

**PARTICIPATION  
AND POLITICAL EQUALITY**  
*A SEVEN-NATION COMPARISON*

To our colleagues in the Cross-National Program  
on Political and Social Change

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## PREFACE

This book is based on the analysis of data from the Cross-National Program in Political and Social Change. The Cross-National Program was a collaborative program of survey studies in seven nations. The studies dealt with a wide range of questions but focused primarily on citizen involvement in political life. Other works – some dealing with one or a few of the nations studied, others more generally comparative – have appeared. (See the List of Publications of the Cross-National Program in Participation.) This work attempts to deal comprehensively with one aspect of our study across all seven nations: the ways citizens participate and the processes that lead them to do so.

The study began over a decade ago as a follow-up to Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture*. The original goal was to replicate that study in some other nations. Over the years the present study has evolved in a somewhat different direction for several reasons. For one thing, we decided to build on rather than replicate the earlier study. In this way, we could take advantage of lessons learned from the earlier work. This choice involves some loss, since replications are valuable ways of achieving continuity in research. But the loss is balanced by our ability to move beyond the previous work. Another source of change in the focus of the study is its organizational structure. From the beginning, it was decided that the study ought to be a cooperative one in which research groups from each of the participating nations would join in research planning and design. The cooperation would go beyond the design of the specific instruments to the choice of a general theoretical orientation. The collaborating groups did join in this process, and the study design developed in new directions in response to their interest.

The resulting study, nevertheless, deals with many of the themes of the earlier work: the citizen as participant, the social sources of that participation, and the values associated with the role of citizen. There are, however, several new emphases. We are more concerned with participatory behaviors – in the wide range of ways in which individuals can participate in politics – than in participatory attitudes. We believe that participatory behaviors have a more immediate impact on politics and that they are somewhat easier to measure in a valid and reliable way

across nations. Furthermore, we seek to explain patterns of political participation in terms of the contemporaneous social and psychological characteristics of individuals, not in terms of earlier socialization. Lastly, unlike the approach used in *The Civic Culture*, our concern here is with the problems of social and political equality within nations.

The study began as an attempt to use survey techniques in a number of nations different from the five studied in *The Civic Culture*, particularly some Asian and African nations. The original participating nations were: India, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, and the United States. Two nations had been in the earlier study, three were new. Over time the set changed somewhat. The Mexican group withdrew during the planning phase. (The withdrawal was largely in response to the Project Camelot affair. Project Camelot was a large-scale planned study of insurgency and social stability sponsored by the Pentagon. The revelation of this base of Camelot's support in Chile had repercussions across many Latin American nations and on many research enterprises having no connection with it.) In the later stages of the research three additional nations joined in: Austria, Yugoslavia, and the Netherlands. The result is a quite heterogeneous set of nations – something that (as we shall try to explain in Chapter 2) is an important asset to our work.

We remain within the tradition of *The Civic Culture* in that we use survey studies to deal with macropolitical problems. We are not primarily interested in explaining the behavior of the individual citizen but in understanding the political system and the way in which individual behavior shapes that system. But despite that macroconcern, our explanatory sights have been set somewhat lower than those of the earlier work. We do not try to explain why some democracies are stable and effective whereas others are less so. To answer such a question as that raised in *The Civic Culture* required quite a leap from the data on citizen attitudes and behavior to conclusions about the political system. We want to explain why the participant population in a society takes the shape it does – why some groups are overrepresented and others underrepresented – and what the consequences are of the particular composition of the participant population. Our substantive concern is with the equality of political access and influence *within* each of the political systems we study, not with the overall survival *of* the political system. As we shall see, the equality of political access and influence within a political system is a political phenomenon quite closely tied to the data we have, and our manipulation of those data allows us to explain differences among the nations.

### Data

The data reported in this volume come from large-scale sample surveys conducted in each of the participating nations. The surveys took

place at various times between 1966 and 1971, with the sample size ranging from 1,775 in Austria to 2,600 in the United States. The samples were designed to produce a representative cross section of the citizenry in each nation. Exceptions to national coverage exist in three of the nations. In India the sample is limited to four states: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. In Yugoslavia, it is limited to four republics: Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. In each case considerations of cost as well as cultural and linguistic diversity determined the limitation. In Nigeria, our original plan had been for a study in each of the four major regions into which Nigeria was then (1966) divided: the East, Midwest, West, and North. During our field work, violence broke out in a number of northern cities. This had little effect on our sample elsewhere, but made it impossible to complete the northern field work. We have, therefore, limited our analysis to the data from the three nonnorthern regions.

The samples in each nation were designed with multiple purposes in mind, given the varied interests of the researchers. Though the goal was national representativeness (or representativeness within the areas studied), we oversampled in certain target communities and interviewed local political leaders in these communities. This volume is based largely on the cross-section data. A more complete description of the samples is found in Appendix C.

### History

The first initiatives for the research project took place during a trip by Gabriel A. Almond to a variety of countries in 1963 during which he had conversations with scholars about the possibility of collaborative research following up that done for *The Civic Culture*. In the spring of 1964 invitations were sent out to scholars from India, Japan, Nigeria, and Mexico for a meeting to last six weeks at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. The meeting there was a rather open forum for the discussion of a variety of research approaches and topics. Gradually the group converged on the subject of the interrelationship between social and economic change and political participation.

The group worked out an overall sketch of a research design, but no precise delineation of what was to be done. One important product of the meeting was a rather long and cumbersome interview form. Each group promised to test it on a few dozen respondents in each country as a means of determining whether the information we were interested in was, in fact, obtainable. The interview was not a very useful research instrument, and very little of it survived into the final field work. On the other hand, it was organizationally useful. It meant that all of the

research groups spent a large part of the next academic year worrying about the same set of problems and refining their ideas on the subject.

In the summer of 1965, the same research groups met again at the University of Ibadan. The meeting lasted a little over a month and was the most crucial meeting for the development of the project. During this meeting, we agreed on a dual-level survey design (interviewing a cross-section sample as well as local leaders) and upon the overall focus of the interviews. On the basis of this meeting a fairly precise set of interview schedules was worked out. We planned pretest activities for the coming year that would involve the simulation of the entire research task in several communities in each of the countries. During the academic year 1965, pilot studies were conducted in each of the individual countries. The interviews were coded, punched, and sent to Stanford University for preliminary analysis.

In the summer of 1966 there was a briefer meeting of the research groups at Uppsala, Sweden. This meeting led to the drafting of our final questionnaires, which were then sent to each of the participating nations. The field work began in the summer of 1966 and lasted until the spring of 1967.<sup>1</sup> Much of the calendar year of 1967 was spent on coding the data and preparing the data for analysis. In the fall of 1967 the senior researchers from each of the countries came to Palo Alto. Some of them were fellows of the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences for 1968, and others were at the Institute of Political Studies at Stanford. This gave us an extended period together planning and carrying out the preliminary analysis. Our original goal had been to accomplish a great deal of the data analysis jointly during the period when the various researchers were all together, but we were somewhat overambitious in our timing. The coding and cleaning of the data took longer than anticipated. This, coupled with the transition from the IBM 7090 to the IBM 360 delayed the availability of the data, so that only preliminary analysis could be done at that time.

However, much planning of the analysis was possible and some analysis was carried out. In addition, several members of the research teams from the other countries spent an additional six months at the University of Chicago when the American locale of the project moved there at the beginning of 1969.

In the summer of 1969, we held a meeting in Bled, Yugoslavia, to plan possible extensions of the study to several other countries. The initiative for this extension had come, in each case, from the scholars of the respective countries (or, in the case of Austria, from two American scholars who specialized in Austrian politics). The meeting in Yugoslavia focused on two main problems: (1) how to design a study that would

<sup>1</sup> The field work in any single nation took less time.

take advantage of what had been learned in the first wave of our research but that would remain comparable to the early research, and (2) how to adjust a study of political participation for application in a socialist society where the institutional structures were somewhat different.

On the basis of this meeting, a parallel study was conducted in Austria in the winter of 1969. In addition, the year 1969–70 was used for some preliminary studies in Yugoslavia and the Netherlands. During that time, one member of the Yugoslavian group spent six months in Chicago working on the research design. During the academic year 1970–1, field work was carried on in Yugoslavia and the Netherlands.

