommend people for state jobs; one was contacted by his state senator.

The Republican chairmen interviewed had received inquiries from the governor's office (with one exception) but all knew the governor personally and felt they could contact him or his office. Some had more frequent contacts than others. One said that anytime the governor's office questioned him he always gave his approval on the applicant unless the appointee would embarrass the governor. This same chairman mentioned three ways in which the governor might contact him about personnel: 1) the governor is looking for a person to fill a position and wants the chairman to search for a qualified candidate. This is particularly likely



with appointments to uncompensated advisory boards; such positions are not sought after; 2) the governor might approach the chairman with four or five candidates and ask which would serve best in this position; 3) the governor might say, this is the man we are going to appoint; what is your opinion of him?

Another Republican chairman said he gives a synopsis on the applicant to state party headquarters and they subsequently send it to the state agency. Another chairman said he may check with the applicant's precinct chairman and then send a letter to the state chairman. Another had not been asked but did send recommendations to agencies.

#### Job Communications from the Governor's Office and from Legislators

It has already been shown that views expressed by county chairmen concerning communication on personnel matters did not match those of the agency officials. However, the comments of state party chairmen did appear similar to those of the county chairmen. The perceptions of state legislators and the governor's office need to be examined to determine if they differ or match those of the chairmen.

Generally, reports of the governors from both parties confirmed the communication pattern of the chairmen. Both Republican governors said they cleared appointments through county chairmen. One of the governors reported some difficulties encountered in attempting this, but he tried

anyway.<sup>9</sup> One of the Republican governors stated that his office was occasionally sent lists of candidates for patronage positions from county executive committees but this was exceptional.

The past three Democratic governors apparently did not consider county chairmen when patronage decisions were made. An aide of two Democratic governors said that the governors were the heads of their party and that was that; there was no need to consult with the party officials. Another governor's personnel aide de-emphasized contacts with Democratic county chairmen on patronage. If his office tried to clear all appointments through county chairmen, the administration would end up with a group of people who did not support the governor. Loyal supporters of the governor were the ones to reward he felt. He also believed that the legislators were the important persons to contact on patronage matters. He said legislators often picked their county chairman who were consequently spokesmen for the legislators. The state Democratic chairman gave the impression that he believed county chairmen were considered by the present administration in patronage decision-making.

Perceptions of legislators were not as similar to those of county chairmen as were the governors. According to the legislators of both parties, inquiries from county

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<sup>9</sup>This particular governor wanted to appoint some registered Democrats to positions; they were Republican sympathizers. Some Republican county chairmen were upset, however, that even registered Democrats should receive appointments over registered Republicans.

TABLE 10

DOES ANYONE ASK YOU (LEGISLATORS) TO RECOMMEND  
PEOPLE FOR JOBS?<sup>10</sup>

---

	Representatives		Senators	
	Repubs.	Dems.	Repubs.	Dems.
Agency	1 (14%)	3 (15%)	5 (56%)	21 (55%)
State party chair- man	3 (43%)	2 (10%)	6 (67%)	3 ( 8%)
County chairman	4 (57%)	2 (10%)	4 (44%)	5 (13%)
Governor	5 (71%)	2 (10%)	6 (67%)	6 (16%)

---

chairmen were not frequent . . . only six representatives and nine senators reported such contact.

It is interesting to note that in terms of percentages, Republicans reported contact from county chairmen more frequently than did Democrats; the reverse was true when county chairmen reported their contacts with legislators. This may again illustrate the weakness of the Democratic party on personnel matters. Legislators may regard county chairmen as so unimportant in personnel matters that they do not consider contacts from chairmen important enough to mention. It must be mentioned again, however, that the Republican party has been a "one man show"; either all support the gubernatorial candidate or no one gets anywhere.

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<sup>10</sup> Perhaps legislators, occupying less officially partisan roles, are loathe to admit such partisan activity relative to the county chairmen whose roles are officially partisan.

The Democratic party has been factional and has been able to afford the luxury of being openly competitive. This is changing to some extent, in that the usual number of Democratic candidates in primaries, although still large, is not as great as it once was. Republicans seldom have more than two candidates in a primary, and most candidates are unopposed. Thus, patronage may be functional to the organization . . . to the Democratic nuclei which are sometimes competitive on an intra-party basis . . . and to the Republican nuclei which are more closely related to the formal party organization.

Republicans tended to receive more contact about jobs from the above sources than did Democrats with the exception of representatives, contacts from agencies. This, again, may be due to greater party consciousness in the Republican party on personnel decisions. Senators of both parties, however, reported a fairly high rate of interaction from agencies. This is not unexpected considering the strong role senators have played in personnel transactions in Oklahoma.

When legislators were asked who they contacted about a job for a constituent their answers showed that party officials play a very small part. Out of all the legislative responding, only one Democratic senator contacted a county chairman concerning an individual applicant; two Democratic and three Republican senators said they approached the state chairman about such persons. No representative reported



contacts with party officials. The outstanding outcome of this question was the legislators' referral of job applicants to the agencies. With only a very few exceptions (29% of the Republican representatives and 10% of the Democratic representatives) the legislators of both parties apparently felt no need to refer applicants to party officials or even to the governor. The legislators sent applicants to the job source . . . the agencies.

A few legislators made comments about communication from different sources concerning jobs. One Republican representative stated that the county chairman was sent a form letter about applicants, evidently for clearance. A Republican senator mentioned that a county chairman had asked him to recommend people for census-taking; a representative also made such a comment. A few Democratic senators recalled contacts with county chairmen. One said he had received inquiries from both the state party chairman and the county chairman; another stated he recommends people to the county chairman but he does not make it a general rule. Another Democratic senator related that he has been called by the state chairman and county chairman about prospective employees. A senator with six years experience said his county chairman had contacted him two times; one Democrat stated that he would not want to appoint someone at odds with the county party organization to the county election board; on the other hand, he would not want the organization to name the appointee either.

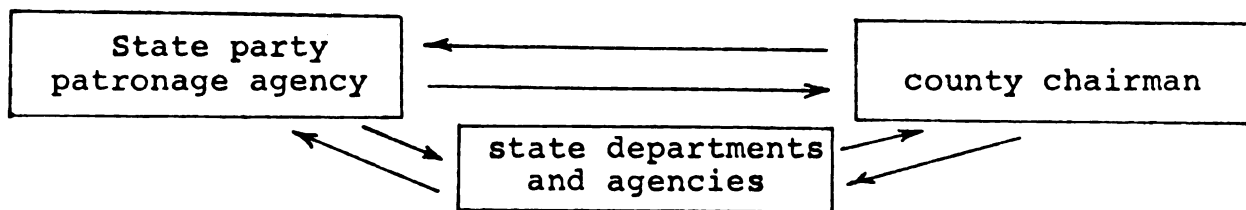
Summarizing the different perceptions of party and governmental officials on lines of patronage communication in Oklahoma, a difference exists between the two parties. For Republicans, contacts about patronage are more party-oriented, although much less so for the legislators than for the county chairmen. Democrats are much more official-oriented in patronage matters; the role of county chairman is weak and their contacts tend to be through officials, namely the legislators. The legislators themselves do not pay much attention to county chairmen on patronage matters and Democratic governors have acted similarly. William Gump in his Ohio study said that parties are weak anyway and patronage is just one indicator of this. It would appear to be even more true for the Democratic party in Oklahoma. For all persons interviewed and almost all respondents, contacts with governmental agencies were deemed important.

#### Comparison of Oklahoma Patronage Communication with Other States

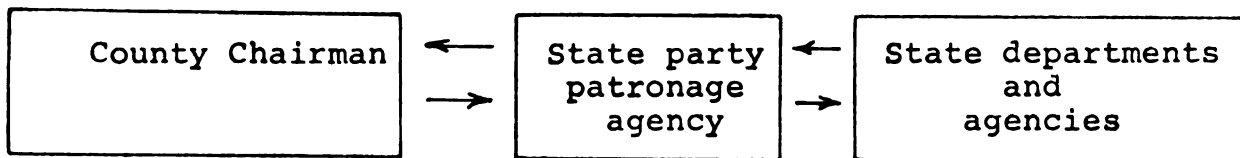
In order to compare the Oklahoma pattern of patronage communication with those known in other states the following models are presented, based on the literature:

ILLINOIS MODEL (From Joseph Tucker: "A Functional Analysis of Political Patronage in Nine Illinois Counties")

Republicans

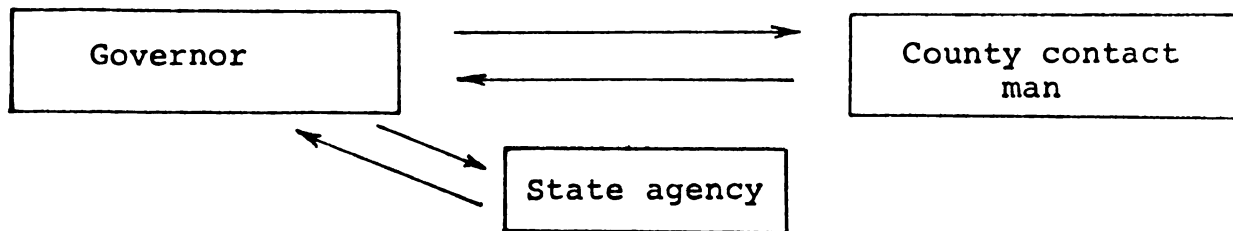


Democrats



KENTUCKY MODEL (from Kentucky Politics by Malcolm Jewell and Everett Cunningham)

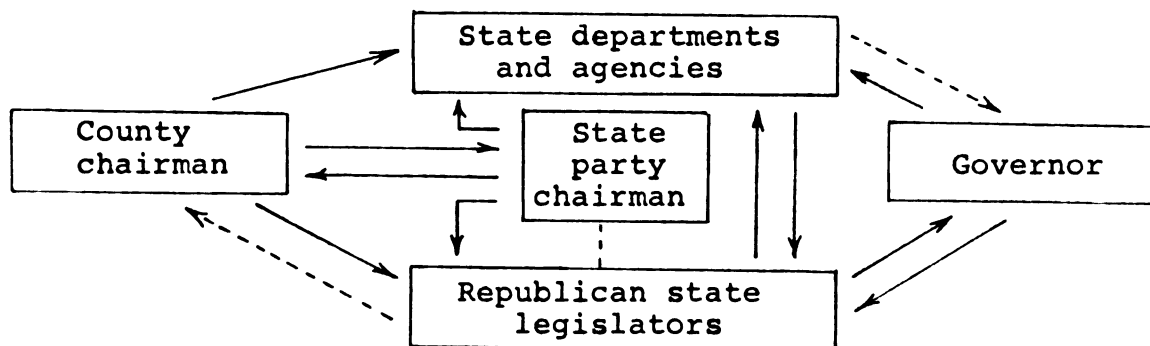
Democrats



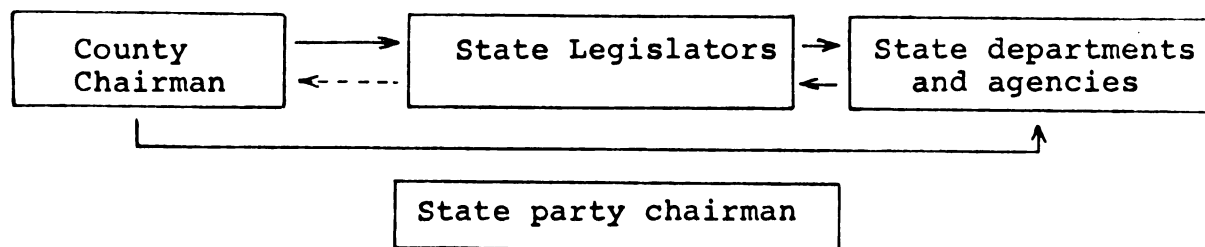
Republican model is not apparent from the book.

OKLAHOMA MODEL  
1970

Republicans



Democrats



It is not easy to draw an Ohio model from the Gump dissertation. There were several kinds of practices concerning communication and clearance for patronage positions. The role of the chairman of the county executive committee was sometimes most important at the county level; at times patronage was shared with others in the party. The state chairman differed in the degree of activity depending upon the person in office and whether or not the party had the governorship.

In Illinois both Republicans and Democratic party officials appeared to play an important role in patronage decision-making. In Kentucky the Democratic governor worked through the contact man who might also be a county chairman. Party was not so important in that state. As stated earlier, Oklahoma would appear to be closer to the Kentucky model and the Democrats might have seemed even more so if a Democratic governor had been in office when the research for this paper was conducted.

#### Summary

Hypothesis III stated that in the dominant Democratic party patronage would be official-oriented while in the Republican party it would be more party-oriented. In general this was found to be true. The Republicans were, of course, effected by the facts that: 1) the governorship was held by a Republican and 2) few legislative seats were held by Republicans. Thus, the Republicans were official-oriented to the extent that the governor played an important role in patronage decision-making.

The hypothesis related to communication stated that a) lines of communication for patronage decisions in the dominant party will be official-oriented rather than party-oriented; b) lines of communication will be more party-oriented than official-oriented in the minority party. Again, the hypotheses were upheld although it was found that the minority party was slighted more by officials than

might have been expected. In both parties, public officials are more important in patronage decision-making than are associational leaders.

The changing competitive nature of the two parties must be referred to here. For the Democrats, increasing competition has not as yet meant a new role for associational leaders in patronage matters. Perhaps there is a time lag between the fact of increasing competition and the response of party organization and candidate nuclei to it. It would appear that 1970 was the first gubernatorial campaign to see Democratic gubernatorial nuclei who were more concerned about inter-party competition than intra-party competition. In response to the victory that resulted, the Democratic governor is supposedly being more considerate of associational leaders in patronage decision-making but this has not been tested.

For the Republicans, the changing competitive nature of the two parties has meant a great deal since they never before had the opportunity to use patronage on the state level. In dispensing patronage, some care was taken by the governor to build up the party organization through consultation with at least some party leaders on patronage matters. However, since the Republicans had not had elected officials at the state executive level before, increasing competition has meant their patronage is more official-oriented than previously; in the past any patronage (mostly federal) had to go through associational leaders only.

## CHAPTER VI

### PATRONAGE AND PARTY ACTIVISM

This chapter considers whether in Oklahoma patronage fulfills its traditional purposes of rewarding and recruiting party workers and producing financial contributions to the formal party organization. In particular the perceptions of associational leaders, i.e. state party officials and county chairmen, are examined. Hypothesis IV was stated as follows:

- IV. Patronage, even where it still exists, no longer fulfills the following functions for partisan organizations: 1) recruiting workers; 2) maintaining activists; 3) raising revenue for the treasury; 4) maintaining discipline in the organization.

The hypothesis will be examined with respect to public officials' campaign organizations in chapter seven.

The important questions are as follows: the extent to which patronage is used as a reward for activists; the value of patronage as an incentive to future activism; and the extent to which patronage employees engage in political activities and give money to the party.

In addition to Hypothesis IV, this chapter also begins the examination of Hypothesis V which states:

- V. A loss of patronage from passage of a merit system with Hatch Act provisions will be perceived as less

significant by county chairmen of the majority party than by its governmental officeholders; the latter will perceive themselves as particularly affected by loss of appointments of lower state employees and contributions from them.

An important question concerns the change, if any, in the political activity of job holders since the inception of the merit system with its "little Hatch Act" prohibitions on political activity. Findings can be compared with those for Illinois and Ohio. A full examination of Hypothesis V awaits comparisons with responses by officials.

Recent studies indicate that patronage has ceased to play its traditional role in party organizations; that is, party officials no longer depend on patronage employees as an important source of campaign workers and contributions. Other uses of patronage are discussed in the remaining chapters.

The first study to cast doubt on the value of patronage for parties was that of Sorauf, who noted that party officials were not effectively using patronage employees as a resource in building campaign organizations. Reasons noted were that, on the one hand, jobs were not necessarily rewarded to activists and, on the other hand, employees who were the most active partisans were the most likely to be fired if their party lost.

Joseph Tucker found that county chairmen in Illinois do not expect their patronage employees to be politically active. Although all the chairmen interviewed did check applicants' voting records, their primary concern was that



applicants were qualified for the job. Firings were due to inability to handle the job, never for reasons of political inactivity. Tucker made the point that most paid patronage employees possess a low level of political skill: thus, county chairmen were not disturbed by their lack of political activity. On the other hand, patronage employees were assessed by the county chairmen for campaign contributions although with considerable variation in amount and frequency from one county to another.<sup>1</sup>

Research in Ohio produced similar findings. Observing how poorly party chairmen exploit patronage's campaign and partisan usefulness, Gump commented: "The patronage system proves to be slack; unused resources are commonplace, and maximum utilization of resources is uncommon."<sup>2</sup> Gump discovered that 52 percent of the Republican and 30 percent of the Democratic chairmen did not care whether or not job applicants had voted in the primary. Most of the chairmen did expect some form of political activity from employees; this ranged from simply convincing friends and neighbors to support the party's ticket to actually soliciting campaign contributions. For the most part, such "expected" activities were simple and if employees did not produce (as was often the case) no sanctions were brought

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph B. Tucker, "A Functional Analysis of Political Patronage in Nine Illinois Counties," Chapter Nine, passim.

<sup>2</sup>W. Robert Gump, "The Functions of Patronage in American Party Politics: an Empirical Reappraisal," Midwest Journal of Political Science, XV (February, 1971, pp. 87-106.

against them. Chairmen were asked if they could recall anyone being fired from a patronage job for non-support of the party: 90 percent said no. Over one-half of the chairmen (more Democrats than Republicans) expected financial support from patronage appointees. Again, expectations often went unfulfilled. Gump believed that, despite these weaknesses, patronage is still of benefit to the party. For instance, he felt that appointments to the County Board of Elections were useful in maintaining the county party's "organization and communication network".<sup>3</sup>

A possible explanation for the diminishing importance in political activism was given by Gump. He believes the modern political campaign, relying more on mass media, appears to have less need for patronage campaign workers. Volunteers, particularly women's clubs, are taking over the "nuts and bolts" work of organization. The political benefits gained by having state employees take part actively in the campaign would be more than offset by the unfavorable image this would create for contemporary middle-class voters, this author feels. Thus, it would appear that in two other states patronage is less important today than previously in its usefulness for partisan organizations.

