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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3m68h79c>

Journal

Public Opinion Quarterly, 33(3)

ISSN

0033-362X

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Publication Date

1969

DOI

10.1086/267719

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PROCESSES OF RECRUITMENT IN THE SIT-IN MOVEMENT*

BY MAURICE PINARD, JEROME KIRK, AND
DONALD VON ESCHEN

On the basis of data collected by questionnaire among participants in a "freedom ride" on U. S. Route 40 in 1961, the role of strains in the growth of an incipient social movement is analyzed. Although strains are positively related to intense participation in the activities of the movement, the data indicate that the most deprived are strongly underrepresented in its ranks. This is explained by the fact that incipient movements do not attract people who are living under long-endured privations, unless they are moved at the same time by a radical ideology and rebellious alienation. The authors argue that access to ideological beliefs is differentially distributed throughout the social structure, with important consequences for early recruitment to movements designed to bring about social change.

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THE PURPOSE of this paper is to examine the role of strain in the growth of social movements. Though it is generally taken for granted that behind any episode of collective behavior lie some form of strains, little is known about the processes through which these strains affect the recruitment of people into a social movement.

STRAINS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT PARTICIPATION

Since the argument of this paper contains some paradoxes, let us present it briefly at the beginning. Our central argument is that contrary to frequent assumptions, one should not necessarily expect a monotonically positive relationship between strains¹ and the various

* We are grateful to the organizers of the "Route 40 Freedom Ride," and in particular to James Farmer, former president of CORE, who allowed us to change our role from that of participants to that of systematic observers. We are also indebted to Raymond Breton, James Coleman, Robert Peabody, and Arthur Stinchcombe for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper, although, since they disagreed with some of our arguments, they cannot be held responsible for its contents.

¹ The concept of strain is borrowed from Smelser, who devotes a full chapter to its elaboration in his *Theory of Collective Behavior*, New York, Free Press, 1963, ch. 3. We use this concept as the most satisfactory generic term to refer to any impairment in people's life conditions. Though in Smelser's typology, the concept of deprivation refers to only one subtype of strains—in particular the loss of

modalities of participation in a social movement. Students in this field have usually failed to make appropriate distinctions between these modalities. As will be seen below, it seems important to distinguish between *recruitment to* (or *attraction to*) a social movement, and *intensity of activity* in that social movement once it has been joined. On the basis of these distinctions, the following propositions are offered.

On the one hand, we hypothesize a positive relationship between amount of strain and *intensity of activity* in a social movement. Most of the literature on collective behavior—though, as noted, it fails to make the distinction we are introducing—is consonant with the suggestion that the most deprived will always tend to be the most active participants in a social movement, once they have joined it. The only directly relevant finding, however, is reported by Lipset, who found that poor farmers, once aroused, became stronger supporters of the socialist C.C.F. party than well-to-do farmers.²

On the other hand, as we have suggested elsewhere,³ only certain types of strain bear a direct linear relationship to *attraction* to a social movement. The most important strains of this type probably consist of *changes* for the worse in one's condition. But long-endured strains, which are relatively *stable* and *permanent*—poverty being probably the best example—present a handicap for the early recruitment of participants. The most deprived, in this latter sense, are *not* generally the early recruits of social movements. For instance, one's probability of joining a social movement may increase when, during a recession, one's economic hardships keep piling up, but this probability does not generally increase with one's degree of (stable) poverty. Again, most of the literature on the effects of social unrest, deprivation, frustration, etc., is consistent with the idea that *increasing* deprivations are directly related to recruitment to a social movement: the appearance of social movements is indeed generally explained by such conditions of strain, and one could cite an endless list of movements following, for instance, economic or political reverses. We shall not in fact try to test this last proposition again here.⁴ At the same time,

social rewards (wealth, power, prestige, esteem)—the two concepts of strain and deprivation are used here interchangeably, since most of our indicators of strain are of this latter type.

² S. M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1950, p. 167.

³ Maurice Pinard, *The Rise of a Third Party: The Social Credit Party in Quebec in the 1962 Federal Election*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, forthcoming; and Pinard, "Poverty and Political Movements," *Social Problems*, Vol. 15, Fall 1967, pp. 250-263.

⁴ See, for instance, Smelser, *op. cit.*, pp. 267 ff.; Maurice Pinard, *The Rise of a Third Party*, ch. 6.

many observers have noted that the poor—the permanently deprived—do not spur revolts; the reader is referred to a summary of the literature and to empirical data presented elsewhere.⁵ Rarely, however, have these various propositions been brought together, and hard data presented to test them within the context of the same movement.