Data analysis has taken place at a variety of sites. The group that prepared the present volume has analyzed these data at computer centers at Stanford, the University of Chicago, the University of Alberta, the University of Leiden, the Max Planck Institute at Garsching, in West Germany, and the University of Iowa. (If surfers travel the world to find that perfect wave, and mountain climbers do the same to climb the unclimbable, cross-national survey researchers, burdened with the immense data files, travel anywhere to find the cheaper computer.) At these places, data were also analyzed at the request of other national groups – members of which often joined us at one or another place.

### Funding

The first part of the study was funded by the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The former supported the field research outside of the United States; the latter supported the research within the United States. In addition, there were funds supplied in each of the countries through the local research centers. Though the major funding for the first wave of studies came from the United States, the use of the funds in each of the countries was under the control of the local research team. The data analysis in the United States has been supported by the National Science Foundation. The Japanese group and the Indian group have both received funds within their own nations for data analysis. The director of the Nigerian study – formerly chairman of the Sociology Department at the University of Ibadan – now occupies the Chair of Sociology at Uppsala, where the data analysis is being supported by Swedish funds.

The studies in Yugoslavia and the Netherlands are supported by funds raised in those two countries. The Austrian study was jointly supported by funds from the Institute of International Studies of the University of California at Berkeley and the Institute for Empirical Social Research in Vienna. Thus, over time, the program has moved toward a more dispersed structure of funding.

## Organization

The program was, from the beginning, organized around the principle of maximum possible egalitarian cooperation. Our hope was to have fully cooperative participation in the research design, research administration, and research analysis phases. The major intellectual problems of the study and the major design of the research instruments were determined at the series of conferences among the senior researchers from each of the countries. Within each of the countries, the local team was fully responsible for the conduct of the research.<sup>2</sup>

Comparative survey research is a slow and complex business. Cooperative research designed and conducted by an international group is slower and more complex by a factor probably equal to the number of collaborating groups (in our case seven). Such a research approach is often defended in terms of the sociology and politics of international social science: Intrusive research by foreigners into another country (particularly by researchers from the United States) is a form of intellectual imperialism; a more equitable approach is one in which multinational groups collaborate. The argument has much validity, and "safari research" where the foreign scholar enters to gather some data with the help of local assistants and carries it off home is and should be largely a thing of the past.

But the main justification for a cooperative style of research is intellectual. One major problem in comparative research is how can one do systematic comparisons across nations (which involves simplification and abstraction from the specific setting of any particular nation) and at the same time do justice to the significant special features of each of the nations being considered (which involves sensitivity to complex contextual factors within each nation). Too much research falls at one extreme or the other: either abstracting a few variables from each country, which may lead to superficial results, or returning to the tradition of the configurative case study, which leads to noncomparable results.

An organizational structure for research that forces scholars who have worked intensively on their own countries to consider their country within a comparative framework is one way of attempting to achieve the two somewhat incompatible goals of comparative research. The specialized knowledge that they bring of their own societies (knowledge that is necessary for meaningful understanding), coupled with the need to compare that society with others, leads to a fairly reasonable compromise between the two polar extremes of research.

Our group discussions constantly moved up and down the ladder of

<sup>2</sup> The only exception was the Austrian study that was conducted under the supervision of two American researchers who had worked in Austria. (See the Acknowledgments for a list of collaborators.)

specificity: We would discuss some general dimension of interest to us and how we might tap it; one participant would comment, "But that makes no sense in my country"; we would discuss the situation in that country and then attempt to climb up again to our general dimension armed with some understanding that would allow it to make more sense in that country. We tried to avoid forcing the individual nations into categories that had no relevance to their specific situations, but at the same time we tried to avoid the "in our country it is different" kind of parochialism.

Our ability to accomplish this was enhanced by our dedication to a rather flexible research strategy. No attempt was made to have identical research instruments in each nation; we were interested in functional not formal equivalence (see Chapter 2). Our goal was to deal with the same set of theoretical issues and to measure the same set of theoretically relevant dimensions but, if need be, to measure them somewhat differently in each case. Furthermore, the research instruments were not limited to the core of common concerns. In the various nations, additional sections of the questionnaires were devoted to more specific topics of interest to the local research team.

Was the enterprise worth it? In particular, has the collaboration paid off? The answer must be yes and no. In some respects our dream of a fully cooperative research venture across national boundaries worked out as we had hoped. The design of the study bears the imprint of the multiple collaborators. The design was not as neat as one created by a smaller group would have been, and, at times, the variety of concerns we carried almost drowned us. But most likely it is a better design than any that could have been created by one or the other of the national groups. The comparativist may find that we adjusted too much to national differences; the specialist on one or the other nations will certainly find that we have paid insufficient attention to national peculiarities. But one must set the balance between universalism and particularism somewhere, and we are not unhappy about our choice.

Our cooperative dream, however, has been less completely fulfilled at the analysis stage. The project involved a quite explicit agreement on data access. The main principle was that the data from all of the countries would be fully available to the senior participants in each of the countries, who would be free to do as they wished with them – with the requirement that they keep collaborators elsewhere informed. Thus each of the senior researchers in each of the countries has had, in principle, full rights to conduct any kind of analysis he wishes of the data. In fact, however, things do not work out in quite so egalitarian a manner.

It is easier to express the general principle of equality of access to the data and equal opportunities for analysis than to put these into actual



practice. The members of the national groups differ in terms of the amount of time they have available to them for such activities and in terms of the computer and other facilities available to them. It is a rather empty gesture to provide raw data to collaborators who do not have access to the computer facilities needed for the analysis of those data.

Our research project made provisions for these problems. Members of the research teams spent extended periods in the United States working on the data; the U.S. group provided assistance in organizing data analyses in the various nations; and we carried out numerous data analysis requests for the various national groups. The result has been, we believe, an impressive cross-national research product. Large-scale works on each of the nations have been produced or are in progress by the national teams, and a number of collaborative works have been produced by scholars from the different countries. (A full list is provided in the list of publications of the Cross-National Program in Participation; see page 384.) Further national and comparative studies are in progress in several of the nations.

But the project never achieved the full cross-national cooperative result for which we had hoped. In part this was due to problems beyond our control. National groups differ in the kinds of resources available to them – computer facilities, time, technical assistance. Attempts to balance things by international transfers help. But, as most cross-national researchers know, everything always takes more time and costs more money. The result is that the imbalance is never fully corrected.

Perhaps we have achieved all that one could realistically have hoped to achieve. The works produced by our project are large in volume and, we hope, high in quality as well. And as a glance at the List of Publications will make clear, the product is cross-national. Yet we would be less than honest if we did not share our lingering concern that, though international cooperation may be easier in the social sciences than in politics, it is not all that easy.

Though our data come from seven nations, this is not a book about these nations so much as it is a book about some general social processes for which each nation is the setting. This is not to say that we ignore context. As we shall try to demonstrate, certain general social processes lead to different results within different contexts. The seven nations provide us with the appropriate variation in context. We do not, however, attempt to deal with the nations *per se*. The result is that no nation receives adequate coverage in this volume, even from the point of view of our main concerns with participation and stratification. The choice to focus on the general problem was deliberate. Fuller considerations of the individual nations on the basis of these data can be found in some of the publications listed toward the end of the book.

## Acknowledgments

All scholars who have conducted cross-national social science research will agree that it takes more time, costs more money, and involves more people. There is little we can do about the time but regret its passage. We can, however, acknowledge the institutions that provided the money and, more important, the people whose ideas and help enabled us to use it effectively.

We begin with our collaborators in the Cross-National Program in Political and Social Change. Our research program has been collaborative from its beginning: The original ideas, the research design, and the analysis have been shaped in cooperation with scholars who are specialists on and, in most cases, nationals of the collaborating nations. They will not all agree with what we have done with the data. But we thank them for sharing with us their effort in collecting the data as well as their ideas at every stage.

