resonance frequency, which is always present, can induce an electron to jump down from level 3 to level 2, the loss of energy creating another photon of the same energy which, in turn, induces a second electron to do the same, and so on. This avalanche process can go on indefinitely and can be maintained to give a coherent oscillation at these wavelengths if the energy balance between the optical pump and the losses in the system is appropriately achieved. Numerical estimates indicate that this is now possible if the optical pump is the output of an optical maser, which is now available, and if one uses large magnetic fields of the order of 100,000 gauss, which are also on hand. With the variety of materials and sources now contemplated, it appears that highly monochromatic sources in the energy-starved region of the far-infrared and submillimeter wavelengths may be possible. Furthermore, these sources would be tunable and would provide energy and resolution many times greater than any now obtainable.

In conclusion, it is evident that cyclotron resonance has proved to be a very useful and powerful tool for fundamental investigations in solids and may yet prove to have equally important application in the design of practical devices for exploiting plasmas and for providing much-needed infrared sources and detectors. Undoubtedly a number of unexpected and significant new developments other than those discussed here lie before us in this fast-moving and exciting field of resonance research.

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Who Participates in Local Politics and Why

The better-off citizen is more active, but so is the citizen who encounters social and economic barriers.

Robert A. Dahl

Why do individuals vary in the amount of influence they exert on local political decisions?

To influence another person, one needs resources or inducements. However, some persons use more of their resources on politics than others do. If we put to one side the question of variations in the efficiency or skill with which different persons use their resources for political purposes, then influence over local decisions should increase with the amount of resources one uses.

Considerations such as these have led to radically different theories about the structure of influence in local politics. According to one kind of theory, some important resources seem to be distributed rather evenly among the great body of citizens. Nearly everyone can vote, information about local affairs is accessible, problems of local policy are close to the experience of the average man, citizens can easily get in touch with their officials, and so on. Hence, it is said, influence over local decisions is likely to be distributed rather evenly among citizens. According to another theory, however, certain important resources are distributed very unevenly in almost every modern American town and city—chiefly wealth, income, social standing, control over jobs, and control over the mass media. In these respects, it is said, the American community is highly stratified. Hence, it is argued, influence over local decisions is likely to be distributed very unevenly; citizens who are best off with respect to wealth, income, social standing, and so on will

also exert decisive influence over local decisions.

The first theory has been tested by little more than arm-chair speculation. A number of recent community studies, on the other hand, purport to have confirmed the second.

However, neither theory takes very strongly into account the possibility that individual citizens may vary a great deal in the extent to which they use what resources they have for political purposes. Even if all political resources were distributed evenly, some citizens might apply their resources more fully to politics, and thus, presumably, might gain more influence. Conversely, even if some political resources are distributed unequally, some citizens might compensate by exploiting to the full what meager resources they have, and thus, presumably, they might offset the influence of the better-off strata of the community.

Thus, our initial question now becomes: Do individuals vary in the amount of political resources they use in order to influence local decisions? And if so, why?

The more obvious reasons why individuals may vary in their use of political resources are as follows.

1) Because of differences in access to resources. On the average, over a large population it is reasonable to expect that the more resources one has, the more resources one will use to gain influence. For example, if everyone simply used the same proportion of his resources for political purposes, obviously, the greater his resources, the more he would use.

2) Because of differences in estimates as to the probability of succeeding in an attempt to influence decisions. A person who is pessimistic about his chances of influencing government policies is less likely to use his resources than one who is optimistic.

3) Because of differences in alternative opportunities for using one's resources to achieve other goals. For example, a young unmarried lawyer with few clients is likely to spend more of his time on politics than an older lawyer with a family, a large clientele, and an active social life.

4) Because of differences in estimates as to the value of a successful effort. The greater the benefit one expects from a favorable outcome, the more likely one is to invest resources in an attempt to influence the decision. The benefit expected from a favorable decision need not be in the form of money, of course; it might be any one or a combination of a great variety of things that human beings like—security, personal prestige, social standing, the satisfaction of being on the winning side, specific liberties, justice, votes, popularity, office, and so on. The list is endless.

Why do individuals vary in these four respects? For one thing, there are several important *subjective* sources of individual variation. (i) Individuals vary in their goals or the standards of value they use to appraise different events and possibilities. (ii) Individuals vary in their predispositions. For example, pessimism or optimism is often more than a transitory view of a particular political situation; frequently it is a persistent, generalized, stable orientation toward politics or even toward life situations of all sorts. (iii) Individuals vary in their information about the political system—how it operates, the decisions that are being made, what the outcomes are likely to be, how probable this or that event is, and so on. (iv) Individuals vary in the ways they identify themselves with others; the people who matter most to one person are almost certain to be different from the people who matter most to someone else.

There are also important variations in the *objective situations* of different individuals. It is useful to distinguish differences in objective situations according to their generality. Some objective differences are relatively specific to a given situation. Some objective differences, on the other hand, are general to a wide variety of situations. To be poor or rich; to be well educated or uneducated; to be a professional man or an unskilled laborer; to live in a slum area or a middle-class neighborhood—these are differences in objective situations of a more persistent and general sort; differences that are likely to show up in a variety of different ways over a longer period of time.

Because of these specific and general differences in the objective situations in which individuals are placed, different actions of government affect different people in different ways and in different degrees. To be sure, differences in objective situations take on meaning for an individual only as they are translated into the kinds of subjective factors mentioned a moment ago, such as values, predispositions, information, and identifications. Consequently, individuals in the same objective situation may not respond in the same way because their subjective interpretations of the situation differ. Nonetheless, the objective differences in individual situations are frequently so great that they largely explain why subjective differences arise.

Largely, but not wholly. For it usually turns out that no matter what kinds of objective characteristics you use as a

Table 1. Campaign participation in New Haven, by kinds of activities; *N*, 525 registered voters.

