

NEW ENGLAND
STATE
POLITICS

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BY DUANE LOCKARD

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CHAPTER 11



ETHNIC ELEMENTS IN NEW ENGLAND POLITICS

SEARCH as you will, there is no other part of the United States with a larger proportion of ethnic minorities in its population than New England. The New England that once was—the Pilgrim-Puritan society of history and legend—is no more, nor has it existed for a long time. As early as the Revolutionary War, Puritanism was more a remembrance of the past than an active force in society. When in the middle of the nineteenth century Hawthorne published *The Scarlet Letter* in condemnation of the moral decadence of seventeenth-century Puritanism, few rose to the defense of the moral code of the founders. Some traditional Congregationalists defended the old order on theological grounds, but most readers of Hawthorne's best-known work accepted his strictures without cavil.

In the course of Hawthorne's life, however, New England began to undergo a change of even greater significance than that implied in the decline of Puritanism. In his youth (he was born in 1804) the people of New England were remarkably homogeneous at least in an ethnic sense. At mid-century one person in ten in New England was foreign-born. Nor were the immigrants of the same ethnic stock as the Yankees to whose society they came. Increasingly the immigrants were from Ireland and from Central Europe. Many were Catholics.

Most New England Protestants took a dim view of this increasing challenge to their orthodoxy. True, Yankee industrialists had invited the hungry and dispossessed to New England to work in their factories, but the mass of the workers and farmers were far from happy about the waves of immigrants. Not only were the newcomers "different"; far worse, they were cheap labor and a threat to jobs. Physical violence was not uncommon; in 1834 a convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts, was burned to the ground by a howling mob, and twenty years later a Catholic church in

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Dorchester was blown up with gunpowder. Economic and social discrimination was prevalent. In the confused political atmosphere of the decade before the Civil War, the anti-foreigner and Anti-Catholic Know Nothing party flourished in New England. The 1854 election in Massachusetts was a sweep for the Know Nothings; they won not only the governorship but all the other state officer elections, and all but two members of the General Court were pledged to this anti-Papist crusade. The following year similar if somewhat less comprehensive victories followed in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire.¹

But where in 1850 one in ten was foreign-born, in 1920, nearly a quarter of New England's population was foreign-born and another third (actually 36 per cent) had been born of foreign or mixed parentage. The heaviest waves of immigration came into lower New England, but New Hampshire absorbed large numbers of immigrants too, and even Maine and Vermont were not far behind the national average in the proportion of foreign-born population, as Table 38 illustrates.

TABLE 38
Proportions of Ethnic Minorities in New England, 1920 and 1950

	<i>Per cent of population foreign-born</i>		<i>Per cent of population born of foreign or mixed parentage</i>	
	<i>1920</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>1920</i>	<i>1950</i>
U.S.	14.5%	7.5%	23.9%	17.5%
Maine	14.0	8.1	21.2	25.2
Vermont	12.7	7.6	22.5	18.0
New Hampshire	20.6	10.9	28.4	25.2
Massachusetts	28.3	15.3	39.3	33.4
Rhode Island	29.2	14.3	41.6	34.8
Connecticut	27.7	14.8	39.2	33.3

New England's proportion of "foreign white stock" population (which combines the foreign-born with those born of foreign and mixed parents) is greater than that of any other region. The percentages given below refer to the proportion of foreign white stock in the total population of the regions as of 1950.²

¹ See Ray A. Billington, *The Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860, A Study of the Origins of American Nativism*, New York, 1938, p. 388.

² Or, one may view the proportion of ethnic minorities in New England this

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New England	46.5%	West South Central	9.7%
Middle Atlantic	41.4	East South Central	2.3
East North Central	27.0	South Atlantic	7.4
West North Central	20.9	Pacific	28.7
		Mountain	19.4

New England is of course not the only region of the country with political problems arising out of ethnic heterogeneity. In New York, Buffalo, Chicago—in most of our larger cities—there are heavy concentrations of ethnic minorities to whom politicians make constant appeals. The German in Wisconsin, the Swede in Minnesota, the Czechoslovakian in Nebraska—all get special attention at election time. The New England situation is not unique; it is the same problem accentuated.

