13 reprinted, unchanged, in Harold [redacted]
Gosnell, Grass Roots Politics
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This article was taken verbatim and unchanged from Alfred de Grazia's totally independent study as a graduate student in 1940.

CHAPTER VIII

LONG'S LOUISIANA

LOUISIANA is a much discussed but relatively little known state. Its lurid politics and picturesque traditions have in recent years provided a happy-hunting-ground for journalists. However, no scientific treatment has been made of the peculiar yet significant problems of the 2,000,000 people of diverse races, origins, and culture who inhabit the bayous, the hills, and the cotton fields of the state. Although a good many writers have drawn grotesque caricatures of the Louisiana political scene and have pointed with contempt at Huey P. Long's dictatorial state, none have illuminated the workings of his machine sufficiently to indicate how the rise of a Long in other areas might be prevented.

The limitations of the quantitative method of studying political behavior are nowhere so evident as in the study of Louisiana and its

leader. Even in a two-party state the behavior of the voters in primary elections does not follow as regular a pattern as in the final elections. In Louisiana where the final election is a foregone conclusion, exclusive reliance must be placed upon the primaries. The lack of a two-party tradition means that the election process itself is not adequately safeguarded. In the northern states reliance is placed upon bi-partisan boards for the conduct of elections. While this system is far from perfect, it is much better than the Louisiana system, where the control of the election machinery is vested in interested persons who may or may not be properly watched. Various election investigations show that the secrecy of the ballot, the honesty of the count, and the integrity of the entire election have been frequently violated in Louisiana.[1] Under these circumstances it is extremely difficult to test rational hypotheses of voting behavior. The election returns may reflect the cleverness of the vote manipulators, not the viewpoints of the voters.

Before the operation of the Long machine from 1925 to 1941 can be understood, something must be known of the background of Louisiana politics and the history and composition of Louisiana society.

Louisiana is not a typical southern state. Its sixty-four parishes have an unusual diversity of racial, religious, and occupational groups. The state was 37 per cent urban in 1920 and 42 per cent urban in 1940. Negroes, who accounted for 36.9 per cent of the population in 1930, are concentrated chiefly along the northeastern Mississippi river basin, and in the northwestern corner of the state. They have not voted in large numbers since 1896 when 130,334 were registered.[2] In 1900 this number dropped to 5,320[3] and in October, 1938 to 1,123.[4] Most of this Negro vote was in New Orleans. In 1928, 42 parishes had no Negro registrants. At the peak of Long's power, an applicant for suffrage, in addition to paying a poll tax and fulfilling certain other requirements, was legally required to demonstrate his ability to read and write unless he had "character" and "understanding," that is, was well disposed to the good order and happiness of the United States and the state, and understood the duties and obligations of citizenship under a republican form of government, and was

able to give a reasonable interpretation of the United States Constitution.[5] In 1934 a constitutional amendment was passed which abolished the poll tax. This was not, however, followed by an increased registration, since the local machines would pay the tax for a poor man before repeal. To bar Negroes from the Democratic primaries, the Democratic party forbade any Negro membership. But events showed that with or without the vote, the Negro was feared politically by southern demagogues and insecurity-ridden whites.

The number of foreign-born in Louisiana is small—only 1.7 per cent of the population. Nevertheless, the effect of a division into native and foreign-born is simulated by the difference between population of the northern parishes, British in origin, and that of southern parishes, in large part of French origin. These two large groups have not yet wholly merged. Aggressive symbols directed against one group by a politician find receptive ears in the other. The Ku Klux Klan, for example, found large numbers of followers in the northern hills of Louisiana. Baptist Protestantism is a far cry from Catholicism and there are many sources of friction between them. Consequently, in Louisiana local politics the voters tend to demand identity of religion between themselves and their representative, though in national politics they most frequently demand a submergence of the irreconcilable religious issue in order to achieve other common goals desired by both the northern and southern parts of the state.

Of the church members 13 years of age and over, 56 per cent are Roman Catholics.[6] The Protestants are thus almost as numerous as the Catholics but they are split into some thirty or more denominations, with the Baptists and Methodists outnumbering the others. The Jewish congregations make up less than 2 per cent of the church membership. The Catholics are concentrated in some twenty-eight parishes with the Protestants holding the balance. While anti-clericalism has not been an issue, the differences between the two main religious groups sometimes furnishes the basis for political divisions.

It is well then, to keep clearly in mind the two social problems in Louisiana—the race problem and the religious problem. Their im-

portance in any study of "rational" political behavior cannot be overemphasized.

For a southern state, Louisiana has an unusual amount of economic resources and a wide variety of occupations, founded on distinct geographical divisions. The southern French region is characterized by marshes and lowlands, with trapping, fishing and farming. In the hilly northern part of the state where the soil is poorer, are some of the richest oil fields in the world. Throughout the central and eastern part, cotton farming occupies a prominent place, while scattered over the state are urban centers with their industrial, refining, and commercial outlets. New Orleans, of course, is a cosmopolitan city of nearly half a million and a seaport of the first rank. Its vote is represented in three parishes, Orleans, Jefferson, and St. Bernard.

