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***East Chicago Politics: A Cornucopia of Corruption\****

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**ABSTRACT**

Despite the comical title, there *is* a lot of corruption in East Chicago (IN) politics. One mayoral election had to have a “do-over” because of fraudulent absentee ballots, and a former mayor is doing time in jail for using public monies to remodel his home. This cornucopia of corruption extended to the indictment of six public officials (the so-called Sidewalk Six) in East Chicago for misusing public funds for political gain, specifically vote-buying, in the 1999 mayoral reelection of Robert Pastrick. These officials, ranging from a parks superintendent to a city engineer to several city council members, bought votes by pouring sidewalks, installing driveways, trimming trees, and more on private property using public funds and noncompetitive bids. This scandal will be the topic of this paper. This type of corruption (vote-buying) falls under the categories of white and gray corruption as theorized by Heidenheimer (1970), where white corruption is typically found in kinship-based systems and is tolerated, and gray corruption is found in boss-patronage systems is not thought to be wrong by those involved. It is hypothesized that the vote-buying in East Chicago occurred because of four elements: lack of a competitive second party (Democrats have controlled East Chicago since its incorporation in 1889), machine politics, a largely ethnic immigrant population, and large amounts of casino money. This article explains how this type of corruption fits into the larger literature on corruption and concludes with the prospects for cleaner politics in East Chicago, Indiana.

**KEY WORDS** Corruption; Machine Politics; Elections; Sidewalk Six

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Elections aren't often given a "do-over" because of voter fraud, but that is just what happened in the mayoral election in East Chicago, Indiana, in August 2004. On May 6, 2003, incumbent mayor Robert Pastrick ran against his Democratic challenger, George Pabey, in the mayoral primary. George Pabey won the election until absentee ballots were counted. The absentee ballots put Pastrick over the top by 278 votes. Pabey filed a lawsuit alleging absentee ballot fraud and asked for a special election, which went all the way to the Indiana Supreme Court. There, the court overturned lower court decisions and stated that fraud did occur. The court found that Pastrick supporters engaged in "actions [that] perverted the absentee voting process and compromised the integrity of that [mayoral primary] election" (*George Pabey v. Robert Pastrick et al.* 2004). Some of these actions were "providing compensation and/or creating the expectation of compensation to induce voters to cast their ballot via the absentee process," "assist[ing] the voter in completing the ballot," "the routine completion of substantive portions of absentee ballot applications by Pastrick supporters to which applicants simply affixed their signatures," and "votes cast by employees of the City of East Chicago who simply did not reside in East Chicago" (*George Pabey v. Robert Pastrick et al.* 2004).

The court called the actions surrounding the Democratic mayoral primary "a 'textbook' example of the chicanery that can attend the absentee vote cast by mail: examples of instances where the supervision and monitoring by Pastrick supporters and the subsequent possession of ballots by these malefactors are common therein. These illegalities came with a side order of predation in which the naïve, the neophytes, the infirm and the needy were subjected to the unscrupulous election tactics so extensively discussed." The court further stated, "It is apparent that a political subculture exists in Lake County which views the political machinations at issue with a 'wink and a smile' and 'business as usual'" (*George Pabey v. Robert Pastrick et al.* 2004)

The special election was held on October 26, 2004, and George Pabey won by a margin of almost 2–1 margin. His tenure would not last, however, and he too would engage in corrupt activities that landed him in jail. He was indicted by a grand jury "with conspiring to embezzle city money and illegally use city workers to remodel the house Pabey bought with his daughter in Gary's Miller Beach neighborhood in December 2008" (Hinkel 2010). Following a trial in 2011, Pabey was found guilty and was ordered to pay a fine of \$60,000 and sentenced to five years in jail (Tompkins 2011).

