

Seventh Edition

POLITICS IN STATES AND COMMUNITIES

Thomas R. Dye



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7th Edition

Politics in States and Communities

Thomas R. Dye

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Preface

Since its first edition, *Politics in States and Communities* has maintained certain distinguishing features:

- Its focus on *politics*
- Its *comparative* approach
- Its concern with *explanation*
- Its interest in *policy*

The seventh edition continues the development of each of these themes. The focus remains on conflicts in states and communities and the structures and processes designed to manage conflict. This “conflict management” theme emphasizes the sources and nature of conflict in society, how conflict is carried on, how key decision makers in states and communities act in conflict situations, how public policies emerge and determine “who gets what.”

POLITICS

The *political conflict* theme guides the discussion of formal governmental structures: federalism, state constitutions, parties and primaries, apportionment, legislative organization, gubernatorial powers, court procedures, nonpartisanship, mayor and manager government, metropolitan government, community power, school boards and superintendents, tax systems, budget making, and so on.

This theme also guides the discussion of *illustrative case studies* in state and local politics:

- Liberalism and Conservatism in the States
- Congress Raises the Drinking Age

The States and ERA
 The Battle over Abortion
 Money in Politics
 Impeachment: Arizona's Evan Mecham
 The Lawyering of America
 The Recall of Rose Bird
 The War on Drugs
 Political Corruption
 The Radical Style: Politics in Berkeley
 The Decline of Chicago's Political Machine
 Top Bananas in the Big Apple
 Busing and Neighborhood Schools
 White Flight and the Tipping Point
 The Minority Mayors
 Wilder of Virginia: Putting Race to Rest
 Education: Back to Basics
 Revolting against Taxes
 "No-Growth" Politics and the Nimby Syndrome

These timely case studies are designed to both improve understanding and stimulate interest in state and local politics.

COMPARISON

In each chapter, *comparative analysis* is used both to describe and to explain differences among states and communities in governmental structures, political processes, and public policy. Students observe the relative ranking of their own state on such measures as

Economic development
 Education
 Urbanization
 Black populations
 Liberalism and conservatism
 Party competition
 Political participation
 Interest groups
 Governors' powers
 Judicial selection
 Crime rates
 Police protection

Educational spending
Welfare spending
Tax burdens

“Rankings of the states” are presented in clear bar graphs and plots. They enable students and instructors to assess their own state’s position in relation to all fifty states.

EXPLANATION

We want to know “what” is happening in American politics, but we also want to know “why.” *Comparative analysis* lays the groundwork for explanation. In each chapter, recent systematic research in the social sciences is summarized for undergraduate students. Difficult theoretical questions are presented clearly and concisely for undergraduates:

Democracy in the states
Politics and the popular initiative
Why federalism?
How money shifted power to Washington
Are protests effective?
The effects of party competition
Are legislators responsible policy makers?
Are school boards responsible policy makers?
Are council members responsible policy makers?
Crime and deterrence
Types of cities and forms of government
Reformism and public policy
Models of community power
How to study community power
Metropolitan government as marketplace
Explaining educational policies in the states
Explaining welfare policies in the states
Explaining state tax systems
Explaining the tax revolt

The most recent systematic social science research on these topics is presented in the seventh edition.

“Democracy and Constitutionalism in the States” (Chapter 2) is a major new effort in this edition to relate American state and local government to traditional theoretical concerns in political science. It seeks to explain what is limited by constitutional government and what the differences are between representational and direct

democracy. The initiative and referenda devices in the states provide an opportunity to explore different definitions of democracy, an opportunity not available in the study of U.S. national government. "States, Communities, and American Federalism" (Chapter 3) presents a strong theoretical argument "Why Federalism?" and a critical assessment of concepts of American federalism including the Supreme Court's notion of "representational federalism" implied in the *Garcia* case. "Community Power Structures" (Chapter 13) also presents a highly theoretical discussion of elitism, pluralism, and democracy, in the context of community decision making. Landmark studies from the Lynds's "Middletown" to Hunter's "Regional City" and Dahl's New Haven are described, and students are encouraged to examine different concepts and methods of the study of power.