Ethnic Groups and Public Policy

What are the political consequences of the ethnic minorities? First, and perhaps the most fundamental fact of all, the nationalities that have chosen New England have been primarily those from Catholic parts of the world. Consequently there are divisions in the society which stem from the philosophic and social differences between Protestantism and Catholicism. One need not subscribe to the sentiment of James Gould Cozzens in his most recent work, *By Love Possessed*, to arrive at this conclusion. There he had one of his characters say: "Yet does any free man, without grief, without shame, without fear, see names so proud a hundred years ago in their birthright of liberty as New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut little by little in the last fifty years degraded to designate virtual papal states?"¹

On many questions of public policy, the two great religious communities, Catholic and Protestant, come into direct and often heated conflict. In Connecticut and Massachusetts the purveyance of birth-control information is forbidden by law. The laws themselves date from Victorian times and were not passed in response

way: the region has 12.3 per cent of all foreign white stock in the country, but only 6.2 per cent of the nation's population resides in New England. The data of this table are drawn from a Special Report of the Census Bureau, *Nativity and Parentage*, 1950 Census Vol. IV, Part 3, Ch. A, Table 2. The regions are the standard ones employed by the Census Bureau.

¹ James Gould Cozzens, *By Love Possessed*, New York, 1957, p. 229.

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to Catholic political pressure, but no one would deny that today the only reason they remain on the statute books is the support of the Catholic community. Similarly throughout New England various aspects of educational policy are bitterly debated in religious terms. In many matters where the law and public morals become interrelated—and where not infrequently great issues of civil rights are inescapably involved—the religious divisions in the New England states pose grave political problems.

Thus in some respects the fact that so many of New England's immigrants were Catholic is likely to be of greater long-run significance than ethnic factors *per se*. Over time ethnic distinctions and attachments are worn away; religious differences are unlikely to be. When the desire to be socially acceptable comes into conflict with emphasis upon ethnic associations, it is the latter which gives way to the former. Indeed it is the view of some observers that the sense of ethnic identification is now kept alive only by "hyphenate organizations" seeking primarily to serve their own selfish interests by emphasizing ethnic loyalties.⁴

Viewed in historical perspective, the pull of ethnic association is on the decline. One measure is the concurrent decline of the old-fashioned political boss and his kind of political machine which depended so much on the bewilderment of ethnic minorities for votes. A leader like the fabulous Martin Lomasney, for example, was capable of getting "his people" to vote for whomever he chose. Lomasney ran Ward Eight in Boston for decades, emerging as a state political leader in the Democratic party. When his Irish followers were asked by Martin to vote for a Republican—as the dictates of Democratic factional politics sometimes demanded—they trooped to the polls to do his bidding.⁵ It is true that such machines rested upon more than mere ethnic loyalty—there was the gift of a Christmas basket to the needy, the hope of some bit of

⁴ See, for example, Johan J. Smertenko's article, "The Emerging Hyphen" 203 *Harper's Magazine* 63-70 (Aug. 1951). It is, however, a fact of some significance that 25 daily and weekly foreign language publications remain profitable business ventures in New England. See *Ayer's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals*, 1956, Section on "Foreign Language Publications."

⁵ See the short biographical sketch on Lomasney by A. D. van Nostrand, "The Lomasney Legend," 21 *The New England Quarterly* 435-58 (Dec. 1948). For another fascinating picture of the great boss, Lomasney, see Lincoln Steffens, *Autobiography*, New York, 1931, Chs. 36, 37.

patronage, and the social function that the political club performed. But the political club tended to cater to ethnic blocs, partly because of ethnic group colonization of particular areas in the large cities. When the machine had to cater to conflicting ethnic groups—as Martin Lomasney's had to later in his life—some of its effectiveness was lost. The political arrival of the Italians, the Polish, and the French-Canadians threatened the hegemony of the Irish leadership of the Democratic party in the urban areas, and the entry of the newer elements infinitely complicated the process of slate-making and internal party maneuvering. Significantly also in lower New England particularly, the Republican party ultimately has begun to play the ethnic game too. Mere appeal to the Old Sod, the virtues of Mazzini or Pulaski is not enough.