Question	"Yes"	
	%	*N*
1. Does anyone from either party call you up during campaigns to talk to you?	60	320
2. Do you talk to people during campaigns and try to show them why they should vote for one of the parties or candidates?	33	172
3. Do you give money or buy tickets or do anything to help the campaign for party or candidate?	26	139
4. Do you go to political meetings, rallies, dinners, etc.?	23	119
5. Have you ever taken part in a party's nominations?	9	44
6. Do you do other work for a party or candidate?	8	42
7. Have you ever held an office or had a job in a political party?	5	25
8. Do you belong to any political club or organization?	4	22
9. Have you ever held public office?	1	6

Table 2. Campaign participation in New Haven; by number of activities.

Category	%	*N*
Most participation (voting; 5 or more other activities)	6	30
High participation (voting; 3 or 4 other activities)	16	84
Medium participation (voting; 1 or 2 other activities)	50	261
Low participation (voting; no other activities)	21	111
Least participation (non-voting)	6	29
No answer, etc.	1	10
Total	100	525

The author is Eugene Meyer professor of political science, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. This article, in a slightly modified form, is appearing as a chapter in Dr. Dahl's forthcoming book, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, to be published by the Yale University Press.

basis for classifying people, not everyone in the "same" objective situation responds in the same way. Because some variations in human behavior are usually left unexplained by factors in the objective situation, one might conclude that the subjective life of the individual has a style and pattern that are often connected only in loose fashion to the "objective" situation.

Methods

As part of a larger study of patterns of influence in New Haven, Connecticut, a survey was conducted in the summer of 1959 of a random sample of 525 registered voters. Among other things, respondents were asked a large number of specific questions dealing with their participation in the political life of New Haven. If we now make the assumption that various levels of political participation are valid measures of the use of political resources, then we can test some of the hypotheses set forth in the preceding section. Specifically, we can examine whether variations are in fact associated with the four factors mentioned.

Findings

Citizenship without politics. How do citizens of New Haven vary in the extent to which they use their political resources? How do these variations help to account for the patterns of influence discovered in the course of this study?

Although it is difficult to answer these questions directly, we can do so indirectly by examining the extent to which different citizens participate in various ways in local political and governmental activities. The first fact one discovers —and it overshadows almost everything else—is that most citizens use their political resources scarcely at all. To begin with, a large proportion of the adult population of New Haven does not even vote; in the last decade, the fraction has varied from a quarter of the adult population in presidential elections to a half in some mayoralty elections.

Even those who do vote rarely do more, and the more active the form of participation, the fewer the citizens who participate. Consider, for example, participation in campaigns and elections (Table 1). Only a tiny minority of the registered voters undertake the more vigorous kinds of campaign participation. We find (Table 2) that only about one citizen out of every 16 votes and also engages in five or more of the activities listed in Table 1; about one out of six votes and engages in three or four activities; one out of two votes and engages in one or two activities; and one out of five only votes. (Because our sample was drawn from the voting lists, the number of nonvoters was of course much smaller than it would be in a sample of the whole adult population; and because we classified as not voting only those who had not voted in two out of the last three elections, the proportion is lower than it would be for any single election.)

It might be thought that citizens participate more actively outside of campaigns and elections—for example, by getting directly involved in some way with the problems of local government. But just as it is with campaign activity, most people do very little beyond merely talking with their friends (Table 3).

As many studies of the national electorate have shown, low rates of participation by citizens in political life are not unusual. In New Haven as in the United States generally, one of the central facts of political life is that politics—local, state, national, international—lies for most people at the periphery of attention, interest, concern, and activity. At the focus of most men's lives are primary activities pertaining to food, sex, love, family, work, play, shelter, comfort, friendship, social esteem, and the like. Activities like these—not politics—are the primary concerns of most men and women. In response to the question, "What things are you most concerned with these days?" two out of every three registered voters in our sample cited personal matters—health, jobs, children, and the like; only about one out of five named local, state, national, or international affairs. It would clear the air of a good deal of nonsense if, instead of assuming that politics is a normal and natural concern of human beings, one were to make the contrary assumption that, whatever lip service citizens may pay to conventional attitudes, politics is a remote, alien, and unrewarding activity. Instead of seeking to explain why citizens are not interested, concerned, and active, the task is to explain why a few citizens are.

Whenever politics becomes related to the primary activities, it may move from the periphery of attention, concern, and action to a point nearer the center. For most people in the United States (and probably everywhere else) this happens rarely, if at all. To be sure, if men are frustrated in their primary activities and if they find or think they find in political activity a means of satisfying their primary needs, then politics may become more important to them. But in a political culture where individual achievement and nongovernmental techniques are assigned a high priority in problem solving, men may be frustrated in their primary activities without ever turning to politics for solutions.

Even for someone to whom politics is important, it is easier to be merely interested than to be active. In terms of the psychic economy of the individual, interest is cheap whereas activity is relatively expensive. To be interested demands merely passive participation, requiring no more effort than that needed to scan the newspaper for political news or listen to news broadcasts. The citizen who is merely interested can then go on to read the comics and watch his favorite Western on television; moreover, he may actually derive vicarious satisfaction from a spurious "participation" in politics that never requires him to turn from his passive engagement in the world described in newspaper, radio, and television accounts to actual participation in the world of politics. In this sense, to be merely interested in politics can be

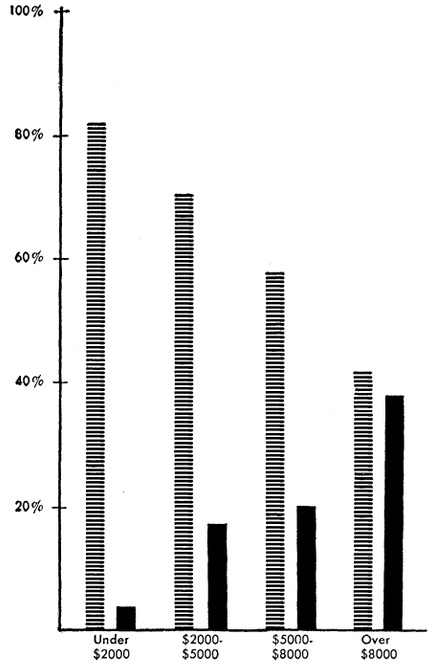

Fig. 1. Participation in local affairs increases with income. Participation here includes the campaign activities listed in Table 1 and the noncampaign activities enumerated in Table 3. (Striped bars) Highly inactive; (solid bars) highly active.