The Sidewalk Six indictments predated the Pabey scandal but involved his nemesis, Robert Pastrick. These indictments involved six public officials in East Chicago who were charged with misusing public funds for political gain, specifically vote-buying in the 1999 mayoral reelection of Robert Pastrick.<sup>1</sup> These officials, ranging from a parks superintendent to a city engineer to several city council members, bought votes by pouring sidewalks, creating driveways, trimming trees, and more on private property using public funds and noncompetitive bids.<sup>2</sup>

The Sidewalk Six scandal is the topic of this article. This type of corruption (vote-buying) falls under the categories of white and gray corruption as theorized by Heidenheimer (1970), where white corruption is typically found in kinship-based systems and is tolerated, and gray corruption is found in boss-patronage systems but is not thought to be wrong by those involved. It is hypothesized that the vote-buying occurred

because of four elements: lack of a competitive second party (Democrats have controlled East Chicago since its incorporation in 1889), machine politics, a largely ethnic immigrant population, and large amounts of casino money. This article explains how this type of corruption fits into the larger literature on corruption and concludes with the prospects for cleaner politics in East Chicago, Indiana.

The literature on corruption is varied but focuses predominantly on definitional issues, the causes and conditions that contribute to corruption, and examples and types of corruption (with only a few case studies of vote-buying). Many of these writings have been collected into three volumes, edited by Arnold J. Heidenheimer (1970); Heidenheimer, Johnston, and Le Vine (1989); and Heidenheimer and Johnston (2002). Regarding the definitional works, Heidenheimer (2002) found three “centered” definitions: public-office-centered, market-centered, and public-interest-centered. The public-office-centered definition focuses on the official duties of an office holder and is usually centered on the office holder using her position for private gain, as in David H. Bayley’s definition: “Corruption, then, while being tied particularly to the act of bribery, is a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gain, which need not be monetary” (1989:936–37). This definition equates corruption with illegal acts by a public official and has the advantage in that it is fairly straightforward—or as Kurer states, it “scores high on the operationability count” (2005:225). Although it is fairly clear (corruption is an illegal act performed by a public official), however, it is also culture-specific; the definition “uphold[s] bureaucratic rules and regulations [that] may be sanctioned by norms and conventions in Western societies but not in others” (Kurer 2005:225). For example, other nations may not have formal rules for how an official is to conduct government business; it may be admissible for an official to accept gifts from individuals desiring to do business with the official, or it may be permissible for the official to ask for “favours” when granting government permits or licenses.

A similar problem is using the law to determine corruption. Corruption does not always involve an illegal act. Consider nepotism, campaign contributions to congresspersons to influence legislation (e.g., Jack Abramoff), or leaking information to the media. Also, what may be illegal today may have been legal a decade ago.

Market-centered definitions are exemplified by the following definition by Jacob von Klaveren: “A corrupt civil servant regards his public office as a business, the income of which he will ... seek to maximize. ... The size of his income depends ... upon the market situation and his talents for finding the point of maximal gain on the public’s demand curve” (von Klaveren 1989:26). Or, according to Gibbons, a market-centered definition of corruption emphasizes “‘profit maximization’ as the prime motivator” of corrupt behavior (Gibbons 1989:166). And “profit” in the economic sense is not the only “motivator”; there is also prestige or political support (Johnston 1996:323). A critique of this definition is that it is not a definition at all, but more an explanation for “the incentives that affect the *amount* and stakes of corruption taking place in a given situation” (Johnston 1996:323).

A public interest-centered definition is provided by Carl J. Friedrich:

The pattern of corruption may therefore be said to exist whenever a power holder who is charged with doing certain things, i.e., a responsible functionary or office-holder, is by monetary or other rewards not legally provided for, induced to take actions which favor whoever provides the rewards and thereby does damage to the public and its interests. (1989:15).

According to Friedrich, public-interest harms include no-bid contracts, vote-buying, and giving out building permits and requiring a kickback. As with the public-office-centered definition of corruption, the public-interest-centered definition is also culture-specific and time-sensitive.

Several authors note that Heidenheimer himself added a fourth “centered” definition: public-opinion (Gardiner 2002; Gibbons 1989; Kurer 2005). This definition “defines” corruption as acts that public opinion believe to be corrupt; therefore, built into the definition is the recognition that corruption and an illegal act may not always be synonymous. By the same token, if the public believes an act is corrupt, it is, regardless of whether it is illegal.

As with the market-centered definition, it is said that the public-opinion-centered definition is more an explanation for than a definition of corruption (Johnston 1996; Kurer 2005), and in fact, Heidenheimer does use the public-opinion-centered definition as such.