Although a bit more sophisticated now than in the past—as well as less frequent—irrational ethnic appeals have not vanished from the New England political scene. An occasional fervent speech is still made on the subject of Irish independence. Connecticut's Governor John D. Lodge used to good advantage his ability to speak Italian in his campaigning, and his Italian-born wife sometimes did Italian folk-dances at rallies. A two-minute spot announcement on Italian radio programs in the 1950 campaign reminded listeners that "Signor Lodge speaks our language like a native, shares the political principles of the great Mazzini, and has our interests at heart because he is married to one of our people."¹ Some politicians now claim that Lodge overdid the special appeal to Italians; it is their contention that the younger generation resented having their background emphasized. Whether this is wishful thinking on the part of Democratic politicians of Italian derivation, who were smarting over Lodge's success in using their own weapons against them, or whether there is some truth in the supposed backfiring of the Lodge technique, there is no real way of knowing.

Ignorant and irrational appeals to nationality groups continue to be made, although one may doubt the efficacy of many of them. As exhibit number one of the kind of appeal that *ought* not to get anywhere with people of the slightest intelligence, consider this item taken verbatim from the *New Yorker*:²

¹ Quoted by Smertenko, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

² A letter to the *Boston Herald*, which the *New Yorker* in reprinting labeled "Clear Days on the Historical Scene," June 29, 1957, p. 84.

To the Editor of the Herald:

In reply to Col. Rich's letter which appeared in your paper on May 13, I wish to reiterate what I said on the floor of the House, that the Pilgrims were a band of pirates, political rejects and undesirables. They stole New York City, then New Amsterdam, from the Indians for two barrels of whiskey, then got the Indians so drunk and stole all their women and land. Later on in years when our country became united, the poor Indians could not get any whiskey in bar-rooms because of what your ancestors, the Pilgrims, did to them.

Your ancestors were only too happy to get the help of the Europeans in ridding themselves of the Redcoats, they could not do it on their own, not being real men or soldiers. Your civilization was founded by Italians, French and Germans, who were not among the Pilgrims but who were badly needed to build this country. Later on you needed the Irish to build your homes and educate your children.

Your own people tried to discipline you while in the Old Country, but when failing to do so, the prisons and institutions being full, they sent you to sea, to make your fortune, hoping that you would drown.

Thank God, Michael [sic] Angelo, Leonardo de [sic] Vinci, Dante, Formi [sic] (who enabled the atomic bomb to operate) Caruso, and Perry Como, and many others did not come over on the Mayflower, but were essential to the civilization of the entire world, and respected for their accomplishments, and not for their escapades.

I was very much surprised when the Governor of Massachusetts decided to appropriate \$125,000 to entertain the ghosts of the renegades that invaded our shores in 1620. I think they have one specific reason in mind to make this trip to the United States—they were trying to put the touch on Uncle Sam.

I am filing a bill next year, for one half million dollars for the building of three replicas, the Nina, Pinta, and the Santa Maria, and also to build a bronze statue of a great man, Christopher Columbus, which if it were not for him, you would not be collecting a pension today.

I hope, Mr. Rich, that I have made myself clear. If there is anything in this letter that you don't understand, don't hesitate to call me. If I have time, I will be glad to discuss this matter with you.