The cotton farming region of Louisiana is typical of a large part of the deep South. The tenant farmer lives in a hell of poverty and hopelessness; the waste of forests and inefficient use of land are obstacles to cultural and economic advancement. The Louisiana rural population there has a lack of purpose, and a bewilderment in the face of man-made and natural forces which account for many of the peculiar traits of Louisiana politics.[7] Housing conditions in large sections of the state are terribly inadequate; prices, and therefore incomes, are unstable; and there is too little capital for efficient farm management.[8] Economic nationalism had destroyed the cotton farmer's income. In the labor market Negroes offer great competition to the whites. There was no security in Long's Louisiana because the present was dismal and the future more so.

Evidences of social disorganization in the general Louisiana scene made it necessary to seek more exact indices of a disorganized public. The "rational" reaction would be to use political devices, which are specifically designed for that purpose, to correct economic and social defects. But many previous studies have pointed out that politics need not be "rational," that political campaigns may be fought over completely insignificant and meaningless matters. As William G. Sumner, Vilfredo Pareto, Graham Wallas, Harold Lasswell and many others have pointed out, people may feel that something is wrong but

do not inevitably react in such a way as to solve those problems. They may, in the absence of proper training, react in any way which simply relieves tension.[9]

Following this line of thought, various social indices were examined in the hope of finding striking disparities between the behavior of Louisiana and that of other states. The results, however, were not striking. Louisiana ranked in the first quarter of the states in homicides and lynchings during the years 1918-1927.[10] In 1930, only South Carolina exceeded Louisiana in illiteracy. Over 7 per cent of the native Louisiana whites were illiterate and, since the whole scale of education is adjusted accordingly, there was also a high proportion of semi-literate persons. Together with Georgia, Louisiana was last among the southern states in the increase in average number of days attended by each pupil enrolled in 1920 and 1930.[11]

There are no data available on the number of civic organizations which mold public opinion in Louisiana. However, subjective estimates indicate that the number is too small for a healthy discussion of public issues. Some of the political organizations were by no means spontaneous, but arose at the instigation of some entrenched interest—political or economic. For example, the "Square Dealers" of 1935 were composed mainly of Standard Oil workers and discharged state employees. They drilled with firearms and for a time there was a general expectancy of a minor revolution.[12] The Constitutional League, formed by the "old gang politicians" to contest Longism and called by Long the "Constipational League," disbanded when he won the 1930 election.

The Louisiana newspapers do not have wide circulation in the hinterland. Hundreds of thousands of poor whites came to look to Huey P. Long for news and editorials, and his paper, which spoke their language, gained ever increasing prestige.[13]

John Stuart Mill once stated that the prerequisites for a republican form of government were: "(1) That the people should be willing to receive it. (2) That they should be willing and able to do what is necessary for its preservation. (3) That they should be willing and

able to fulfill the duties and discharge the functions which it imposes on them.''[14] Louisiana satisfied none of these conditions.

The post-Civil War political leadership in Louisiana had never been capable of directing a bewildered and insecure population along progressive lines. The issues around which political opinion centered, however, are relatively discernible. Reconstruction left as destructive a blight upon Louisiana as on any other southern state.[15] Planters who had ruled before the Civil War were eventually restored to dignity and power. Gradually, however, they were dispossessed by the depression which settled over the entire South, losing bit by bit their old economic preeminence. Pressed by economic insecurity and born to rule, they maintained their command over southern politics long after their ideas had become stagnant and their philosophy moribund. Their slogans were outworn, their conventions were absurd, their respectability became pomposity. But new forces were at work in Louisiana. Yankees had come in to exploit its resources. New Orleans attracted gamblers and gangsters whose urbanizing influences cannot be overlooked. The city acquired a political machine similar to its northern prototypes. Louisiana, too, had a Tammany Hall. Dying aristocracy, however, held the state for a long time. In other southern states startling figures flashed on the political stage, heralds of new orders. For example, ''Pitchfork Ben'' Tillman, (1847-1918) of South Carolina, for many years agitated in Congress for the forgotten man in the South. But Louisiana was safe for the landed oligarchy and the new absentee industrial magnates until Huey Long entered the arena.

In the words of Howard W. Odum: ''The emerging picture is thus a logical one—the absence of economic issues in politics, the lack of experience and training in fiscal affairs, the political 'machine' politics of a Solid South, the dilemmas of modern issues to be attacked, and the whole question of the place of large race and propertyless classes in a region theoretically the most democratic in its clamor for the rights of the common man.''[16]

It is not enough to say that Louisiana gave birth to Long because the people were ignorant and corrupt. What types of ignorance and

corruption produced the Long machine? At the risk of putting the cart before the horse, the answer will be sought by describing the Long machine at its peak, and then tracing its origin.