As all of the above definitions suffer from some defect or another, this article relies upon the following definition of corruption: behavior performed by a public office-holder that compromises the democratic process. This is a hybrid of the public-office-centered definition and the public-interest-centered definition. It is culture-specific, as this analysis is focused on urban American politics but does not rely on the law to determine corruption. Additionally, it is more specific about a particular behavior but gets at the harm that corruption does to the democratic process, similar to the public-interest-centered definition.

As stated previously, other than definitional issues, the literature on corruption focuses on the causes and conditions for corruption and the different types of corruption. Bull and Newell categorize these causes as political culture; political structure and institutions; party system, party government, political parties, and politicians; and political economy, the public, and private sectors (2003:236–40).

The causes and conditions are numerous, but each contributes to a different type of corruption: bribery, kickbacks, violating campaign finance laws, nepotism, or vote-buying.

Regarding the act of vote-buying, the literature is rather limited. It focuses primarily on incidents of vote-buying and whether vote-buying is a tactic used by a political machine or other officials. There are also two conference papers, which discuss why vote-buying is undemocratic in Latin America (Stokes 2004) and why people sell their votes (Lehoucq 2002).

Lehoucq states that people sell their votes “when parties cannot use coercion or economic dependence to control voters. [P]arties will buy votes as long as they can monitor compliance with agreements they reach with sellers” (2002:2). The agreement can be for the voter to vote for a particular candidate or stay home on election day. When parties cannot monitor this compliance, as with the secret ballot, vote-buying will cease.

Lehoucq touches on one reason vote-buying exists—to ensure a particular outcome at the polls—but he does not explain why vote-buying would occur in an election in which the secret ballot does exist and in the 21st century when it is clearly illegal to sell votes. Some other motive or reason must exist to warrant the number of incidents of vote-buying continuing into the 21st century.<sup>3</sup>

As stated above, Heidenheimer uses the public-opinion-centered definition or focus when defining political corruption. He also uses that definition to explain *why* political corruption exists in a community. This emphasis on public opinion equates to a conception of corruption based on a community’s political culture (one of the causes of corruption listed by Bull and Newell 2003). That is, the occurrence of corrupt political behavior will be in direct proportion to the community’s definition and perception of corruption: Less ambiguity and less tolerance equals less corruption; more ambiguity and more tolerance equal more corruption. This focus does not explain the first occurrence of corruption, but it does offer an explanation for why corruption continues.

Heidenheimer’s 1970 work ranks the perception of corruption along a gradient from black to gray to white.<sup>4</sup> Black corruption is behavior that is clearly perceived by the majority of members of the community to be illegal, and the members are willing to see those guilty of the behaviors punished. On the other end of the spectrum is white corruption. This is behavior that the majority of the community is willing to tolerate and would not want to see punished. In the middle is gray corruption. This is behavior for which little consensus exists; some would prefer to see it punished, others not.

Heidenheimer found there to be three types of corruption, in ascending order of severity: petty corruption, routine corruption, and aggravated corruption (2002:143–52). Heidenheimer also classified four types of communities, or “systems” where corruption could exist. These systems differ from one another based on a continuum of the independence the community members believe they have in relating to their government, or, as Heidenheimer terms it, “political obligation relationships”: traditional familist- (kinship-) based system, traditional patron-client based system, modern boss-patronage-based system, and civic-culture-based system (Heidenheimer 2002:143–47).

In the first type of system, kinship-based, the nuclear family retains all loyalty and trust, and it is to the family one turns when dealing with the governing members of a community. The second type of system, patron-client, exists where “ties to powerful protectors are strong, identification with the general community still quite weak” (Heidenheimer 2002:146). The boss-follower system differs from the patron-client system in that relationships occur in larger, more open, urban centers “based upon highly differentiated economies in which even the greenest immigrant differentiates between a patron saint and the political boss” (Heidenheimer 2002:146). In the boss-patronage system, the citizens also have more choice about whom to attach themselves to, and this is where political machine-type politics flourish. The civic-culture system is the “cleanest,” in which citizens realize they do not need intermediaries (a

patron or boss) to receive the benefits of the laws of the community. Citizens are much more altruistic in their goals for the community and in their dealings with each other.