Moreover, we know little about the mechanisms that initially inhibit the recruitment of those permanently deprived. It is suggested here that such steady strains render unlikely the presence of the sophisticated “generalized beliefs” that are essential for translating grievances into political action. Only at later stages, when these beliefs have developed because of the early successes of the movement, do the most deprived become candidates for recruitment.⁶

These hypotheses can be tested with data collected from participants in a sit-in demonstration. On December 16, 1961, some 500 to 600 members of CORE and other civil rights organizations staged a demonstration at eating places along U. S. Route 40 between Baltimore and Wilmington. We distributed questionnaires to the participants at the Baltimore central meeting place, and the questionnaires were filled out by 386 of them (i.e. by about 60 to 80 per cent of the demonstrators).⁷

STRAINS AND ACTIVITY IN THE MOVEMENT

Participation in a social movement is generally first a response to strains that the movement tries to correct. In this sense, racial strains must certainly have been an important determinant of activ-

⁵ Pinard, “Poverty and Political Movements,” pp. 250-256.

⁶ This is akin to Lipset’s idea that because of “the lack of a rich, complex frame of reference,” low-status people will always choose the least complex form of politics. Wherever the Communist party is small, he observed, it tends to be supported by the better-off segments of the working-class, while where it is strong, as in France and Italy, for instance, the contrary is true; see his *Political Man*, Garden City, Doubleday, 1960, pp. 122 ff.

⁷ For a brief history of the sit-ins and freedom rides in the United States, see Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro, *Negroes and the New Southern Politics*, New York, Harcourt, 1966, pp. 407 ff. The authors date the beginning of the sit-ins to February 1960, in Greensboro, North Carolina, though they report other sporadic instances in 1958 and 1959. In Maryland, the first activities of the sit-in movement took place in early 1960. The “Route 40 Freedom Ride,” at which we distributed our questionnaires, was organized after African diplomats complained that they were refused service at eating places along the main artery from Washington to New York. The reason some participants did not fill out the questionnaire is that they either did not arrive at the Baltimore terminal or, more often, were organized in groups leaving for a demonstration before they could complete it. While the sample is not random, so that confidence or significance methods cannot be applied, we have been unable to discern any source of systematic non-response bias and we feel satisfied that these data present an undistorted picture of the group.

ity in the sit-in movement.⁸ But participation can also be a response to strains less clearly related to the goals of that movement; for example, it may represent a partial displacement of protest against targets more easily accessible than those which are the immediate source of one's tensions.⁹

In this instance, racial strains were not the only ones to find their expression among participants; socioeconomic deprivations were also involved.¹⁰ If we take as our indicator of participation in the movement the amount of *activity* the participants engaged in since joining the movement, we find that the lower one's socioeconomic status (the higher one's deprivation), the more active one has been in the movement (Table 1, first panel); notice moreover that this is true for both Negroes and white participants independently.¹¹

Similarly, an experience of downward intergenerational occupational mobility can obviously be taken as an indicator of at least status, if not economic, deprivation. Again the data indicate that among non-students, both Negro and white participants who had experienced downward mobility had been more active than the others (Table 1, second panel). Finally, since it has been argued that status

⁸ Though Matthews and Prothro do not carry out a separate analysis of recruitment to and activity in the sit-in movement, their data clearly indicate that dissatisfaction with race relations was monotonically related to participation in the sit-in movement; see *ibid.*, pp. 419-424.

⁹ According to Smelser (*op. cit.*, pp. 48-49), "any kind of strain may be a determinant of any kind of collective behavior," and the same kinds of strain lay behind a vast array of religious and political movements. See also, from a psychological perspective, John Dollard *et al.*, *Frustration and Aggression*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1939; Neal E. Miller, "The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis," in M. H. Marx, *Psychological Theory*, New York, Macmillan, 1951.

¹⁰ Most studies have indicated that lower-status people tend to have more complaints about their conditions, to be more dissatisfied, and to be less happy than others. See for instance Geneviève Knupfer, "Portrait of the Underdog," in R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset, eds., *Class, Status, and Power*, New York, Free Press, 1953, pp. 255-263; Alex Inkeles, "Industrial Man: The Relation of Status to Experience, Perception, and Value," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 66, 1960, pp. 1-31; Norman M. Bradburn and David Caplovitz, *Reports on Happiness: A Pilot Study of Behavior Related to Mental Health*, Chicago, Aldine, 1965, ch. 2. One study which is partly in exception is that of W. G. Runciman, *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1966, ch. 10. This study, moreover, along with others cited in Hyman and Singer, indicates that low socioeconomic status is not necessarily accompanied by perceived deprivation unless certain kinds of comparisons are made. See Herbert H. Hyman and Eleanor Singer, eds., *Readings in Reference Group Theory and Research*, New York, Free Press, 1968, pp. 166-221.