Concerning the pre-merit patronage system in Oklahoma, there is some uncertainty as to whether the benefits of the system for campaign purposes went to the Democratic party

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

or to elected officials. Waldby indicates that elected officials gained the most from sponsoring employees; the formal party structure evidently received little. One ex-party chairman said the party did not benefit from assessments but candidates did. The party did gain, he believed, if officials were active party members. Another chairman said employees aided candidates rather than the party. Another interviewee observed that the Democratic party was the recipient of patronage employees' activity. He thought people in the Tax Commission, Highway Department, Corporation Commission and local welfare employees were the shock troops of the party at the precinct and county level. There are two important points here. First, it is not important whether the activity of state employees benefited the formal party structure directly or indirectly through support for Democratic candidates; their campaign effort was certainly not going to the Republican party. Second, considering the nuclear organizational concept, it should be realized that the nuclear organizations centered around candidates for public office were the effectual part of the Democratic party organization. This is still primarily true today, although the formal Democratic party leaders have become slightly more assertive in response to the increasing competition. Thus, concern about building a campaign organization and using patronage in ways to strengthen this organization have been of far more importance to public officials than to party leaders. In the Republic party, so

weak for many years, nuclear organizations seldom had any real hope of winning since if their candidate lost there would be no patronage on the state level, consequently Republicans could hardly count on such patronage to build up the organization. By 1960, however, Republicans had become concerned with the "nuts and bolts" work of organization necessary for their minority party to win elections. Also, after 1966, Republicans were elected to some state-wide offices which controlled patronage appointments. Whether or not Republican associational leaders were using what little available patronage there was to build up the formal party structure will be examined in this chapter.

#### County Chairmen and Partisan Activity

In chapter five it was noted many county chairmen have few or no opportunities for patronage. Nevertheless, a majority reported job inquiries from residents; thus, chairmen might have some choice of applicants if they did possess patronage. Some chairmen reported patronage influence.

Chairmen were asked if precinct committeemen were given the first chance at jobs. This is one way of determining whether partisan activists were rewarded by patronage. Only a small number of county chairmen said committeemen were given priority for employment. Seven, or 15.9 percent, of the Republicans and four or 10 percent, of the Democrats responded positively. Eight of the chairmen

from both parties indicated the question was not relevant because they had no patronage to give. And seven of the total did not answer the question. In some cases there may have been few or no precinct committeemen.

One Republican stated, "We attempt to get jobs for whomever shows interest in a job." Another said, "None (no precinct chairmen) have asked." Similarly, "None have spoken for jobs." A Democrat wrote, "With the merit system, this is not an issue." For whatever reason, either the lack of patronage jobs or the lack of desire on the part of committeemen to hold such jobs, this group of party faithful is not rewarded for party activity with patronage employment.

The chairmen were also questioned about the political activities of state patronage employees. The responses to these questions in both interviews and questionnaires were generally negative. The only possible exception was found in the Democrats, one third of whom responded that patronage employees were an important source of votes.

Only a slight increase is seen in the second table. In both tables there is a small tendency for Democrats to report more employee activity as compared with the Republicans. Democrats might be more apt to use such a source, when it is available, since, as they surmise, they lack the financial resources to pay workers. With both questions, it would be interesting to know why a few chairmen of both parties answered positively.

TABLE 11

IN CAMPAIGNS FOR PRIMARIES AND GENERAL ELECTIONS, DO YOU  
RELY MOST ON STATE PATRONAGE EMPLOYEES?

	Republicans	Democrats	Total
Yes	2 (4.5%)	3 (7.7%)	5 (6%)
No	42 (95.5%)	35 (89.7%)	77 (92.8%)
No Answer		1 (2.6%)	1 (1.2%)

TABLE 12

ARE STATE PATRONAGE EMPLOYEES IMPORTANT AS A SOURCE OF  
ACTIVE PARTY WORKERS?

	Republicans	Democrats	Total
Yes	5 (11.3%)	7 (17.9%)	12 (14.5%)
No	38 (86.3%)	31 (79.4%)	69 (83.1%)
No Answer	1 (2.3%)	1 (2.6%)	2 (2.4%)

Of the chairmen who were interviewed, the Republicans expected only a little support. The state chairman said that policy-making appointees should campaign; certainly they should not campaign against the party's nominee. However, participation is not expected of lower state employees. Another Republican chairman reported asking a member of an important state board to be chairman of a Republican fundraising dinner. The board member replied that he could not because of his service on the state board; he felt it

could reflect on the governor, as it might appear that the governor persuaded him to do it. The chairman did expect that such persons would participate in the gubernatorial campaign, however.

Democratic chairmen interviewed basically agreed with the responses of their Republican counterparts. One said that it is difficult to tell at the state level just how actively employees are campaigning. Another chairman said that if you have volunteer help, then patronage employees are not important.

When asked about the importance of the votes of state patronage workers, some chairmen said they were important because any vote was important. Two Democrats commented on this question, indicating that one cannot expect much of patronage employees, even if they do vote. One who had served over five years said, "They (state patronage employees) are surprisingly disloyal all over the state." Another replied that employees were an important source of votes "but the party can't control them."

The difference between Republican and Democratic responses on this question may be due to the greater number of Democratic voters in many counties.

As with all of the questions concerning activism, tenure seemed to make no difference in the respondent's reply. It should be noted that this set of questions is worded strongly. Had chairmen been given a check list of fairly simple campaign activities, as Gump gave to his

TABLE 13

ARE PATRONAGE EMPLOYEES IMPORTANT AS A SOURCE OF  
VOTES FOR YOUR PARTY IN YOUR COUNTY?

	Republicans	Democrats	Total
Yes	4 ( 9.1%)	13 (33%)	17 (20.5%)
No	39 (88.6%)	24 (61.5%)	63 (76%)
No Answer	1 ( 2.3%)	2 ( 5.1%)	3 (3.6%)

chairmen, the Oklahoma chairmen's responses might have been more positive.

County chairmen were also questioned regarding assessment practices . . . long considered an important source of funds for Democratic candidates and/or the Democratic party in Oklahoma.

One Democrat added a new category: "They are expected and don't contribute."

It is interesting to note the lack of inter-party differences on this question, particularly in light of the tradition of Democratic assessment. This may be because the Republicans held the governorship at the time chairmen were questioned. At any rate, Democratic and Republican chairmen hold similar expectations as to contributions from state patronage employees.

If categories (b), (c) and (d) are combined it is found that 62.6 percent or fifty-two chairmen feel some



TABLE 14

WHAT IS THE PRACTICE REGARDING FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS  
BY PATRONAGE JOB HOLDERS? (CHECK ONE)

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County Chairmen			
	Republicans	Democrats	Total
a. They are not expected to and do not contribute.	9 (20.4%)	9 (23%)	18 (21.7%)
b. It's not generally expected but some do contribute.	18 (40.9%)	17 (43.6%)	35 (41.2%)
c. Most contribute something to the party.	7 (15.9%)	7 (17.9%)	14 (16.9%)
d. It is expected and almost all do contribute.	2 ( 4.5%)	1 ( 2.6%)	3 ( 3.6%)
No answer	8 (18.1%)	5 (12.8%)	13 (15.7%)

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contributions are received by the party from patronage employees. This is so despite the fact that fifty-three chairmen reported not expecting any financial support from job holders. The fact that contributions are not prohibited by merit system rules undoubtedly contributes to the fact that state patronage employees are more apt to participate financially than in other ways.

Interviewed chairmen told of some financial support from patronage job-holders. One Republican said that contributions are hoped for. "If a man is a department head I

hope he's a member of the governor's club since his salary would be in that range." He stressed that contributions were voluntary. Another Republican mentioned that contributing is not a condition for holding a patronage job; however, such employees are asked to contribute and if they do not it is remembered. One Republican chairman said no systematic effort is undertaken to collect funds but most do contribute.

Democrats also spoke of contributions from employees. One said that although such persons were expected to contribute, many did not appreciably. Another chairman felt patronage employees have never been a big source of money for Democrats in Oklahoma. He believed contacts with interest groups are more vital as a source of campaign funds.

As in Illinois and Ohio it appears that patronage employees in Oklahoma are not serving the parties in the traditional way. Democratic chairmen see some benefit in voting, and chairmen of both parties note that some financial contributions are received even if not necessarily expected. This, in part, reflects the regulations of the merit system: There are no restrictions on political contributions or voting for employees, while most other types of activities are forbidden.

#### Effect of the Merit System on the Parties

The chairmen were questioned concerning the difference in political activities of state employees before and after enactment of the merit system.

TABLE 15

IF YOU WERE ACTIVE IN PARTY POLITICS PRIOR TO THE MERIT SYSTEM, HOW WOULD YOU COMPARE THE BENEFITS TO THE PARTY OF THE POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF STATE EMPLOYEES THEN WITH TODAY?

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	Republicans	Democrats	Total
Less activism	9 (20.4%)	20 (51.3%)	29 (34.9%)
More activism	1 ( 2.3%)	1 ( 2.6%)	2 ( 2.4%)
About the same	9 (20.4%)	5 (12.8%)	14 (16.9%)
Not active before 1960	19 (43.2%)	11 (28.2%)	30 (36.2%)
No answer	6 (13.6%)	2 (5.1%)	8 (9.6%)

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Both inter-party differences and tenure differences are reflected in answer to this question. Chairmen with more years of service were more apt to report a decrease in activism than newer chairmen. Also, Republicans would be expected to notice less difference in campaign activities than would Democrats, as the latter were in power when the patronage system was at its height.

If one allows for the number of chairmen who were not active before 1960 the percentage of those noticing a loss in activity is even greater. Thirty-six percent of the Republicans over the years feel there is less activity; thirty-six percent believe it is about the same. It would be interesting to know why over one-third of Republican chairmen active prior to 1960 feel employees are less

active than they were before the merit system. Most of the state employees were Democrats then. Perhaps this pre-merit activity was located in the northern counties, where there were Republican legislators. Perhaps Republicans benefited more from patronage than is commonly believed.

Seventy-one percent of the Democrats active prior to 1960 believed that since the merit system the party has received less support from state employees, while seventeen percent believed there has been no change in activity. Thus, more Democratic chairmen than Republicans perceive a loss in party benefits as a result of the merit system. This loss would be especially noticed in the lower level of merit workers - typists, office managers, field employees, etc. - who are no longer free to participate in party activities. More than one respondent commented that many employees "hid behind the merit system". It was meant by this that many employees did not want to be active anyway and the merit system gave them a legitimate excuse for non-participation. For those who want to be active there are still ways to help the party and candidates, particularly if they are discrete.

Exempt employees may still be active in whatever degree they desire. Comments of chairmen indicated that some type of activity may be expected from these appointees at campaign time. One person interviewed commented that a department head (exempt from the merit system) had approached him about backing a particular candidate for

governor. The interviewee believed this was an indication that policy-making individuals campaign.

In 1971 two accusations of political campaigning by merit employees in the 1970 election were publicized. One involved an employee in the Wildlife Department (which has its own merit system) who had openly campaigned for a candidate. He was subsequently transferred.<sup>3</sup> In the other case, an enforcement officer for the Corporation Commission claimed he had been asked to hire men to erect campaign signs for the Corporation Commissioner's race. He was transferred by his department. The department denied such allegations, claiming that, in fact, this man volunteered to campaign.<sup>4</sup> The point is that conflict continues over the employee's right of political participation. Perhaps, with a Democratic governor in office, the legislature will amend the merit law without fear of a gubernatorial veto, thus enabling employees to participate more openly and legally.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Democratic Party and Fund-raising

There have been contradictory statements concerning the effect of the merit system on financial aspects of the Democratic party. Some feel the party has suffered

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<sup>3</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, September, 1971.

<sup>4</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, September 9, 1971.

<sup>5</sup>A Democratic legislature did amend the merit system to allow more political participation but Governor Bellmon, a Republican, vetoed this in 1965.

financially; others think it has made no difference. The annual Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner was a necessary function for most state employees prior to the merit system; the proceeds from this dinner went to the state Democratic headquarters. Governor Edmondson recalled the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner the year prior to his election as governor. He said eighty-five thousand dollars was netted at the dinner and most of this came from the pockets of state employees. It was his opinion that some of these employees making \$200 a month were asked to contribute \$25 - \$50. He was incensed at this and said it helped give him impetus to push the merit system.

Obviously the loss of this income would affect the party. At the least the party has been forced to seek other sources of income since employees cannot be coerced into contributing.<sup>6</sup> The Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner of 1968 resulted in contributions of \$54,457 as reported in the State Election Board records.

General election campaign expenditures as reported by the Democratic State Central Committee have decreased steadily since 1960 (with one exception). In 1960 expenditures of the state Democratic party were \$180,531 for

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<sup>6</sup>"Coerced" may be a strong word, however, it is what this author would use to describe such tactics as those used in the following anecdote related by one interviewee: this man was called in the office of his supervisor (as were the other employees) in the 1930's. The governor was going to run for another position he was told and needed money for his campaign. The person was given a choice of two tables: at one he could write a check for a specified amount; at another he could sign his resignation.

advertising, campaign materials, office expenses, etc.<sup>7</sup> In 1962 they rose to \$210,060. By 1970 expenditures were reported at \$36,262 (\$36,870 in contributions). This amount was spent despite stiff competition for the governor's office and other elective executive positions. The state chairman said this figure comprised almost one fourth of the party's expenditures for the two year period; this, however, would still be less than what was reported for the 1960 general election. It is possible that there is a difference in reporting techniques. The expenditures of candidates were not studied and these may have risen greatly during this period. But superficially it appears the advent of the merit system had financial repercussions on the Democratic party. The state chairman denied this, explaining there were other intervening factors causing the difference in expenditures.

An interesting side issue concerns the role the merit system played in the election of the first Republican governor in Oklahoma. As shown earlier, the state had exhibited some Republican tendencies preceding 1962. A few persons interviewed, in both parties, believed the initiation of the merit system, with its political restrictions, affected the gubernatorial campaign of 1962, contributing to the

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<sup>7</sup>Expenditures for the Democratic State Central Committee in general elections, 1960-1970, as reported to the State Election Board.

1960 - \$180,531.03	1964 - \$107,784.66	1968 - \$67,917.72
1962 - \$210,060.01	1966 - \$ 81,399.30	1970 - \$36,262.00

election of the first Republican governor. The Democrats' loss of campaign workers from among the rank and file state employees made some difference at the polls, giving an advantage to the Republicans. However, there are so many other factors that it would be difficult to isolate the effect of the merit system on that election.

### Summary

Hypothesis IV stated that patronage was no longer fulfilling functions traditionally accorded to it for partisan organizations. In this chapter the hypothesis was examined in respect to party leaders and formal party organization as opposed to public leaders and nuclear campaign organizations. Generally the hypothesis was found to be upheld in Oklahoma for party leaders. The Oklahoma party leaders find that patronage employees are of little use in campaign activities. There is little inter-party difference in these perceptions, which, since one party has been so much stronger than the other, indicates that patronage has not contributed that much to either. On the other hand, this small inter-party difference may reflect the importance of nuclear campaign organizations and their use of patronage in a dominant one-party state. In other words, the wrong people were being questioned in this instance. Funds from patronage employees were perceived by both parties as being of some help, though giving is not compulsory. Oklahoma parties, in their use of patronage



employees for campaign activity and in employees use for them, do not appear to differ from the parties in Illinois and Ohio as described by Tucker and Gump.

The hypothesis relating to the effects of the merit system on patronage stated that county chairmen of the majority party will feel the loss of patronage from the merit law with Hatch Act provisions less than will governmental officials. The perceptions of public officials will be examined later; however, a substantial majority of Democratic county chairmen active prior to passage of the merit act (71%) believed benefits to the party from patronage employees were greater before the merit act passed in 1959. This was double the number of Republican chairmen who believed similarly. Thus, county chairmen of the majority party definitely feel a loss of benefit to the party from patronage employees.

Changing party competition does not seem as important a factor in relation to these two hypotheses as does the passage of the merit law. Republicans did not generally have the benefit of state employees' partisan activism prior to the merit law. When they gained control of the governorship, the merit law prohibited campaign activities by classified state employees. Democrats have faced increasing competition at a time when employees, previously available to the party and nuclear organizations, were legally prohibited from helping the party.

## CHAPTER VII

### PATRONAGE, ELECTED OFFICIALS AND PARTISAN ACTIVISM

In this chapter Hypothesis IV regarding the role of patronage in supplying campaign workers will be considered in relation to public officials, namely state legislators and elected executives, rather than to county and state party leaders. This phenomenon was not studied in either Ohio or Illinois. Since Oklahoma has been a one-party dominant state and since we have found patronage to be official-oriented rather than party-oriented, it is important to determine whether Hypothesis IV applies as well to public officials as it does for party officials.

The Schlesinger theory of party organization utilized in this paper emphasizes the nucleus as the basic unit of party organization.<sup>1</sup> The nucleus, which is aimed at the capture of a single office, may range from the activity engendered in a county commissioner's race to the many activities associated with an attempt to win the presidency. Schlesinger states that patronage is one of the primary contributions (as opposed to secondary or transitory contributions) to the nucleus, i.e. its contribution is one

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph Schlesinger, "Political Party Organization".

that can extend between elections and can be made within the nucleus to enhance the organization.

The minority party is in a special position in regard to nuclei, however. The term nuclear unit applies only to one which has a real possibility of winning an election. Thus, a minority party with no expectations of winning (as was nearly always true of Republicans in statewide elections until the 1960's) may not develop true party nuclei; the candidates who do run, however, may run "to contribute to other nuclear organization".<sup>2</sup> For Oklahoma Republicans in earlier years, such campaigns were in aid of the presidency or one congressional seat. In recent years candidates for state elected executive positions or legislative seats with no hope of winning themselves have been able to contribute to the gubernatorial nucleus and even the nucleus for U. S. Senator or Representative. According to Schlesinger, such activities of minority candidates may be aimed at securing patronage positions. On the state level this would mean department heads, board and commission appointments, or state judgeships.

The effect of increasing inter-party competition must also be scrutinized in relation to Hypothesis IV. However, it is at this level . . . state elected executives other than the governor and state legislators . . . that inter-party competition is still weak. For all statewide

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

elections held since 1950, the Republicans have never been able to contest all of the lower state elected positions.<sup>3</sup> In all, they have won only two such positions and it is seldom that a Republican even runs a close race with a Democrat. On the legislative level, as stated in chapter three, inter-party competition is not as yet a reality. Generally, incumbent legislators appear to be re-elected (but figures are not readily available). Seldom does either party upset an incumbent of the opposite party or even lose the seat that has been traditionally Republican or Democratic. Thus, the evolving two-party system can not as yet be said to be an important factor for nuclei of legislators and secondary officials. For all state offices, however, there might be an intangible psychological effect on Democratic candidates stemming from the knowledge that Republicans sometimes upset Democrats. Thus, Democratic public officials would be concerned about establishing their own campaign organizations, and the incentives necessary for such an organization may include patronage.

Hypothesis V dealing with public officials' perception of the effect of the merit system on campaign workers will also be examined and compared with results found on party workers' perceptions in chapter six.

The patronage system as described by Hubert Waldby

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<sup>3</sup>Directory and Manual of the State of Oklahoma, pp. 219-240.