Heidenheimer examined all four types of systems to answer the question “Which of the various forms of behavior that a significant portion of the population regards as corrupt are more likely to be more pervasive in one society than another, and why?” (2002:143). His research found all types of corruption to exist in the four systems, but the amount of corruption found depended on the type of system. He found that the civic-culture system had the lowest incidence and the kinship-based had the most, with it all considered white corruption.

Under the different types of corruption—petty, routine, and aggravated—there exist several subtypes (Table 1). The practice of vote-buying is considered routine corruption in a modern boss-patronage system, with frequent incidence, and is considered gray corruption—a behavior that is tolerated, but without generating much concern, and citizens differ in their opinion as to whether it should be punished. Under the first two systems, familist and patron-client, vote-buying is considered a standard operating procedure and white corruption, or behavior that does not generate much concern on behalf of the community. In a civic-cultured system, however, vote-buying is considered black corruption and is not tolerated.

The Sidewalk Six vote-buying incident occurred in East Chicago, located in Lake County in Northwest Indiana, about 6 miles from the Illinois state line and about 19 miles from the city of Chicago. East Chicago was incorporated as a city in 1893, and shortly thereafter, Inland Steel came to town. In 1903, the East Chicago Company, composed of “powerbrokers” from Chicago, “recognized the need for a new industrial zone outside Chicago and invested heavily in municipal services, oversaw neighborhood planning, and dredged the Indiana Harbor Ship Canal. By 1907, East Chicago boasted a navigable waterway link to Lake Michigan and to the Grand Calumet River” (Chicago Historical Society 2005).

The influx of jobs in East Chicago was matched by the influx of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. During WWI, immigrants also came from Mexico to take advantage of the plentiful jobs. In 1900, the foreign-born population reached a high of 39 percent. It dipped to 11.6 percent in 1990, but as of 2000, the foreign-born population was 14.7 percent.

East Chicago is a fading industrial city, and like other declining cities, its population has dropped almost 44 percent, from a high of 57,669 in 1960 to 32,414 in 2000. Today, the city is 51.6 percent Latino, 36.1 percent African American, and 12.1 percent White non-Hispanic (City-Data 2019).

What has somewhat saved the city of East Chicago are casinos. The Harrah’s East Chicago casino (bought by Resorts Hotels and Casino in 2005) arrived in 1997; since then, a total of four other casinos have come to Northwest Indiana. The cities of East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Michigan City, and Whiting take slices from the casino-proceeds pie. East Chicago alone, a town of 32,414 people, is entitled to \$8 million annually. Recently, the Indiana governor and attorney general announced an investigation into a private East Chicago developer who collects millions of dollars from Resorts Hotels and Casino in East Chicago. The governor alleges that the developer has not used the funds as required, for the public interest (Zabroski 2006:1).

**Table 1. Incidence and Evaluation of Corrupt Practices**

Type of Behavior	Traditional Familist- (Kinship-) Based System		Traditional Patron- Client-Based System		Modern Boss- Patronage-Based System		Modern Civic- Culture-Based System	
	Incidence	Evaluation	Incidence	Evaluation	Incidence	Evaluation	Incidence	Evaluation
Petty corruption Officials deviate from rules in minor ways for benefit of friends	SOP	W	SOP	W	SOP	W	FI	G
Routine corruption Gifts accepted by public officials (parties) for generalized goodwill	SOP	W	SOP	W	SOP	W	OI	B
Nepotism practiced in official appointments and awarding of contracts	SOP	W	SOP	W	SOP	G	OI	B
Officials profit from public decisions through sideline occupations (clean graft)	SOP	W	SOP	W	FI	G	OI	B
Clients pledge votes according to patron's direction	SOP	W	SOP	W	FI	G	OO	B
Aggravated corruption Clients need patron intervention to get administrative "due process"	SOP	W	FI	G	OI	B	OO	B
Gifts (kickbacks) expected by officials as prerequisite for extending "due process"	SOP	W	FI	G	OI	B	OO	B
Officials tolerate organized crime in return for payoffs	FI	W	FI	G	OI	B	OO	B
Activists suddenly change party allegiance for pecuniary reasons	FI	W	FI	B	OI	B	OO	B
Officials and citizens ignore clear proof of corruption	FI	W	OI	B	OI	B	OO	B

*Notes:* B=black corruption; FI=frequent incidence; G=gray corruption; OI=occasional incidence; OO=rare incidence, without regular pattern; SOP=standard operating procedure; W=white corruption



East Chicago has a mayoral system of government, with a nine-member city council. All are elected to four-year terms with no term limit.<sup>5</sup> ) Democrats have controlled the mayor's office and most of the council seats since the city's incorporation in 1893.