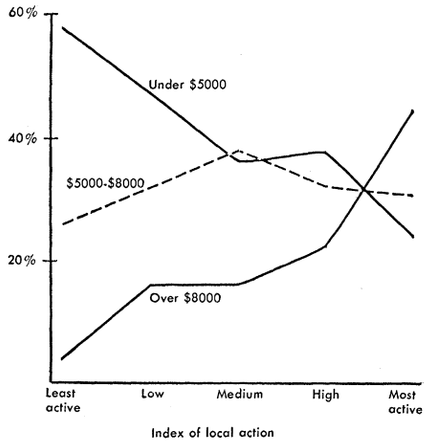

Fig. 2. Although participation in local affairs varies with income, the better-off are a minority of the participants.

a kind of escape from politics. To be interested allows one to indulge in a great variety of emotional responses, from rage and hate to admiration and love; to derive a sense of superiority from the obvious inadequacies of men of action; to prescribe grandiose solutions to complex problems of public policy; to engage, like Walter Mitty, in fantasies about one's own achievements in a never-never land of politics; to become an insider-dopester; and to follow each day's new events with the passionate curiosity of a housewife anxiously awaiting the next installment of her favorite soap opera; while never in one's entire life participating in politics in any way except by discussing political affairs with others and occasionally casting a vote.

An interest in politics, then, need not compete with one's primary activities. By contrast, active political participation frequently removes one from the arena of primary activities. Since the primary activities are voracious in their demands for time, political activity enters into competition with them. For most people it is evidently a weak competitor.

The sources of the myth about the primacy of politics in the lives of the citizens of a democratic order are ancient, manifold, and complex. The primacy of politics has roots in Greek thought and in the Greek philosopher's idealization of the city-state. That initial bias has been reinforced by the human tendency to blur the boundaries between what is and what ought to be; by the fact that those who write about politics generally are deeply concerned with political affairs and sometimes find it difficult to believe that most other people are not; by the dogma that democracy would not work if citizens were not concerned with public affairs (since "democracy works," it follows that citizens must be concerned); by the sharp contrast (noted by deTocqueville) between the low rate of uncoerced citizen participation in public affairs in authoritarian regimes and the relatively much higher rate in democratic ones; and by the assumption, based on uncritical acceptance of scanty and dubious evidence, that whatever the situation may be at the moment, at one time or in another place the life of the citizen has centered on politics.

Whether the citizens of Athens were in fact more highly concerned with public affairs than the citizens of New Haven are, we shall probably never know. In any case, New Haven is not Athens, the United States is not ancient Greece.

Given the fact that most citizens are not much engaged in politics, several conclusions are evident. First, insofar as participation is a valid measure of the use of political resources, comparatively few citizens use these resources at a high rate. Second, insofar as the use of political resources is a necessary condition for political influence, only citizens who use their political resources at a high rate are likely to be highly influential. It follows that the number of highly influential citizens must be a relatively small segment of the population.

What kinds of factors are likely to induce people to use their resources at a relatively high rate? In an earlier section I hypothesized that, on the average, a citizen's effort to influence political decision would increase with his political resources, with his expectation of success, with high pay-off, or with low pay-off from alternative uses. Let us now examine these hypotheses on the assumption that various kinds of political participation are valid measures of the use of political resources.

Variations in the supply of resources. Political participation does tend to increase with the amount of resources at one's disposal. For example, participation in local political decisions is greater among citizens with high incomes than among those with low incomes; greater among citizens with high social standing than among those with low social standing; greater among citizens with considerable formal education than among citizens with little; greater among individuals in professional, business, and white-collar occupations than among those in working-class occupations; and greater among individuals from "better" residential areas than among those from poorer areas.

Table 3. Noncampaign participation in New Haven: by number of activities. The four activities were as follows: talking about New Haven politics and local affairs with friends; letting local officials or politicians know what the respondent would like them to do about something he was interested in; having any contact with local officials in the past year; engaging in any activity in connection with some local issue or local problem, political or nonpolitical.

Category	%	N
Most participation (4 activities)	3	15
High participation (3 activities)	9	46
Medium participation (2 activities)	17	89
Low participation (1 activity)	32	168
Least participation (no activity)	39	207
Total	100	525

For want of a better term, let us refer to citizens who are relatively well off with respect to income, social standing, education, occupation, or residence as the "better-off." To summarize, participation in local political decisions is higher among the better-off than among citizens who are less well off.