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Sidney Verba  
Norman H. Nie  
Jae-On Kim

# 1

## Introduction

Most democratic political systems are, in principle, equalitarian. They are based on universal suffrage whereby each person has equal influence. In practice, it does not work that way. There is a wide variation in the political influence exercised by citizens. One reason for this is that most – probably all – modern democracies are neither in principle nor in practice equalitarian when it comes to social and economic matters. Wide differences exist among individuals in income, educational attainment, and occupational status. Such differences mean that citizens are differentially endowed with resources that can be used for political activity and influence. As citizens convert such resources into political influence, political inequality appears.

The political advantage of those citizens more advantaged in socioeconomic terms is found in all nations, certainly in all those for which we have data. But there is a great variation across nations in the extent to which those who have greater socioeconomic resources outparticipate those having fewer resources. In this book we shall compare a very heterogeneous set of nations to determine how people attempt to influence political decisions and what process brings them into political activity. Our purpose is to describe and explain the variations across nations in the extent to which socioeconomic stratification is linked to political participation.

By political participation we refer to those legal acts by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions that they take. There are other definitions of participation, some broader, some narrower (see Verba and Nie, 1972, pp. 2–3), but this definition is appropriate for our purposes. We are interested in participation that involves attempts (successful or otherwise) to influence the government. Purely ceremonial participation is outside our sphere of concern though it is very important in many societies. And we limit ourselves to the use of “regular” legal political channels. We do not deal with protests, extralegal violence, or rebellions. We do not deny that these are important ways in which a citizenry can influence the government. But to deal with these would be to write a different book. The history of democracy is in large part the

history of the development of regular and legal channels through which citizens can express their preferences and apply pressure on the government to comply with those preferences. The extent to which such channels are available, the extent to which they are used, and (the special concern of our book) the extent to which they are *differentially available* and *differentially used* across social groups are crucial in understanding the effectiveness of democracy. Nor is such a subject unrelated to the subject of more intense "out-of-channels" protests; for the use of such alternative means of political influence often results from the perceived inadequacy or the unequal availability of more regular channels.

### Stratification and political participation

Students of society have long debated the relationship among various stratification hierarchies. For Marx, economic position as indicated by one's relation to the means of production represented the dominant dimension of stratification that determined, in the long run, all other stratification patterns. Weber, on the other hand, stressed the distinction among economic, political, and social stratification hierarchies. Positions on such hierarchies can vary independently of each other. One individual or group may be more politically influential than another but less well off in economic terms. Or an individual or group may have wealth but less social prestige.

In general, political and socioeconomic stratification hierarchies are likely to be closely aligned. This is because one's position on one hierarchy affects positions on other hierarchies. Wealth is not the same as political power, but it can (usually) purchase political power as it can (usually with enough time) purchase social respect. Conversely, political power can be converted into wealth. Where political and nonpolitical stratification hierarchies are closely congruent, they mutually support each other. Those citizens who are wealthier, better educated, or who come from more prestigious ethnic or racial or linguistic groups will hold a disproportionate share of political influence. The political stratification system in turn reinforces the socioeconomic one: The economically and socially better-off dominate politics. Government policy, in turn, maintains and reinforces the position of those who are better off.

Where, however, the two hierarchies do not reinforce each other — where they are at least partially independent — the possibility exists that the political can modify the socioeconomic. This can happen where the political stratification system is more egalitarian than the socioeconomic one. Under such conditions, those low on the socioeconomic hierarchies will have — relatively speaking — better political positions. They can use such positions to influence governmental policies to change the socioeconomic stratification patterns. Such was the result that many expected

from political democratization. The universalization of the franchise and the expansion of the right of workers, peasants, and other disadvantaged groups to form political movements would create political equality and in turn provide the opportunity for those less well off in society to press for redistributive policies. In this process the less-well-off would use their major political resource, numbers. Their success would be furthered by a disjunction between political and socioeconomic ideologies. The spread of political rights down the socioeconomic hierarchy has usually rested on an equalitarian ideology as to the proper distribution of political rights. Such an equalitarian ideology in the political sphere has often coexisted with a hierarchical one in the socioeconomic sphere. In capitalist societies such as the United States, equalitarianism as a political ideal has gone hand in hand with the legitimacy of hierarchy in economic terms. In traditionally stratified societies such as India, political equality as an ideal has coexisted with a relatively rigid social hierarchy. Equality as a political ideal would legitimate demands for equality in social and economic terms.

In fact, things have not worked out quite that way. It is difficult to measure the impact of democratization on redistribution, but the best available evidence suggests that the impact is by no means large and certainly not uniform. There have been a number of cross-national aggregate data studies of the relationship between the extent of democratization and welfare expenditures. The studies tend to converge on the finding that the level of economic development is more important than the level of democracy in determining the extent of welfare spending. (See, for instance, Cutright, 1965; Aaron, 1967; Pryor, 1968; Wilensky, 1975; Jackman, 1975; and Adelman and Morris, 1973.) Jackman, for example, concludes that the extent of democracy in a society — as measured by the percent voting, the competitiveness of the party system, the absence of electoral irregularity, and freedom of the press — is bivariate related to redistributive policies and economic equality. But when one adds the level of economic development to the analysis, the relationship between the political democracy variables and the measures of economic equality disappears (Jackman, 1975, chap. 4). Similarly, Wilensky divides societies on the basis of two characteristics: (1) "the degree to which the mass of citizens participate in decision making, a continuum from populist to oligarchical" and (2) the "degree to which the state allows or encourages the voluntary action of numerous alternative groups," a continuum that runs from liberal democracies with free speech and party competition to totalitarian systems (Wilensky, 1975, p. 21). These two dimensions are quite similar to the two dimensions that Robert Dahl uses to measure the extent of polyarchy, liberalization (the extent of legitimate political contestation), and inclusiveness (the proportion of the population taking part in political life) (Dahl,

1971, chap. 1). Wilensky finds that welfare spending is largely a function of per capita GNP and the age distribution of a population. The nature of the political system contributes almost nothing to the explanation of the extent of welfare spending (Wilensky, 1971, pp. 22–25). Lastly, one might cite similar results in the work of Adelman and Morris. Measures relating to political participation do relate to income equality, but they rank quite low as explanatory factors for the equality of income distribution across societies (Adelman and Morris, 1973, p. 184).

There is, however, some work in which a relationship between political characteristics and socioeconomic outcomes appears. Douglas Hibbs shows a fairly close connection between the nature of the party or parties that govern a country and macroeconomic policy (Hibbs, 1975, 1976). As he puts it,

Countries regularly governed by labor-oriented, working-class-based Social Democratic parties have typically experienced average unemployment levels below the West European, North American median and average rates of inflation above the West European, North American median. In contrast, nations dominated by business-oriented, middle-class-based center and right-wing political parties have more often than not experienced above median unemployment rates and below median inflation rates [Hibbs, 1976, p. 78]

In addition, he finds that these differences across nations are replicated longitudinally within nations. Using data from the United States and Britain, he shows that lower unemployment and higher inflation rates occur under Democratic and Labour regimes than under Republican and Conservative regimes respectively. Furthermore, he argues, the macroeconomic choice between unemployment and inflation has redistributive consequences. Policies that minimize unemployment but pay less attention to curbing inflation tend to have redistributive results downward, whereas anti-inflationary policies that allow higher unemployment rates have redistributive effects upward.

Thus if the degree of democratization has little consequence for redistributive policies, the nature of the party system and the kind of party in power do. The studies we have been summarizing are based on highly aggregated cross-national data. Our study based on disaggregated micropolitical data on individuals forms a link between the two sets of studies – those that show little relationship between politics and redistributive policies and those that show a relationship. We shall seek an explanation of the weak link between the extent of democracy and redistributive policies by considering the way in which socioeconomic inequality affects the workings of political democracy and, in particular, the way in which opportunities to take part in democratic political life are used more effectively by more advantaged groups in society. This in turn dampens down the potential redistributive impact of democra-

tization. We shall also consider the question of why there should be a stronger link between the kind of party in power and redistributive policies. We shall explore this link by considering the way in which the pattern of social cleavage in a society and the institutional manifestations of that cleavage in party competition undercut the propensity for dominant socioeconomic groups to make more effective use of the instruments of democracy.