East Chicago operates with a quintessential political machine. It has all but eliminated the Republican Party in Lake County. In fact, the chair of the Lake County Republican Party came out of the closet, so to speak, in 2004 and registered as a Democrat, which he *was*, for all intents and purposes. Thomas Philpot, Democrat and county clerk, said at his November (2003) victory party that "the GOP chief had been with him 'every step of the way.' The public acclaim by a Democratic candidate was too much for even Cantrell's supporters inside the GOP to bear" (Kiesling 2003). He was asked to leave his position as chair of the county Republican party by the state party chair soon thereafter.

In 2004, the city had a monthly payroll of \$3,044,221 with 925 full-time employees (City-Data 2019)). What's interesting is that the City of East Chicago employs (supports?) more public employees in Solid Waste Management (East Chicago has trash pickup twice a week) and the Parks Department than in the police and fire departments put together (248 vs. 204; City-Data 2019). Additionally, compared to similarly sized cities in Indiana, East Chicago easily outpaces all others in spending per person; East Chicago spends \$633 per person, while the average is \$317 person (Lowery 2004:8).

The vote-buying scandal began six weeks before the 1999 mayoral primary. Robert Pastrick was fighting a close election with Lake County's Democratic Party chair, Stephen Stiglich. The incident has been called a sidewalks-for-votes scheme because concrete ultimately paid for by the public was poured on private property. Driveways, patios, basketball courts, pools, and basements were all poured out of public funds: \$25 million was spent on concrete for thousands of people's private property. The scandal was nicknamed the Sidewalk Six case because of the six top-seated officials and the enormous numbers of sidewalks (concrete) that had been poured.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Gary Bell has said that in his opinion, this is one of the most unique cases ever prosecuted and that "officials were so arrogant they did it in broad daylight".<sup>6</sup> Basically, city officials approached residents and asked if they wanted any concrete work done. One of the city's Catholic churches had substantial work done. One resident had her whole backyard covered with concrete; when asked about it by investigators, she stated that she did not want to mow her lawn. One resident who had the entire area surrounding his backyard pool covered claimed to know nothing about the concrete. An apartment-building owner claimed he had no idea how the basement of his building had been poured with fresh concrete. These and numerous other residents lied to investigators, saying they had no idea how the concrete had gotten there. According to Bell, contractors lied and said they could not remember who had ordered the work, that they had done it and gotten paid.

The case came to light because once the elections had taken place, all the work suddenly stopped, leaving many of the areas in disarray. As citizens called to find out when work would be finished—especially the small amount of work that had actually occurred on public property—city officials found themselves in an urgent situation:

Where was the money to come from to finish the project? According to Bell, by May, the city of East Chicago was already \$5 million in the red. While it isn't uncommon for cities to run in the red, this usually doesn't happen until the end of the fiscal year, around October or November. Following investigations, indictments were brought against six leading officials: three members of East Chicago City Council and three officials in Mayor Robert Pastrick's administration.

Bell states that with vote-buying, there is no gray area: vote-buying is all black. It is very black in regard to the Sidewalk Six case. "In very small amounts, vote-buying could be a gray area, such as when, right before an election, city officials decide to fix a public street that was in need of repair. A gray area would be using public works projects to influence the vote," Bell stated.

The charged Six pleaded innocent to fraud charges and asked that 66 of the 71 charges against them be dropped because, they say, no federal funds were abused and no kickbacks, bribes, or other overt acts were alleged in the indictment (Dolan 2003). After they learned that charges would not be dropped, three of the six (Pedro Porrás, Adrian Santos, and Jose Valdez Jr.) decided that they would cooperate. City engineer Pedro Porrás allegedly authorized \$77,000 worth of asphalt paving and electrical work for an unidentified church. He was accused of overseeing \$16 million of the work. Porrás was charged with 13 counts, including conspiracy, fraud, obstruction of justice, and perjury (Dolan 2004a). Had Porrás gone to trial and been convicted, he could have faced more than 200 years in prison and received fines totaling more than \$32 million, but because of his cooperation in the cases against others and his guilty plea, he was promised leniency by prosecutors. Porrás was sentenced to 27 months in federal prison, and he and the other five defendants must collectively pay \$25 million in restitution (Harvey 2005b).