Long was at the peak of his power when he was assassinated by a political opponent on September 8, 1935. How he had consolidated his power after his election to the governorship in 1928, and what that power was may be summarized as follows:

The Governor, originally Long himself, and later one of his trusted lieutenants, had the right to call out the state militia without the interference of the courts.

The courts were deprived of all control over voting registration records.

The state administration had been given sole right to name polling booth commissioners.

All teachers and municipal employees were subject to state control and not to their respective local governments.

New Orleans had been deprived of revenues at the same time that its expenses were increasing, a situation which increased its dependence upon the state machine.

Baton Rouge Parish, once hostile to Long, had been made subject to him through the enactment of a law which gave the state administration the right to appoint enough police jurors from Long's adherents to overcome the anti-Long members who were popularly elected.

The city administration of Alexandria was legislated out of office.

Complete loyalty of all state employees to Huey Long was exacted.

A system which replenished campaign coffers through forced contributions of machine employees was enforced.

The legislature was at best a petty obstacle to Long—at worst a "rubber stamp."[17]

The Louisiana courts permitted an unusually broad interpretation of the police power, which enabled the state to interfere in many local affairs.

A plain-clothes state police responsible only to Long was powerful.

There is little indication that Long had any elaborate or well-thought-out social program. His "share-the-wealth" program had great appeal but little content.[18] His political and economic attitudes were as juvenile as Frank Hague's or Big Bill Thompson's. He loved the game of politics and played it for all it was worth, foregoing economic advantage in order to gain power.

The lack of any crystalized public opinion in Louisiana, noted above, is apparent from a study of election statistics. Fascism of the Italian and German sort presupposes highly conflicting and mutually exclusive parties contending for power. This was not so in Louisiana. Few people knew what was needed. They could only feel bitter. Long, unlike Mussolini or Hitler, was not forced into extreme reaction by the intensity of opposing social forces. Mass apathy enabled him to do what he wanted without violent opposition.

"Why," asked Raymond Gram Swing in 1935, "do these committee members take it lying down? . . . How can they put up with his bullying, his unsavory, blasphemous, overbearing language? They do not seem to be afraid of him; they appear to like him. Psychology explains the dictators of Europe as appealing to the innate yearning for father-authority in most people. But Huey is no father-figure. He is a grown-up bad boy."[19]

Why did Louisiana go as far as it did on the road to dictatorship? What part did the southern type of party system play? In the first place, where public opinion makes no demands, the legislators, accustomed to inactivity and job politics, can more readily adjust themselves to an executive who does all the planning and acting. In the second place, by virtue of being a one-party state, Louisiana could not very readily participate in the economic battles of national politics. Possibly the democratic primary might raise a class issue, but state politics, *in themselves,* are nowadays singularly free from major issues. Whereas a northern voter may have two chances to sift out a desirable candidate, the southern voter has only one, except in a run-off primary election.

It is proper to distinguish between that which has been ascribed to Long and that which is justifiably attributable to him. Some maintain that Long made use of economic appeals to a considerable extent, on the other hand, there are those who assert that he did not use economic symbols to the extent often reported.

The commentaries on Long show a general belief that he appealed to the poor whites of northern Louisiana and gradually to all the downtrodden people of the state. Judging from his many speeches, Long was acutely conscious of economic conflicts and reveled in old-fashioned Populist anti-corporation slogans. His declamations about the inequalities of educational opportunities show a certain sensitivity to some types of social injustice. His pleas against poll taxes were also an appeal to the poor man. But he was by no means an advocate of the right of labor to organize. One of his major lieutenants was a violent anti-unionist. Consistency in such matters may be foolish politics.

Long was, then, partially a reformer and partially a cynical politician. He evidently used economic symbols because they sounded good to him and because they worked. But they didn't bind him. Carleton Beals has commended that "Hard as Huey hammered the special interests, he was not averse . . . to take their money and aid if offered."[20] An astute analyst of the southern mind, W. J. Cash, said of Long:

> In his jesting humor, in his dealings with the skeptical tribe of reporters, he often delighted, indeed, to represent himself as simply a brazen master-manipulator at the calculus of demagoguery. And he never let his sentiment and his vision get in his way when any question of practical politics or boodle was at stake. Nevertheless, if you look into his serious deliverances, it is hard to avoid the sense that there was in him an almost wistful conviction that he was the destined liberator of the people who shouted after his car.[21]

Long was conscious and proud of his cynicism. He said of one of his legislators, "I bought him like a sack of potatoes." He would switch from pajamas to night-shirt in order to be photographed for his hill-billy constitutents. In southern Louisiana, so the story goes, he would say, "I don't drink" with a leer and wink; in northern

Louisiana the same statement was made with a stern and pious look. He gathered his strength in 1924 from the northern dry Baptists, and campaigned in 1926 for Edwin S. Broussard, a southern wet Catholic. If a man of principle is to be distinguished by the men with whom he refuses to keep company, Long had no principles, for he accepted any man or organization if it suited his purposes. Because he was full of sound and fury, he was regarded as more of a dictator than he actually was. He was frequently at odds with the press because it painted him in the black colors and compared him with Hitler and Mussolini. When all is said and done, however, Long was more of a master organizer and machine politician than a force particularly destructive of human values.