For three reasons, however, the matter is much more complex than this simple statement suggests. First, all the relationships mentioned above represent statistical tendencies. For example, it is true that the more income one has, the more likely one is to participate in local political decisions. Indeed, with some kinds of participation the relation to income is quite striking (Fig. 1). But it is also true that 42 percent of our sample of registered voters who reported incomes over $8000 were relatively inactive, while 17 percent of those with in-

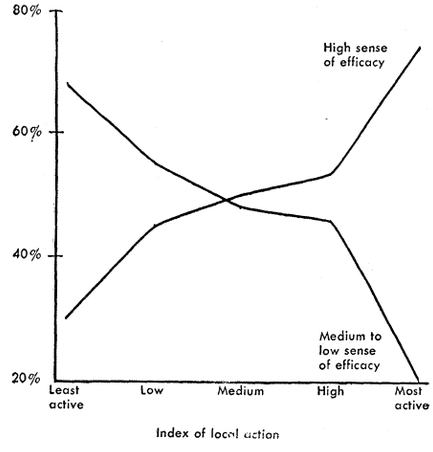

Fig. 3. The more one participates in local affairs the more likely one is to have a high sense of political efficacy.

comes from $2000 to $5000 and 20 percent of those with incomes from $5000 to $8000 were highly active participants in local decisions.

Second, because the number of better-off citizens is inevitably rather small, the aggregate activity of citizens with smaller resources is often impressively large. In our sample of registered voters, for every citizen who reported an income over $8000, more than five reported incomes of less than that; in fact, almost half the sample reported incomes of less than $5000. Consequently, even though citizens with small incomes are much less likely to participate actively in local decisions than citizens with larger incomes, there are so many more in the first group that a smaller proportion of them can make up an aggregate greater than the group of participants with higher incomes. For example, citizens with incomes of less than $8000 a year outnumber those with higher incomes at every level of political participation, from the lowest to the highest. In fact, as Fig. 2 shows, citizens with incomes of less than $5000 outnumber citizens with incomes over $8000 at every level of activity except the highest; one-fourth of the people in the most active category and nearly two-fifths of those in the second most active group have incomes under $5000.

In the third place, the extent to which the better-off citizens participate in local decisions varies a good deal, depending on the nature of the participation. They participate much more heavily in noncampaign than in campaign activities. Even at the highest levels of campaign participation, citizens with incomes under $5000 greatly outnumber citizens with incomes over $8000; moreover, the proportions of the less well off are not much lower among the most active participants than they are among the less active participants. On the other hand, the greater readiness of the better-off to engage in local affairs outside campaigns and elections shows up in a variety of ways. Greater formal education, higher income, higher social position, better neighborhoods, and a white-collar occupation are all associated less strongly with campaign participation than with local action of the kinds summarized in Table 3.

Since the propensity among the better-off to engage more in noncampaign activities than in campaign and electoral activities evidently does not arise as a result of greater access to resources among the better-off, other factors must be at work.

Variations in political confidence. I suggested earlier that an individual who is relatively confident of success in attempting to influence decisions is much more likely to make the attempt than one who fears failure. Confidence in success might vary with the specific political situation; if you happen to be a friend of the incumbent mayor and an enemy of his rival, you might reasonably be more confident of success now than you will be if his rival wins the next election. However, confidence in one's capacity to influence government officials also seems to be a general, pervasive, stable attitude in an individual. Some individuals bring into the political arena a durable optimism that survives occasional setbacks; others are incurably pessimistic. One of the most striking characteristics of the activist in politics is his relatively high confidence that what he does really matters; by contrast, the inactive citizen is more prone to doubt his effectiveness. A citizen who tends to feel that people such as he have no say about what the local government does, or that the only way he can have a say is by voting, or that politics and government are too complicated for him to understand what is going on, or that local public officials don't much care what he thinks, is much less likely to participate in local political decisions than one who takes the opposite view (*1*). In short, the more one participates actively in local affairs, the more confident one is likely to be of his capacity to be effective in political matters (Fig. 3).

Participation and political confidence evidently reinforce one another. A citizen with a high sense of political efficacy is more likely to participate in politics than a citizen pessimistic about his chances of influencing local officials. Participation in turn reinforces one's confidence. Evidently, as a citizen becomes more familiar with the operation of the political system and develops more ties with leaders, subleaders, and activists, he tends to assume that he can get the attention of officials for his views and demands. If he becomes a subleader he is likely to have a very high sense of political efficacy (Fig. 4). Conversely, if one has little confidence in his capacity to influence officials, he is less likely to participate and hence never acquires the skills, familiarity with the system, and associations that might build up his confidence.

There is, however, a second and closely related factor associated with political confidence that might loosely be called the possession of "middle-class" attributes and resources: a college education, above-average income, a white-collar oc-

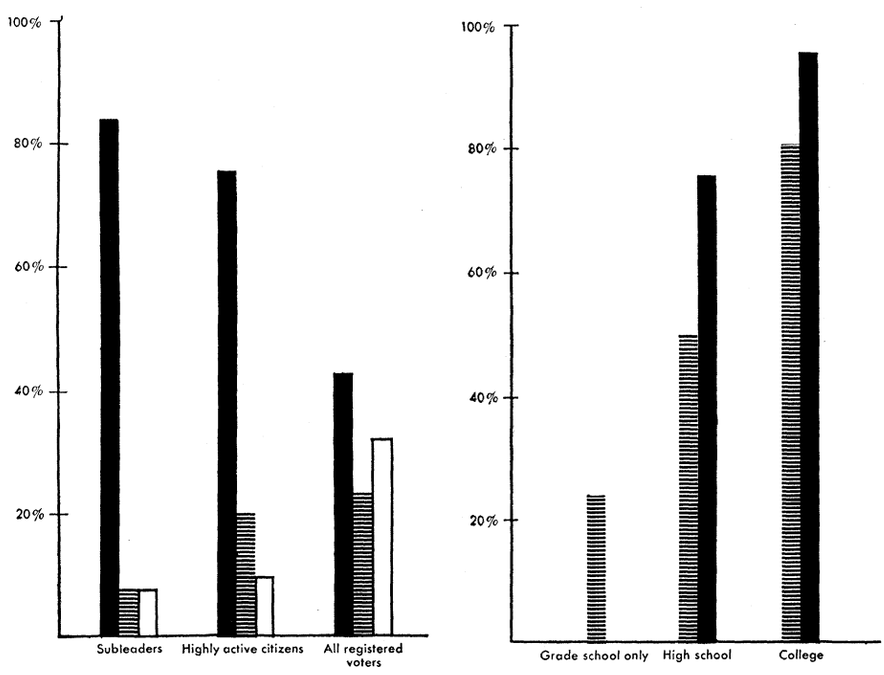

Fig. 4 (left). Subleaders have a very high sense of political efficacy. (Solid bars) High sense of efficacy; (striped bars) medium-high sense of efficacy; (open bars) low sense of efficacy. Fig. 5 (right). A sense of political efficacy increases with education, particularly among non-leaders. (Vertical axis) Percentages of individuals with a high sense of efficacy; (horizontal axis) education. (Striped bars) Registered voters; (solid bars) subleaders.