Democracies have evolved in two ways: by expanding the number of political rights and the number of people who have the rights. Citizens come to possess the full panoply of political rights that are needed for political influence: the right to vote, to form and work for political parties and organizations, to petition the government, and to stand for governmental office, as well as the concomitant rights of free speech, press, and assembly that make the former rights meaningful. In addition, these rights are universalized so that all citizens possess them equally. The history of the franchise, for instance, is the history of the removal of barriers based on economic condition or sex or skill and often the lowering of the age threshold (Rokkan, 1962 and 1970; Bendix, 1964, chap. 3). The result is a system with wide political rights equally available to all citizens.

Such political rights, however, represent opportunities available to individuals. Citizens may or may not choose to take advantage of such opportunities; they may or may not have the resources to take advantage of such opportunities. Political rights give disadvantaged groups the opportunity to use their numbers as a political resource. Numbers, however, represent an important resource only when the members of the numerous segments of society take advantage of the rights provided to an extent equal to the advantage taken by other groups. Numbers are important when the numerous are there to be counted and when they are counted with equal weight. Where citizens differ in the extent to which they take advantage of political opportunities – some are active and some are not, or some of the activists are more active than others – numbers may play less of a role.

If activity depends on resources and motivation, then the advantage of numbers may be counterbalanced by the unequal use of participatory opportunities on the part of those who are better off. As we shall show, those high on social and economic stratification hierarchies possess greater resources and motivation to be politically active. They, therefore, take greater advantage of political participatory opportunities than those lower on the socioeconomic stratification hierarchy. The messages communicated to political leaders through the participatory system will reflect the preferences of the advantaged groups. The result is that those who are already well off tend to benefit more from governmental policies because they have greater influence on such policies.

We begin with the assumption that in all societies motivations and resources are unequally distributed among individuals. If such individual differences are the only relevant social and psychological forces affecting political participation and if participatory rights are universalized, one shall find a situation such as is illustrated in Figure 1-1: Political activity will be a function of individual motivations and resources. The result will be a participant population coming disproportionately from those high on the socioeconomic scale. The extent of the skewing in the participant population would depend on how unequally motivations and resources were distributed.

The equalization of opportunities for political activity coexists with inequalities in the *use* of such opportunities. To achieve equality in the use of participatory opportunities may involve greater governmental intervention, intervention that sets a ceiling and/or a floor on political activity. A ceiling on activity limits the amount of activity for each individual. Such a ceiling is most usually found in connection with the vote. Each citizen is allowed one and only one vote, thereby removing any differences among citizens in their amount of influence over the electoral outcome. Such a ceiling goes a long way toward equalizing political participation, but it does not eliminate the possibility that citizens will differ in their use of the franchise. Turnout is usually related to socioeconomic status. Thus it may be necessary to place a floor under political activity as well, to make it compulsory.

Figure 1-2 illustrates what would happen if participation were indeed equalized by law. If all individuals were required to participate (as in compulsory voting systems) and if there were a limit on the amount of

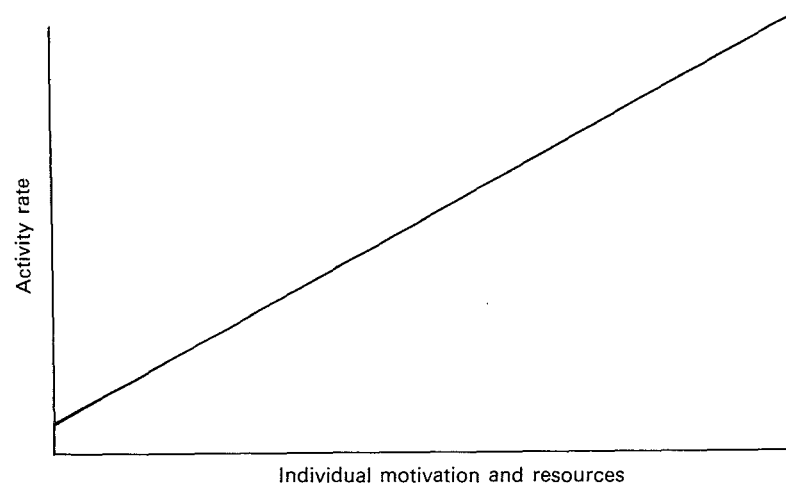


Figure 1-1. Individual effects only.

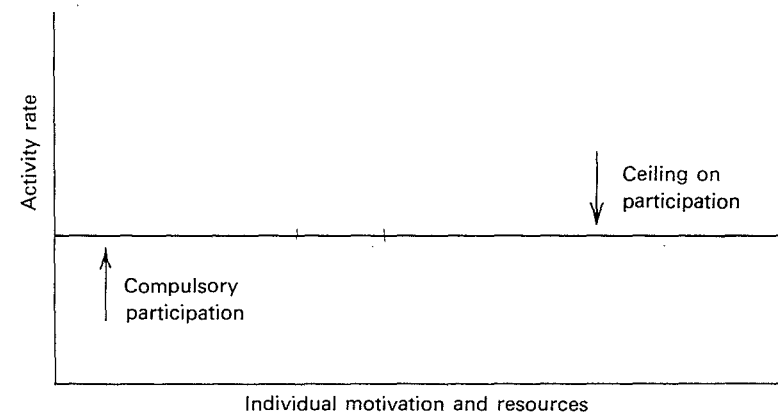


Figure 1-2. Participation equalized by law (one man, one vote, and compulsory voting).

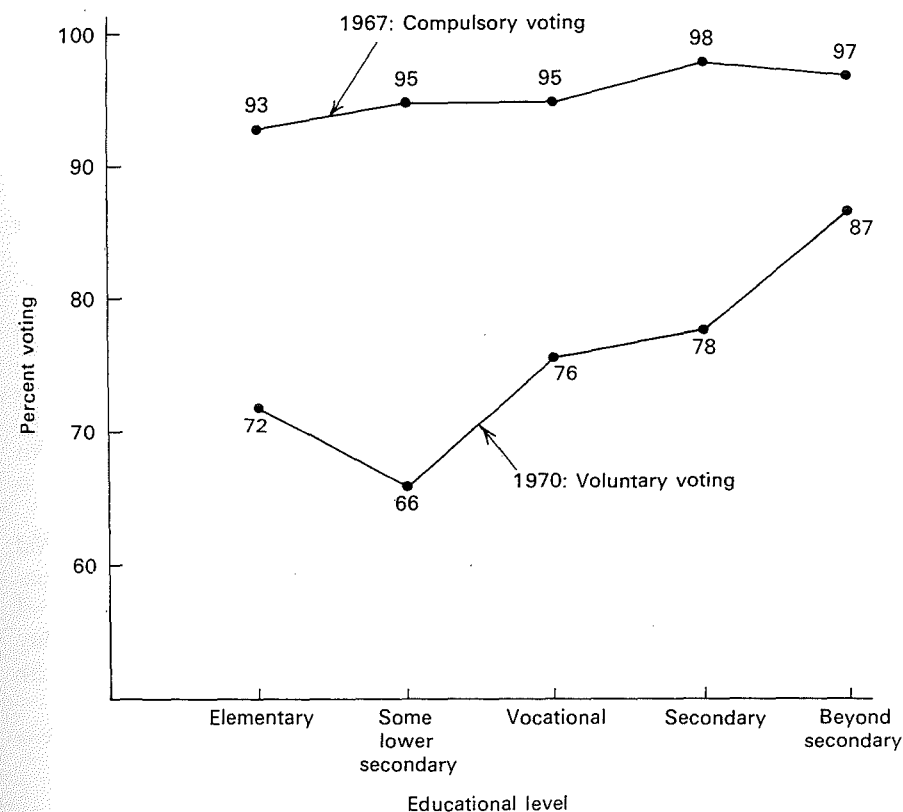


Figure 1-3. Voting turnout by education under compulsory voting and under voluntary system: the Netherlands, 1967 and 1970. Data from Irwin (1974), p. 299.

their participation (one person, one vote), there would be no relationship between individual motivation and resources and the amount of political activity. The floor under political activity would raise the activity level of those low on the resource and motivation scale to a level above that which they would ordinarily attain, and the ceiling on political activity would lower the activity rate of those high in motivation and resources. If one has a system in which the right to vote is universal, all citizens are limited to a single vote, and all citizens are required to vote, there will indeed be legally mandated equality of political activity across all social groups.