The Rise of Huey Long

Long had barely reached the eligible age of thirty when he decided to run for governor in 1924.[22] He was practically without organized support, but had benefited by some good publicity on the Public Service Commission to which he had been elected in 1918. Running as a dark horse, he was determined to give the other two Democratic candidates, Hewitt Bouanchaud, supported by the state machine, and Henry Fuqua, supported by the New Orleans city ring, stiff competition. Despite heavy rains which made country roads impassable for many of his constitutents, Long beat both of his opponents in the primary vote outside of New Orleans. But the city vote threw him out of the race and Fuqua won the run-off election.

The issues of the primary of 1924 were varied: The Ku Klux Klan pitted the northern section of the state, where it flourished, against the southern section, where Catholics predominated. Huey straddled the issue as best he could and refused to commit himself on the abolition of the Klan. Instead he introduced novel ideas and issues into the campaign. He attacked high taxes and demanded their abolition. He promised to disband the Conservation Commission and permit poor country folk to fish and hunt without charge. He attacked the large corporations as oppressors of the poor man. He advocated free school books and a concrete highway system throughout the state.

And he seldom missed an opportunity to attack his opponents with unprecedented viciousness.

His organization support was practically negligible. His greatest asset was his contacts with the people, on whose doors he had knocked as a young salesman, and to whom he and his wife mailed campaign circulars. His superb evangelism and campaign oratory, added to his early experience and "common touch," constituted a formidable political weapon among the illiterate and backward country folk. The final count in the 1924 primary testifies to the effectiveness of these methods and Long never changed them. It is important to note that in this first campaign Long did not resort to the ingenious and fraudulent voting practices which later became part of his technique. As a result of his showing in this election, many political opportunists jumped on his bandwagon and the beginnings of a powerful machine were created.

The French parishes of southern Louisiana where Long received few votes in the 1924 primary, were predominantly Catholic, and very much in favor of repeal. The northern part of the state, Long's main support, was predominantly Protestant, anti-Catholic, and staunchly prohibitionist. The cleavage between Long's country and city votes was more clear cut than that between his northern and southern votes.

Maps and scatter diagrams are somewhat helpful in determining from what social groups Huey Long drew his main strength in 1924. The absence of relationship between the vote for Long and that of later elections in which he or his henchmen were candidates, indicates the lack of a machine in the first Long election; this lack soon disappeared. There was likewise no high degree of inverse relationship for his opponents in 1924. Joseph Ransdell, who was supported by Long in the senatorial campaign of 1924, did well in many parishes where Long ran poorly and vice versa. This is explained by the fact that Ransdell was the choice of the state machine. He was, moreover, a traditional ornament in state politics, having been senator for many years.

Maps and charts are not sufficient to show a relationship between

Longism and the vote of the low income classes, despite the statements that Long was the poor man's candidate. There are poor parishes in the south of Louisiana as well as the north, and here the rumors of Long's attachments to the Klan and his Protestant dry background nullified the effects of economic deprivations. A more thorough technique is necessary to make allowance for the Catholic vote. This might show a definite tendency for the poverty of the parish to be a strong factor in explaining its attachment to Long.[23] Long was a smart politician. He realized that his support from the northern country parishes was loyal but limited. He had to win the south and the machine in order to control the state.

In 1926, Edwin S. Broussard, a Creole Catholic from the South, sought re-election to the United States Senate on a wet repeal platform and was opposed by a Protestant dry. Long, a Baptist dry, gave Broussard a rousing support that won the primary election for him and the affection of many French voters. The anomaly of the combination is shown in the scatter diagram of the Long primary vote in 1924 and the Broussard primary vote in 1926. There is a slight inverse relationship, showing that where Broussard was weakest, Long was strongest.

In the 1928 primary, when Long again ran for governor, the northern and southern parishes gave him enough votes to defeat the New Orleans' machine candidate, Congressman Riley Wilson.[24] Lieutenant-Governor O. H. Simpson ran with the support of the state machine. Though again he lost New Orleans, Long carried the rural parishes by a landslide in the first balloting, and, although short of a majority, was so likely to get it that the opposition collapsed. Simpson decided to support Long, and Wilson withdrew from the race. This automatically insured Long's election as governor.