Representative Chas. Iannello
Assist. Majority Leader

Boston

Such arrant nonsense can only be intended to deceive someone, although who could be taken in by it is hard to imagine. Yet the rantings of a Pitchfork Ben Tillman or a Theodore Bilbo are not far different, and they won support through outrageous remarks that appealed to the hatreds and prejudices of their communities. Is Iannello's denunciation of the second landing of the *Mayflower*

any more ridiculous than the "contribution to statesmanship" of Senator W. K. Vardaman of Mississippi, who advocated the repeal of the Fifteenth Amendment? As V. O. Key has said, this was "an utterly hopeless proposal and for that reason an ideal campaign issue. It would last forever."⁸

To what extent are such rantings intended to obscure more significant political questions? In the South emphasis on what W. J. Cash called Negrophobia undoubtedly serves to deemphasize issues. "In part," says V. O. Key, "issues are deliberately repressed, for, at least in the long run, concern with genuine issues would bring an end to the consensus by which the Negro is kept out of politics. One crowd or another would be tempted to seek his vote."⁹ The exclusion of any element from voting is not today a factor in Massachusetts politics, but emphasis on the irrational prejudices of ethnic association still serves as an avenue to power without the necessity to consider policy questions in any forthright manner. In any event, whatever the intent, concentration on such irrelevancies does serve to depress the issue content of politics. Deliberate or not, if the irrational appeal opens the way to power, why substitute any more debatable and contestable issue?

Ethnic Group Politics and Parties

Surveying the history of ethnic group politics in New England, one is impressed with the extent to which the particular groups coming to New England were those whose allegiance in recent times at least has been primarily with the Democratic party. The Irish, French-Canadian, Italian, and Polish groups—the most numerous minorities in the region—have been largely Democratic since the 1920's. Certain other ethnic groups—the Germans and the Swedes, for example—have chosen to be Republicans in the main, but relatively few of them came to New England. The rise of the Democratic party from the ashes of defeat and exclusion to competition with the Republicans is inextricably connected with the settlement of the ethnic elements in New England.

Why these ethnic groups have either come to or stayed with the Democratic party is apparently a question of both tradition and

⁸ Key, *Southern Politics*, p. 232.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131. See also W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South*, New York, 1941, p. 252.

pocket-book voting. Since the Whigs, the Know Nothings, and the Republicans, who derived largely from the remnants of these earlier parties, were largely anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant, it was natural that the Irish as the first comers turned to the Democratic party. The Democrats made a special appeal to the Irish in these early days, and it paid off handsomely. Later when the Democratic party became more and more urban the leadership element reflected the rise of Irish political leadership in the cities. Irish leaders, of course, never lost an opportunity to cement the ties of ethnic association and party faith. Irish infiltration into the leadership of the party and a general affiliation of the Irish voters with the party served to temper the anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant attitudes of the Democratic party. Consequently, when later immigrants from Catholic countries came into New England the Democratic party had at least somewhat of a head start on the Republicans, who, if not outrightly antagonistic to the newcomers, at least had a record of antagonism to live down.

There were, however, certain negative factors involved. The dominance of the Democratic party by the Irish was no warm invitation to the Italians and the French-Canadians. In most areas the by then well-established Irish tended to be the straw bosses on jobs, to be on the police force, and no less than the Yankees of earlier generations they were now apprehensive about the cheap labor threat. Irish neighborhoods were invaded by the Italians late in the nineteenth and early in the twentieth centuries and there were some vicious brawls growing out of the inability of the two communities to adjust to each other. Thus the entry of these groups into the Democratic party was far from automatic—in various areas both the Italians and the French-Canadians tended to vote with the Republicans.

Yet in the long run the element of economic status in political choice tended to favor the Democratic party. The vast majority of the immigrant population occupied the lowest rungs of the economic and social ladder, and once the Democratic party had taken its trend toward a more liberal position it could make a successful appeal to the working-class ethnic minorities. William Jennings Bryan's radicalism in 1896 irrevocably cut the ties between the Democratic party and the New England small-town population. What few victories the Democrats won in the small towns of New England after

the Civil War were now almost unthinkable. But the very emphasis on liberalism with which Bryan sought to win the old Populist vote of the West was to become the salvation of the Democratic party in the East. Bible-quoting, fundamentalist Protestant that he was, Bryan did his bit for the party by helping to win over Catholic ethnic minorities.