Regarding the second official to cooperate, East Chicago Councilman Adrian Santos and others had voted to borrow \$15 million to pay for improper work and to replenish city coffers. Santos was required to immediately resign from the city council and never hold a future position with the city. Santos admitted that he and others directed contractors to pour concrete throughout the fourth and fifth districts of the city, knowing "that a city in Indiana may not lawfully pay for work on private property except on an emergency basis." Santos was sentenced to 33 months in federal prison (Harvey 2005a).

Jose Valdez Jr., general foreman of the East Chicago Parks Department and a precinct committeeman, conspired to steal more than \$20 million from the city treasury. The money would be used to finance reelection campaigns for the conspirators and others in Pastrick's administration. Valdez also canvassed neighborhoods to identify which residents would vote for Pastrick and other city incumbents in exchange for free concrete. He was directed to the city's Sunnyside neighborhood, and he became so busy directing concrete into it that he jokingly called it Cementville. Valdez was also sentenced to 33 months for his part.

Prosecutors called both Santos and Valdez to testify against the remaining defendants. They were also to cooperate with the ongoing investigation of public corruption within East Chicago, as well as to make restitution for any money squandered through the alleged sidewalk conspiracy (Dolan 2004b).

The three who chose to stand by their not-guilty plea were Frank Kollintzas, Joe De La Cruz, and Edwardo Maldonado. Two of the three men (Kollintzas and De La Cruz) voted to borrow more than \$15 million to pay for improper work and to replenish the city coffers. All three of the men voted to steal more than \$20 million in order to finance their reelection campaigns and the campaigns of Pastrick and others in his administration. East Chicago City Councilman Frank Kollintzas fled to Greece prior to sentencing and remains a fugitive, according to U.S. Attorney Bell. It is believed that he used a false passport or a Greek passport under the name of Fotios Kollintzas. Before he fled, he wrote the court a letter complaining that he had not slept since his arrest and that he didn't deserve to go to prison "until he died or became an old man" (Dolan 2005). He was thought to have fled after hearing the sentences given to Maldonado and De La Cruz. Kollintzas was supposed to have been sentenced the same day, but his sentencing had been delayed because his attorney was not able to appear in court because of another case. In Kollintzas's absence, he was sentenced to 11 years and 4 months.

East Chicago City Controller Edwardo Maldonado ordered concrete and tree-trimming work to be completed in both private and public areas. He also falsified paperwork to cover up \$77,000 worth of asphalt paving and electrical work on a church. He paid \$298,058 to cover the union dues of 48 employees who worked on the sidewalk project, and he attempted to cover this by issuing handwritten checks rather than using a computerized system that would track and record the payments (Dolan 2003). Maldonado was sentenced to eight years and one month in prison. He was shocked by the sentence and said that he had been forthright from the beginning and that his first interview had provided the road map for the prosecution. He hadn't even hired a lawyer because he didn't think that what he had done was wrong. He said the only thing that he could have done to assist more in the case would have been to testify. Bell replied that Maldonado was not helpful and refused to accept responsibility for his actions by admitting that they were wrong.

Joe De La Cruz received six years in federal prison for his part in the sidewalk scandal. As noted previously, included in each of their sentences is the order for the six to collectively pay back \$25 million. Following his conviction, Valdez and his wife filed for bankruptcy. According to Attorney Bell as quoted in the *Hammond Times*, however, a defendant cannot be resolved of restitution though bankruptcy (Harvey 2005b).

Frank Kollintzas's wife tried something similar. She filed for divorce from her husband to keep the assets of herself and her husband safe. It did not work. A federal court ruled that the "government's interest in seizing those assets is superior to Joanna Kollintzas' efforts to preserve them through divorce. Otherwise, spouses could shield property from federal taxation and seizure" (Dolan 2006).