■ POLICY

Public *policy* is what governments do, and state and local governments in America do many things that touch the lives of all of us. This text is divided roughly into three parts: federalism and state politics, local politics and community power, and public policy. Specific attention is devoted to policy questions in

- Crime in the states
- Police and law enforcement
- State correctional policies
- The death penalty
- Abortion
- The states and school desegregation
- Affirmative action
- The politics of higher education
- The politics of "no-growth"
- Housing and development policy
- Poverty in America
- The welfare mess
- The tax revolt
- The politics of budgeting
- Fiscal stress and cutback management

If this book has a theme, it is that states and communities in America play an important role in the political life of the nation. State and local governments do more than merely provide certain services such as education, road building, or fire protection. They also perform a vital political function by helping to resolve conflicts of interest in American society.

THOMAS R. DYE

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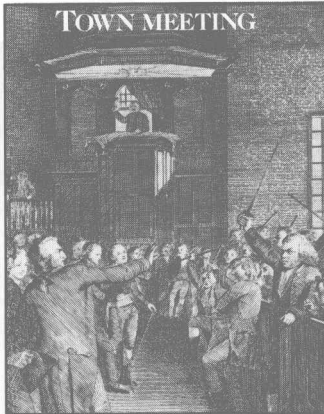
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Politics in States and Communities

■ A POLITICAL APPROACH TO STATES AND COMMUNITIES

The management of conflict is one of the basic purposes of government. Two hundred years ago, James Madison wrote that the control of “factions” was the principal function of government. He defined a faction as a number of citizens united by common interests that opposed the interests of a number of other citizens. He thought that regulating such conflict was “the principal task of modern legislation.”¹ To paraphrase Madison, the management of conflict is “the principal task” of state and local government.

Politics is the management of conflict. An understanding of “politics” in American states and communities requires an understanding of the major conflicts confronting society and an understanding of political processes and governmental organizations designed to manage conflict. State and local governments do more than provide public services such as education, highways, police and fire protection, sewage disposal, and garbage collection. These are important functions of government to be sure; but it is even more important that government deal with racial tensions, school disputes, growth problems, economic stagnation, minority concerns, poverty, drugs, crime, and violence. These problems are primarily *political* in nature; that is, people have different ideas about what should be done, or if government should do anything at all.

¹ James Madison, *The Federalist*, Number 10. New York: Modern Library, 1958.

Moreover, many of the service functions of government also engender political conflict. Even if “there is only one way to pave a street,” political questions remain. Whose street will get paved? Who will get the paving contract? Who will pay for it? Why not build a school gym instead of paving the street?

So it is appropriate that a book on *politics* in states and communities deal not only with the structure and organization of state and local government, but also with many of the central policy questions confronting American society. It is true that these problems are national in scope, but they occur in our communities and our states. And much of this book is devoted to describing how these questions arise in state and local settings, and how state and local governments confront them.

■ A COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO STATES AND COMMUNITIES

The task of political science is not only to *describe* politics and public policy in American states and communities, but to *explain* differences encountered from state to state and community to community through comparative analysis. We want to know *what* is happening in American politics, and we want to know *why*. In the past, the phrase “comparative government” applied to the study of foreign governments, but American states and communities provide an excellent opportunity for genuine comparative study, which is *comparing political institutions and behaviors from state to state and community to community in order to identify and explain similarities or differences*.

Comparison is a vital part of explanation. Only by comparing politics and public policy in different states and communities with different socioeconomic and political environments can we arrive at any comprehensive explanations of political life. Comparative analysis helps us answer the question *why*.

American states and communities provide excellent “laboratories” for applying comparative analysis. States and communities are not alike in social and economic conditions, in politics and government, or in their public policies. These differences are important assets in comparative study because they enable us to search for relationships between different socioeconomic conditions, political system characteristics, and policy outcomes. For example, if differences among states and communities in educational policies are closely associated with differences in economic resources or in party politics, then we may assume that economic resources or party politics help “explain” educational policies.

State politics are often affected by unique historical circumstances. (See Figure 1–1, Table 1–1.) Louisiana is distinctive because of its French-Spanish colonial background, and the continuing influence of this background on its politics today. For nine years Texas was an independent republic (1836–1845) before it was annexed as a state by Congress. Eleven southern states were involved in a bloody war against the federal government from 1861 to 1865. Hawaii has a unique history and culture, combining the influence of Polynesian, Chinese, Japanese, and haole civilizations. Alaska’s rugged climate and geography and physical isolation set it apart. Wisconsin and Minnesota reflect the Scandinavian influences of their settlers, and Utah reflects the religious influences of its Mormon settlers. The states of the Deep South—South Carolina,