Figure 1–3 illustrates such a situation with some real data. Galen Irwin compared the relationship between education and voting turnout in the Netherlands in two elections: the 1967 parliamentary election under the system of compulsory voting that was in effect at that time, and the 1970 election under the system of voluntary voting in effect since 1967. Note that the two elections compared on Figure 1–3 are similar in two respects: Under each, voting rights were universal and individuals only had one vote. Where they differ is in that there was a floor (i.e., compulsory voting) in 1967; in 1970 the floor had been removed.

Voting turnout, as one might expect, was higher under the compulsory system. But our interest is in the relationship between socioeconomic resources and turnout. If we use education as a measure of socioeconomic resources, we see that under voluntary voting the education/turnout relationship is moderately strong; under compulsory voting, turnout is almost equal across educational levels. Compulsory voting pushes up the political activity of those lower on the educational scale. If we take the 1970 figures to indicate what turnout would have been without compulsory voting for various educational levels in 1967, we can see that compulsory voting increases turnout by 20 to 30 percent for those low in education but only by 10 percent for those high in education.<sup>1</sup>

A comparison of Figures 1–1 and 1–2 makes clear why the removal of constraints on participation can have the effect of making participation more unequal. If there are significant differences in resources and motivation, new participatory opportunities can mean more inequality in participation as those with the resources and motivation use the

<sup>1</sup> The figure does not illustrate the impact of a ceiling on participation, since each electoral system was a one-man, one-vote system. But one can imagine the curve if there were a floor but no ceiling – for example, a requirement that each citizen contribute some minimum amount to political campaigns but no limit on how much additional money they could contribute. All would be above a minimal threshold, but there would be status-related differences in above-the-minimum contributions.

opportunities available to them.<sup>2</sup> The example of legal constraints on political activity illustrates the two ways such constraints can lead to equality in activity: Those who would otherwise be inactive (those low in resources and motivation) can be boosted in their activity or those who would otherwise be active (those high on that scale) can be reduced somewhat in their activity. In either case, citizens differ in their rate of activity from what one would predict on the basis of their individual resources and motivation.

Legal constraints, however, are not effective equalizing forces. The attempt to equalize the amount of activity that citizens can engage in by placing a ceiling fails for two reasons. For one thing, as we have noted, not all citizens take advantage of rights. Secondly, such limitations work best in connection with the vote, but voting is only one of many ways in which citizens exercise political influence. Other modes of activity may be more effective and, furthermore, are much more flexible in terms of the amount of activity in which an individual can engage. The size of campaign contributions, the amount of time spent in political campaigning, the number of letters written or contacts made with political leaders, the amount of effort given to political groups – all these activities can vary widely in magnitude.

One can attempt to hold the amount of such citizen activity within limits: ceilings can be placed on campaign contributions, or such contributions can be prohibited, or they can be made less important by governmental support for campaigns. Similarly, access to office can be limited by rules against reelection. Witness recent legislative efforts to limit campaign contributions in the United States (see Adamany and Agree, 1975) or attempts to limit campaign activities as in the elaborate Japanese campaign law (Curtis, 1971). Such ceilings, however, are difficult to enforce and are often observed more in the breach (Curtis, 1971). Furthermore, such restrictions can quickly run up against guarantees of free speech and freedom to organize politically. The U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld limitations on contributions to candi-

<sup>2</sup> Studies of participation in industry have shown this to be the case. An increase in participation within the firm is often accompanied by an increase in the power differential across members of the firm. Mauk Mulder links this to the possession of expertise, one of the political resources in our scheme. "When there are relatively large differences in the expert power of members of a system, an increase in participation will increase the power differences between members. . . . The introduction of greater participation provides the more powerful with an opportunity to exercise their influence over the less powerful, and thereby make their greater power a reality" (Mulder, 1971, p. 34). See also Marrow, Barrows, and Seashore (1968), and, on the Yugoslavian workers' councils, see Kolaja (1965) as well as Chapter 11 in this book.



dates, at the same time when it allowed individuals to spend unlimited funds in direct support of a candidate. The possible inconsistency between the two rulings illustrates both the difficulty in drawing clear boundaries around political activity and the fact that too strict limitations seriously undercut other democratic rights.

Let us take another example: A policy that limited the amount of political knowledge a citizen could acquire or that restricted the right of an individual to be as convincing and articulate as possible in expressing his or her preferences to a political leader would hardly be consistent with democratic rights. Yet knowledge and articulateness are important determinants of effective political activity. Furthermore, they are by no means equally distributed across socioeconomic groups in the citizenry.

The effective application of a floor on political activity is even more difficult, especially for activity beyond the vote. Meaningful political participation inevitably is voluntary; at least it is difficult to imagine compulsory letter writing or compulsory local organizational involvement consistent with our notion of democratic participation. (In fact, our definition excludes involuntary acts from the rubric of participation.) And, if activity is voluntary, some will be active and others will not. In short, legal arrangements cannot guarantee equality of political activity; inequality of political activity (and in turn political influence) is likely to exist in all democratic societies.

There are, however, other forces that affect political activity and that can in turn affect the extent to which participation is equally distributed across individuals and groups. Such forces emerge from the structure of political competition and conflict in society. To understand the kinds of forces we have in mind, one must understand a distinction we make between *individual-based* inequalities in participation and *group-based* inequalities. This distinction can be applied to the process by which people come to be political activists and to the results of that process. Let us consider the individual-group distinction from the perspective of results first.

One may find differences in political activity among individual citizens but differences that are randomly distributed across the major social groupings in a society. Some individuals are more active than others, but average activity rates across significant social categories may be the same: members of one religion as active as members of others; farmers as active as workers or managers; men as active as women; rich as active as poor; and so on. Political inequality takes on a different meaning, however, when there are systematic differences in political activity across significant social groups. What makes a social category "significant" is something we shall deal with at some length later. But for the moment suffice it to refer to any social category whose members would differ from members of other social categories in terms of preferences for

governmental policy. If adherents of different religions differ in policy preferences, religion is a significant social category; if not, not. If there are differences in policy preferences between rich and poor, that becomes a significant category.

The group-individual distinction also applies to the processes by which people are mobilized to political activity. An individual-based process of political mobilization depends on individual motivation and resources; a group-based process depends on group-based motivation and resources. Let us consider individual motivation and resources first and then group-based motivation and resources.

The most important characteristic of individual motivations is that they do not involve preferences for policies beneficial to some group of which one is a member. They are "issue-neutral" motivations. Such issue-neutral motivations include a belief in one's political efficacy, general interest or involvement in public affairs, and a sense of obligation to be a political activist. Each of these "civic attitudes" increases the likelihood of political activity.<sup>3</sup> In addition, individuals may be motivated to become politically active because of specific personal problems or grievances with which they want the government to deal. This motivation as well involves no group affiliation. The resources associated with this individual-based process of political mobilization are held by the individual as individual. These include resources such as money or other material resources, time, prestige, and political skill.

The motivations and resources associated with the individual-based process of political mobilization are more likely to be possessed by individuals of upper status. Education provides such issue-neutral motivation as efficacy, interest, and a sense of obligation to be active.<sup>4</sup> Education, wealth, and high-status occupation – the usual components of upper status – provide the resources that individuals can convert into political activity. If an individual-based mobilization process is operating, upper-status citizens will form a disproportionate amount of the activist population.

The motivations and resources associated with the group-based mobilization process are somewhat different. Motivation comes from a preference for policies relevant to a social category of which one is a member. This implies consciousness of one's membership in such a social category and of the way government impinges on or could benefit

<sup>3</sup> This is not to imply that the result of such issue-neutral motivation is not some benefit for a group, nor that those with such issue-neutral motivations may not at the same time have preferences for policies to aid some group of which they are members. As we shall point out, issue-neutral motivations are far from issue neutral in their consequences.