<sup>4</sup>Young, "Oklahoma Politics," p. 100.

in 1949 operated to produce campaign workers for elected officials. All of the elements of a traditional patronage system were present. A prospective job holder had to obtain a letter of endorsement from his legislator(s).

Oftentimes the endorsement will not be granted unless the applicant actively supported the legislator when he last campaigned for office. In other cases the endorsement may be given with the understanding that the applicant will campaign for the legislator in future races.<sup>5</sup>

The governor might also directly reward some of his campaign workers with appointments to major or minor posts.

According to Waldby, campaigning for your sponsor could be a year-round job. During most of the year the employee might campaign "indirectly" by "verbally praising the sponsor" while on the job and campaigning more indirectly after work. "As the campaign reaches its climax these employees spend less and less time on the duties of their positions and become more active in direct campaigning."<sup>6</sup> If the candidate lost, the job was lost. Legislators also obtained jobs at the state capitol for their district and county campaign managers. Approximately a month before the election these persons would leave the capitol and campaign full-time in their districts while drawing their usual state salary.

Given the traditional use of patronage by Oklahoma

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<sup>5</sup>Hubert O. Waldby, The Patronage System in Oklahoma, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

legislators, particularly senators, and the present use of patronage by all but four elected executives, it is useful to examine the attitudes and expectations of these officials concerning patronage employees and their partisan campaign activities. Such an examination is the content of this chapter.

#### Legislators and Partisan Activity

Legislators were questioned concerning the number of constituents visiting them yearly in quest of state jobs. It was hoped that this number would indicate not only the activity of the legislator in this area but also the degree of interest in state jobs among the constituents. If constituents failed to contact legislators about state jobs then probably patronage would be of less value to the legislators: they would be less able to choose from applicants who had been campaign workers, thus rewarding them, or those who might be potential campaign workers, thus motivating them. Legislators tended to answer the question about numbers of requests with a quick, rough approximation: "off the top of their heads". This combined with some uncertainty as to the candor with which a legislator replied, certainly limits the accuracy of the figures given. Thus, the number of constituents coming to legislators is a rough estimate at best.

The bulk of senators and representatives reported that fewer than fifty constituents contacted them concerning

jobs each year; this amounted to about 70% of the senators and 85% of the representatives. In view of the larger constituency of the senators and their traditionally more powerful role in job matters the difference between the two houses is not surprising. Seven senators (15%) and three representatives (11%) say they had over 100 constituents inquire about jobs each year; of these, some answered as many as 250-300. There were two legislators who simply stated "many" contacted them.

A definite inter-party difference was witnessed in both houses; all seven Republican representatives stated between one and twenty-five constituents visited them about state jobs. Democratic representatives reported contact in all categories or the other extreme of no contact at all (three or 11%). The nine Republican senators were classified under the one-to-twenty-five category with two exceptions: one Republican senator reported 51-100 inquired about jobs while the other estimated over 100. Again, Democratic senators responses ranged from 0 to over 100 (the one in whose district the state capitol was located said "thousands".) Most Republican legislators represent relatively prosperous districts in the metropolitan areas. Even those Republicans representing urban or rural districts have districts with average to above-average income. State jobs would consequently appear less important to their constituents.<sup>7</sup> In summary, almost all legislators reported

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<sup>7</sup>One Republican senator who reported numerous contacts

contact from constituents about state jobs but the majority had under fifty, or less than one per week, seeking employment.

Legislators were also asked whether they had to seek out people to fill positions. This indicates whether legislators were "losing" the value of patronage; presumably, if they sought out people rather than the reverse, they would not have the ability to reward activists.

Republicans had to find employees more often than Democrats. This might be due to the pressure to find suitable appointees from the Republican governor or perhaps because their more affluent constituents might be less interested in low-paying state jobs. Four Republican representatives and two Republican Senators had to seek out people to serve on board and commission appointments. Twelve legislators had to seek out people for skilled positions and five for unskilled.

A majority of senators in both parties had to search for people for positions. Each senator has an amount of personal patronage . . . tag agents, election board secretaries and tax board secretaries . . . which they must fill themselves and for which they have to look for people. One senator remarked that being tag agent in his county "was not such a plum" due to the small population and that it

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had defeated a Democratic incumbent of many years service whose constituents expected help from him; the Republican senator was still experiencing the effects of this pattern of expectation.



was difficult to find employees.<sup>8</sup> He had never even met the person who finally took the job. Three legislators commented on their difficulty in finding case workers (a reminder again that legislators do play a role in the personnel system of the welfare department). One Democratic senator said he did not have to seek out people now but he did a few years back, when people could not meet the qualifications. The senator who served as Roads and Highway Committee chairman remarked that the highway department desired a black man to fill a quota and asked him to find one. One Republican representative said it was hard to recruit qualified persons who satisfied the governor's criteria for appointment to boards and commissions; he said there were many volunteers for such jobs who think they are qualified but are not.

Consequently, the power of senators and representatives to benefit from their influence on personnel matters is diminished when they must search for a person to fill a certain position. When one is sought out by a legislator and asked to take a job one does a favor for the legislator by taking the job and not vice versa; thus one is not in the legislator's debt and cannot be expected to repay by activities at election time. (There exist other pay-offs in terms of finding an employee for a department . . . the

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<sup>8</sup>The position of tag agent has been considered a "plum" in the past because of financial returns, particularly in more populous areas. At present the car tag agent receives \$1.00 for each license registered and can thus make a fair salary each year.

department may be in your debt.)

Legislators were asked if they considered prior campaign activity to be a job qualification. Apparently it was considered so in pre-merit days. The responses of legislators indicated that the situation has changed, at least in respect to campaign activity. The only group giving a majority of "yes" answers to this question were the Republican senators. Other legislators were either unwilling to admit that campaign activity was a criterion for appointment or simply did not consider it so. Republican representatives, to a man, stated that they did not try to recommend such individuals. Thus, differences between the two houses are more evident on this question than inter-party differences. Senators are more apt than representatives to say they appoint or recommend campaign activists to state jobs. The fact that senators have personal patronage in their districts makes the difference.

Tag agents have been traditionally considered past or potential activists in the senator's campaign. However, one Democratic senator said he had not replaced most of the tag agents and county election board secretaries in his district, and this man had served twenty-two years. Another Democratic senator said he fired the tag agent who managed his opponent's campaign (one of the risks of being an activist tag agent if the incumbent is defeated) but he then informed his agents he would leave them alone. A Democratic senator with twenty years service said he had

had only two opponents in his legislative career and had thus not had much occasion to use campaign activists of any type. He said, however, in reply to the question that he did not think a valid reason to appoint or recommend people was "how much did they help me?" The strongest response was from a southern Oklahoma senator who said, "campaign helpers are the only ones I recommend."

TABLE 16

DO YOU TRY TO RECOMMEND AND APPOINT PEOPLE TO JOBS WHO  
HAVE BEEN ACTIVE POLITICALLY IN YOUR CAMPAIGN?

	Representatives (sample)		Senators (all)	
	Repub.	Demo.	Repub.	Demo.
Yes	---	2 (10%)	5 (55.6%)	17 (44.7%)
No	7 (100%)	16 (80%)	4 (44.4%)	21 (55.3%)
No Answer	---	2 (10%)	---	---

Legislators were then asked if party activity was a qualification for patronage appointments. Most legislators considered party to be an important qualification for a job recommendation than considered campaign work to be important. Although all seven Republican representatives said campaign work was not important, four of the seven believed party work to be an important qualification. Democratic representatives' responses changed only slightly: four as compared to two felt party work important as compared to campaign work.

Differences in the responses of the senators of both parties to the two questions were not great although two more senators in both parties believed party activity more important than campaign aid. The senators were more conscious of party activity as a qualification for a job recommendation than were representatives. And Republicans were more apt to respond positively to this question than were Democrats. Being part of the minority party which is growing in strength, Republicans are apparently thinking in terms of strengthening the party organization even more through appointments. It would seem that Democrats might become more aware of the necessity of organizational incentives to maintain their traditional dominance but have not as yet done so to the extent the Republicans have.

Six legislators qualified their positive response by saying, "if two people are equal then party is important." One said party was important only if the person was qualified for the job; "you can't just put hacks in." And generally legislators, as party officials in Illinois and Ohio, were concerned that persons receiving jobs be qualified to handle them. A Democratic senator said he favored party members but that for average jobs at a state institution in his district he did not ask for party affiliation. Some mentioned, as with the previous question, that party affiliation and/or campaign activity was an important qualification only for a job like tag agent.

Two Democratic senators gave particularly interesting comments. One said that he did not ask political affiliation of applicants and that, inadvertantly, he had appointed a Republican tag agent in his district. Someone wrote to the Democratic state chairman, complaining about this and the chairman contacted the senator, although no action was taken. The senator said the previous tag agent had campaigned openly for his opponent and the women he had appointed helped him at election time. Another Democratic senator remarked, "About 75 percent of the people who call me are strangers . . . they've never heard of me either and did not help me. Someone told them their senator could help them." He expressed the opinion that he owed these people nothing although he might write letters of recommendation for them. But he was not really interested in helping them obtain a job.

Very few legislators gave the simple answer that they would recommend party people solely on a partisan basis; most indicated they would also need to be qualified. Thus, patronage is not used by the legislators as a reward mechanism purely for past service to the legislator or to the party; qualifications must also be considered. Although there were several exceptions, particularly the appointment of a Republican tag agent by a Democrat, senators tried to give their personal patronage to persons who had shown some party or personal loyalty.

The legislators were questioned as to what they

expected and what they actually received in terms of campaign help from their patronage appointees. For several legislators the questions were not relevant; either they were first term legislators who had not participated in a campaign since their appointments or they were experienced legislators with very little opposition and no need to campaign in the usual sense. Some had no experience in that they said they had no patronage employees.

The majority of legislators said they did not expect help. Senators were almost evenly divided on this question. In the house, answers to the question concerning expectations showed somewhat surprising inter-party differences: Republicans split evenly on the question while a majority of Democrats said they did not expect campaign help from employees.

Although senators were rather evenly split on expectations, many "yes" answers were qualified by saying they expected activity only from personal patronage. Only one senator strongly admitted expecting appointees to campaign and he, in turn, said that they do campaign or he "runs them off". Otherwise the approach from legislators was low key; they may expect activity but do not require it or request it of appointees.

Some legislators voiced hopes that patronage jobholders would campaign but felt they probably would not by such comments as these: appointees "usually kick them (legislators) in the teeth"; "their memories are short";

TABLE 17

ONCE AN INDIVIDUAL HAS BEEN PLACED IN A NON-MERIT JOB  
IS HE EXPECTED TO BE ACTIVE BY VOTING FOR YOU,  
TELLING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES TO VOTE,  
CAMPAIGNING FOR YOU, EXPRESSING  
GRATITUDE OR OTHER TASKS?

	Representatives (sample)		Senators (all)	
	Repub.	Demo.	Repub.	Demo.
Yes	3 (42.8%)	5 (25%)	3 (33.3%)	17 (44.7%)
No	3 (42.8%)	12 (60%)	5 (55.6%)	18 (47.3%)
No exper- ience	1 (14.2%)	2 (10%)	1 (11.1%)	2 (5%)
No answer	--	1 (5%)	--	1 (2.6%)

TABLE 18

DO YOU FIND THAT SUCH EMPLOYEES DO IN FACT CAMPAIGN BY  
VOTING, TELLING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES TO VOTE, CAM-  
PAIGNING FOR YOU, EXPRESSING GRATITUDE OR  
OTHER TASKS?

	Representatives (sample)		Senators (all)	
	Repub.	Demo.	Repub.	Demo.
Yes	5 (71.4%)	9 (45%)	4 (44.4%)	13 (35.5%)
No	1 (14.3%)	5 (25%)	--	6 (11.1%)
No exper- ience	1 (14.3%)	5 (25%)	4 (44.4%)	16 (42.1%)
Don't know or No answer	--	1 (5%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (7.8%)

"too many people are interested only in what you can do for them"; "no, I never see them or hear from them again".

Seven legislators made statements to the effect that they hoped the appointees would not campaign against them. One senator who said he does not expect anything said he keeps a list of all pages he appoints (a somewhat minor form of patronage) and contacts them when campaigning; many pages have helped him, he declared.

When legislators were asked whether the patronage employees actually did campaign, many reported no experience with a campaign in which they faced opposition, or no patronage, which lessened the significance of the answers. Among those who have campaigned, more Republican house members believed they received campaign help. For Democrats in both houses a majority who felt the question was relevant said they received such help from patronage employees. Experienced Republican senators all reported such help.

Almost all responses were qualified in some way. One legislator said campaigning "depends on the employees . . . some are interested in politics and try to do everything to help within the bounds of the merit system . . . some even ask if the merit law can be changed." Another stated that some campaign, "those who aren't under merit". Another observation was that appointees are under the merit system and can do nothing; they are "second class citizens." Here the effect of the merit system might be



observed. Merit appointees who "owed" their job to or received aid in obtaining it from the senator or representative are not allowed to campaign under the rules of the merit system. If they were to campaign at all it would have to be done very cautiously but campaigning can be carried out subtly sometimes. Merit employees are free to contribute to the campaign chests of candidates as they could to parties, and a few legislators did mention such contributions, although these were played down as unimportant.

The comparison between legislators with expectations of support and legislators who received support is that, with the exception of Democratic senators, more stated that they received support than expected it. Undoubtedly more Democratic senators would have been in this category had not so many been long-term incumbents or new senators. Partially the explanation for the contrast in answers to the two questions is that many legislators were concerned that a "yes" answer to the first question might be interpreted as "forcing" employees to campaign. They did not want to force or require anything of employees but felt they did receive some form of campaign assistance.

Legislative patronage may not be fulfilling traditional functions although it may be doing so more than it is for county chairmen. According to their statements legislators do not use it to reward campaign workers, rather more to reward party people. Although a number

of legislators report receiving campaign help from patronage employees it was more a matter of being pleasantly surprised about aid than requiring it and then firing them if they did not campaign. The main exception is in the area of senator's personal patronage . . . tag agents, county election board secretaries, tax equalization board secretaries and whatever else they may consider patronage (highway superintendent [one in particular mentioned this], social workers, pages, doormen at the capitol, etc.). Senators are generally more careful about appointing campaign helpers and party activists to such positions; they likewise apparently expect more from them. One Democratic senator said he did not receive campaign help but then added, "I think the sub-agents (car tag) are very loyal to me. I am strictly their employer and except for one they all helped me campaign in the beginning." Senators do not hesitate to fire tag agents and election board secretaries who have campaigned against them.

Democratic representatives were the one group of the four to report an overall low level of use of patronage for campaign purposes. Primarily it is because they are overshadowed by their senator counterparts and have traditionally been so (although it depends more on the individual than on the house he represents, supposedly.) By contrast, Republicans in both houses are more active than Democratic representatives in using patronage. Their small numbers and the presence of a Republican governor may have

made them more aware of patronage and its possibilities.

What may have been true for the party chairmen in Ohio may also hold true for senators in Oklahoma. In Ohio, the appointments to the county election board were alleged to be important enough to form the nucleus of a campaign organization. The few appointments which Oklahoma senators have in the form of tag agents, election board secretaries, etc. which is considered their personal patronage, may be enough to help them form the basis for a campaign organization.

The merit system has presumably had an effect on legislative patronage; certainly fewer employees can be considered the personal patronage of a legislator today as compared with the pre-merit days of Waldby's book when almost all employees were in this situation. Legislators serving prior to 1960 were asked if there had been a decrease in state patronage jobs available to them. Twenty-six legislators (eleven representatives and fifteen senators) or over one-third of those interviewed claimed service prior to 1960. Only three of these were Republicans.

Republicans were divided on this question. One Republican legislator agreed there had been no decrease, one said his two years service in the house before 1959 provided insufficient experience to answer and the other said there had been a decrease. One Democratic senator speculated that for Republicans there had been no decrease because Republican governors had been in office since 1963,

meaning an actual increase in patronage opportunities for Republicans. In Kentucky apparently Democratic governors have wooed Republican legislators with patronage as much as they have wooed Democrats. This may have been the case in Oklahoma for this particular senator.

The Democratic representatives generally said there had been a decrease in state patronage jobs available to them: six replied yes, two no and two did not know or did not answer. Eight Democratic senators believed there had been a decrease and five said no. In all, fifteen legislators said a decrease occurred in patronage jobs available, eight said it had not and three did not answer. One Democratic representative said there was no way to make a sensible comparison; the economy is the main factor. Affluence has meant people are not as interested in state jobs regardless of whether or not a merit system is in effect. Another representative said no, because in the house there was no patronage to start with. A representative who felt there had not been a decline qualified this by the statement that "there is a greater number of employees" (today).

A senator stated there had been no decrease in available jobs but rather a decrease in number of people applying, particularly because of the age limits presently on jobs and because of the economy. A senator from an agricultural district said there had been no decline because in his district there have never been many appointees.

One admitted he could not perceive any appreciable difference: "I can still get jobs if people pass the test."

#### Elected Executives and Partisan Activity

The one area of state government almost totally exempt from the merit system is that of elected executives. These officials are free to appoint whomever they wish to work in their offices. The two exceptions, mentioned earlier, are Corporation Commission employees, all of whom are covered by the merit system and the State Department of Public Instruction where all but policy-making employees are under merit regulations.

These elected officials must campaign statewide every four years and thus require some campaign organization. Although opposition in the general election has been until recent years weak, executives sometimes face opponents in primaries and run-offs.<sup>9</sup> It would certainly be advantageous to such officials to hire as staff members persons who either campaigned in the past or would in the future.

Eight of the elected executives were interviewed (one was a Corporation Commissioner and the questions were not relevant to him presently). The executives interviewed were asked about the number of people approaching them for positions but most did not answer this question. One official said about two hundred people approached him

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<sup>9</sup>In the 1950-1966 period 14 out of 47 executive candidates were involved in run-offs. Directory and Manual of the State of Oklahoma, pp. 219-240.

for employment over a four year period. Another stated he usually had a waiting list of prospective employees. One whose office requires special skills said they had no trouble hiring people for positions.<sup>10</sup>

The executives were asked whether they consider party affiliation when making appointments. On the whole they do not ask this question of prospective employees. One executive uses an application blank for employees which does ask party affiliation, but he claimed that this information is not important to him. One other said he considers party only if two or three applicants are equal in ability.

Officials were asked if, when first elected, they replaced appointees of the previous administration with their own. It is realized that 100 percent turnover seldom occurs in any patronage system since the most skilled are too hard to replace. For others, ties to the employer will be closer and willingness to campaign will be more evident if they know their livelihood depends on the electoral survival of their boss.