The winning over of a group does not mean that it will stay won, as the Republican party discovered in the case of Negro voters who in the course of the New Deal forgot their allegiance to Lincoln. The traditional ties of New England's ethnic minorities with the Democratic party are less significant now than they were a generation ago.¹⁹ The upward social and economic mobility of ethnic minority people has resulted in some desertion of the Democratic party. A young and ambitious Italian-American politician finds the very fact that Italians are not numerous in the Republican party an asset to his career. In the Democratic party his Italian background is no particular distinction; indeed being a Yankee Democrat is more likely to be unique in New England. In the Republican party the aspiring Italian-American may find the dominant leadership of the party not entirely sympathetic to his demands, but often this is apparently outweighed by the mystical hope on the part of the leadership that promoting a "representative of the Italians" may be the key to victory. In short, the once relatively comprehensible ethnic battles *within* the Democratic party have now given way in most of New England to the more complicated double battling of ethnic minorities who have two arenas in which to operate.

The inevitable result is that the parties are weakened as a consequence of ethnic rivalries. In the discussion of New Hampshire, I pointed out how devastating the Irish-French-Canadian conflict in the Democratic party has been. The unfortunate thing is not only that the Democratic party as an institution suffers but that the resultant weakness of the party has a depressing effect on the total politics of the state. Ethnic rivalries have not been quite so crucial

¹⁹ Lawrence H. Fuchs traces this in his study of the 1956 presidential election in Boston. He found that the Irish particularly (more so than Italians, Negroes, or Jews) deserted Adlai Stevenson in 1952 and 1956. In 1956 heavily Irish areas of the city still turned in Democratic majorities, but they were much diminished as compared not only with 1948 but also with 1932. See his "Presidential Politics in Boston: The Irish Response to Stevenson," 30 *New England Quarterly* 435-447 (Dec. 1957).

in the other New England states, but in each state they have been a factor of some importance. In both Maine and Vermont they have helped to keep the Democratic party disorganized and ineffective, although not quite so dramatically as in New Hampshire. In Vermont, ethnic rivalry or no, the Democratic party was destined to be weak. Maine Democratic hopes have not been quite so forlorn as those in Vermont, but clearly the rivalries of the past have helped to postpone the day of two-party politics. In southern New England industrialization and urban growth were such that ethnic conflict could not prevent the rise of the Democratic party. Whether or how long it postponed the coming of two-party politics in those states is difficult to say.

Ethnic competition in the Democratic party is normally between the Irish and the more recent comers, such as the Italians, the Polish, and the French-Canadians. Which of the latter has the strength to fight in a district or state depends upon the demographic pattern. But the group to be fought in nearly every case in the New England states is the Irish, who were well fixed in the Democratic party before the others came. In many areas where the Irish now comprise a scant minority of the population, Irish leadership continues to dominate the Democratic party. In New Haven, for example, the Italians now far outnumber the Irish, but the latter nevertheless keep a stranglehold on the city's Democratic machinery. It is true that an Italian-American has for several years served as Democratic town chairman, but he does not run the party by any means. His appointment in fact is a byproduct of a Republican Italian's winning mayoralty races. John Golden, Democratic national committeeman, remains the top man of the New Haven party. Similarly in Rhode Island, the Democratic state chairman is of Italian derivation, but he is in truth a front man for Irish politicians. "Recognition" is easier to get than power.

In the Republican party, the Yankees are in control and their competitors are mainly the Irish and Italian and Jewish Republicans. Of necessity the Republican party throughout New England has a somewhat split personality; organizational power resides with the small-town Yankees, but deference must be paid to the suburban and urban Republican organizations. The latter particularly are likely to be dominated by non-Yankees. There are too many votes in the urban areas to make it safe to ignore these urban organiza-

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tions, however uncongenial their leaders may be to the more powerful rural Republicans. Thus in the Republican party the battles tend to be over what concessions are to be made by a dominant Yankee element to the ethnic minorities, in contrast with a somewhat more open battling among ethnic factions within the Democratic party. The strength of the Irish Democratic leaders is not exactly comparable with that of the rural Republican Yankees.