<sup>4</sup> One exception is personal grievance, which is as likely to be found at all socioeconomic levels. (See Verba, 1978.)



the group. Group-based political mobilization can be based on economic position, race, ethnicity, language, region, religion, or other factors. What counts is that the motivation to be politically active derives from membership in a particular social group. The resource that is relevant to the group-based mobilization process is organization. The more organized a social category is – into an association or a political party – the more capable is it of taking effective part in political life.

The distinction between individual- and group-based motivation may be better understood if we make a small diversion and address our attention to some findings in the small group experimental literature (where similar sets of forces have been noted). Give a group a task to perform for which the relevant criteria for task performance are uncertain, and those group members with higher status outside of the group (higher education, higher-status occupations) will be more active in trying to perform the task. In the absence of more specific cues as to what is relevant for the task at hand, the more general status and skills associated with education and higher occupational position leads those who have those attributes to volunteer their participation, and leads the others in the group who do not have those attributes to acquiesce to the leading role of the higher-status participants. What is crucial is the absence of cues as to what is relevant to the task at hand (Berger, Zelditch, and Anderson, 1966).

Let us give the situation a bit more political content, but keep it within the realm of the group experiment. Imagine an experimental group set up to discuss and recommend solutions to a simulated set of urban problems. Put a group of white Americans together to discuss the problem, and in all likelihood the more educated and higher-status members of the group will take the lead in the group discussion – even if they have no specific competence in relation to the problem nor any particular policy preferences. They will have general skill in discussion and perhaps feel an obligation to keep the discussion going. But mix the group racially, and it is likely that the black members of the group – even if they are the less well educated members – will not defer to whites of higher socioeconomic level. The additional cue of race will cause the blacks to participate beyond that which one would expect from white group members of similar status. The blacks will have – and be *aware* of having – policy preferences relevant to their identification as blacks.

We have not conducted such an experiment. But we think we are correct in our prediction of the difference between racially unmixed groups that are socioeconomically heterogeneous and racially mixed groups similarly heterogeneous in socioeconomic terms. Our analysis of changes in group participation rates over the past two decades in the United States is consistent with our argument. We found a striking

change in the black/white gap in political activity. In the early 1950s, black Americans were much less politically active than whites. By the mid-1960s, they had closed that gap and were roughly as active as whites. For contrast, we traced the gap in participation between whites with less than a high school education and college-educated whites. During the same period, the gap remains constant (Verba and Nie, 1972, chaps. 10 and 14). Our explanation is simply that during the 1950s and 1960s American blacks developed a sense of race consciousness that acted as a group-based motivation. This motivation led them to increase their political activity rather than leave political initiatives to the more affluent and better educated. (See also Aberbach and Walker, 1973.) There is evidence that blacks increased their group-based resources at the same time. During the period in question, the number of black political and community organizations rose precipitously (Miller, 1977).

Group motivation and group resources can vary independently of each other. The members of a social category may have a high level of group-based motivation but be unorganized. Or a well-organized category may have no strongly felt sense of political motivation. The two are likely to go together, however. Groups with a consciousness of common purpose are more likely to form organizations; organizations are likely to try to generate and maintain a sense of common purpose among their members. Where the two go together, one would expect the greatest amount of group-based political mobilization. The well-organized group whose members are motivated to take part in political life because of interests they want to further is likely to be a group with a particularly high level of political activity. In some cases, group motivations may result in organizations that survive after the motivations have declined somewhat. Lipset and Rokkan suggest that this has been the case with many political parties. When formed, they reflect the political cleavages that are relevant, but they may survive and “freeze” those cleavages even after they have become less salient. In such a case, the organization can still mobilize individuals to political activity even if the individuals no longer share the particular concerns that led to the formation of the group in the first place (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967).

Certain social characteristics can function both within the individual-based process of political mobilization and the group-based process; examples are characteristics of social status such as education or wealth or occupational level. On the individual level, as we have pointed out, such social-status characteristics provide issue-neutral motivation and individual resources for political activity. On a group level, such socioeconomic characteristics can be the basis for group interest and/or organization. Thus individuals at a particular income level (the wealthy, the poor, or the “squeezed” middle class) or people with common edu-

cational attainment (the college-educated, those who have been educationally deprived, or people with particular technical skills) might enter politics in order to further the interests of those particular groups. The socioeconomic characteristics work differently in the two processes. Insofar as they affect the political activity of people through an individual-based process, they work only in one direction: They increase disproportionately the activity of those in the upper reaches of the socioeconomic scale. When socioeconomic characteristics operate through a group-based process, they can affect the political activity of people at any level of the socioeconomic scale, depending on which groups – the wealthy or the poor, the well-educated or the less-well-educated – develop consciousness of common interests and/or organization.

How are group- and individual-based processes related to group- and individual-based results? A group-based process leads to a group-based result. If particular groups with particular policy preferences are mobilized as groups, the result inevitably is that the participant population consists disproportionately of individuals from such groups. In contrast, an individual-based process of mobilization to participation does not necessarily lead to an individual-based result in terms of the participant population. Even if people are mobilized to politics on the basis of issue-neutral motivations and individual resources, there will still be systematic differences across important social categories in political activity. The reason is that individual resources and issue-neutral motivation are not distributed at random across social groups. Those with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to be well endowed with the requisite individual resources and motivation. The result of the individual-based process, therefore, is the disproportionate participation of upper-status groups in politics. Insofar as upper-status citizens have distinctive policy preferences, these will receive greater representation. The result is similar to what would occur if upper-status citizens were mobilized on a group basis rather than an individual one.

There is, our discussion suggests, an interesting asymmetry between the processes by which upper-status and lower-status citizens become politically active. It does not require any explicit group-based process of mobilization for upper-status citizens to take a disproportionate role in political life. Political mobilization can take place on an individual level. The process is implicit and not easily recognized. (Upper-status people can also, of course, be mobilized on a group basis.) Lower-status groups, in contrast, need a group-based process of political mobilization if they are to catch up to the upper-status groups in terms of political activity. They need a self-conscious ideology as motivation and need organization as a resource. The processes that bring them to political activity are more explicit and easily recognized. They are more likely to involve

explicit conflict with other groups. Our argument is consistent with Michels's contention that organization – and we might add ideology – is the weapon of the weak.

In a previous book (Verba and Nie, 1972) the process of political mobilization in the United States was analyzed from this perspective. It was concluded that processes in the United States tended to be individual ones, resulting in a disproportion of upper-status individuals in the participant population. Group-based processes – with the exception of those associated with black Americans – tended to increase the participation disparity between haves and have-nots, largely because upper-status individuals in America also have more group-based resources and motivation.

In the present book we expand the analysis into a comparative context so as to observe variations in the group-based processes of political mobilization. As we illustrated, the legal constraints – a ceiling or floor – on political activity can modify the positive relationship between socioeconomic level and political activity. Group-based political mobilization can do so as well. How the shape of that relationship changes depends on which groups in society are motivated to be active and have the relevant resources. If a group whose members would otherwise be low in individual motivation and resources has high group motivation and is highly organized (and if other groups higher on the individual motivation and resource scale are not equally motivated and organized as groups), the situation might resemble that in Figure 1-4. The group forces would boost up the activity rates of those with least motivation

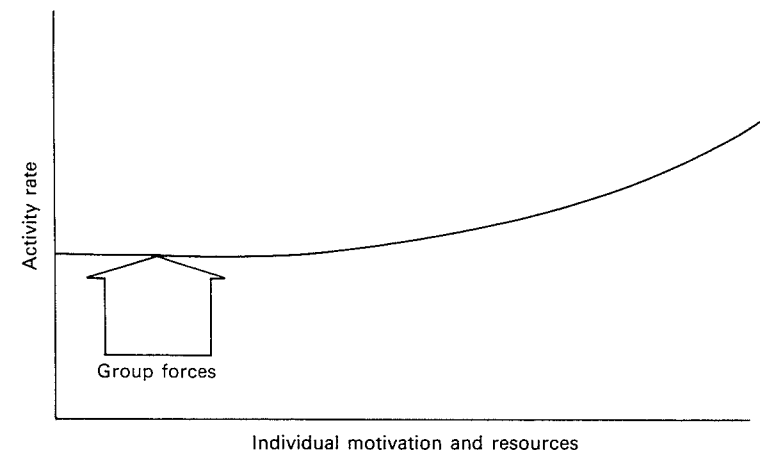


Figure 1-4. Group motivation and resources equalizing activity.

and resources on the individual level, and participation would be more equal. We shall show how this happens in societies where those low on the stratification scale are well organized.