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<sup>10</sup>Number of employees in the elected executives' offices, spring, 1970:  
 Commissioner of Insurance - 40 (some part-time)  
 State Auditor - 3  
 State Treasurer - 18-19  
 Attorney General - 29  
 Superintendent of Public Instruction - 200 as of August 1, 1968  
 Secretary of State - 16  
 Lieutenant Governor - 9-10  
 State Examiner and Inspector - 100  
 Commissioner of Charities - 29  
 Commissioner of Labor - 20.

According to their replies, most of the elected executives were not thorough about replacing persons who had worked for the previous administration. Even the two minority party officials said they did not fire all past employees. One said he retained nearly one-half of the professional staff and retained all but two of the secretaries who wanted to stay. The only person he hired as a reward for helping in his campaign, he stated, was his personal secretary. He said he even hired one person who had actively campaigned for his opponent. The other minority official said he fired only two or three people who were obviously tied to the previous administration. He did say he brought in several new people, however.

An official serving his third term recalled that he replaced only the "deadbeats" when he first took office. Anyone "worthy of hire" he kept on the payroll. It did appear from the interviews that, as with Sorauf's findings, those employees who campaign hardest and retain the most loyalty to their employer are the ones most likely to be fired should a new official take office.

When the executives were questioned as to their expectations of campaign aid from employees, four said they expected it, three said they did not expect it and all admitted they would be happy to have it regardless. Most of them had not had an opportunity to test support,<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>The author had an opportunity to observe first hand the campaign activities expected of one executive's employees.

either because of no competition or because they were first term executives. One who had experienced a campaign did expect help and had used at least some employees to campaign. Another qualified the type of campaign activity he wanted his employees to engage in by saying that "word of mouth" campaigning is what he expects and that he would not let employees contribute to his campaign.

One official replied that his employees tell him they will campaign for him; he has had little opposition in campaigns. However, newspaper accounts in the early 1960's told of the employees of this official being required to campaign for the official's son who was running for state representative at the time. Thus it would seem this man was utilizing some patronage employees (at that time temporarily under the merit system) in a traditional way.

Elected executives may not be using patronage to its maximum benefit but it appears to be an important resource for them and one they do not neglect. The use of patronage employees as campaign managers or activists is important for some of the secondary officials. However, such activists are most likely to be replaced should their employer be defeated.

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The author had to research records in this office during the campaign and all employees wore special campaign uniforms. When casually asked about campaign activities, one employee said they did campaign and they were taking off work to man a booth for the incumbent at the state fair.



## Summary

The main findings of this chapter are related to Hypotheses IV and V. Hypothesis IV stated:

- IV. Patronage, even where it still exists, no longer fulfills the following functions for partisan organizations: 1) recruiting workers; 2) maintaining activists; 3) raising revenue for the treasury; 4) maintaining discipline in the organization.

The findings, when related to state public officials, excluding the governor, are mixed. The legislators and the secondary officials took a low-key approach in answering questions about patronage and campaign organization. That patronage does not mean that much to most of them must be accepted at face value, although it is possible many would like to project such an image to an interviewer.

Whereas the legislators generally played down the importance of patronage for nuclear and factional organizations, and where as they do not use it in the traditional manner there did seem to be some benefits to them. Although a majority of legislators are not concerned with past participation in campaigns as a basis for recommending someone for a job a bare majority did feel party affiliation was an important criterion for employment. This was more true for senators than representatives and for Republicans than Democrats. The latter finding demonstrates the unity of the minority party and the greater attention paid to organization by its officials, both public and associational. The Democratic party, despite increasing pressure of competition (although not on their own level), remains factionalized

and not as concerned with formal party organization. Although they did not demand campaign help, more legislators facing opposition received help than expected it, with the exception of senate Democrats. Much more is expected of senators' personal patronage . . . tag agents, county election board secretaries . . . and senators do not hesitate to fire tag agents who have openly campaigned for an opponent. Perhaps, at this level, more than any other, patronage is used in the traditional manner, although the many exceptions mentioned demonstrate that it is far from maximal use.

Elected executives had the greatest opportunity of any group interviewed (excluding governors) to build up campaign organizations through the use of patronage, since all employees (except in the Corporation Commission and rank and file employees in the State Department of Public Instruction) are patronage. They did not appear to be using patronage in a maximal manner, although sometimes employees were used for campaign purposes. Perhaps more than anything else these officials desired loyalty from their employees; this would certainly mean employees were not to campaign for the opposition. Thus, for public officials as for party officials Hypothesis IV could be said to hold true, although less so for public officials.

Hypothesis V states:

- V. A loss of patronage from passage of a merit system with Hatch Act provisions will be perceived as less significant by county chairmen of the majority party than by its governmental officeholders.

Hypothesis V was not upheld in this chapter. Of course, it did not apply to secondary officials whose employees are purely patronage. For legislators for whom the question was relevant, however, the perception of the loss of patronage was less than it was for party officials. There were a variety of reasons for such a stance ranging from the notion that they had never had any patronage in the first place to the fact that there are many more state employees today and legislators can still exert influence, particularly when employees pass the merit examination.

## CHAPTER VIII

### PATRONAGE AND STATUS MAINTENANCE

Thomas Page and Joseph Tucker discovered that, in Illinois and other states, patronage was not fulfilling its traditional functions.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, they observed an attitude prevalent among county chairmen that patronage was important to them. The Illinois chairmen demonstrated their attachment for patronage by concerted efforts to modify civil service legislation in order to produce more patronage jobs.

Both Page and Tucker pointed out an explanation for this paradox: although patronage was of only minor usefulness to the party, it could be of direct benefit to the chairman himself, in so far as it might enhance his status. That is, having job seekers come to him and ask for his help in gaining patronage positions would clearly demonstrate his power and importance, especially if he was able to get the jobs for them.

Gump found in Ohio a similar discrepancy between the usefulness of patronage for the party in the traditional sense and the desire of county chairmen to see it preserved.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Page, "Merit and Patronage in State Manpower Systems"; Joseph Tucker, "A Functional Analysis of Political Patronage in Nine Illinois Counties".

<sup>2</sup>W. Robert Gump, "A Functional Analysis of Patronage: The Case of Ohio".

attitude of most chairmen was either that patronage contributed to party success or that it was at least a part of their responsibility as chairman. Gump's interpretation of his data was that the chairmen believed patronage is important.<sup>3</sup> Gump did not view their feelings as an indication that patronage was important primarily as a status-maintaining device, however. As an alternative explanation, Gump suggested that since local parties are so very weak, any incentive to further party work is important, particularly a few appointments to the county election board.

Neither of these explanations are adequate to describe the situation in Oklahoma. The associational leaders' role in patronage has traditionally been weak. (Republicans, it is true, are more party-oriented than Democrats but it would be false to claim that Republican county chairmen have a strong role in patronage decision-making.) Both explanations may have some value when applied to legislators and elected executives. Governors have the most reasons for retaining patronage, as it has many uses for them; these will be discussed in chapter nine.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Hypothesis

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<sup>3</sup>It would seem to this author that Gump is stretching the point a bit. From his data it might be possible to draw the conclusion that patronage was not viewed as important by many of the chairmen and that, on the other hand, a sizeable percentage felt it was a status-maintaining device. Thirty-five percent of the Republicans and 54.5 percent of the Democrats said patronage helped maintain the chairman's position and influence. Also, 22 percent of the Republicans and 12 percent of the Democrats perceived patronage as troublesome and little benefit (15 percent total).

VI relative to patronage and status-maintenance which states:

- VI. For party chairmen, legislators, governor and other elected executives, patronage will be desired as a means of maintaining status in regard to their constituency.

County Party Chairmen and Patronage  
as a Status Indicator

It has been demonstrated that Oklahoma party chairmen have little chance to participate in patronage decisions. This varies from county to county according to such factors as the traditions of the area, the personality of the chairman (does he want to seek patronage and use it?) the characteristics of his constituency, (are there too few people in the county or does the wealth of the county make state jobs unsatisfactory, etc.?), and his relationship with elected officials (does he know the governor personally, was he selected by the state senator to be party chairman, and does he have a working relationship with county commissioners, etc.?). Just how important chairmen consider patronage to be in relation to their job is shown in the next table.

In Ohio much greater inter-party differences were found for a similar question. However, there were some inter-party differences in the above responses.

Fifty-four or 65 percent of the chairmen thought patronage was not too important in their job. This is a sizeable number and may be indicative of the county chairman's weak role in patronage decision-making.

A few tenure differences were noticeable in the

TABLE 19

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE DISTRIBUTION OF PATRONAGE TO THE  
PERFORMANCE OF YOUR JOB AS COUNTY CHAIRMAN?

	Republicans	Democrats	Total
Very important	8 (18.2%)	6 (15.4%)	14 (16.9%)
Important	8 (18.2%)	4 (10.3%)	12 (14.5%)
Not too important	27 (61.3%)	27 (69.3%)	54 (65%)
Not relevant or no answer	1 (2.3%)	2 (5.2%)	3 (3.6%)

answers. The longer a Democratic chairman had served, the more likely he was to feel patronage was very important to his job; no Democratic chairman with one year or less service thought patronage was very important and ten or 91 percent thought it unimportant. Democratic chairmen serving two-to-four years were divided more evenly, though still favoring unimportance. Tenure also made a difference in replies of Republicans. One explanation to serving longer terms and getting to appreciate patronage more is that those recruited under the new volunteer politics have a different basis of support while those recruited ten or more years ago depended then on patronage and still see it as important. Thus, for both parties, a tendency exists for chairmen to regard patronage as more important to their job the longer they hold office.

Several chairmen included comments with their answers.

The strongest was from a Republican county chairman in a swing county. Supposedly, this area has one of the strongest patronage traditions in the state.<sup>4</sup> This chairman remarked, "Without patronage I cannot function as an effective county chairman." Two other Republicans who stressed the importance of patronage qualified their answers with the phrases, "if handled right", and "strictly in the interest of the best qualified for best service." Some Republicans who said patronage was important made comments emphasizing that patronage would be important if they had more of it. They felt either there was not much patronage for anyone or for Republicans in particular. One Republican chairman who believed patronage was unimportant commented, "Patronage has had nothing to do with the performance of my job."

One Democrat strongly stated his sentiments on the importance of patronage to his job: "Without patronage there would be no party activity." Such a statement was the exception, however, as most were more low key in their approach. Some Democrats replied they had little to do with patronage; another said, "I'm just not that interested."

Thus about 35 percent of the chairmen felt that patronage is important or very important for their job, and this attitude is more likely if they have served longer terms. For a majority it is not considered important to

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<sup>4</sup>A personnel officer in one department stated, "Back in the old days in \_\_\_\_\_ County, if you didn't have a state job, you didn't have a job."



their job as county chairman.

The county chairmen were then asked their opinion of how important patronage is to the party.

TABLE 20

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF  
PATRONAGE TO THE PARTY?

	Republicans	Democrats	Total
Very important	17 (38.6%)	14 (35.9%)	31 (37.3%)
Important	7 (15.9%)	9 (23.1%)	16 (19.3%)
Not too important	20 (45.4%)	16 (41%)	36 (43.3%)

There is a shift of nearly 20 percent in the direction of importance from the previous table to this one. Many more chairmen perceived patronage as important to the party rather than to themselves in their role as county chairmen. The explanation for this disparity is not obvious but perhaps it can be explained in terms of the sustaining myth of the importance of patronage. On a general level, i.e., the party, they may believe the myth but on a specific level, i.e., themselves as county chairmen, they know the myth is inaccurate. For others, an explanation may be that patronage benefits the party in different ways than it might benefit them as chairmen. It might be thought to benefit the campaign nucleus rather than the associational leader.

Inter-party differences again were not major although

the Republicans tended to feel that patronage was less important to the party than did the Democrats. Again, tenure was a factor in responses but more so for Democrats than Republicans. Chairmen with longer years of service were more likely to view patronage as important or very important to the party.

Comments of chairmen showed that they felt patronage could be important as a reward for party workers. Such remarks from Republicans were as follows: "Party regulars do expect patronage consideration"; "provides a means whereby good and qualified party workers may be rewarded over their Democratic party counterparts"; "People work, as a rule for what they hope will be profitable".

Chairmen who were personally interviewed had opinions similar to those revealed by the questionnaire. They generally believed patronage was not important to them as chairmen but was important to the party. One Democratic chairman stated patronage "generates energy, enthusiasm, funds and self-interest." It apparently had not done so for him since he did not have any patronage. A Republican chairman voiced the opinion, more common for Republicans than Democrats, that the in-party want governmental jobs filled by people who support their views and embody the actual feelings and attitudes of the party in power. Another Republican said, "Government should be responsive to the people", and that he felt patronage helped make it so.

If state patronage is relatively unimportant to the

county chairmen, is patronage at other levels of government assuming its place?<sup>5</sup> Such a question was asked of chairmen.

TABLE 21

DO YOU FIND COUNTY PATRONAGE MORE OR LESS  
USEFUL THAN STATE PATRONAGE?

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	Republicans	Democrats	Total
More useful	11 (25%)	18 (46.2%)	29 (34.9%)
Less useful	11 (25%)	10 (25.7%)	21 (25.3%)
Don't know or no answer	15 (34.1%)	6 (15.4%)	21 (25.4%)
None useful (this category not included in questionnaire)	7 (15.9%)	5 (12.8%)	12 (14.5%)

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Nearly a majority of Democrats believed county patronage to be more useful than state patronage (as compared with one-fourth of the Republicans); however, over one-third of the Republicans did not answer this question. This finding conforms with the political reality that Democrats maintain a firm majority of county offices in Oklahoma (see chapter three) and all such offices operate on a patronage basis. Perhaps Democrats gain more benefit from local patronage since the merit system poses restrictions on the state level. One-fourth of both Democrats and Republicans found

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<sup>5</sup>Unfortunately, chairmen were not asked if another reward or incentive was taking the place of patronage.

patronage less useful at the county level, perhaps because of the lower salaries for jobs at this level. Fewer new Republican chairmen felt that county patronage was less useful . . . 5 percent of these chairmen compared with 55 percent of the chairmen serving five years or more. The new chairmen were likely to find it useful.

Comments from chairmen were generally negative, particularly from Republicans: "Have not been able to get anybody a county job"; "Republicans have never had any in \_\_\_\_\_ County so I wouldn't know"; "County Commissioners who can build a machine of workers benefit". One Democrat echoed the latter comment saying, "County patronage is useful only to the elected official they are working for."

Chairmen were questioned as to the importance of federal patronage relative to state patronage. Interparty similarities were noticeable although more Republicans than Democrats thought federal patronage was less useful than state; this is interesting in light of the national Republican administration at the time of the questionnaire together with the presence of a Republican senator in the state.

Tenure differences were evident for the Democrats but not for the Republicans. Democrats who had served longer believed federal patronage was more useful than did new Democratic chairmen; they were more likely to have served under a Democratic administration.

Thus, for the majority of county chairmen patronage does not appear to have a status-maintaining value, as the

TABLE 22

DO YOU FIND FEDERAL PATRONAGE MORE OR LESS USEFUL  
THAN STATE PATRONAGE?

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	Republicans	Democrats	Total
More useful	11 (25%)	12 (30.9%)	23
Less useful	18 (41.8%)	12 (30.9%)	30
Don't know or no answer	11 (25%)	11 (28.2%)	22
None useful (not a category on the question- naire)	4 (8.2%)	4 (10.3%)	8

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chairmen perceive it. Twice as many county chairmen believe patronage is very important for the party as believed patronage is very important for the county chairman. Chairmen view patronage as important for the party in promoting party activism, as a right of the "in" party, and as an aid in policy-making. Also, a majority of county chairmen felt that state patronage was no less important than county or federal patronage although nearly half of the Democrats felt county patronage was more useful.

#### Legislators and Usefulness of Patronage

Since Oklahoma legislators, especially senators, are involved with patronage, it is important to consider their attitudes concerning the usefulness of patronage. As seen in chapter seven, legislators do not necessarily get the maximum advantage from the use of patronage in building

and sustaining a campaign organization, but many employ it to reward qualified party members or campaign helpers. This is similar to findings in Ohio concerning party chairmen.

While some observers interviewed spoke of the great interest legislators had in patronage . . . similar to what Waldby described . . . others said legislators had never been as concerned with patronage as popularly believed. Actions may speak louder than words: the fact that there have been legislative attempts to amend or delete merit legislation, plus the interest shown by legislators in the departments and agencies on personnel matters, indicates that for some legislators at least, the distribution of patronage or, at least, the ability to help constituents obtain jobs, is still an important facet of their legislative career.

In an interview one legislator remarked that sometimes patronage provides "eyes and ears" for legislators. What he meant was that some senators and representatives cultivate acquaintances in departments in order to obtain information concerning departmental operations. This is facilitated if the legislator has aided persons in the department in obtaining their employment. In addition, senators from outside metropolitan areas particularly, spend considerable effort at the capitol during interim discussing with their contacts in departments problems about departmental activities and about problems of their constituents with that particular department. The legislator interviewed

believed urban legislators do not spend as much time on such tasks.

Legislators were asked what they considered their part, as legislators, should be in the state personnel process.

TABLE 23

SHOULD LEGISLATORS HAVE A ROLE IN OBTAINING  
JOBS FOR CONSTITUENTS?

	Representatives (sample)		Senators (all)	
	Repub.	Demo.	Repub.	Demo.
Yes	3 (42.8%)	7 (35%)	4 (44.4%)	27 (71%)
No	4 (57.2%)	11 (55%)	5 (55.5%)	11 (29%)
No answer	--	2 (20%)	--	--

The Republicans in both houses were almost evenly divided on this question with the majority answering in the negative. House Democrats showed the least agreement with the statement. However, nearly 3/4 of the senate Democrats believed legislators should have influence in the personnel process. Since this is the group that has allegedly been the most patronage-oriented, it is not surprising that they should view this as integral to their role.

Legislators who responded positively often qualified their response. One Democrat senator said "Legislators should have a say so about who's employed in their area

but not make wholesale changes"; yes, "but should just recommend if a good score on the exam"; "should distribute to those who deserve and actually need it". Several legislators mentioned that their position enables them to be "closer to the people" or to "know the people" better than the agencies. Others feel their aid eliminates bureaucratic "red tape". One responded that it is "all part of being a legislator". On the other hand one legislator said, "legislators should legislate". Two more voiced the opinion that they should not serve as personnel managers. Others mentioned that they did not want to be involved because departments could blame their problems on hiring personnel under pressure from legislators. Some legislators responding negatively simply said "don't want it" or "should be left to heads of departments".