What do the scatter diagrams show for this primary election? As might be expected, there is no close relationship between the Long vote in 1924 and vote in 1928. Long had gained the support of new elements in the population. For example, Cameron and Evangeline parishes in the southern part of the state, which had given him 14 per cent and 13 per cent of their votes respectively in 1924, now gave

him 74 per cent and 73 per cent. These are extreme shifts, however. There is no close relationship between Long's primary votes and economic status by parishes since he now had a majority in both poor and rich French parishes.

Long had been consolidating his popular forces between 1924 and 1928. Now, as governor, he began to build his machine. He immediately forced the passage of bills allowing him large funds which he could use for political purposes. When he called a special session of the legislature to impose a tax on oil, impeachment proceedings were begun against him, backed by Standard Oil and other business interests. By clever manipulation of faithful Senators, Long beat the charges and promptly struck back. He succeeded in removing a number of state employees who had seemed unfriendly during the impeachment proceedings. He spent millions on highway construction in a manner that favored his friends and punished his enemies. He doled out payments in little strips to the parishes which pleased him.

In other state studies it has been possible to compare the voting figures in the final elections of Democratic or Republican candidates with the figures for the presidential candidates in that state. The one-party system in Louisiana makes such comparisons difficult, since everyone unites after the primary in support of the Democratic presidential candidate. But, though significant relationships between primary candidates and the Democratic presidential candidates cannot be expected, there may be significant likenesses between the vote for candidates of the same faction at the different primary elections. A study of such relationships in the 1920 Illinois Republican primary[25] showed that one of the Republican candidates for senator, Frank L. Smith, had profited to a great extent from the support of the Thompson-Lundin-Small machine and that consequently there was a very close connection in almost every county and Chicago ward between the size of Smith's vote and that of Thompson for mayor in 1918 and Small for governor in 1920. However, there was less of a relationship between the Smith votes for 1920 and 1926. When Small's vote for governor in the 1920 primary is compared with his votes in 1924 and 1928, a somewhat closer voting tradition is apparent.

How does Louisiana compare with Illinois? There was no relationship between the Long and Ransdell votes in 1924 or between the Long vote in 1924 and the Broussard vote in 1926, although Long supported both of these candidates. There was only a slight similarity between the Long vote of 1930 and the vote for O. K. Allen for governor in 1932, although Allen was closely tied to Long. It may, therefore, be concluded that Huey Long had to start with hardly any organization and that he had to bargain as he went along, consolidating his gains until he built up a strong state-wide machine. Thus the similarity between the source of Long's vote in 1928 and in 1930 is noticeable, but there is no association of his vote with any social and economic groupings in the state—at least none that can be isolated through census data. His opposition can be isolated only in terms of personalities and interests; it is known, for example, that much of the opposition to Long in Caddo Parish and East Baton Rouge came from the Standard Oil Company.

Two things are striking about Louisiana politics during Long's political life. First, Long's support was mostly a personal endorsement and not support of his program of social reform. Most of his running mates in 1928 lost though Long himself won.[26] Secondly, Long's candidates in separate elections and his machine candidates during his entire hegemony could not count on a strictly "Long majority" in the population.[27] This seems to indicate that Louisiana politics were based on "bread and butter" patronage and not long-term issues. A constantly shifting base of support showed that local machines were very active and supported no one who would not literally support them.

In most of the scatter diagrams on the Louisiana primary campaigns extreme variations appear from one election to another in a number of counties. People do not change their long-term political and economic views as rapidly as the diagrams indicate. The most powerful single factor, therefore, in those great changes was the parish machine. It distorts the picture which would perhaps otherwise be drawn by economic factors. This tendency becomes more evident when we remember that political machines are generally

stronger in the low income than in the high income parishes. Other evidence of the machine's power is in the manner in which the parish votes are clustered. For example, whereas in the Long election of 1924 only three parishes are located anywhere near the mean of the distribution, seventeen parishes are below 15 per cent and twelve are above 65 per cent. Ordinarily the greatest cluster of county (parish) votes centers around the median point. But the machine in any parish is either for or against a candidate, and if its power is strong, the parish will be strongly for or against the candidate. Another possibility is that great issues may have split the localities into quite opposite camps. But the votes for Ransdell in 1924 and Broussard in 1926 also had high variations and yet they never represented live issues. Consequently it is inescapable that the local machine was the key to the problem. As might be expected, the distribution was more nearly normal in the presidential elections.

Later elections showed a more normal distribution. This is partially accounted for by the growth of the Long machine which gained control of the parish machines and caused a general uniformity in parish voting behavior. In the primary elections, whether northern or southern, the relationship between candidates of the same faction tended not to be as close as in the final election.[28] Deals were made by the candidates with the localities and there were hardly any issues to hold support over any period of time. Only a rare man like Huey Long could introduce enough discipline into local machines to guarantee their loyalty. Long was creating a real dynasty just before he was assassinated, and his followers carried on with a machine stronger that any he had ever had. They were tied closely together in popular support. There was a fairly close relationship between the vote for O. K. Allen for governor in 1932 and in 1936, though not as close what might be expected. The votes for John H. Overton for governor in 1932, A. J. Ellender for senator, Richard W. Leche for governor in 1936, and Earl Long in February, 1940, were similar in many parishes, although local machines deserted the state machine for various reasons. The 1936 primary elections in Louisiana offer an example of machine and factional cohesion that is unparalleled in ex-

isting studies of American voting behavior. There was almost a perfect relationship in that year between the votes for Leche, Ellender, and Allen, each drawing his strength in almost the exact proportion from the individual parishes. Huey Long left an amazingly well-disciplined machine. Unfortunately, only a governor was elected in 1940, so that it is impossible to ascertain whether there were great changes in the Long organization between 1936 and 1940.