What's in a Name?

In both parties there is a tendency for the formal leadership to lose its control over nominations to the leaders of the ethnic groups. Or, more accurately, this situation exists for both parties in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island and for the Democrats in other states. Very frequently the nomination goes to the man with an "O" at the beginning or end of his name rather than to an individual who might make a good officeholder on other and perhaps more significant grounds. This is comparable to the divisions in a party on a geographic basis. In some states the tradition has it that the attorney general must come from "down state," regardless of other factors that may be involved. Neither form of pressure on the party leadership is likely to emphasize the ultimate rationality of the decisions made.

In the case of ethnic-group struggles for party position or recognition on the slate of nominees, it seems to me that there is an unusual amount of mythology about what might happen on election day. Hard-headed and highly practical politicians are led down the garden path more often than one might imagine by the bogey man of threatened ethnic insurgency. Leaders who customarily take all kinds of risks in a political lifetime seem inordinately frightened by the prospect of mass ticket splitting. This, of course, is part and parcel of the total mystery of election day. The mystifying uncertainty of the electorate's behavior is, as any who will reflect on it for a moment will realize, one of the most powerful if undirected forces operative in a democracy. Money is spent by the bushel in fear of that uncertainty. Compromises that would make Machiavelli blush and forced but heroic actions that the recording angel perforce must put on the positive side of the ledger all result again and again from lack of knowledge of what the voters may do on the first Tuesday in November. But on the ethnic question, how much ground is

there for being so frightened? Do ethnic groups really vote as blocs, as their leaders imply, or frankly say they will unless the leaders' demands are met?

One student of the subject, Johan Smertenko, says the answer is "an emphatic No." He said he had "examined the records of more than twenty elections in half a dozen states, with special reference to candidates from minority groups, and I find that in every case statistics controvert the prevalent idea that these groups vote as blocs in support of candidates of their own faith or race."¹¹ In support of this contention, he cited several situations in Connecticut and New York where it appeared to make little difference whether the candidate was of a particular ethnic derivation. "Obviously," he concluded, "it is no more possible to testify that Patrick O'Rourke, Domenic Mazzarelli, Izac Cohen, Olaf Olsen, and Hans Schmidt did not vote for candidates of their own national origin than that Douglas Scott and Cabot Mather did not split their ballots in favor of Presbyterians and Congregationalists. But it is also obvious that whatever preference voters have given to candidates of their own race or faith is either too slight to be material or is counterbalanced by the prejudices of other voters."¹² He goes on to admit that at times, as Samuel Lubell and others have clearly proved, minorities have voted as blocs on men and issues, but these cases have resulted from old loyalties to basic political ideals and not from mere promotion of men by hyphenated organizations.

Within certain clear limitations, I think Smertenko is correct in his analysis. The data cited in the chapter on Connecticut concerning the Democratic party's decision to run a Yankee instead of a Polish candidate for congressman at large in 1954 is a confirming bit of evidence. Antoni Sadlak, the Republican incumbent, did not do much better against the Yankee in Polish wards than he did against the two previous candidates, both of whom were Polish. (He ran 1.9 percentage points ahead of the Republican candidate for governor in 1954; in the earlier two races he had run .1 per cent and 1.2 per cent ahead.) This, I think, offers a pretty good test case since it follows a bitter battle in the Democratic convention in which the Polish delegation made threats against the party if they did not get their way. In a close election, of course, a 1.9 percentage point

¹¹ Smertenko, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

lead may not be insignificant *if it is a lead throughout the electorate*, but such a lead among a minority group is far less important for two reasons. First, it is intrinsically a small factor in the total vote; second, it may well be offset by other groups who are persuaded to support the man just because he is *not* what the ethnic group insisted that he be.