Considering the contacts departmental representatives reported from legislators concerning personnel, a sizeable number of legislators, whether they think they do or not, sometimes attempt to influence personnel decisions even if it is simply to put in a good word for a constituent who scores high on the exam. On the other hand, some legislators apparently want to minimize their role in personnel decision-making. As one senator said, (the) "merit system has taken an ugly thing off my back . . . I'm tickled to death to be rid of it." Others from silk-stocking districts, for example, simply are not asked by constituents for help in getting jobs.

Although 70 percent of the Democratic senators



believed they should participate in personnel decisions concerning constituents, their attitudes are nearly reversed on the question of patronage's usefulness for themselves. Answers of senate Republicans are similar to the previous question; again negative responses accounted for approximately 55 percent of interviewees. House Republicans, however, were unanimous in their belief that patronage was not useful for them.

TABLE 24

HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE THE USEFULNESS OF  
PATRONAGE TO LEGISLATORS?

	Representatives (sample)		Senators (all)	
	Repub.	Demo.	Repub.	Demo.
Very useful	--	2 (10%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (2.6%)
Useful	--	6 (30%)	2 (22.2%)	8 (21%)
Not too useful	7 (100%)	11 (55%)	5 (55.5%)	28 (73.6%)
No answer	--	1 (5%)	--	1 (2.6%)

The main reasons for the negative responses were the difficulties, headaches, and nuisance factors of patronage. Nineteen of the legislators echoed a sentiment which varied only in the number they used; for example "for every job you fill you have ten (fifteen, twenty, etc.) applicants . . . you make one happy and nine mad and you can't convince the nine they weren't qualified." The legislators did not report

enough job applicants coming to them to anger many people, (most said under 25 per year) but apparently it is enough to cause the legislators to comment on it.

The author asked one ex-legislator with many years service if it was true that often several persons were angered when one person received the job. He said that it was a fact. But obtaining a job for a constituent was merely the first step; the constituent would later return to inquire about raises; the last step was for the legislator to help obtain promotions or possibly somebody else's job. "Then 50 percent or more of those you got jobs for were mad because you couldn't come through on other things." It is no small wonder that some legislators admitted they were happy to have the merit system take the "monkey off their backs".

Some legislators noted patronage was less important since state merit employees were politically restricted: "Once a person receives a job they're out of circulation politically." Another legislator noted that the changing economic situation has made a difference in the value of patronage jobs: "People could lose the average state job today and get a better paying one in private industry." When that is the case the coercive value of patronage is diminished.

The legislators admitted patronage was useful to them because state employees donated money to their campaign. One Democratic senator observed, on a "limited basis it

[patronage] serves some purpose . . . it serves as a campaign nucleus and this is all I'd care for." This latter statement is particularly interesting since this is just the reason Mr. Gump advanced to explain how patronage was useful for county chairmen in Ohio. It also is consistent with the nuclear concept of party organization.

Thus, legislators (mainly Democratic senators) desire some influence over state jobs but believe that generally patronage is little help to them personally and often a nuisance.

As did party chairmen, legislators felt that patronage is more useful for the party than for themselves. Perhaps in both cases it is easier to perceive benefits on a more general level than a specific one; they see disadvantages to themselves from personal experience. For the party, however, they are more apt to feel patronage is useful.

A majority of legislators believe patronage useful or very useful for the party; many are moderate rather than superlative in their description. It is interesting that 1/3 of the senate Democrats did not consider it of use to the party, even though this comprises half the number considering it of no use to themselves.

Three of the Democrats said patronage was only useful for the governor. Responses from several legislators were that patronage is useful for rewarding hard workers and generating party activity: the motto, "to the victor belongs the spoils" was quoted by some. A Republican

TABLE 25

HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE THE USEFULNESS OF  
PATRONAGE TO THE PARTY?

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	Representatives ( <i>sample</i> )		Senators ( <i>all</i> )	
	Repub.	Demo.	Repub.	Demo.
Very useful	--	6 (30%)	1 (11.1%)	8 (21%)
Useful	6 (85.7%)	12 (60%)	7 (77.8%)	18 (47.3%)
Not too useful	1 (14.3%)	2 (10%)	1 (11.1%)	13 (34%)

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mentioned the usefulness of patronage to implement the party's platform; another said that the prestige of the party is improved if you appoint good people. As did Republican county chairmen, Republican legislators appeared more aware of those particular benefits of patronage. A Republican governor following years of Democratic dominance undoubtedly heightened their sensitivity. There were four legislators who, when responding to this question, said the merit system weakened the Democratic party and possibly contributed to Republican victory in 1962.

## Elected Executives and Status Maintenance

Only one of Oklahoma's elected executives would have liked to eliminate the patronage system from his department, thus giving up his prerogative to choose his own employees. That this official was a first-term Republican may be of note. He evidently was not viewing personal patronage as a means

of building his campaign nucleus. He was not re-elected in 1970.

The newly elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction requested and received legislation exempting the policy-makers in his department from the merit system. His rationale was that he needed policy-making control since he was elected state-wide and was responsible to all the people for his administration. All other positions in his department remain under the merit system.

The other executive department which has been placed under merit is apparently content to continue. Since the law was passed in 1968, no obvious withdrawal attempts have been made by the Corporation Commissioners. The commissioner interviewed appeared satisfied with the system although he implied that senators were still able to exert pressure over personnel in his department. Certain commission employees were accused or did accuse others of campaign activities on behalf of the incumbent commissioner in 1970.

Other elected executives want to retain control over the hiring of their employees. When interviewed they failed to mention disadvantages of patronage. They emphasized the positive side especially as compared with what they described as a rigidity and lack of freedom for department heads under the merit system.

The merit law of 1959 placed all elected state executives except the governor under the merit system. As described in chapter four, two of the executives who wanted to

remain outside the system appealed to the courts. Ultimately the courts decided against the executives; however, in 1961, new merit legislation removed the executives from the merit system.

One official stated that he liked the flexibility of not being under a merit system . . . he had fired a girl the morning of the interview. Of course, he did not believe in firing people "just for their politics." He wanted his employees to be loyal to him, not working against him. This he felt, is best attained by patronage.

Another official, having had experience with the merit system in 1960, was of the opinion it was difficult for elective officials to be under a merit system. For example, he said that merit employees could "talk back" and this kind of behavior he did not like.

The other officials interviewed, with one exception, preferred selection of their employees, particularly because of their elective status. They considered that part of their job should be the right to choose their own employees. Thus, it would appear that for this group, more than any other, patronage serves as a status-maintaining device, at least in the officials' eyes. In addition, it provides some campaign assistance.

#### Other Uses of Patronage

Gump lists eight uses of patronage: 1) status maintenance for chairmen; 2) influencing voters in primary

elections; 3) and 4) group recognition through racial and religious recognition; 5) incentive and reward for central committeemen; 6) stimulation of campaign effort by jobholders and jobseekers; 7) fund raising; and 8) sustenance of the nucleus of the party's organization and communication network.

Nearly all of these were mentioned by interviewees and respondents in Oklahoma (with the exception of group recognition) as uses of patronage. Other uses were also discussed. Republicans, particularly, were concerned with patronage as a device in maintaining policy-making responsibility and continuity from department to department for the governor and the party. One Republican senator said, "Elected officials can't handle the day to day work of implementing policies so they need loyal assistants and people with like political views." The best method to find such people would not be through the merit system but through patronage, it was felt.

Others in both parties mentioned patronage as a vote-getting device by demonstrating efficient administration. Their opinion was that if competent persons are appointed it would reflect favorably on the party, the legislators, or the executives. Thus, quality appointments supposedly pay off in votes. This was true for lower level appointments as well as upper level ones: Republicans were concerned that good census workers be appointed so that a good job of census collection would reflect credit on the

Republican party.

These types of benefits - loyalty, ideological similarity, quality appointments - appeal to middle-class voter orientation. At a time when patronage is not providing traditional benefits to its maximum degree, these advantages appear important reasons to interviewees for continuing patronage appointments.

#### Summary

The evidence in support of Hypothesis VI is mixed.

Hypothesis VI stated:

- VI. For party chairmen, legislators, governors and other elected executives, patronage will be desired as a means of maintaining status in regard to their constituency.

It was found that patronage was not considered useful by party chairmen and legislators for themselves but is definitely considered important by secondary officials. The majority of legislators, particularly senate Democrats, believed helping constituents obtain state jobs was a part of their role as legislators. Both party chairmen and legislators perceive disadvantages of patronage for themselves although they place a higher value on the importance of patronage for the party. Whether this is due to their belief in the continuing myth of patronage's traditional usefulness, to their perception of new uses of patronage, or simply to greater candor when talking about the party rather than themselves, is difficult to judge. Elected state executives want to continue patronage since for them



it is a status-maintaining device, a way to control employees and implement policy and somewhat useful in serving as a campaign organization base.

The significance of determining whether patronage is considered important by both party and public officials may be as follows: for county chairmen without the power and prestige of public officials, any aspect of decision-making which symbolizes power, such as sanction over jobs, may be an incentive to help keep them in their job. Patronage dispensation has many disadvantages for public officials which may outweigh the advantage of what appears to constituents to be power. The gratitude of the constituent who has been helped can be beneficial, however.

If an official believes patronage is not important, he may not use it or seek it out. On the other hand, those who have used it and found it was not helpful may feel it is not important. Thus, attitudes may affect action and vice versa. Generally we can not determine from the available data which is more important in this circular process. However, the fact that attitudes of county chairmen became more positive toward patronage the longer they had served, may show that over the years chairmen used patronage to some degree and found it useful. It may also show that those chairmen more adept at the use of organizational incentives such as patronage were more apt to survive.

If patronage is too much of a nuisance for legislators, they may spend the least amount of time possible

on it. Advantages would seem to need to outweigh disadvantages for legislators to actively seek it out. On the other hand, the legislator's district may be such (low-income, many welfare cases) that it is important to the legislator's survival that he try for jobs, if the legislator either wants to remain in his position or move up the ladder.

The effect of changing party competition on patronage attitudes of officials is not obvious, since inter-party differences were not always great. One could conjecture that in the face of increasing competition a chairman might feel patronage is more important to the party than to himself. This was the case for both parties. It might also be expected that, for minority party chairmen, increasing competition would produce a better self-image since the party organization is building. This was found to be so to a limited extent; slightly more Republicans than Democrats believed patronage was important to their job. But Republicans, by a slight margin, also believed patronage was not as important to the party as did Democrats. Democratic chairmen, traditionally weak compared to public officials, still feel patronage is important to the party organization and more so than to themselves. If the Democrats begin to believe that a strong formal organization can aide the nuclear organizations in competing with the other party we may expect chairmen to view it as more important to themselves. The main effect of changing

competition is that the questions asked to the chairmen and Republican legislators were at least relevant to them in 1970 whereas in 1960 they would not have been for the state level.

## CHAPTER IX

### OKLAHOMA GOVERNORS AND PATRONAGE

In previous chapters, this study has shown the varying degrees of importance patronage holds for some Oklahoma state elected officials, such as state senators and secondary officials. However, the importance of patronage to Oklahoma governors dwarfs its usefulness for these other officials. For Oklahoma governors, past and present, patronage is an important tool which helps them overcome the limitations of their office and aids them in carrying out their programs. In this section we extend the analysis of the previous chapter in respect to Hypothesis VI which stated:

- VI. For party chairmen, legislators, governors and other elected executives, patronage will be desired as a means of maintaining status in regard to their constituency.

In addition, the hypotheses relating to the usefulness of patronage for officials and the perception of the loss of patronage after the 1959 merit system passage will be discussed in relation to governors. The latter point is put in the form of a more specific hypothesis relating to the governor and the legislature and this, Hypothesis VII, states:

- VII. If patronage has diminished for the governor, his influence with the legislature will have been reduced.

### The Governor's Powers and Patronage

The Oklahoma governor operates under numerous legal and constitutional restrictions. Among these factors weakening the governor's control and hindering the accountability of his administration are the following: the inability to appoint directly many department heads; the number of elected executives with whom he shares power; a loose and cumbersome administrative structure; and the requirement that many appointments be confirmed by the senate. On the other hand, the informal powers of the governor are such that he can greatly enhance his leadership role by their astute utilization. For example, although he cannot appoint directly certain department heads, the board or commission responsible for the appointment traditionally follows the governor's wishes. For Democrats, the traditional informal role of party leader has contributed much to the formal power of Democratic governors.

The power of appointment is, of course, a formal power which chief executives possess. Appointments serve many purposes in addition to granting the governor some control over his administration.<sup>1</sup> One purpose which the appointment power may serve is to promote the governor's position as leader of his party. For governors in one-party states this has not been as important as for those in two-party states (for

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<sup>1</sup>James Q. Wilson and Daniel Moynihan, "Patronage in New York State", pp. 286-301. They discuss the uses of patronage for governors.

example, the Averril Harriman administration in New York State, 1951-1955). Still, by appointing personnel of his own party, especially campaign workers, the governor rewards past work and provides incentive for future campaigns in the party. And by obtaining clearance of party officials a governor acknowledges the leadership of party officials which hopefully will help him consolidate his position as party leader. In relation to his own nuclear campaign organization, as opposed to formal party organization, appointments of the governor should reward past workers and build for the future.<sup>2</sup> Through appointments which recognize racial, religious, professional or other special groups and areas of the state (geographical distribution of patronage is quite important for Oklahoma governors), the governor may win the support of these groups. The ability to make appointments also allows the governor to reward those who have been loyal to him, regardless of party or group. And by this power, he can place in responsible positions persons with philosophies of government and administration similar to his own.

Perhaps a governor's most important use of patronage is to be able to reward constituents of legislators (or occasionally legislators themselves) thus, enhancing his

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<sup>2</sup>The Oklahoma governor could not succeed himself until 1970. However, governors have run for U. S. Senate seats (Edmondson, Bellmon and Bartlett being recent examples) or run for reelection to the governorship after one intervening term. Thus, a potential campaign organization is often important.

bargaining power with the legislators.<sup>3</sup> Legislators want to obtain positions for constituents (other than opponents), and thus, the governor does the legislator a favor by appointing them. Also, as one legislator pointed out, when the governor appoints bankers, doctors, advertising men, etc. to honorary boards and commissions, he obtains powerful political allies in communities throughout the state. A legislator may well feel apprehensive about such "political muscle" of the governor: such men are opinion leaders in their communities and at the governor's urging could do serious damage to a legislator's campaign for reelection.

Of course, the governor's power to make appointments can also be a political liability, as was true for the legislators (see chapter eight). Those persons who expect but do not receive appointment may be angered by what they consider is non-recognition of their campaign assistance. Such persons may feel they are qualified to hold an important appointment when in fact they are not qualified. This was mentioned as a problem by an ex-gubernatorial aide.

There is a delicate balance between the governor and the legislature on appointments as on other matters; this is

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<sup>3</sup>Two examples of appointments of legislators are the following: Governor Edmondson appointed Clint Livingston, then Speaker of the House, as Commissioner of the State Insurance Fund. Livingston subsequently resigned from the legislature. (The Daily Oklahoman, August 20, 1959). Representative Sparks, Chairman of the House Committee on Higher Education, resigned his job as Executive Secretary of the Oklahoma Motor Vehicle Commission under fire. The Attorney General ruled he could hold the position but could receive no salary for it during the legislative session. (The Daily Oklahoman, July 1, 1963).

a consequence of the basic system of checks and balances and representation of different constituencies. Each holds certain elements of power which can limit or check the others; on the other hand, if they cooperate, much can be accomplished. On some personnel matters, the senators have the greater influence, but the governor holds the predominant power in most cases. For example, senate confirmation of gubernatorial appointments is normally a routine matter. Nevertheless, both Democratic and Republican governors have experienced occasional difficulties with senate confirmations.

Another explanation for tensions and cooperation between governor and legislators on personnel matters is provided by Schlesinger's theory of party organization.<sup>3</sup> At the electoral phase of organization in the multinuclear party some nuclei are enclaves or sections or a larger nucleus. Such is the case with legislators' districts which are enclaves of the gubernatorial nucleus. When both larger and enclaved constituency are one-party (as has been the case with Oklahoma Democratic governors and most southern Oklahoma legislative districts) there is no interdependence between the two at the electoral phase. Whether or not this affects cooperation at the governmental phase depends on other factors, such as ambition level of the legislator and nature of his district. When the larger office is

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<sup>3</sup>Joseph A. Schlesinger, "Political Party Organization", particularly pp. 786-797.



competitive and the enclaved constituency is one-party then the larger office is dependent on the smaller. Thus, Republican governors are more dependent on the electoral phase on northern Republican legislators representing solid Republican majorities and now, it would seem, Democratic governors should be more dependent on those legislators representing solid Democratic majorities. These factors alone would not affect the gubernatorial-legislative relationship on personnel matters so much were it not for the different ambition levels of the legislators (and the governors) and the nature of the constituency. If ambition is discrete (legislator doesn't plan to run again) then he may feel no reason to cooperate on any matter; if ambition is static, (legislator has no further political ambitions than remaining a legislator) he may have more pressure to cooperate with others if his district is competitive, or his party is the minority in his district or if his district is such (low-income, high percentage of welfare recipients, long tradition of patronage and thus, state jobs are considered attractive) that he may be more responsive to governor's patronage offers. When ambition is progressive and the legislator wants to obtain leadership roles in the legislative body, desires to run for higher office or "if he wants to be able to exert influence within the executive to provide incentives within his own organization"<sup>4</sup> (which would include

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<sup>4</sup>Schlesinger, "Political Party Organization," p. 793.

those of patronage) then pressure is much greater to cooperate. Thus, one could perhaps predict which legislators would be most likely to cooperate with the governor on personnel matters (aside from the fact that usually this is a routine matter) or with whom the governor would have more possibility of bargaining over patronage matters if one knew the ambition level of the legislator and competitiveness of the district. Unfortunately for this analysis, these factors remain unknown.

The changing competitive nature of the two parties has been felt more keenly at the gubernatorial level than at any other. If for any state office changing party competition has had an impact on patronage policies it would seem to be this one.

Increasing party competition, it is surmised, would induce greater gubernatorial concern for obtaining clearance for many positions through formal party lines. Governor Harriman in making appointments in New York State "operate(d) through the official party leadership exclusively in developing channels for handling patronage."<sup>5</sup> This was far from the case in Oklahoma prior to 1962.

Another change brought about by competition might be a new variable in any conflicts between governor and the senate over appointments . . . the variable of party label. With the governorship and control of the senate divided

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<sup>5</sup>Judson Lehman James, "The Loaves and the Fishes: New York State Patronage, 1951-1955," p. 75.

between the two parties, persons may be nominated and accepted or rejected partially on the basis of party label; heretofore conflicts were factional, between the governor and the old guard, for example.

One might expect appointments made under conditions of increasing competition to be more voter-serving than previously. Governor Harriman was most concerned about appointing persons who would readily obtain approval of voters and concerned interest groups. Faced with increasing competition Oklahoma governors seemingly would seek appointees attractive to the voters and pleasing to interest groups (although these may conflict at certain points).