¹¹ In the case of white participants, the relationship suggests the "displacement" hypothesis, if we assume that segregation does not account for the strains they suffered. A slightly different interpretation of these relations is that feelings of unjust treatment lead one to help others in similar conditions and/or to desire to change a system in which one has no vested interests.

TABLE 1
THE MOST DEPRIVED WERE THE MOST ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Status Measures	Per cent More Active ^a					
	Negroes		Whites		Both	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Socioeconomic Status ^b (all R's)						
High	32	(28)	49	(76)	44	(104)
Medium	44	(63)	59	(108)	54	(171)
Low	67	(27)	83	(18)	73	(45)
Social Mobility ^c (non-students only)						
Upward	42	(12)	61	(23)	54	(35)
Stable	46	(11)	67	(12)	56	(23)
Downward	100	(2)	80	(15)	82	(17)
Status Consistency ^d (non-students only)						
Consistent	35	(23)	64	(14)	46	(37)
Inconsistent I	88	(8)	64	(25)	70	(33)
Inconsistent II	67	(12)	100	(15)	85	(27)

^a Per cent who reported having been out on demonstrations 3 times or more, in answer to the question: "How many times have you been out on demonstrations before today?"

^b Socioeconomic status: determined by North-Hatt scores for occupations given in response to the question: "What job are you training for in school?" (students), or "What is your job?" (non-students). A high status corresponds to a score of 85 or above; a low status, to a score of 71 or below. (Notice that many low-status participants had at most a lower-middle-class occupational level, i.e. below, approximately, the status of an undertaker, a grade school teacher, or a reporter). The relationships remain the same for Negro students and non-students, and for white students and non-students.

^c Social mobility: comparison, for non-students, of their socioeconomic score with that of their father ("What is your father's main occupation?"). The scores were broken into four classes (less than 72; 72-74; 75-84; 85 or more).

^d Status consistency: based on a comparison of socioeconomic scores (see above) and educational levels. The educational levels used were: high—finished college or more; medium—some college; low—finished high school or less. The "inconsistent I" group comprises participants with a combination of high and medium statuses; group II, participants with medium-low or high-low status combinations.

inconsistency is a source of stress,¹² we should find the same type of relationship with this indicator. This is once more borne out by the data (Table 1, third panel). Those whose status was inconsistent were generally more active than those enjoying a consistent status.¹³

¹² See, for instance, Gerhard E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966, pp. 86-88. Lenski suggests that status inconsistency can lead people to support liberal and radical movements.

¹³ We are aware of the problems involved in measuring the effects of status inconsistency; see, for instance, the papers by Martin D. Hyman, "Determining the Effects of Status Inconsistency," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 30, 1966, pp. 120-129, and H. M. Blalock, "Comment: Status Inconsistency and the Identification Problem," *Ibid.*, pp. 130-132. But even if we hold constant status to obviate these difficulties, our results remain: among the consistent subgroup, 44, 50, and 44 per cent

Other data from the study (not presented here) also reveal that those whose income was lower than that of their friends, or who expected a discrepancy between their occupational expectations and their aspirations (the latter being higher), or who were unhappy in their jobs tended to be more active participants than the others. In short, the data so far convincingly demonstrate the existence of a direct linear relationship between *strains* and *intensity of activity* in the sit-in demonstrations.

Yet, and this is paradoxical, though deprivations led to active participation, the movement we studied was still a predominantly white and upper-middle-class movement. As indicated above, the denial to American Negroes of so many of the privileges enjoyed by whites should be a significant source of strain prompting Negroes to participate in this movement. And indeed, while Negroes formed only 8.6 per cent of the population in the census regions from which the participants were recruited (New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, and South Atlantic), they constituted 36.4 per cent of our sample, that is, a proportion more than four times what one would have expected on the basis of chance alone. Nevertheless, one may still wonder why this overrepresentation was not much larger, indeed why Negroes were not at least a majority in a movement devoted to the redress of Negro grievances.

Similarly, few of the movement's recruits came from the most deprived segments of the population. Although we found in Table 1 that those of a *relatively*¹⁴ lower socioeconomic status were more active, it is nevertheless true that few participants were from the working classes proper. If we shift for a moment from a measure of relative position on the North-Hatt status scale to the more traditional census categories, we find that the vast majority of the participants (89 per cent; $N = 311$) were either training for, or engaged in, jobs which are usually considered to be of an upper-middle-class status, that is, professional or managerial jobs; only a very small minority (4 per cent) were workers. The high proportion coming from the upper middle class held pretty well in all subgroups of the sample: the corresponding figures were, for Negro non-students, 60 per cent, for Negro students, 92 per cent, for white non-students, 81 per cent,

of the high, medium, and low status participants were more active ($N = 16, 12$ and 9 respectively); this is much lower than the 70 and 85 per cent of the two inconsistent subgroups (see Table 1; they are differentiated on the basis of their status components).

