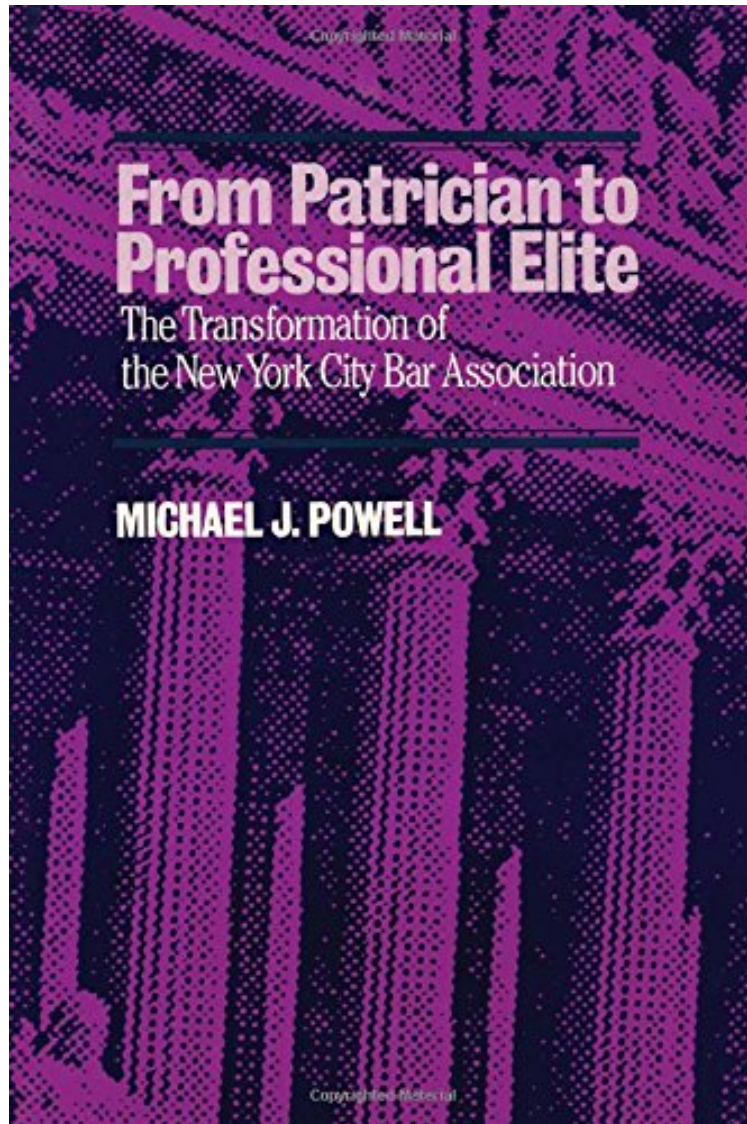


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From Patrician to Professional Elite (Contemporary Issues (Prometheus))

Walter Powell

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Walter Powell : From Patrician to Professional Elite (Contemporary Issues (Prometheus)) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From Patrician to Professional Elite (Contemporary Issues (Prometheus)):

The Association of the Bar of the City of New York (ABCNY) is no ordinary professional organization. Formed in 1870 and housed in an imposing mid-town edifice, it was the first modern bar association, nationally known for its eminent membership, its reformist stance and its intimidating selectivity. During much of its history, the ABCNY appeared to be more an upper-class, WASP legal club than an open, collegial association. How did such an organization fare in the face of post-war pressures for inclusiveness? *From Patrician to Professional Elite* offers a rare view of the internal dynamics of an institution adapting to a changed environment. The ABCNY maintained its elite identity by adopting a meritocratic organizational model in place of a class-based model. By shedding its overt exclusivity, the ABCNY asserted its legitimacy; by embracing an "open elite" or meritocratic model, the association retained its high standing and relative homogeneity. In fact, the ABCNY today is dominated by the same functional group of lawyers as before, the corporate legal elite. This fascinating study of organizational change prompts a re-examination of fundamental questions about the class basis of modern professionalism and the dominance of elites within professions, in addition to illuminating the larger question of the role of elite institutions in democratic societies.