Thus, it is hypothesized that the uses of patronage by Oklahoma governors would change in response to changing party competition. For Republicans with no history of gubernatorial patronage, patronage could be used to build Republican representation, to reward and build the gubernatorial nucleus and the formal party organization, to attract voters and interest groups, and to strengthen the governor's own position in an intra-factional fight. Whether a shift toward greater organization or any other change in style has occurred in the Democratic party will be examined in this chapter.

A description of the governor's use of patronage in the period before the state merit system was adopted has been presented in chapter four. In this period, jobs were often awarded on the basis of whether or not a legislative

"sponsor" deserved another jobholder. "Deserving a job holder" meant that the legislator's voting record was satisfactory to the governor. Governors varied in the extent to which they used this technique and in its effectiveness as a means of persuading legislators. Reportedly, Leon Phillips and Raymond Gary were the governors most adept at managing this leadership tool.

In light of the above situation, and considering the importance Highsaw, Sorauf and others have assigned to patronage for southern governors, it would seem likely that the introduction of the merit system would drastically reduce the power of Oklahoma governors. Although most important policy-making positions are untouched by the system, it does cover most of the rank-and-file positions which previously could be dispensed as political plums to favored legislators.

It is the purpose of this chapter to determine how much the governor's influence over the legislature has been reduced by the merit system's elimination of patronage jobs, as well as how the changing party system has affected the governors' uses of patronage. The governors' perceptions of patronage in the post-merit system period are also explored.

#### Effect of Reduction of Patronage on Governors

A study has been made of the Kentucky political system which is very similar to that of Oklahoma. In Kentucky,

most state jobs were covered by the merit law of 1960 except the usual exempt positions and several rank-and-file jobs in the highway department. Kentucky governors had used jobs for legislative bargaining power much as had the Oklahoma governors. Yet, in Kentucky, the merit system by no means dealt a death blow to the effective use of patronage by the governor.

The governor has fewer jobs to distribute and less freedom in authorizing state projects than he once had, but he is still the only one to whom legislators can turn for various kinds of patronage. If the currency of patronage has been devalued, it is still being minted only in the governor's office.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, in Kentucky the effect of the merit system on the governor's legislative relations did not appear too significant.

Politicians interviewed about this situation in Oklahoma view the patronage reduction in different ways but generally feel it has been a liability for Oklahoma governors; this is more true for Democratic spokesmen than for Republicans. It should be pointed out that, just because a job is classified under the merit system does not mean that governors or others can not influence appointments. It does mean, however, that even if influence is exerted, the person who obtains a merit job is not free to repay the debt with the currency of campaign activism.

One interviewee stated that the merit system had

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<sup>6</sup>Malcolm Jewell and Everett Cunningham, Kentucky Politics, p. 237. These authors include governmental favors other than jobs as part of their definition of patronage.

reduced the governor's effectiveness since probably he could never obtain as much control over the legislature as before. This man also believed it had weakened the governors position as party leader and also his financial strength, by cutting down on contributions from lower state employees. However, this political observer also felt that, in general, patronage had been weakened by the reduction in demand for state jobs and a better economic picture.

One Democrat interviewed served as a legislator under seven governors. It was his belief that over the years the patronage drive from the governor's office had lessened. The drive was less intense in recent years than in the past, regardless of the presence or absence of a merit system. However, he felt the elimination of lower level jobs from patronage meant the governor had less power in the over-all picture. He remarked that previously the governor could make state appointments at the county and district level, which resulted in a closer relationship between the governor and the legislators.

Governors' aides disagreed over the effect of the loss of appointments on the governor but divided primarily on party lines. A Democrat believed the loss had made a difference to the governors, since the patronage power gave governors life or death power over legislators before the merit system. If the governor withheld patronage from a disloyal legislator, the legislators' constituents would wonder why he could not deliver jobs.

On the other hand, an aide to a Republican governor did not feel the merit system had limited the governor's effectiveness at all. Another believed the merit system was itself a great tool for politicians. The people who were not capable of holding a job could be eliminated if they could not pass the merit exam. But if one of the top three scorers on an exam campaigned actively for the governor that person could still be recommended by the governor's office for the job.

J. Howard Edmondson was the first governor to serve under the merit system although part of his administration was prior to it. In an interview he said patronage was not nearly as important in the governors' legislative relationship after the merit system as it was before. He believed more of his program could have passed if he had possessed more jobs to offer the senators.

The first Republican governor to serve under the merit system observed that it had had little effect as far as he could tell. However, this same governor tried to obtain passage of a law which would exempt all employees earning \$7,500 or more yearly (supposedly policy-making positions) from the merit system. (Not surprisingly, the Democratic legislature refused to pass such legislation for a Republican governor.) It would thus appear that the governor felt a need for more appointive positions . . . even though his administration recorded the largest number of appointments of any of the past five governors. (See

table 4, chapter four.) The governor stated in an interview that he believed top decision-makers were sometimes placed under the merit system, and he felt that such positions should be exempt. He did feel that the merit system had eliminated much work for him. Prospective employees inquiring about jobs were informed as to which were and which were not merit jobs. If it was a merit job it was out of the governor's hands.

The second Republican governor to serve Oklahoma felt it would not have been beneficial to him politically to have maintained control over the non-policy-making state jobs. He expressed the view that patronage influence over such positions did not lend itself to "professionalism, good government, stability and continuity." However, this governor was not legislatively-oriented on patronage matters. He said that he would consider recommendations of all people who had influence, including legislators. It should be added that this governor's program was not an aggressive one; one reporter said Governor Bartlett's main goals were not to "rock the boat" and to obtain industry for the state.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the governor had no pressing reasons to utilize patronage with legislators to any extent.

The Democratic governor elected in 1970 did not believe the merit system had limited him. However, this governor presented a controversial program to the legislature

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<sup>7</sup>Clarke Thomas, The Daily Oklahoman, January 5, 1969.



in 1971, primarily a substantial tax package (income tax and the first tax increase on oil and gas since the 1930's).

In order to obtain passage of such a tax program, the governor needed strong political bargaining tools, including patronage. The program passed narrowly, after considerable compromises were made.

The present governor's personnel officer maintains a file on each applicant for a state job who comes to his office. Some applicants' folders have red tabs on them which means a legislator or some other important person recommended him. The personnel officer perceives himself as performing a real service for the legislators as well as the governor. The officer said that qualifications of applicants - age, group, etc. - would be put on a card system so that when a merit or non-merit job opened the office could determine by this system which person fit the qualifications for the job. The senator and/or representative from the applicant's district would then be informed and could tell the applicant which test to take. Thus, the present system is a sophisticated up-dating of pre-merit gubernatorial personnel offices. As much control as possible is gained while at the same time the merit system can continue to operate. The personnel officer's comments were somewhat substantiated by a newspaper article reporting a memorandum passed to agency heads from the governor's office. It requested that notification be given the office of any job vacancy, including the title, description and salary of the job. If after

10 days no word was heard from the governor's office the department could fill the vacancy or eliminate the job. The rationale given for this memorandum was the governor's economy drive.<sup>8</sup> The merit system apparently has affected the present governor and he is trying to do what he can within the legalities of the system to obtain the bargaining power with legislators that he needs in order to pass his program.

The remarks made by the various governors and governors' aides present a mixed picture dividing somewhat along party lines. Republicans, never having possessed the benefit of rank and file appointments, do not perceive any real advantages to them of a straight patronage system. Democrats feel that the governor has been hurt in his legislative relationship as well as in other ways by the merit system, although they may also feel the merit system has its political assets.

#### Legislators' Views of the Governor's Power of Patronage

Another means of determining whether or not a decrease in patronage for lower jobs has lessened the governor's effectiveness in pushing his legislative program is to ask the legislators themselves what they believe. Several questions were asked to this purpose. First, legislators were asked if they knew of actual cases of bargaining between

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<sup>8</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, Summer, 1971.

Oklahoma governors and legislators using jobs as the currency of trade. If it could be determined that such bargaining happened more now than prior to the merit system, one would obtain concrete evidence of changes in governors' uses of patronage with the legislature.

It should be remembered that this is an area of questioning in which legislators might well avoid frank answers. There were so few legislators who either would admit to or honestly knew of trading of jobs for votes on legislation that the questions and answers lacked significance, but the results are presented as an indication that the practice is not unknown. Only five Democratic representatives, one Republican senator, and nine Democratic senators stated they knew of such instances. Three legislators said they knew of trading for votes, but that roads were the items traded rather than jobs. A few legislators remarked they did not know of trades happening except through rumour or hearsay. If the answers are taken at face value, it would appear that trading of jobs for votes has not been a common way to influence legislators in Oklahoma. Perhaps the question was too direct and did not lend itself to positive answers.

When asked if this situation had ever happened to them, only five senators said yes; no representative did so. One Republican and four Democrats were in this small group. Even there, indications were that this had happened only rarely to these individuals. In one instance a Republican

senator said a governor had offered one of the senator's constituents a position on the textbook committee if he would withdraw an amendment. A Democratic senator said he had used this device himself rather than the governor using it on him; he agreed to confirm a position if the governor would grant him a favor.

Surprisingly, when asked if trading was more common before the merit system, only two Democratic senators said yes. Four representatives (one Republican) and seven senators (three Republicans) believed it was less common prior to the merit system. Although the numbers are very small here, it would appear that in the eyes of legislators responding, the use of patronage in trading of votes had not necessarily decreased since the merit system. A Democratic senator said, one's "attitude toward being persuaded has more to do with it than the merit system ever did have."

Legislators were then asked if they felt the governor's position with respect to the legislature had been weakened by the decline in patronage. Only thirty-four of seventy-four legislators answered the question; the majority felt they did not have the experience to answer, not having served before the merit system (some did answer anyway). Of those who answered, responses of most groups were fairly evenly divided, although the majority felt the governor's position had not been weakened. Two Republican and four Democratic representatives said it had been weakened, whereas two Republican and six Democratic representatives said it

had not. Of the 47 senators questioned 19 answered the question; one Republican and five Democratic senators said the governors' position had been weakened and two Republicans and eleven Democratic senators said it had not been. Thus, it would appear that Democratic senators more than any other group felt most strongly that the governor had not been hurt by a decline in patronage . . . to what degree recent Republican control of the governorship influenced this statement cannot be determined. In all, twelve legislators perceived a weakening in the governors' position and twenty-two did not.

Many legislators remarked that the governor still has a great deal of patronage and that the legislators were the ones hurt by the decline in jobs. Thus, such statements as the "governor has patronage under the merit system and not the legislature" and the governor can "get around the merit system" were common. Two who said the governors' position had not weakened said so for different reasons, however. One legislator said that the "patronage element never entered into it (legislative relations); therefore it would not have any effect to take it away." Another stated that the governor "has other ways beside patronage (of influencing legislators) . . . bridges and roads; patronage does not mean a lot anymore." One commented that everyone's position was weakened since the merit system and not just the governors.

Thus, it would appear that, according to legislators,

particularly Democratic senators, the decrease in the number of appointments the governor can make since the merit system has not decreased the governor's influence with the legislature. He still has more top level appointments than before, and he can find ways to use the merit system should he desire.<sup>9</sup>

#### Governors' Appointments and Senate Confirmation

A look at the record of governors' appointment confirmations by the senate and general patronage matters (as presented in newspaper accounts) shows little evidence of a decline in governors' legislative influence due to the decrease of patronage. Many other factors would appear to be as important as patronage in the success or failure of a governor's program.

J. Howard Edmondson was elected by the largest margin ever accorded an Oklahoma governor: clearly a mandate from the people for his reform program. However, Edmondson was strongly opposed by the old guard legislators, and his program had rough going in spite of the mandate. Thus, Edmondson had to use many devices, among them patronage, to influence unsympathetic legislators.

Edmondson used patronage primarily in two ways: First, he used the FDR technique of holding back many important appointments until late in the session . . . May,

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<sup>9</sup> It should be said that the governors' use of the merit system thus far has been to choose one of the top three on the exams as far as anyone has been willing to admit.

1959.<sup>10</sup> Second, through his aides, he asked for the firing of many employees sponsored by or relatives of legislators who opposed him. Ostensibly, this was done in the interest of economy. In reality, however, the legislators affected were those holding up key parts of the governor's program, in particular the merit bill.<sup>11</sup> The firings did not always go through since the governor had to work through boards and commissions who sometimes refused to do the firing. Various agencies involved were the Oklahoma Highway Commission, the Department of Public Welfare, the Planning and Resources Board and the Wildlife Commission. Eventually the firings stopped and the governor's program (or major portions at that time) went through.<sup>12</sup> No governor has since been able to do this, at least so openly, with lower employees. Thus, it would appear that in a limited fashion Edmondson's use of patronage did help him.

By the 1961 session of the legislature, the governor's position as party leader and legislative leader had so deteriorated that no strategem could force further concessions from the legislative "old guard". Otis Sullivant, commenting on Edmondson's relationship with the 1961

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<sup>10</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, May 19, 1959.

<sup>11</sup>The governor explained the firings by saying his campaign aides were anxious to replace the previous governor's appointees with people loyal to Edmondson. This was in an interview.

<sup>12</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, April 1, 1959, April 22, 1959, April 23, 1959, May 6, 1959.

legislature, said that Edmondson's failure to convince individual legislators he could deliver on road building and other promises was a major factor in his failure to get votes to pass a sales tax.<sup>13</sup> In a last minute battle with the legislature, the senate refused to attach an emergency clause to the governor's contingency fund and he retaliated by not re-appointing the State Election Board Chairman.<sup>14</sup> In general, it is difficult to assess to what extent the merit system affected Governor Edmondson in his legislative relations.

Governor Bellmon's administration was the first to operate completely under the merit system. In his campaign he gave his support to the system.<sup>15</sup> He retained some top people from the Democratic administration but did replace boards and commissions which are usually replaced by new governors.<sup>16</sup> One person he had planned to retain, the state prison warden, he in fact replaced, presumably due to pressure from the powerful senator whose district contained the state prison.

Bellmon had very few problems with appointments in his first legislative session, as he cooperated well with Democratic legislators on personnel as well as other matters.

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<sup>13</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, June 28, 1961.

<sup>14</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, July 13, 1961.

<sup>15</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, November 9, 1962.

<sup>16</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, January, 1963.



One appointment to the Highway Commission could not be confirmed because the majority of senators from the commissioner's district felt the governor's choice was from the wrong county.<sup>17</sup> In another case, some important senators wanted to see a particular person reappointed to the University of Oklahoma Board of Regents. Bellmon eventually did nominate this person. Otis Sullivant wrote that Senator Roy Boecher insisted upon the appointment and Bellmon used this to get one part of his program, the welfare transfers, enacted.<sup>18</sup> Sullivant also remarked that Bellmon's policy of recognizing Democratic support in his appointments and clearing his choice with senators found favor with the senate "most of whom were happy to get rid of Edmondson's appointees."<sup>19</sup> He even sought advice on appointments not requiring confirmation.

Bellmon experienced some conflict with the legislature over one appointment which did not require senatorial confirmation. Bellmon wanted to appoint a person from Maine to be Director of the State Commerce and Industry Department.<sup>20</sup> Legislators were incensed that the governor should look out of state for the directorship. (They had been

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<sup>17</sup> Beginning with the Edmondson administration, a majority of senators from the Highway Commissioner's district had to agree to confirmation, rather than the senator representing the commissioner's county.

<sup>18</sup> The Daily Oklahoman, May 9, 1963 and May 14, 1963.

<sup>19</sup> The Daily Oklahoman, June 2, 1963.

<sup>20</sup> The Daily Oklahoman, June 6, 1963 and other June articles.

equally upset over Edmondson's appointment of a Missourian as Highway Director.) Acting through the commission, Bellmon was able to secure the appointment seemingly without harming his legislative relations.

The greatest battle Bellmon experienced with an appointment concerned the Tax Commission. The Tax Commission had long been a haven for legislative patronage. Even though the merit system was in effect, senators still controlled tag agents and tax equalization board secretaries through the commission. Senators definitely wanted commissioners friendly to them. Even though governors have the legal right to choose a chairman of the Tax Commission every two years no governor had done so since Roy Turner in the late 1940's. The commission chairman had served since 1931.<sup>21</sup> Governor Bellmon wanted to appoint a new person, preferably a Republican, to the chairmanship. His announced goals for the 1965 legislative session involved this appointment as well as passage of his "Giant Stride" program. After the governor submitted his candidate's name the senate held up sixty of the governor's other appointments for confirmation.<sup>22</sup> The senate rejected the governor's appointee; the fact that he was also a former senator was a source of embarrassment to the senate. Subsequently, the name of a former Democratic senator was submitted and

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<sup>21</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, January 15, 1965.

<sup>22</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, February 4, 1965.

the Senate likewise rejected the Democrat to demonstrate that the senate would not accept a former senator of either party in place of the existing chairman of the commission. Bellmon consequently reappointed the incumbent chairman and the senate confirmed him without delay. The sixty other appointments, as well as others of Governor Bellmon, were incumbent chairman and the senate confirmed him without delay. The sixty other appointments, as well as others of Governor Bellmon, were subsequently routinely confirmed.

Bellmon had some successes and some failures in the passage of his program. At one point Otis Sullivant, writing in The Daily Oklahoman, said it would take great effort from the governor's office to ensure passage of portions of the "Giant Stride" program. "And Governor Bellmon does not have the control, leadership, know-how and follow through to get the votes."<sup>23</sup> Thus, it may have been that even had Bellmon more control over patronage he would not have used it in the traditional manner to which legislators were accustomed in the state.

The second Republican governor was elected in 1966. He had an advantage over his predecessor in that by this time several Republicans were experienced in state government. Although he kept many of Bellmon's appointees (for example he did not make a clean sweep of the Highway Commission or Board of Affairs as was usual with Oklahoma governors) he

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<sup>23</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, March 7, 1965.

did make many new appointments. It was predicted in August, 1966, that if elected, Dewey Bartlett would replace two highway commissioners who had campaigned for his opponent in the primary.<sup>24</sup> He eventually did replace them after one year. His rationale for replacing them at that time was their activity in soliciting campaign funds from road contractors in the 1968 Nixon campaign.<sup>25</sup>

It would appear from a study of his administration that if Governor Bartlett had held power over lower appointments he would have been unlikely to use them to persuade legislators. He was, however, very concerned with one appointment and resolved to win on it. This again involved the Tax Commission. The term of one commission member was to expire. Bartlett hoped to compromise and enable the incumbent commissioner to stay on with the commission as a consultant. This eventually occurred at the end of the legislative session. The legislature created the advisory position and the governor signed the bill.<sup>26</sup> The governor's own choice for the position was a Democrat but apparently one amenable to the Republican governor. When questioned about this appointment in an interview, the governor said he felt this position was so important to control that he was willing to hold out on the issue until it was resolved

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<sup>24</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, August 7, 1966.