At the time of this writing, several related cases that evolved from investigations within the Sidewalk Six cases were being tried in Indiana State courts. One case involved Robert Pastrick's son Kevin and former state Democratic chairman Peter Manous and a Lake County land deal. Both were found guilty and are currently serving time in federal prison.

In a one-party system, very few checks and balances exist, and corruption tends to be more prevalent. Historically, the Democratic Party has controlled East Chicago and Lake County, primarily through the mayor's office (in East Chicago), various elected positions, and the Democratic Party county chair. The party's policy has been to employ as many people as possible and therefore retain votes from those they have employed. The people who are in power hire the businessmen and contractors to complete projects, and these businessmen and contractors give kickbacks to those in power, thus creating a cycle of corruption. According to Gary Bell in 2006, the Democratic Party had an enormous amount of power, controlling all the local government jobs, and until recently, nearly all appointed officials had had ties to East Chicago.

The vote-buying scheme in East Chicago was thus a function of the lack of competitive political parties (essentially one-party rule) and a Democratic political machine. In fact, East Chicago is a textbook political machine: It is an "exchange process" in that it "traded favors and benefits for votes" (Ross and Levine 2006:175). It gave favors and benefits in the form of jobs (note the earlier-noted discrepancy between the number of parks department and sanitation employees and police and firefighters) and free yard work. Although East Chicago's foreign-born population is not as high as it was at the turn of the 19th century, many of its inhabitants are second- and third-generation American families with Eastern and Southern European and Mexican ancestries. These families have remained in East Chicago, along with all their ties and loyalties. And then there are the millions in casino money.

These reasons explain *why* the vote-buying scheme occurred in the 1999 mayoral primary election, but they don't really shed any light on why corruption *continues to occur* in East Chicago. It is believed that Heidenheimer's definition of corruption—based on public opinion, or what the public will tolerate—explains the continuance of corruption in East Chicago politics. Several of the Sidewalk Six believed that they had done nothing wrong. They stated that they had not received kickbacks or public funds themselves for securing the work at private residences. Those who had the work done may have known the work was not quite legal (refer to their statements, above, that they could not recall when the work was done) but appeared more than willing to tolerate the behavior as long as they benefited from the work. Those who could not get work done were willing to complain to the authorities and hold the officials accountable, however. Whether they felt this way because of the illegality of the work on private property or because they were not the beneficiaries can only be speculated. This fits into Heidenheimer's conception of gray corruption: ambiguous classifications about what constituted corruption, and ambivalence about whether the Six should have been prosecuted. Clearly, the Six themselves did not believe they did anything wrong. They received no personal gain, although it was alleged that some did receive kickbacks when steering the work on private property to companies of relatives and/or friends (Dolan 2004c).

The prospects for cleaner politics in East Chicago are a little more positive under the new administration of Mayor Anthony Copeland, but cleaner politics seems more than just one man or administration can accomplish. It requires an entirely new political

culture, one similar to what Heidenheimer described as the civic-culture system, in which the citizens

do not feel they have to work through an influential intermediary in order to get the benefit of the law and administrative programs. They have developed strong community-regarding norms, which are supported by viable voluntary associations who repay their volunteer activists in tokens of moral satisfaction rather than money or money's worth. (2002:147).

This type of change will take quite some time to establish. It will occur only when the people believe they do not need the political bosses and can fend for themselves when dealing with city government.

## ENDNOTES

1. This primary election is depicted in the 2001 film *King of Steeltown: Hardball Politics in the Heartland*.
2. Additionally, votes were bought in Mayor Pastrick's 2003 reelection bid; 34 indictments have been handed down for that incident.
3. An EBSCO search on "vote-buying" found 126 articles describing the practice in Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.
4. In later articles, Heidenheimer and others have expressed concern over the simplicity of his black-gray-white design and suggested a more "polychromatic" scheme (Heidenheimer 2004; Moroff 2004; Von Alemann 2004).
5. Robert Pastrick served as mayor for 32 years, and it was during his 1999 run for reelection that the Sidewalk Six vote-buying scheme occurred.
6. Personal interview of Tracey McCabe with U.S. Attorney Gary Bell on March 8, 2006.

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