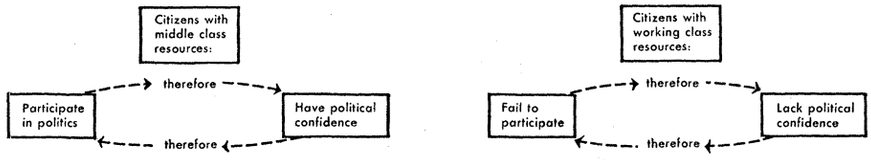

Fig. 6. Diagrammatic representation of the process of reinforcement (see text).

cupation, and the like. One's level of education is particularly important (Fig. 5). Among subleaders and registered voters alike, political confidence is higher among citizens with a college education than among citizens with a high school education; the relation is much more apparent among registered voters than among subleaders.

Because the better-off citizens with "middle-class" attributes and resources are also likely to participate more heavily in political affairs, an important circularity develops that increases the influence of the better-off and decreases the influence of the working classes. Each characteristic reinforces the other. Partly (though not wholly) because of his greater confidence in his capacity to influence officials, the better-off citizen participates more actively in local affairs. As he participates and learns the ropes, his confidence grows. Then, partly because of his increased confidence, he continues to participate in political affairs. By contrast, the working-class citizen is more likely to have less confidence in his capacity to influence decisions; for this and other reasons he does not participate as actively. Hence, he fails to acquire the skills and associations that would give him the confidence he needs in order to participate more actively. The less he participates the more dubious he is about his political influence; and the more doubtful he is, the less incentive he has to participate and learn the ropes. (In a city with a predominantly working-class political culture, the process would probably work in reverse.) This process of reinforcement is illustrated in Fig. 6.

Why, then, is campaign participation so much less popular among the better-off citizens than noncampaign participation? Evidently the circular process by which participation and confidence reinforce one another is attenuated by the plain facts of party life. Once the *explebes* had taken over control of the parties and used them as instruments to appeal to the immigrants and their children, it became difficult for the better-off to succeed in party affairs, nominations, and elections; they became estranged from the men who governed the parties and alien to their problems and tactics. Today, two generations later, it is by no means unrealistic for the better-off citizen to be somewhat pessimistic about his chances of success in *party* politics and at the same time relatively confident about his capacity for influencing city officials in various other ways. In addition, control over the parties is so tightly held by a handful of people that even citizens who do participate in partisan activities seem to feel less confident about influencing decisions than those who participate in sectors where centralized control is less manifest.

Variations in alternative opportunities. Citizens also vary in the extent to which they use their political resources because of differences in their opportunities for achieving goals through means other than political action. In an affluent society dominated by goals that are typically sought through individual rather than collective action, citizens are confronted with a variety of opportunities for gaining their primary goals without ever resorting to political action at all. Essentially, this is why the level of citizen participation is so low.

Some citizens, however, have fewer alternatives to political action than others. In New Haven, probably the most significant group whose opportunities are sharply restricted by social and economic barriers are Negroes.

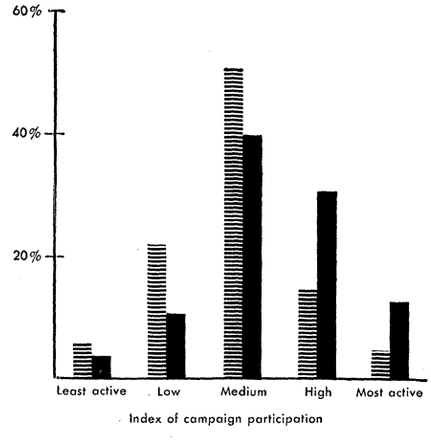

Fig. 7. New Haven Negroes participate more than whites in campaign and electoral activities. (Striped bars) Whites (N=472); (solid bars) Negroes (N=47).

Negroes are a small but rapidly increasing minority in New Haven. In 1950 they comprised 6 percent of the population. During the next decade their number more than doubled, while the white population declined by a sixth. In 1960 Negroes comprised nearly 15 percent of a total city population 7 percent smaller than it had been in 1950.

In 1959 Negroes made up 9 percent of our sample of registered voters. Because the sharp increase in Negro population reflects both a heavy birth rate (and therefore a disproportionate number of individuals too young to vote) and extensive migration into New Haven from other parts of the United States, it is impossible to judge with confidence from data now available whether the proportion of registered voters is lower among eligible Negro adults than among whites. It is reasonable to suppose, however, that adult Negroes who move into New Haven are slow to register even after they have satisfied the residence requirements (one year in the state, six months in the city). Hence, the registered Negro voter is likely to be a Negro who has been in the community for some time, and who is therefore aware of the opportunities and barriers in city politics as compared with nonpolitical areas of activity.