<sup>25</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, January 30, 1968.

<sup>26</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, January 5, 1967 and May 5, 1967.

in his favor and that the legislature was aware of his determination.

In another situation one of the governor's appointments was blocked by a Republican senator representing the appointee's district. The Democratic legislature subsequently created a new position which did not require senatorial confirmation in order for the governor to name his appointee. This was an unusual example of cooperation between the governor and the legislature which undoubtedly would not have occurred had the objecting senator been a Democrat. In some instances the legislature either tried to take appointing power away from the governor or to require senate confirmation for positions not before required.<sup>27</sup> The legislature was apparently concerned about the appointing power of a Republican governor who had the power to succeed himself, for the first time in Oklahoma history.

The Republican governor did not succeed himself, however, losing by some 2000 votes to Democrat David Hall. As evidenced in some of his campaign speeches, Governor Hall was well aware of the traditional style of personalized politics in Oklahoma, and of the clout it would take to pass the programs he wanted. The governor replaced the usual boards and commissions, making a clean sweep of several

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<sup>27</sup>The senate passed a law to make the lieutenant governor the state Industrial Development and Park Commission Chairman. They also attempted to require confirmation for the Director of the Highway Department. The Daily Oklahoman, May 9, 1967 and February 2, 1968.

. . . Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, Board of Affairs, Crime Commission and almost the entire Highway Commission.

The governor's desires concerning appointments were satisfied, almost without exception. In fact, the governor was able to persuade the legislature to pass a bill changing requirements for the Adjutant General's position in order to appoint a campaign aide to the post. Another bill changed qualifications for the Director of the Department of Corrections so the acting director could be appointed.<sup>28</sup>

The governor experienced some difficulty with two of his Highway Commission appointments but they were ultimately resolved in his favor.<sup>29</sup> In one case the Governor appointed a former Democratic state chairman from a small town for the traditionally Oklahoma County (Oklahoma City) position on the Highway Commission. Oklahoma County senators were not happy about this.

One example of the governor using jobs as trade for a vote was reported in the newspaper. The vote on the governor's income tax bill was very tight. One Republican representative who voted for the emergency clause on the bill, said he was informed before the vote that his brother-in-law was being considered for a job as Director of the

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<sup>28</sup>The governor did experience some problems with the board appointing the acting director. Four Republicans served on the board and could not be dismissed at will. One resigned and the governor gained a majority at the last minute.

<sup>29</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, March 9, 1971, and March 11, 1971; January , 1972.

Grand River Dam Authority.<sup>30</sup>

Apparently the present governor has been affected by the merit system. If he had more positions at his disposal it is likely he would use them in the traditional manner. However, he appears to be obtaining the maximum advantage from the existing system.

In summary, it appears that Democrats have been affected more than Republican governors by the merit system. The former had used the patronage system in the traditional manner whereas Republicans had no experience governing prior to the merit system. However, there are many more important factors than the governor's patronage power in his effectiveness with the legislature. This is only one of many tools which the governor can use, if he will. The governor's personality, outlook, background, and program he wants to accomplish are important factors in determining how successful he is in using patronage, no matter how much of it he has at his disposal.

#### Other Effects of the Merit System

Some legislators, governors, and political observers interviewed mentioned additional effects of the merit system on the governor's office. One was a possible reduction in campaign contributions to gubernatorial campaign funds from state employees. Since the election of a new governor could no longer cost them their jobs, classified employees would

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<sup>30</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, April 23, 1971.

feel less pressure to contribute to the coffers of potential candidates. One Republican governor claimed the merit system had helped him by paring down employee contributions to the opposing party.

Loss of patronage may also have hurt governors in petition drives. The Oklahoma constitution is so extremely detailed that it must be amended for most major changes and many minor ones. Such amendments require the vote of the people. If the legislature does not put an item on the ballot then it can be done by initiative petition. Sometimes governors must turn to the initiative petition to obtain action on part of their program. In the drive to obtain petition signatures, employees were of significant help as they worked statewide to produce the required number of signatures. Since the merit system this resource has been lost to the governor. The Personnel Board ruled that classified state employees could not take part in petition drives except to sign the petitions.<sup>31</sup>

The governor's role as party leader has also been slightly affected by the merit system; this would affect Democrats more than Republicans. Since the bulk of state employees were controlled by the Democrats it would be expected that their allegiance was to that party. Oklahoma Democratic governors could ask rank-and-file employees for their attendance and participation at precinct meetings to

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<sup>31</sup>"Rules of the Merit System," The Personnel Board, State of Oklahoma.



back candidates who would ultimately support the governor's candidate for state chairman. One Democratic governor in particular believed the merit system, particularly its little Hatch Act provisions, made a difference to him in his position in the party. Governor Edmondson needed all the support he could get in the 1960 precinct meetings in order to bring about the election of his candidate for state party chairman and control the delegation to the national convention. Just before the precinct meetings Edmondson's opposition obtained a ruling from the Attorney General's office stating that merit employees could not attend precinct meetings. Although only a few departments were covered by the merit system at that time, this ruling probably either discouraged employees soon to be under the merit system or gave them an excuse for not attending. For whatever reason, Edmondson believed that the merit system, which he had sponsored, hurt his position as party leader. On the other hand, the present Democratic governor appears to have party control without the benefit of control over all employees. Certainly, many factors beside patronage determine the governor's leadership ability in all his roles.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the opinion was expressed that roads have been more important to governors than jobs in working with the legislature. Arguing that roads are less important now than previously, a Republican ex-governor and a former Democratic legislator both pointed out that federal control of the highway program leaves less

opportunity for the governor to utilize this incentive. On the other hand, in the spring of 1971 one legislator told reporters that Governor Hall had offered roads for \_\_\_\_\_ County in his district if the senator would back the governor's Highway Commission nominee.<sup>32</sup> Interviewees indicate that roads have been an important incentive in the past. While their importance may have decreased, funding for county roads is still available to the governor indirectly as a quid pro quo.

#### Inter-State Comparisons

How do Oklahoma governors compare with Kentucky and New York? The comparison is most easily made between Democratic governors in Oklahoma and Kentucky serving since the merit system was passed in both states. Jobs are utilized in different ways; governors perhaps have more control in Kentucky, where they work through a county contact man. Elimination of the bulk of patronage in both states has not in itself meant deterioration of the governors' legislative leadership position. Governors in both states can still be strong if they have the desire and know-how. Since they still control the most important appointments they still hold the edge over the legislators.

New York under Governor A. Harriman was in an entirely different situation from Oklahoma; it is thus difficult to compare the two. Patronage was utilized carefully in New

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<sup>32</sup>Jewell and Cunningham, Kentucky Politics.

York in order to enhance the governor's legislative and party leadership roles. Party officials from the county level up were consulted about appointments and appointments were made with an eye to improving the governor's position in the party, toward consolidating support of interest groups, and toward implementing policy.<sup>33</sup> Patronage has not been as judiciously distributed in Oklahoma by governors of either party as it was in New York. In both states, however, patronage matters have demanded large portions of the governors' office time.

The effects of changing party competition on the Oklahoma governors' use of patronage were hypothesized earlier in this chapter. However, the past three governors, two Republicans and one Democrat, did not always use patronage the way one might expect. As expected, all three governors have used patronage to reward their own campaign workers and build their own nuclear organizations. And the Republican governors were aware to some extent of the importance of contacting party officials about patronage appointments. The first Republican governor said he received some criticism from party leaders for appointing Democrats who had supported him. In one case, the second Republican governor apparently acted to enhance his nuclear organization at the expense of the party. Two Republican Highway Commissioners who had supported Dewey Bartlett's opponent in the Republican gubernatorial primary of 1966 were fired by Bartlett in January,

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<sup>33</sup>Moynihan and Wilson, "Patronage in New York State, 1951-55;" Judson Lehman James, "The Loaves and the Fishes."

1969. The reason he gave for the firings was that the commissioners had collected funds from road contractors for the 1968 Nixon presidential campaign in Oklahoma.<sup>34</sup> Although this is an accepted practice in the state, the governor claimed it was morally unacceptable for state officials. He stood behind this reason for the firing, rather than the opposition to himself in 1966, even after he was out of office. The effect, however, could have been to strengthen his own nuclear organization through the punishment of non-supporters, and to weaken the formal party structure in its own attempts at building through campaign contributions.

The other points concerning patronage use by Republican governors in Oklahoma in the face of competition would appear to hold: 1) Conflicts over appointments between senate and governor were generally couched in party terms. 2) The two Republican governors emphasized their attempts to appoint the best qualified individuals for the job, thus, making voting-serving appointments in their own eyes.

The Democratic governor, elected in 1970, resembles governors of the pre-merit days in his dispensation of patronage. The effects of party competition can not be readily noted in his administration. He stated that he is concerned with appointing the best qualified persons and, thus, perceives his appointments as voter-serving. However, some of his appointments are denigrated by the press as the

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<sup>34</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, January 30, 1968.

rewarding of old guard Democrats. According to his patronage officer, party officials are not consulted in the appointing process; the state chairman, however, believed the present Governor was doing this more than previous Democrats had. Perhaps he has helped strengthen the formal party organization by appointing party officials such as district chairmen to important positions. Otherwise, his partisan appointments tend to help his nuclear organization through rewards and building for future campaigns. Conflicts between the senate and governor over appointments have again arisen from factional rather than party differences. The governors' own perceptions of building party and nuclear organizations are described in the next section.

#### The Governor and Partisan Organization

In spite of the merit system, governors still have a large number of appointments which they may use to reward campaign workers for past effort or which they may promise as an incentive for future political activity. Governors were asked about the extent to which patronage functions to build and maintain campaign organizations. Views on this question held by party and other state elected officials in Oklahoma appear in previous chapters.

All of the governors interviewed made the comment that large numbers of people were interested in employment, particularly at the beginning of their administration. Thus,

they had a chance to choose from several candidates, making the reward more meaningful to the recipient. It can be readily documented that all governors appointed some campaign aides to important policy-making jobs, thus building their own nuclear organizations.<sup>35</sup> By no means did all aides receive appointments, however, nor was there a complete turnover of those in policy-making jobs. All interviewed mentioned that some campaign participants were by-passed because they were incapable of holding a board or commission appointment. When one former aide was asked if the governors he worked for fired appointees who did not support him the aide said a smart governor would not: unless a person was really obnoxious, the governor should try to win opponents over to his side. The present personnel aide believed he had slighted campaign activists more than any other group. He also felt departmental officials retained from a previous administration may be more grateful than ones newly appointed. Evidently, they are happy to keep their jobs and will try to please the governor because of it.

All of those interviewed voiced a concern that the people they appointed be qualified for the position as stated above. Everything else being equal, they said they would favor a member of their party for a position. Of course, for some boards it is required that members of both parties

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<sup>35</sup>The Daily Oklahoman, August 21, 1959; September 1, 1959; February 6, 1963; April 6, 1967; January 8, 1971.

serve, so the governor is forced to appoint members of the other party. (This might be less of a hardship for Republican governors, since many registered Democrats vote Republican.)

It is difficult to surmise the extent to which appointees have been used by governors in campaigns since the merit system although there is evidence that some have. Until 1970 a governor could not succeed himself, although he could run for other offices such as the U. S. Senate. A governor might at least expect quiet support instead of opposition from appointees.<sup>36</sup>

Some persons interviewed, particularly Republicans, verbalized their belief that the most effective way to campaign is to appoint qualified and competent individuals to positions; if they perform well, it will reflect credit on the administration.

#### Status Maintenance and Governors

In regard to the desirability of patronage for the governors, all interviewed believed that the power to make appointments was an important part of their office. Although they all believed the merit system was necessary, two introduced legislation to remove certain positions from the merit system. All three governors were concerned that policy-

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<sup>36</sup>Even quiet support can lead to difficulties. The three member Chiropractic Examiners Board allegedly sent a letter to all chiropractors urging support for the incumbent governor in 1970; they were subsequently fired by Governor Hall for their participation in the 1970 campaign.

making positions to be exempt from the merit system. They felt it necessary for appointees to be loyal and to have similar philosophies of governing so that their administration would be a true reflection of their own attitudes.

#### Summary

This chapter was primarily concerned with a discussion of Hypothesis VII which states:

VII. If patronage has diminished for the governor, his influence with the legislature will have been reduced.

It was found that although some political observers believe such influence has been reduced since passage of the merit system, the majority of legislators who answered such questions felt it had not been. Other evidence from the administrations of the governors pointed to little or no reduction in influence for the governor on patronage matters with the legislature. It is possible, however, that the little Hatch Act provisions of the merit legislation have had some effect on the party leadership role of governors; this may be offset by the added importance of the man who has been able to win the office for his party under competitive circumstances.

Patronage is used by governors to build up their nuclear organization, and to a lesser degree (particularly with the Democrats) the formal party organization; this has been true of the past four Oklahoma governors, regardless of the merit system. When governors talk about patronage, however, they perceive it as most important for appointing



qualified people to office and obtaining people of like political philosophy. Patronage can be said to be desired by Oklahoma governors as a means of status maintenance.

Apparently, the change from a dominant one-party system to the beginnings of a competitive system has had little effect on the governors' use of patronage. However, more changes may become evident with the passage of time; the election of two Republican governors in a state which had never before had Republican governors makes comparisons with the past difficult. There was some attempt to build up the minority party through patronage, but more emphasis was put on strengthening of the gubernatorial nucleus; this is understandable in view of the fact that one Republican governor became a U. S. Senator and the other sought to be the first governor in the state to succeed himself. The first Democrat elected after the two Republican governors has apparently been catering to the rural and old guard elements in his party and his style of dispensing patronage has been similar to those of his Democratic predecessors before the merit system. He has used patronage to build his gubernatorial nucleus and obtain the bargaining power with legislators he needs for a positive program.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

It was posited in the Introduction that as a result of certain changes in the Oklahoma political system . . . namely, 1) the transition from a dominant one-party system to an emerging two-party system and 2) social and economic changes which helped precipitate passage of merit legislation in 1959 . . . patronage might be handled in different ways by the state public and party officials. This overlying theme was enlarged upon by the testing of seven hypotheses. The existing body of patronage literature, recent political studies of Oklahoma and comparisons of past and present patronage practices in Oklahoma helped make the study possible.

Again, limitations of the thesis should be noted: the number of people interviewed or responding to a questionnaire was often not large enough either to prove definitely or disprove conclusively the hypotheses; rather the data collected can be said to support or not to support the hypotheses. Hopefully, the observations and study presented here form a realistic picture of patronage in Oklahoma. This is limited, however, by the extent to which officials would give the interviewer realistic answers.

### Hypotheses

Of the hypotheses presented, Hypotheses I and III were supported. Hypotheses II and VII were not supported by the data presented. Either they were based on false assumptions or the experience of other states was not borne out in Oklahoma. The other hypotheses were partially valid, depending on which group of officials they referred to.

#### Hypotheses I:

- I. The introduction of a merit or civil service system in modern times tends to be accompanied by the onset of industrialization and urbanization and rise in levels of income and education.

This hypothesis was found to be a realistic one from the Oklahoma experience. Hypotheses II.

- II. Those departments and agencies in which patronage was the most important before the merit system will continue to be the place where patronage will be important after merit, even if violations of the merit system have to occur for this to be so.

The evidence does not provide clear-cut support for this hypothesis. Certain departments or agencies, particularly tag agents, county election board secretaries and the Departments of Parks and Industrial Development and Public Welfare, have maintained traditions of patronage. In these departments, merit rules are followed but the spirit of patronage is often seen. Other departments, such as Highway and Wildlife, which were very patronage-oriented before 1959 have apparently established effective merit system.<sup>1</sup> Where patronage has

<sup>1</sup>The Wildlife Department may revert to more patronage-oriented methods of personnel hiring: in June, 1972, the former Wildlife head under Governor Raymond Gary was reappointed. Gary was one of the more patronage-minded of governors.

effectively continued there has either been no political pressure to change the system (tag agents) or department heads have had the power and ability to continue the practice. Other department heads who so desired were able to institute an effective merit system. By 1970 the change to the merit system was extensive although the election of a Democratic governor that year promised a return to some of the traditional ways.

Hypothesis III:

III: In a political system in which one party has dominated, patronage will be official-oriented rather than party-oriented. This has the following consequences for inter-party differences: a) lines of communication for patronage decisions in the dominant party will be official-oriented rather than party-oriented; b) lines of communication for patronage decisions will be more party-oriented in the minority party.

This hypothesis was upheld by the data. Democratic county chairmen considered the state party chairman the least likely person to be influential on personnel matters; for these county chairmen state public officials, particularly state legislators, were important as a job source. On the other hand, Democratic legislators were unlikely to contact a county chairman regarding a state job; they preferred to contact the agencies directly. For Republican county chairmen, the state party chairman played a more important role in the line of patronage communication, as did the governor, at that time a Republican. The governor, however, consulted only about one-third of the Republican chairmen respondents. A higher percentage of Republican than Democratic legislators

were contacted about jobs by county and state party officials as well as by the governor; however, in referring persons for jobs the agencies were the main contact. Nevertheless, nearly 20% of the Republican legislators refer persons to the county chairman, in sharp contrast to the Democrats. With a few exceptions, county chairmen in both parties play a small role in the patronage process in Oklahoma: the Democratic chairmen because of the important part Democratic legislators play in the job process; Republicans because of their minority status and the long dominance of Democrats.

Hypothesis IV:

- IV: Patronage, even where it still exists, no longer fulfills the following functions for partisan organizations: 1) recruiting workers; 2) maintaining activists; 3) raising revenue for the treasury; 4) maintaining discipline in the organization.

This hypothesis while generally true for public and associational leaders, has certain exceptions. For one thing, as was true in Illinois, patronage workers were considered a source of party funds for a majority of county chairmen responding to the questionnaire. Another exception was found in that state senators generally expect holders of their personal patronage (such as tag agents and county election board secretaries) to be active in their nuclear organization. This contribution alone may be enough to sustain such nuclear organizations between campaigns. Most legislators did not expect partisan activity from other patronage employees. Nevertheless, many (although not a majority) found that such activity was forthcoming. (Senate Democrats expected more activity than they

received.) Another exception to the hypothesis could be found in secondary officials' offices. All employees of such officers (with the exceptions of Corporation Commission employees and non-policy employees in the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction) were patronage employees. Some activity was expected from employees and it was observed that the employees carried through; utilization of such employees was not maximal, but was certainly enough to provide a basis for campaign organizations. Perhaps the most important point to be made here is that patronage is most useful to those officials (governor, secondary officials, and state senators with personal patronage) who have the power to fire as well as hire employees for jobs.