Another interesting illustration is a recent primary election in Maine. Frank M. Coffin, a Yankee, was opposed in a 1956 congressional primary by a French-Canadian candidate. Clearly Coffin was the more illustrious of the two candidates, and he had the support of Governor Muskie, but he happened to be running in a district where the French-Canadian population was as heavy as it is probably in any congressional district in the country. Yet Coffin won handily, carrying a good many districts where French-Canadians comprised a considerable majority of the voters. On the evening of the primary, when Coffin's victory was obvious from the returns then in, one old-time French-Canadian Democratic politician was brought literally to tears in pride that "his people" had chosen without regard for nationality. "You see," he told a Coffin aide, "we didn't do what the Yankees said we would—we chose the best man, not the Frenchman."

One final example will illustrate a slightly different variant of this point. In Massachusetts, as we have seen, the Republican party has only recently begun to compete with the Democrats by running statewide candidates representative of ethnic minorities. In 1950 and 1952 party leaders backed an Italian candidate, Roy C. Papalia, for the nomination for state treasurer, and in both primaries he was opposed by the same Republican oldtimer, Fred J. Burrell. In 1950, without the benefit of a convention endorsement, Papalia lost the nomination; in 1952 with a formal endorsement he won it. The interesting thing is that Papalia did not get any overwhelming majority in the eight towns of the state with the heaviest Italian population. Indeed he got a lesser percentage from these towns than he did in the state at large.¹² How did he fare in the general election?

¹² The eight towns in question gave him 36.4 and 42.1 per cent of the vote cast for the office in two primaries. These towns all have more than five per cent of their population who were born in Italy. They are in order of descending proportion of Italian-born: Milford, Franklin, Plymouth, Revere, Everett, Mansfield, and Medford. Apparently what he picked up in these towns must have been more than offset by others in the town who cut him.

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He was the number five man on a six-man state ticket in the state as a whole, trailing the governor by 92,000 votes out of slightly more than the one million average Republican vote. And how did he fare in the eight towns with the highest proportions of Italian-born? There he was number four man, if we count all the towns together. His vote was 7.4 per cent below the average vote of all six Republican candidates in these eight towns combined.¹⁴ Clearly there was no great desertion of Italian Democratic voters to vote for a Republican compatriot.

Are there, then, no exceptions to the proposition that ethnic affiliation is not a potent political factor? There is a clear exception, and one of some importance. If the candidate is not only an Italian, an Irishman, or a French-Canadian, but also a man who is attractive as a candidate on other grounds, it can make a difference. Moreover, when such a candidate scores a "first," he is likely to be given the benefit of ticket splitting. The candidacies of two prominent vote getters in Rhode Island—Senator John Pastore and Christopher Del Sesto—are cases in point. As the data presented in Chapter 7 indicate, both Pastore and Del Sesto pulled unusually high votes in Italian districts. In both cases these extra votes provided the margins for close majorities for the governorship. Pastore in 1946 could hardly have won without that support and Del Sesto, as the first Republican to win a majority (although not, as it turned out, the governorship) in 18 years, could not have made it without the Italian wards. Pastore was running as the first Italian Democratic candidate for the office, and Del Sesto as the first Italian Republican. Both are men who have considerable prestige and honest ability. They were men with whom the Italian voters could identify themselves with pride. So also with many local candidates of a particular ethnic group; in many cases even a relatively unimportant office may seem an upward step of great proportions to people who long for evidence that they are as good as anyone else but suspect that they are not, having been made to feel inferior in many ways innumerable times. Still, even locally, it is not just the name that counts; it is the name of a person who is respected and admired.

¹⁴ In 1954 an Italian candidate for auditor ran 10.8 per cent behind the average in those same eight towns, and was sixth in the field of candidates on the ticket.

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In the final analysis, then, I agree with Smertenko but with the important reservation that all depends on the quality of the candidate involved. If the candidate is good enough to hold his own with other voters, then the fact that he has the right kind of name may be just the added fillip needed for success.