The conclusion, as it affects the American party system, becomes evident. Important issues rarely touch the primaries. In a state without significant final elections the electoral system contributes to the degeneration of public opinion and the frustration of rational politics. The one-party system and the economic and social problems of Louisiana seem to complement each other.

It is a striking fact, apparent from a study of the election returns, that the same type of southern political party system which fostered the evasion of issues and the building of a strong personal government, also limited the cohesive powers of the machine over a period of time. That there was little relationship between Long's vote in 1924 and in later elections and a high cohesion among the later Long machine candidates and himself, was expected. However, there was also less relationship between members of the machine and Long than was found between candidates of the same machine in northern states in the final elections. The reasons for such an occurrence are: (1) A low crystallization of public opinion, as indicated above; (2) the fact that most voters in Louisiana are Democrat and therefore can move easily from one faction of the party to another. There are no legal or psychological barriers to changing loyalties—no party tradition; no strain on a life-long Republican who tries to become a Democrat; no obstacles to national political alignments; no differences as substantial as those between Democrats and Republicans in the North; and finally, no single party machine which endures over a number of years. By 1936, the Long machine had become complete master of the state, but still these underlying factors made the foundations of the machine insecure.

There is little doubt that the local politicians in Louisiana had

strong machines in the parishes and could divert, in many cases, a commanding number of votes by shifting personal allegiances. An illustration or two may suffice. Orleans Parish, which contains mainly the city of New Orleans, has long been under the domination of a kind of Tammany Hall. Long was opposed from the outset of his career by the "Old Regulars" of the city. Notwithstanding his general motto, "If you can't lick 'em, join 'em!" Long was unable to break the hold of the machine on New Orleans with all its spoils and votes. In 1924, he received 18 per cent of the city's primary vote, in 1928, 23 per cent; and in 1930, 47 per cent. The marked change between 1928 and 1930 was not caused by the surrender of the machine. It still fought bitterly, but Huey controlled the state machine and manipulated it ingeniously. His agile mind conceived of much devilment. He waged open warfare against "lying newspapers," and his "sonofabitch" book, which contained the names of enemies marked for future retribution, grew ragged with use. State highway funds went only to supporters. Robert Maestri, New Orleans business man who was one of Huey's earliest backers, ended up as mayor. Huey wrested jobs from city control, ranted against the "evil metropolis" and used the militia to raid gambling houses. He resorted to the device of increasing state functions and thereby state patronage inside the city; for example, the Dock Board was granted additional funds for public works. Using the legislature's constitutional prerogatives and his own semi-legal or illegal devices, he showed the New Orleans machine by the vote of 1930 that it must either join him or be dissolved. It made its peace with Huey and has remained loyal to the Long machine up to the present time.[20]

On the other hand, Caddo Parish, located in the extreme northwestern part of the state and containing the city of Shreveport, was consistently opposed to Long, giving him 40 per cent of its votes in 1924, 39 per cent in 1928, and 41 per cent in 1930. The main-spring of the anti-Long forces there was the Standard Oil Company which maintained large fields and refineries in the region; the mayor of Shreveport was also a bitter opponent of Long. Standard Oil alternately made peace with and waged war against Long, who was not

so much hostile to the company as he was unreliable. The successors of Long made peace with the company and captured the parish, but Sam Jones was favorable to the business interests and took the parish away from the machine in 1940.

Long was assassinated in 1935 and a group of less skillful politicians inherited his domain. They prospered for years under his lingering shadow, until they were decimated by a federal prosecutor and internal dissension. An orator at Huey Long's funeral had drawn the future with great intuition: "To you, the officials of state, the companions of political strategy, crusaders in a common cause, count memorable the day you first heard mention of his name. The time will come when to say that you even touched his hand will be the most potent interest in your life." For four years after Huey's death, the men who divided his leadership had little to fear and much to enjoy. In 1936, Allen was elected governor and Ellender and Leche senators with greater majorities than were ever given to Long. It was a rash man who dared to criticize the martyred Huey. His name mingled with that of the patron saints on the lips of the Cajun child at his nightly prayers.