Hypothesis V:

- V: A loss of patronage from passage of a merit system with Hatch Act provisions will be perceived as less significant by county chairmen of the majority party than by its governmental office-holders; the latter will perceive themselves as particularly affected by loss of appointments of lower state employees and contributions from them.

The data did not support this hypothesis, in that both county chairmen and legislators active before the merit system was effective perceived a loss in benefit to the party from patronage employees after 1959; this was more true for Democrats than Republicans. Legislators, however, felt the merit system had not effected the governors. Governors voiced the same opinion (for different reasons) with the exception of J. Howard Edmondson; of course, Republicans could not make such comparisons with the past.

**Hypothesis VI:**

VI: For party chairmen, legislators, governors and other elected executives, patronage will be desired more as a means of maintaining status in regard to their constituency than as a means of maintaining political organization.

Tucker believed this to be true in Illinois but Gump did not think it was so in Ohio. In Oklahoma, a majority of county chairmen believe patronage is not important to their job as county chairmen. The opinion that legislators should have a role in obtaining jobs for constituents was held by a majority of senate Democrats, but by only a minority of all other legislative groups. However, not even senate Democrats felt that patronage was actually useful to legislators. County chairmen and legislators alike claimed that patronage is more important to the party than to themselves. Secondary officials were the most positive in their commitment to patronage. It would seem that in Oklahoma those more likely to participate in patronage decisions (including the disciplinary aspect of patronage firing) are more likely to consider it important to themselves. Thus, it contributes significantly to the status of those who participate in the process.

**Hypothesis VII:**

VII: If patronage has diminished for the governor, his influence with the legislature will have been substantially reduced.

Several authors have put forth this hypothesis unsupported by data, while evidence from Kentucky seems to discredit it. The Oklahoma situation is similar to that in Kentucky. The

governor in Oklahoma still retains much important patronage, as well as possessing many alternative sources of power; his use of these depends on his personality, his background, his philosophy, and his program.

The results of this study would indicate that the merit system has been relatively effective; however, the effect of the loss of patronage has had varying impacts on different groups. Effects of the change from one-party dominant to the beginnings of two-party competition are difficult to determine. For the most part it would seem that the Democratic party and its public officials have not as yet been able to respond in an organizational manner to competition, where patronage is concerned. There has been a time lag between the reality of competition and their response to that reality. On the whole, old patterns have been maintained, although there may be a very slight shift to party-orientation for the Democrats. For the four governors who have served since 1959, the building of nuclear organizations is apparently more important than the building of party per se.

#### Future Research

Since patronage is still an important political resource (the recent book To the Victor makes a strong case for executive use of patronage) further research would be of benefit. The main areas in which such work would be desirable are: 1) studies of patronage employees, like the



one by Sorauf, to see if their views correspond with the recent findings of party and public officials assessments of patronage (the Sorauf study is overdue for revision after so many years) and 2) inter-state studies, which could be regional or perhaps could study several states which instituted merit systems about the same time (for example, Delaware, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kentucky). These need to differ from the Fenton study of Midwest Politics in that they would be based on more systematic study.

In spite of the growth of civil service systems and the decline of many urban machines, the importance of patronage should not be underestimated. Particularly when patronage is considered in a dynamic situation, such as in Oklahoma, does its study provide important insight into political processes. Patronage indeed remains a sensitive and controversial issue, and the heated conflict surrounding this exercise of political power keeps the personnel issue alive in many American states.

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 Blankenship, G. T. Attorney General.  
 Cartwright, Wilburn. Corporation Commissioner.  
 Hunt, Joe B. Commissioner of Insurance.  
 Rogers, John. Secretary of State.  
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 Winters, Leo. State Treasurer.

##### Representatives of State Agencies

Ballinger, James N. President, State Board of Agriculture.  
 Bigham, Bob. Business Administrator, Department of Mental Health.  
 Bledsoe, Tye. Division Head, Parks, Recreation and Waterways, Industrial Development and Parks Department.  
 Burns, Clifford E. Administrative Assistant, Operations and Personnel, Department of Public Welfare.

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Hoback, W. D. Chief Engineer-Manager, Oklahoma Turnpike  
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Keating, Wallace L. Director, Department of Personnel,  
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McCracken, Leo E. Deputy Director, Department of  
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Mayfield, Britt. Employment Security Commission.

Pirrong, Cecil M. Director, Office of Personnel, State  
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Roberts, Leland. Assistant to the Director, Department of  
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Robinson, Sam. Personnel Assistant, Department of Public  
Welfare.

Will, Ken E. Assistant Commissioner, Department of Public  
Safety.

Williams, John D. State Bank Commissioner.

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Atkinson, H. B.

Baggett, Bryce.

Baldwin, Don.

Berrong, Ed.

Birdsong, Jimmy.

Boecher, Roy.

Bradley, Ed. W.

Breckinridge, Peyton.

Crow, Herschal.

Field, Leon.  
Ferrell, Donald F.  
Garrett, John L.  
Garrison, Denzil.  
Grantham, Roy.  
Graves, Ralph.  
Ham, Glen.  
Hamilton, James E.  
Hargrave, George, Jr.  
Holden, Wayne M.  
Horn, Raymond.  
Howard, Gene.  
Inhofe, James M.  
Keels, Lee.  
Lane, Jimmie.  
Luton, John D.  
McCune, John R.  
McGraw, Joseph R.  
McSpadden, Clem.  
Martin, Ernest D.  
Massey, John.  
Medearis, Robert P.  
Miller, George A.  
Murphy, Robert M.  
Nichols, Allen G.  
Payne, Tom.  
Phillips, William Fred

Porter, E. Melvin.  
Romang, Richard E.  
Short, Jack M.  
Smalley, Phil.  
Smith, Finis.  
Stansberry, Richard.  
Stipe, Gene.  
Taliaferro, Jim.  
Terrill, Al.  
Williams, G. O.  
Young, John W.

Oklahoma State Representatives

Allard, Lou.  
Andrews, Red.  
Bean, Lewis.  
Briscoe, Bill.  
Conaghan, Brian F.  
Connor, James W.  
Derryberry, Larry D.  
Fine, Ray.  
Ford, Charles.  
Hill, Archibald.  
Hill, Ben.  
McCune, John W.  
McKee, Marvin.  
Miskelly, John, Jr.  
Murphy, Mike.



Musgrave, Joe. E.

Odom, Martin.

Privett, Rex.

Robinson, Carl.

Sandlin, Hugh H.

Sanguin, Wayne.

Skeith, William H.

Sparkman, Wiley.

Taggart, Thomas.

Thornhill, Lynn.

Wayland, Russell.

Witt, J. D.

Wixson, Douglas.

Wolf, Leland.

#### Oklahoma State Party Officials

Hester, Smith. Democratic State Party Chairman, 1952-1959;  
1964-1967.

Kennedy, J. C. Democratic State Party Chairman, 1969-1972.

Warner, Clarence. Republican State Party Chairman, 1968- .

#### County Chairmen, 1970

Antosh, Ed. Pottawatomie County Republic Chairman.

Dougherty, William E., Jr. Pottawatomie County Democratic  
Chairman.

Ellis, Charles W. Oklahoma County Republican Chairman.

Frazier, Tommy Dee. Past Tulsa County Democratic Chairman.

Freeman, Travis. Tulsa County Republican Chairman.

Gilbert, Jerry. Oklahoma County Democratic Chairman.



James, Ted. Cleveland County Republican Chairman.

Lawson, Ed. Past Tulsa County Republican Chairman.

Rambo, G. Dan. Past Cleveland County Democratic Chairman.

Others

Bever, Wendell. Ex-Director, Department of Wildlife Conservation.

English, Glen. Administrative Assistant, Democratic State Central Committee.

Huan, Martin. Administrative Assistant, Governor Johnston Murray, 1951-1955; Governor Raymond Gary, 1955-1959.

Hefner, Hal. Personnel Assistant, Governor David Hall.

Herring, Robert. Administrative Assistant, Governor Dewey Bartlett.

Johnson, James. Assistant Director, State Legislative Council.

Lollar, Robert. Legislative Assistant, Governor Dewey Bartlett.

McCarty, J. D. Ex-legislator, Speaker of the House, 1961-1965.

Moore, Evelyn. Administrative Assistant, Board of Public Affairs.

Price, Inez. Retired employee, Department of Public Welfare.

Sullivant, Otis. Retired political reporter, The Daily Oklahoman.

Thompson, Gary. Staff member, Oklahoma Merit System, 1956-1957; Staff member, Oklahoma Department of Personnel, 1960-1962.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Oklahoma Democratic and Republican County Chairmen

1. Party affiliation: Republican \_\_\_\_\_ Democrat \_\_\_\_\_

2. Number of years you have served as County Chairman:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Party offices held prior to this one: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do people ever come to you to inquire about state jobs?

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_.

If yes, what kinds of jobs? (check as many as apply)

Non-merit

Merit

a. boards and commissions \_\_\_\_\_

a. Welfare Department \_\_\_\_\_

b. county election board \_\_\_\_\_

b. Corporation  
Commission \_\_\_\_\_

c. county tax equalization  
board \_\_\_\_\_

c. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

d. janitorial, unskilled  
labor \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

e. temporary \_\_\_\_\_

f. tag agent \_\_\_\_\_

g. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you then recommend these people for such jobs?

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

6. To whom do you recommend them? (check as many as apply)

a. the appropriate agency \_\_\_\_\_

b. the Governor's office \_\_\_\_\_

c. State Senator \_\_\_\_\_

d. State Representative \_\_\_\_\_

e. State Party Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

f. Governor's county campaign  
manager \_\_\_\_\_

g. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Are you ever asked by governmental and party officials  
to recommend people for state jobs?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, by whom? (check as many as apply)

a. the Governor's office \_\_\_\_\_

b. a state agency \_\_\_\_\_

c. the State Senator \_\_\_\_\_

d. State Representative \_\_\_\_\_

e. State Party Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

f. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8. If a governor asks you to recommend someone and you feel  
that the individual should not be recommended what  
happens?

a. the individual gets the job anyway \_\_\_\_\_

b. the individual does not get the job \_\_\_\_\_

c. it depends on the governor \_\_\_\_\_

d. have never encountered this situation

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Is there anyone else in the county who can get a person a state job?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
- Position held \_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you find it hard to fill low paying, low status jobs?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't have any \_\_\_\_\_
11. In campaigns for primaries and general elections, do you rely most on state patronage employees?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
12. Are patronage employees important as a source of votes for your party in your county?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
13. Are state patronage employees important as a source of active party workers?
- Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
14. What is the practice regarding financial contributions by patronage job holders? (check one)
- a. they are not expected to and do not contribute to the party \_\_\_\_\_
- b. it is not generally expected, but some do contribute to the party \_\_\_\_\_
- c. most contribute something to the party \_\_\_\_\_
- d. it is expected, and almost all do contribute to the party \_\_\_\_\_

15. Are precinct committeemen given first chance at jobs?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

16. Are there certain types of non-merit jobs you feel are more useful to the party than others?

a. board and commission appointments \_\_\_\_\_

b. department heads \_\_\_\_\_

c. janitorial and unskilled positions \_\_\_\_\_

d. temporary help \_\_\_\_\_

e. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

17. If you were active in party politics prior to the merit system (1960), how would you compare the benefits to the party of the political activities of state employees then with today?

a. less activism today \_\_\_\_\_

b. more activism today \_\_\_\_\_

c. about the same \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you find county patronage more or less useful than state patronage?

more useful \_\_\_\_\_ less useful \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19. Do you find federal patronage more or less useful than state patronage?

more useful \_\_\_\_\_ less useful \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. How important is the distribution of patronage to the performance of your job as county chairman?

a. very important \_\_\_\_\_

b. important \_\_\_\_\_

c. not too important \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

21. What is your opinion of the importance of patronage to the party?

a. very important \_\_\_\_\_

b. important \_\_\_\_\_

c. not too important \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Oklahoma Legislators

1. Present position: Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Senator \_\_\_\_\_
2. Party affiliation: Republican \_\_\_\_\_ Democrat \_\_\_\_\_
3. Party offices held presently: \_\_\_\_\_  
Party offices held in past: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of years served in House of Representatives \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of years served in Senate: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you presently serve as the chairman of a legislative committee? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Do you hold any legislative leadership positions now?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_  
Which ones have you held in the past? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Were you a member of the legislature when merit legislation was passed (1959) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
8. How did you vote on this legislation?  
for \_\_\_\_\_ against \_\_\_\_\_ excused \_\_\_\_\_  
for \_\_\_\_\_ against \_\_\_\_\_ excused \_\_\_\_\_ (House or Senate Journal)
9. Approximately how many constituents come to you each year requesting state jobs? \_\_\_\_\_



10. What kinds of jobs? (check as many as apply)

- | Non-merit                                 | Merit  |
|---|--|
| a. dept. head _____                       | a. welfare dept. _____                       |
| b. boards and commissions _____           | b. corporation<br>commission _____           |
| c. county tax equalization<br>board _____ | c. parks and industrial<br>development _____ |
| d. county election board _____            | d. highway dept. _____                       |
| e. tag agent _____                        | e. other (specify) _____                     |
| f. temporary _____                        | _____  |
| g. janitorial, unskilled<br>labor _____   | _____  |
| h. other (specify) _____                  |  |
| _____                                     |  |

11. Do you then recommend these people for such jobs?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

12. To whom do you recommend them? (check as many as apply and circle the most frequent case)

- a. the appropriate agency \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. county party chairman \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. state party chairman \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. governor's office \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

13. About how many positions are available to you on which to make recommendations and/or appointments in your district? \_\_\_\_\_

14. If you were a legislator prior to merit legislation would you say that there has been a decrease in state patronage jobs available to you?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Same \_\_\_\_\_

15. Does the governor ever ask you to make recommendations?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Which jobs?

- a. policy making \_\_\_\_\_ c. unskilled labor,  
janitorial \_\_\_\_\_
- b. temporary \_\_\_\_\_ d. skilled merit  
jobs \_\_\_\_\_
- e. other (specify)  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Are there any other ways in which you take a part in state jobs placement?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what? \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does anyone else ask you to recommend people for jobs?  
(check as many as apply)

- a. appropriate agency \_\_\_\_\_ c. county chairman \_\_\_\_\_
- b. state party chairman \_\_\_\_\_ d. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

18. Which of the above do you wish there was more of?

\_\_\_\_\_

Which of the above do you wish there was less of?

\_\_\_\_\_

19. Do you sometimes have to seek out people to fill jobs?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ What kind? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you try to recommend and appoint people to jobs who have been active politically in your campaign?  
(ex. - tag agent) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If no, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

21. Do you try to recommend and appoint people to jobs who have been active politically in the party?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

22. Once an individual has been placed in a non-merit job, is he expected to be active in the following ways?

a. vote for you \_\_\_\_\_

b. tell friends and relatives to vote \_\_\_\_\_

c. actively campaign for you \_\_\_\_\_

d. contribute money to party or campaign \_\_\_\_\_

e. gratitude \_\_\_\_\_

f. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you find that such employees do in fact:

a. vote for you \_\_\_\_\_

b. tell friends and relatives to vote \_\_\_\_\_

c. campaign for you \_\_\_\_\_

d. contribute financially \_\_\_\_\_

e. express gratitude \_\_\_\_\_

f. other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

It is common practice in many state legislatures for the governor and his staff to offer jobs in exchange for a vote on a particular bill.

24. Do you know of instances where this has happened in Oklahoma?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

25. Did this make a difference in the vote? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

26. Has this ever happened to you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

27. If you were a legislator prior to general merit legislation, do you now find this practice:

a. more common \_\_\_\_\_

b. less common \_\_\_\_\_

c. same \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

28. Do you find that the decline in patronage has weakened the position of the governor vis-a-vis the governor?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't know \_\_\_\_\_ Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

29. Should legislators have state jobs at their disposal to distribute to constituents?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

30. How would you evaluate the usefulness of patronage to legislators?

a. very useful \_\_\_\_\_

b. useful \_\_\_\_\_

c. not too useful \_\_\_\_\_

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

31. How would you evaluate the usefulness of patronage to the party?

a. very useful \_\_\_\_\_

b. useful \_\_\_\_\_

c. not too useful \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B

STATE AGENCIES WITHIN THE MERIT SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL  
ADMINISTRATION

December 1970

Oklahoma Aeronautics Commission.  
State Board of Agriculture.  
Oklahoma Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.  
State Banking Department.  
State Board of Public Affairs.  
Division of the Budget Office.  
State Health Planning Agency.  
State Bureau of Investigation.  
Oklahoma Capitol Improvement Authority.  
Capitol Maintenance - Building Superintendent.  
Central State Griffin Memorial Hospital.  
Oklahoma Cerebral Palsy Center.  
Oklahoma Civil Defense Office.  
Oklahoma Corporation Commission.  
Department of Corrections.  
State Cosmetology Board.  
Eastern Oklahoma Tuberculosis Sanatorium.  
Eastern State Hospital.  
Department of Education.

Employment Security Commission.  
State Fire Marshal's Office.  
Grand River Dam Authority.  
State Department of Health.  
State of Oklahoma Highway Department.  
Oklahoma Historical Society.  
State Industrial Court.  
Oklahoma Industrial Development and Park Department.  
Department of Welfare, Department of Public Institutions,  
Social and Rehabilitative Services.  
Commissioners of the Land Office.  
Department of Libraries.  
Oklahoma Liquefied Petroleum Gas.  
Department of Mental Health.  
The Oklahoma Military Department.  
Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education.  
Oklahoma General Hospital.  
Oklahoma State Penitentiary.  
Oklahoma State Personnel Board.  
State Board of Pharmacy.  
Professional Engineers.  
Oklahoma Real Estate Commission.  
Oklahoma State Reformatory.  
Oklahoma Public Employees Retirement System.  
Department of Public Safety.  
Securities Commission.  
State Soil Conservation Board.  
Oklahoma State Agency for Surplus Property.

Taft State Hospital.  
Oklahoma Tax Commission.  
Teachers' Retirement System.  
Oklahoma Turnpike Authority.  
State Veterans Department.  
Oklahoma State War Veterans Home Facilities.  
Oklahoma State War Veterans Home Facilities.  
Oklahoma Water Resources Board  
Department of Public Welfare  
Boley State School for Boys.  
Enid State School.  
Girls Town.  
Helena State School for Boys.  
Hissom Memorial Center.  
Pauls Valley State School.  
School for the Blind.  
School for the Deaf.  
Taft State Home.  
Taft State School for Girls.  
Whitaker State Home.  
Western Oklahoma Tuberculosis Sanatorium.  
Western State Hospital.  
Will Rogers Memorial Commission.

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