Although discrimination is declining, in the private socioeconomic sphere of life, New Haven Negroes still encounter far greater obstacles than the average white person. They find it difficult to move from Negro neighborhoods into white neighborhoods. In 1950 they were still concentrated in a few Negro ghettos; about 40 percent of the Negro population lived in one of the city's 33 wards, the Nineteenth, where three out of four persons were Negroes. Many private employers are reluctant to hire Negroes for white-collar jobs. In 1950, only four of the 33 wards had a smaller proportion of the labor force in white-collar jobs than the Nineteenth. Only three wards had a lower median income. These differences cannot be attributed solely to disparities in education, for in 1950 the median number of school years completed for the Nineteenth (8.8 years) was only slightly lower than the figure for the whole city (9.1 years). Although 19 wards were, on the average, better off in education, 13 were worse off.

In contrast to the situation the Negro faces in the private socioeconomic sphere, in local politics and government the barriers are comparatively slight.

There is no discrimination against Negroes who wish to vote; they have participated in elections for generations. Though they are a relatively small minority, both parties compete vigorously for their support. Partly because of their votes, Negroes are not discriminated against in city employment; they have only to meet the qualifications required of white applicants to become policemen, firemen, school teachers, clerks, stenographers. Negroes also share in city patronage, city contracts, and other favors. Because both parties nominate a Negro to run as alderman from the Nineteenth Ward, the Board of Aldermen always contains one Negro. In 1954 Mayor Lee appointed a Negro as corporation counsel; in 1960 he appointed a Negro to the Board of Education.

In comparison with whites, therefore, Negroes find no greater obstacles to achieving their goals through political action but very much greater obstacles in the sphere of private socioeconomic activity. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect that Negroes will employ their resources to a greater extent in political action than the average white person does.

This hypothesis is strikingly confirmed by the evidence. For example, when we asked our sample of registered voters, "Assuming the pay is the same, would you prefer a job with the city government or with a private firm?" only 37 percent of the white voters said they preferred a city job, as compared with 64 percent of the Negroes; 38 percent of the Negro voters said they would like to see a son enter politics, as compared with 27 percent of the whites.

What is even more impressive is the extent of Negro participation in politics, at least among those who register. Although slightly less than one out of ten persons in our sample of registered voters was a Negro, among citizens who participated most heavily in campaign and electoral activities nearly one out of four was a Negro; in the next most active group one out of six was a Negro. With respect to local action generally, the percentages of Negroes in the two most active groups were 24 and 16 percent. To look at the matter in another way, 44 percent of the Negroes in our sample were among the two most active groups of participants in campaigns and elections, as compared with 20 percent of the whites (Fig. 7); 38 percent of the Negroes were among the two most active groups of participants in local affairs generally, as compared with 17 percent of the whites (Fig. 8).

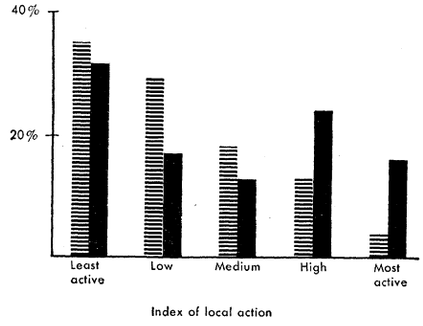

Fig. 8. New Haven Negroes participate more than whites in local political affairs generally. (Striped bars) Whites; (solid bars) Negroes.

The position of the Negro in New Haven helps to explain why the better-off prefer to participate in nonpartisan ways rather than through the political parties. An important incentive for routine participation in party activities is the prospect of receiving favors from the city, particularly jobs, minor contracts for snow removal, printing, and the like. The large contractor who constructs buildings, streets, highways, and other expensive projects is likely to participate more through financial contributions than through party activity. It follows that the parties must recruit their rank-and-file workers in great part from groups in the community to whom the prospect of a city job or a small contract for themselves, members of their families, or their neighbors is attractive. To the better-off, who have many other and better opportunities, a job with the city is likely to be much less attractive than it is to the less well off. Now it happens that in almost every major category of the city's registered voters, a majority would rather have a job with a private firm than with the city. But this preference is less marked among the rest of the population than it is among the better-off, who have attractive alternatives. By contrast, a citizen with a grade school education, low income, or a relatively low social position is just as likely to prefer a job with the city as one with a private firm. The higher up the socioeconomic scale one goes, the smaller is the proportion of those who express a preference for a city job (Fig. 9).

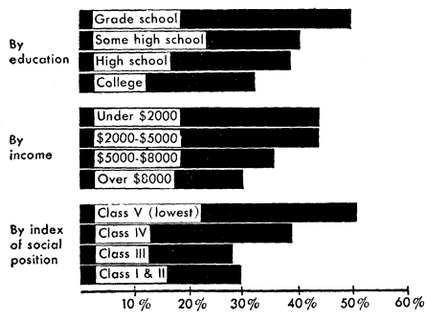

Fig. 9. The better off a citizen is, the less likely he is to prefer a job with the city to a job with a private firm. Percentages represent those who prefer a city job. The index of social position is a two-factor index based on residence and occupation.

Variations in rewards. As the preceding discussion suggests, citizens also vary in the value they attach to the outcome of a decision made by local officials. The bigger the reward they expect from a favorable decision, the more of their political resources they are likely to invest in trying to obtain the outcome they want.

The factors that affect one's evaluation of an outcome are numerous. As I suggested earlier, citizens vary both in their objective situation and, because of differences in information, predispositions, values, and identifications, in the subjective interpretation they put on events. The "pay-off" from a decision may seem immediate to one person and remote to another; it may be specific or general, tangible or intangible. Almost always there is a set of citizens who feel that they benefit more from the existing situation, whatever it may be, than from any of the alternatives urged by those who favor a change. The results expected from a decision may vary from the concrete gain or loss of a job, a city contract, or a nomination to more abstract results such as a better neighborhood, better schools, cleaner politics, or a sense of personal satisfaction in having performed one's duty as a citizen (*2*).