Significant changes occurred, however, in the character of the machine. None of the masters bore the stamp of the avenging angel peculiar to Huey. In consequence, and not because the new bosses had less power than Huey, the press and the nation ceased talking about the Louisiana dictatorship. The bases of their support should be noted. While Huey rode to power on the back of the northern parishes, the popularity of his successors depended more and more on the New Orleans machine.[30] As rumor and gossip reached the hinterlands of the Babylonian practices in the old witch city, the popularity of Huey's henchmen declined. External conditions were little changed in the state. More grafting was done by state officials; less roads were built; and the new leaders were pale reflections of the dead genius. The general population felt that government was not entirely pure and decent in their state, but public lethargy needed more than a few ills to dissipate it. The state administration entrenched itself with the powers inherited from Long. It controlled

election practices and administration, assessments, and even the courts. It used state jobs, paving contracts, and free school books as Huey taught it to use them. What ultimately destroyed the machine was its own crudity, its avarice, and a dogged and brilliant federal prosecutor.[31]

When indictments of state officials began, there was a kind of popular uprising. The reputable business men and civic leaders, middle class citizens who had never become quite acclimated to the rowdy Long type of government, moved in the direction of reform. Their representative, Sam Houston Jones, a lawyer from Cameron Parish ran for governor in January, 1940 on a platform to re-establish democratic government in Louisiana, though of course, at the same time to respect "all the good that Huey did."[32] He was opposed by Earl Long, Huey's brother, who promised to clean house if re-elected, and by James A. Noe, a disgruntled member of the Long machine. In the election, Long forged slightly ahead of Jones, with Noe a poor third, but when Noe threw his support to Jones, Long lost the run-off. A new regime was "in." But the basic conditions for desultory democracy remain. Unless Jones shows hitherto unrevealed powers, or unless a Huey Long with greater consistency and less cynicism arises, Louisiana democracy will function only feebly.[33]