On the other hand, group motivation and resources might be found among those citizens who already have substantial individual motivation and resources. In that case, the situation would look like that in Figure 1-5. Inequality in participation would be greater because of the reinforcing effects of individual and group forces. An example is the im-

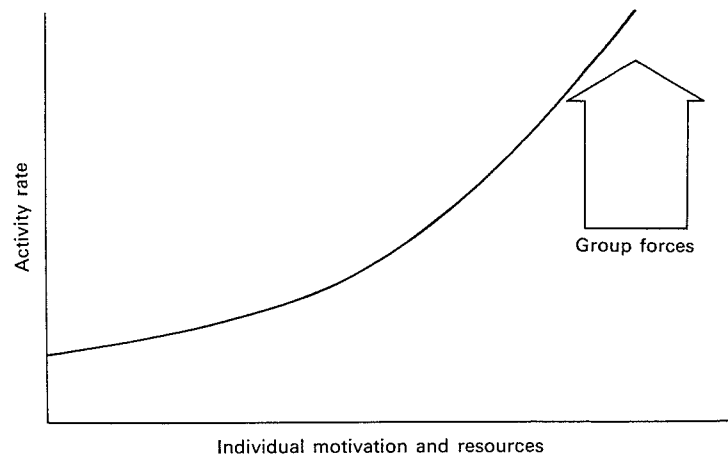


Figure 1-5. Group motivation and resources making activity less equal by reinforcing individual differences.

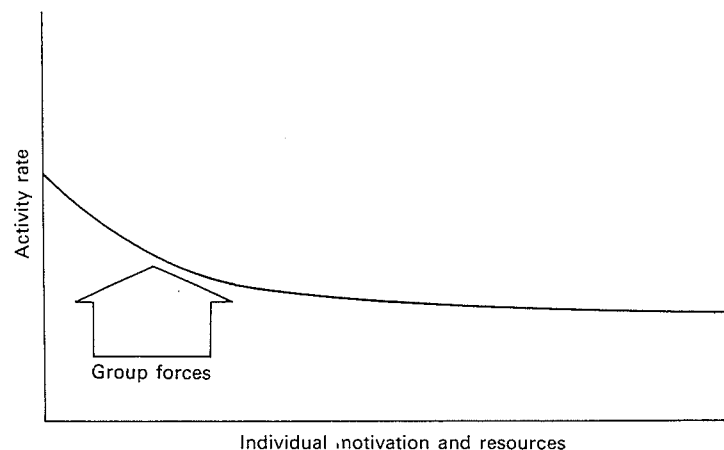


Figure 1-6. Group motivation and resources counterbalancing and overwhelming individual forces.

portance of a free-enterprise ideology and affiliation with the Republican Party that we found to be an important source of campaign mobilization for upper-status groups in the United States (Verba and Nie, p. 227).

Another example is provided by Figure 1-6. Group motivation and resources might so counterbalance the individual forces that they would create a new inequality. Citizens who would as individuals not be likely to be politically active might, through their group membership, become so politically active that they would outparticipate those whose individual motivations and resources would ordinarily make them the leading participants.

The conclusion is that group forces have the potential of reducing the kind of inequality illustrated in Figure 1-1, where those best endowed as individuals with motivations and resources are the most active. Figure 1-4 illustrates such an equalizing force. But group forces can replace inequality based on individual forces with another inequality as illustrated in Figure 1-6. Or group forces may reinforce the individual forces as in Figure 1-5.

One additional way participatory equalization can be achieved ought to be mentioned. Where one or another social category is well organized, the activity of its members will be boosted up above the rate that the individual characteristics of the members would predict. If much of the political activity in a society is based on group forces, those citizens who are not members of organized social categories are unlikely to be politically active even if they have individual motivations and resources. Lacking the requisite organizational base, they may withdraw from political life. This type of equalization is illustrated in Figure 1-7. This situation is, as we shall see, not uncommon where elections are dominated by a mass-based party. Upper-status people may withdraw from that political arena.

## Overview of this book

### *The argument*

Our main goal is to explain differences across nations in the degree to which the participant population is representative of the population as a whole. As we shall see, there are substantial differences across nations in this respect, differences in the social characteristics in which the participant population deviates and differences in the extent of that deviation. We shall look most closely at the degree to which the participant population is representative in socioeconomic terms, but shall consider other social characteristics as well.

The book attempts to solve a puzzle posed at the end of a previous book, *Participation in America* (Verba and Nie, 1972). In that book we

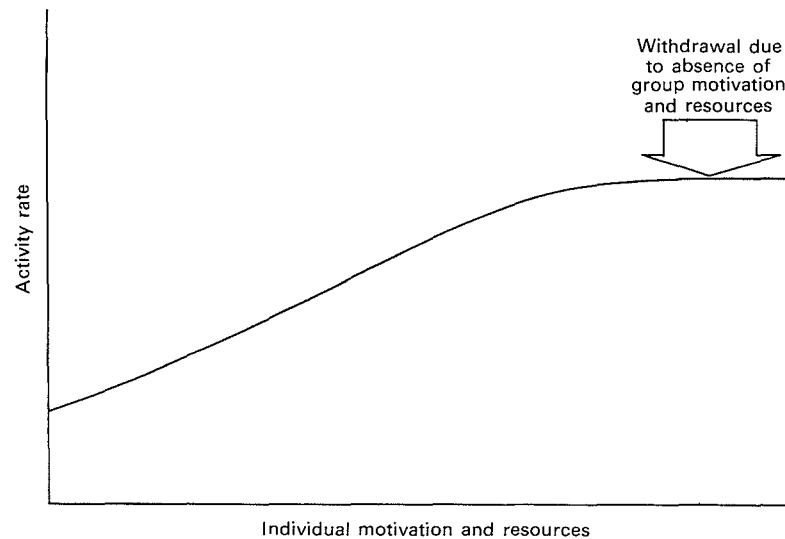


Figure 1-7. Absence of group motivation and resources causing upper-status citizens to withdraw from politics.

showed the close connection between socioeconomic status and political activity in the United States. We ended it with data on the correlation between socioeconomic status and a scale of political activity. The data were from the countries studied in the *Civic Culture* study and from our more recent cross-national studies. They showed that the socioeconomic status/political participation correlation was larger in the United States than in any developed democracy for which we had data and was matched only by the data from India and Yugoslavia. The figures for Austria, Japan, and the Netherlands were much lower. (These data are in Table 4-1.) Why should there be this variation in the relation between status and activity? And why should three nations as different as the United States, India, and Yugoslavia appear so similar in this respect? We posed that problem at the end of *Participation in America*. In this book we attempt to solve the problem.

Our explanation of the differences and similarities in the correlation between political activity and socioeconomic status lies in the juxtaposition of individual- and group-based mobilization processes. Our argument begins with the assumption that everything else being equal, those individuals who possess greater motivation and resources for political activity will be more active. If individual forces are the only ones operating, one will find much similarity across nations, with those who have such resources and motivation (the wealthier and better-educated mem-

bers of the society) outparticipating those less-well-endowed in these respects.

However, all else is not equal. In particular, group-based forces differ from nation to nation. These differences are reflected in the pattern of cleavage in societies and in the way in which such cleavages are institutionalized in parties and organizations. Societies differ in the extent to which parties and voluntary organizations are tied to any particular population groups and, if they have such ties, in the particular groups to which they are tied. Group-based forces embodied in institutions such as parties and organizations can modify the participation pattern that one would have if only individual forces were operating. They do this by mobilizing some individuals to political activity over and above the level one would expect on the basis of their individual resources and motivation or by inhibiting the activity of others to a level below that which one would expect on the basis of their individual resources. The way in which institutional constraints on participation modify individual propensities to be politically active takes us a long way in explaining differences across nations in the representativeness of the participant population.