Unfortunately, our data from the survey in 1959 do not permit a direct examination of the effect on political activity of variations in expectation of rewards. However, it is possible to approach the problem indirectly. We have a measure of "political concern" based upon the degree of interest in, and care about, politics that our respondents expressed (*3*). Political concern may be regarded as a rough index of the reward, in a subjective sense, that the individual expects from politics. As might be expected, there is a very strong relationship between the amount of political concern a voter expresses and the extent of his participation in local po-

litical activities of all sorts (Fig. 10). Among those who are most active, 72 percent are highly concerned; this proportion steadily declines as the level of activity goes down, so that among the least active voters only 18 percent are highly concerned about politics.

Political concern tends to increase with education and socioeconomic position. Hence, it might be thought that political concern is simply another reflection of socioeconomic position. However, this does not appear to be the case; thus, when the education factor is held constant, although the relation between political concern and political activity is somewhat less marked, it is still strong.

A second though somewhat more unsatisfactory way of estimating the amount of reward different individuals receive, or expect to receive, from politics is to determine the extent to which they think the community is facing problems that may require action by the local government, such as redevelopment, traffic, parking, education, and the like. Both the number of problems different voters cite and the number on which they have more or less definite views may be used as a crude index of the benefits they expect from political action. Here, too, the relationship is quite strong. For example, among the most active people in local affairs, 55 percent mentioned three or more problems and only 13 percent mentioned less than two problems; among the least active people the figures were almost exactly the reverse: only 15 percent mentioned three or more problems and 57 percent mentioned less than two problems (Fig. 11). Among the most active voters, eight out of ten had views on two or more problems, whereas among the least active voters only three out of ten had views on two or more problems.

A few citizens use their political resources to such an extent, over such a broad range, and with such a relatively high degree of skill that they might properly be called political professionals —even though they carefully cultivate the appearance of amateurism. To the professionals and the incipient professionals, the rewards from political activity are evidently very high indeed. It is impossible to say precisely why this is so, but several aspects of the objective situation and the subjective perspectives of participants are worth emphasizing.

The most relevant aspect of the objective situation of a political participant is this: in a city such as New Haven the number of highly rewarding positions, judged by the standards of the great middling segments of the population, are few. The mayoralty is the key prize and only one person in the city can be elected mayor. There are other prizes, but the number is not large. Hence, at any given moment only a tiny number of people in the middling segments can have any hope of gaining rewards greater than those offered by careers in private occupations. For anyone who is not yet a member of one of the middling segments of the community, the chance of competing successfully for the chief offices are slight.

Table 4. Political participation among citizens who belong to four or more organizations. Number of those who had completed 12th grade, 54; others, 30.

Participation	Education	
	Less than 12th grade (%)	Completed 12th grade (%)
High	47	46
Medium	43	37
Low	7	15
None		2
No answer	3	

In sum, there are only a few large prizes; the only contestants with much chance of success are those from the middling layers who are prepared to invest their resources, including time, energy, and money, in the task of winning and holding the prize, and a full-time alternative career must be temporarily abandoned. Hence it is not to be wondered at that the number of professionals is small.

Now one of the most obvious requirements of the professional is that he must have an unusual capacity for cultivating and sustaining personal relationships in great profusion. It is characteristic of leaders and subleaders that they are active in many more organizations than are ordinary citizens. In a sample of 280 New Haven subleaders, seven out of ten belonged to four or more organizations; by comparison, only one out of six registered voters belonged to as many as four organizations. Moreover, what is characteristic of leaders and subleaders is also true of the political activists among the registered voters: the more a voter participates in local political life, the more likely he is to participate in other forms of community organization (Fig. 12). Now the propensity for joining organizations is partly a func-

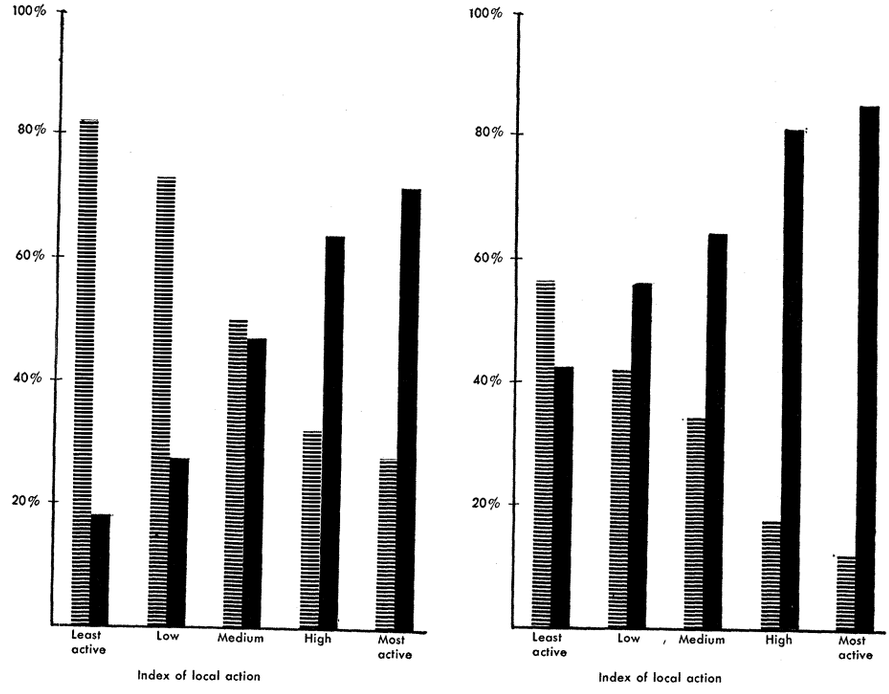

Fig. 10 (left). Citizens who are highly concerned about politics participate more in local affairs than citizens who are less concerned. (Striped bars) Less concerned; (solid bars) highly concerned. Fig. 11 (right). The more civic problems a citizen is aware of, the more he participates in local affairs. (Striped bars) Respondents who mentioned less than two civic problems; (solid bars) those who mentioned two or more civic problems.