LOUISIANA—PERCENTAGE FOR HUEY LONG OF TOTAL VOTE FOR GOVERNOR, JANUARY, 1924

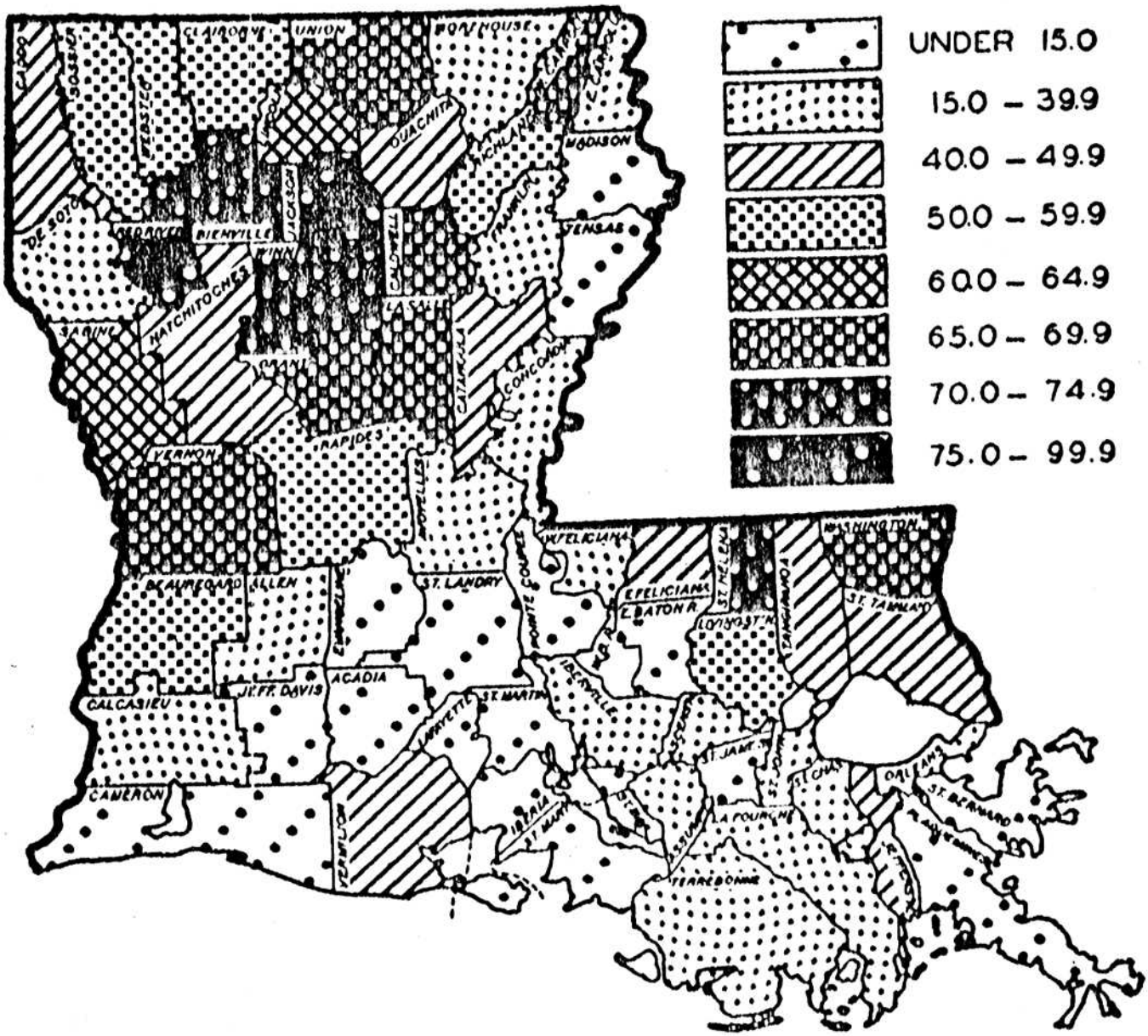

Figure 16

LOUISIANA—PERCENTAGE FOR EARL LONG OF TOTAL VOTE FOR GOVERNOR, FEBRUARY, 1940

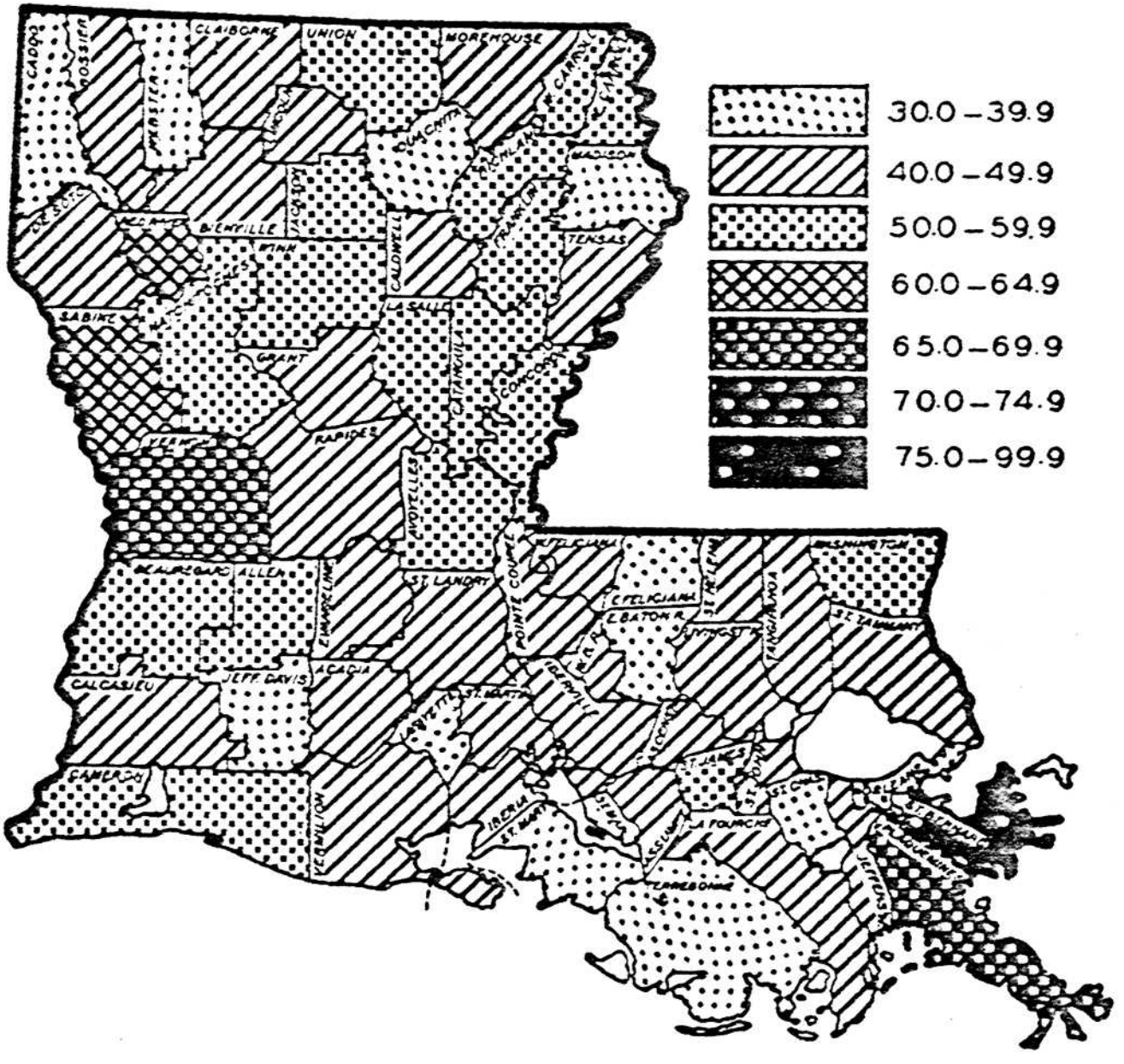

Figure 17