In short, we shall begin by demonstrating that individual motivation and resources give a participatory advantage to some in the society. We shall then show how this advantage can be modified by the way in which institutions such as parties and organizations mobilize individuals to political activity. The result of such institutional effects in terms of the composition of the activist population depends upon which groups are affected by institutional forces. And this, as we shall show, depends on the pattern of group affiliation with institutions. The description is probably too schematic. We shall now spell it out more fully.

#### *The nations*

The seven nations to which we shall apply our model of the forces that shape the participant population are quite a heterogeneous set: Austria, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, the United States, and Yugoslavia. In Chapter 2 we shall discuss the criteria for this selection more fully. But for our introductory purposes it suffices to mention the ways in which they are similar and different that are relevant to the model we are testing. The nations are similar in providing whatever opportunities to participate that they do provide on a universal basis. This gives us the opportunity to observe what kind of person takes advantage of these opportunities. On the other hand, the nations differ in the kinds of group-based forces that exist. This allows us to test our model of the effects of varying configurations of such forces.

The societies we study vary in the extent to which they provide the

full panoply of political rights. Four of the nations, Austria, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States, provide the full array of such rights – the right to vote in meaningful elections, the right to form and join political associations, the right to petition the government, coupled with the auxiliary rights of free speech, a free press, and free assembly. In India, the central government has from time to time suspended certain rights in states it considers troubled; and in 1975 it suspended most democratic rights. At the time of our field work in 1966–67, however, India could certainly be listed with the preceding four nations. Unlike the case in India, our field work in Nigeria took place in the summer of 1966, shortly after the suspension of political rights by a military regime. Our questions, however, were about political activities prior to this suspension. (The particular timing of the Nigerian study poses serious problems for the analysis of those data to which we shall soon allude.)

The situation in Yugoslavia is somewhat more complicated, since it is a “democracy of a different sort.” The franchise is universalized, and there are often contests for particular elective positions. But organized opposition via competing parties is barred. Speech and publication critical of the government is allowed, though only up to a point. (There appeared to be more political openness when our study was conducted, in 1971, than more recently.) On the other hand, the Yugoslavian system provides alternative institutions – local councils, workers’ councils, and the like – that foster high rates of citizen participation. We shall, in our analysis, take account of these variations among the nations.

But what is crucial for our analysis is that all of these nations provide whatever rights they do provide on a universal basis – to all adult citizens with no sex, income, occupational, racial, ethnic, religious, or other limitations. If there are differences in the extent to which these rights are used, the source of the difference lies outside of the legal requirements.<sup>5</sup>

The framework of universal political rights allows us to observe variations in who takes advantage of these rights. We can observe how individual-based processes (which we believe to be uniform from society to society) and group-based forces (which we shall demonstrate are varied across these societies) shape the participant population. We begin our analysis with a pan-cultural generalization: All else being equal, those individuals with more resources and motivation will be more active. This generalization, as we shall try to demonstrate, holds across the heterogeneous set of nations with which we deal. Though this sociol-

<sup>5</sup> One qualification – that does not affect our overall argument – is the limitation of the availability of certain self-management institutions in Yugoslavia to those in certain sectors of the economy. See Chapter 11.

ogical generalization holds uniformly across nations, the result is different from nation to nation due to the “interference” of the particular patterns of cleavage and the way cleavage has been institutionalized. These patterns differ from nation to nation due to the particularities of political development in each. Thus similar sociological processes lead to different results because they are channeled through different institutions.

### Participation and development: a note

The relationship among participation, socioeconomic stratification, and equality is analyzed in this book using data from relatively more and less developed societies. The problems of participation differ between the two types of society. In developing nations the problem is often posed as one of development or mobilization; in more developed nations the problem is more directly one of equity.<sup>6</sup> In the less developed nations, the problem of participation involves the mobilization of apolitical parochials to active citizens. This political mobilization is the result of a number of forces. Changes in the social structure increase the numbers who are literate and educated. The development of the economy increases the numbers who are employed in more modern settings; the factory, according to Inkeles (1969), can substitute for formal education as a school for citizenship. These changes provide the motivation and resources for political development on the part of individuals; they become aware of the wider world of politics, learn norms of citizen participation, and develop the cognitive skills needed for political activity. In addition to these changes in the social situation of individuals and in their psychological predispositions toward political involvement, political institutions affect the political involvement of citizens. Universal suffrage and mass election campaigns open participatory opportunities. The existence of such elections – where they represent meaningful contests – leads political parties to try to mobilize citizen activity. The result is both psychological mobilization (people become more aware of and involved in political life) and behavioral mobilization (they take a more active political role).

In more developed societies the problem of participation is more one of equality than of mobilization. Where education has been widespread and literacy universal, where political parties are well established and electoral politics well institutionalized, the problem is less one of mobilizing an apolitical mass to political life. Rather, it is one of the unequal access to and unequal use of political opportunities.

<sup>6</sup> Apter (1971) makes this a central distinction in his work on choice and allocation.

Our analysis is relevant to each of these sets of issues: the mobilization of apoliticals in developing societies and the equality of political activity in developed societies. However, we have blended both of these concerns together in our analysis, for we believe that they are related to each other. In developing nations the problem is only in part the mobilization of citizens to new forms of political life. We consider a wide range of activities – participation in national elections and campaigns as well as activity within the local community. The mobilization model is more appropriate for the former than the latter. For activities within the local community – activities in which the individual relates to his or her government on more narrow, parochial matters – the mobilization model is less relevant. Such activity appears to be widespread among groups not mobilized to politics in the broader sense, nor is its incidence clearly related to those forces – education, awareness of politics in the broader sense – that explain the mobilization of citizens to take part in national elections. (See Verba, 1978.) For these activities, however, the question of equality can be raised even if the mobilization model is of little use.

More important, the mobilization model as applied to those broader political activities for which it is explanatory, also has implications for equality. As we have indicated, economic development may increase the degree of inequity in societies as social groups take differential advantage of developmental opportunities. The same holds true for political mobilization. Citizens are reached unequally by mobilization forces, nor do all take equal advantage of mobilizational opportunities. Indeed, it is at this point that the concerns for mobilization in developing societies and equality in developed societies converge, because just those changes that produce political mobilization (the spread of education, the movement of individuals into occupations in the industrial sector and up the occupational hierarchy within that sector) become the bases for social stratification in the developed society. By looking at mobilization processes in terms of their stratification implications, we can fruitfully compare the processes by which citizens come to be active in less developed and more developed societies.

## 2

### Comparing participatory systems

#### The strategy of inquiry

No single method is appropriate for all research questions. Our particular research concern is one for which large-scale survey research appeared particularly, though not exclusively, appropriate. As we have pointed out in the previous chapter, and as we shall explicate more fully in this one, we are concerned with the processes that lead to participation in a society. The analysis begins with a consideration of the process by which individual citizens come to be political activists. However, the goal of this analysis is the explanation of macropolitical phenomena. Our dependent variable is the shape of the participant population; more specifically, we are interested in characteristics of the participant population such as the participation disparity (the difference in activity rates) among different groups or the degree to which particular social groups are over- or underrepresented. Thus we need information about individuals that can be systematically aggregated to provide us data on the sub-groups within each of the nations. Sample surveys serve the purpose quite well.

The surveys we have conducted are cross-national. This is also relevant to our research concern. A single-nation study provides a sample of individuals, certainly large enough to allow generalization. But the generalization will be about individuals. We want to generalize about “participatory systems,” and need more than one such system to compare. Our concerns are macropolitical, and we need macrounits to compare.

Much of our analysis deals with the individual as individual – the usual case in survey research. We are concerned with the individual characteristics of our respondents that are associated with political activity – their social backgrounds, their resources for political activity, their attitudes toward such activity. We move from these individual-level analyses to the macrolevel in several ways. For one thing, the sum of individual decisions about participation is a social outcome – that is, the individual decisions result in a participant population with a particular composition in demographic terms. The relation between individual demographic or attitudinal characteristics and political activity on the individual level will determine in part the extent to which and the way