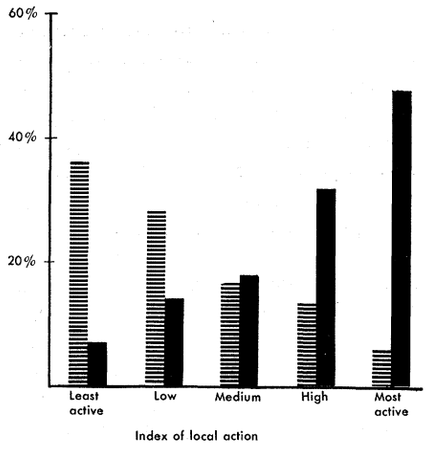

Fig. 12. The greater the citizen's participation in organizations, the greater his participation in politics. (Striped bars) Registered voters ($N = 525$); (solid bars) members of four or more organizations ($N = 89$).

tion of socioeconomic factors that are also associated with participation in political life; organizational memberships are higher among the better-off than among the worse-off. However, we cannot explain the relation between political participation and other forms of participation merely by saying that *both* are functions of being better off. For the tendency of citizens who belong to numerous organizations to participate actively in political decisions remains high even when socioeconomic factors are held constant. For example, among citizens who are members of four or more organizations, the proportion of highly active citizens is just as great among those who have not completed high school as among those who have (Table 4). Moreover, the relationship holds for both campaign and noncampaign forms of participation.

Joining organizations and participating in politics are mutually reinforcing activities. If an individual participates in local political decisions, he widens his range of relationships in the community; moreover, if he is serious about politics, he may deliberately join organizations in order to establish more contacts. Numerous memberships in organizations in turn bring him in touch with people who are involved in various ways in local decisions and increase the probability that he too may become involved.

The professional politician has to tolerate a profusion of human contacts that many citizens would find abrasive and exhausting. He must interact with great numbers of people, cultivate friendships with as many as possible, and convey the impression that he enjoys meeting them all. To work with the zest and energy necessary for success, probably he must actually enjoy this proliferation of human contacts. If a citizen does not enjoy the process of cultivating friendly, though not always very deep, relationships with a great variety of people, he is not likely to find political life highly rewarding.

In a recent doctoral dissertation at Yale (*4*) Rufus Browning presents a good deal of interesting evidence about the nature of some of the politician's rewards. Using measures of the strength of certain presumed motivations that have been labeled the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power, Browning finds that the more influential politicians he studied displayed a relatively high need for achievement and a rather modest need for power, in comparison with less influential politicians and with businessmen not in politics. What is perhaps most interesting, however, is his finding that the more influential politicians had a relatively low need for affiliation. This suggests the hypothesis that the successful politician manages to sustain his plethora of human relationships without overburdening his psychic economy precisely because these relationships are, to him, psychologically not very costly. Despite his apparent involvement, the politician is not really involved; if he were, he could not bear political life. Beneath an outside layer of warmth, the politician, Browning's study suggests, is and must be somewhat cool and perhaps even downright cold.

These variations (and doubtless there are others) contribute to a complex pattern of influence over local decisions that cannot be accurately covered by a single conventional label such as *democracy* or *oligarchy*. It might be more accurate, if more cumbersome, to refer to New Haven today as a system of dispersed (or noncumulative) inequalities.

Summary

A survey of registered voters in New Haven in 1959 indicated that only a few citizens participate much in local affairs by any action other than voting, and that variations in participation are related to variations in resources, political confidence, alternative opportunities, and rewards.

The more resources one has (income, education, occupational standing, social standing, and so on), the more one is likely to participate. However, because the number of better-off citizens is small, citizens with smaller resources generally outnumber the better-off citizens at every level of political participation.

The more confident one is of his capacity to be effective in political matters, the more one participates actively in local affairs. This relationship tends to strengthen the influence of middle-class citizens and to weaken the influence of working-class citizens.

The fewer the alternatives a citizen has to politics as a means to achieve his goals, the more likely he is to participate actively. Thus, in New Haven, Negroes are among the most active participants in local affairs.

The greater the rewards a citizen receives or expects to receive from politics, the greater is his participation. Thus, the more "concerned" he is over politics, the greater is his participation. And the more "problems" he thinks the community is faced with, the greater is his participation likely to be.

References and Notes

1. The "sense of political efficacy" is a widely used and well-tested scale based on the respondent's views on these four points. In Fig. 3, registered voters who held a positive view on three or four of the points were regarded as having a "high sense of efficacy." Those who held a negative view on two or more of the points were regarded as having a "medium-to-low sense of efficacy."
2. It is not unreasonable to suppose that a sense of civic duty might impel many citizens to action; the "pay-off" would be their own sense of satisfaction in having performed their obligations as citizens. These considerations suggest that the most active participants in civic life might also have the strongest sense of civic duty. Unfortunately, the data from our study are inadequate for a good test of this hypothesis. While we cannot conclude that the hypothesis is false, it is clearly not confirmed by our data, and in fact such evidence as we have seems to run counter to it. However, given the nature of the evidence, perhaps the best position one can take on the question is a combination of skepticism and open-mindedness.
3. The index of political concern was based on answers to the two following questions: "Some people feel that political affairs are important and some people feel that they are not so important. Thinking back over the last month or so, would you say that you have been very much interested in political affairs, somewhat interested, or not interested at all?" "Generally speaking would you say that you care a great deal about what goes on in politics, that you care somewhat, or that you don't care too much?"
4. R. Browning, "Businessmen in politics," thesis Yale University (1960).