¹⁴ Notice that with the North-Hatt measure used before, we classified as of low socioeconomic status people who were from the lower-middle-class or below; see note to Table 1.

and for white students, 100 per cent. At the other extreme, the proportions from the working classes (skilled workers and below) in each of these four groups were, respectively, 21, 2, 2, and 0 per cent ($N = 43, 75, 62, \text{ and } 131$). In short, while deprivations led to active involvement, Negroes were still a minority in the movement, and the most deprived Negro and white strata of the population were strongly underrepresented. How can we account for these apparently contradictory observations?

STRAINS AND ATTRACTION TO THE MOVEMENT

To answer this question, we must turn to the role of relatively permanent strains as a determinant of attraction to an incipient movement. If our argument about the role of this type of strain is correct, it should show up in the data. When considering as the dependent variable the *length of participation* in the movement, rather than the amount of activity engaged in since joining it, we should observe that those suffering from relatively stable deprivations, though the most active, were not the early recruits of the movement.

The reader should note first that the three indicators of deprivation we have used so far are all indicators of relatively stable, permanent deprivations: people's position in terms of socioeconomic status, or intergenerational mobility, or status consistency does not generally represent a sudden change in their share of society's rewards. If we turn again to these independent variables, we find first, assuming similar patterns of attrition,¹⁵ that those of a relatively lower socioeconomic status tended to have been relatively late joiners, even though we found them to have been *the most active of all*. This is true for the sample as a whole, as well as for Negro students and non-students, and white non-students (Table 2A). Similarly, among non-students, those who had been downwardly mobile, or whose status was inconsistent (with some low components—group II), albeit the most active participants, as seen in Table 1, are now found to have been the latest joiners of the movement (Table 2B). And, though the number of cases becomes very small, the over-all pattern seems to hold for Negroes and whites separately. Thus, while those most deprived were the most active participants, *once they had joined*, they were nevertheless relatively late joiners.

In short, while the relationship between steady deprivation and activity is positive and linear, the relationship between these depriva-

¹⁵ A different, and more costly, kind of data would yield a more definitive demonstration of this point. In the absence of longitudinal data, it is impossible to discriminate conclusively between the effects of differential recruitment and the artifact of differential retention.

TABLE 2A
THE MOST DEPRIVED, IN TERMS OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS,
WERE AMONG THE LATEST RECRUITS
(Per cent Early Joiners^a)

	Socioeconomic Status ^b					
	High		Medium		Low	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Negro Non-students	43	(7)	44	(18)	18	(17)
Negro Students	35	(20)	40	(42)	30	(10)
White Non-students	40	(5)	42	(40)	33	(18)
White Students	22	(65)	26	(61)	—	(0)
Total Sample	27	(97)	36	(161)	27	(45)

^a Per cent who joined the movement one year or more ago.

^b Socioeconomic status: as in Table 1.

TABLE 2B
THE MOST DEPRIVED, IN TERMS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY AND STATUS CONSISTENCY,
WERE AMONG THE LATEST RECRUITS

Status Measures	Per cent Early Joiners ^a					
	Negroes		Whites		Both	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Social Mobility ^b (non-students only)						
Upward	25	(12)	41	(22)	35	(34)
Stable	50	(10)	33	(12)	41	(22)
Downward	0	(2)	29	(14)	25	(16)
Status Consistency ^b (non-students only)						
Consistent	39	(21)	36	(14)	37	(35)
Inconsistent I	62	(8)	44	(25)	48	(33)
Inconsistent II	8	(12)	40	(15)	26	(27)

^a As in Table 2A.

^b As in Table 1.

tions and length of participation is curvilinear: the early joiners of this incipient movement tended to be people who were only moderately deprived. Neither the least deprived nor the most deprived tended to be early recruits.¹⁶ Among the first, the presence of strains as a con-

¹⁶ Matthews and Prothro also found that Negro students from lower social classes were less likely to participate in the sit-in movement than others. They did not find, however, a lower rate of participation among the higher classes (i.e. their relationships do not appear to be curvilinear); this may be due to the use of less refined categories of status. See *op. cit.*, pp. 418-419. It is interesting to note, however, that in their adult Negro sample, they found that the relationship between political participation and satisfaction with the community's race relations was curvilinear: both those who evaluated these relations as of the very best or as of the very worst kind were less likely to participate than those between these extremes; *ibid.*, pp. 288-292.

dition was lacking—and notice that they were not very active, once they had joined; among the second, though strains were present, something else was lacking: the ability to translate their grievances in political terms.

This process in part accounts for the fact that Negroes were a minority even in “their” movement and for the fact that the movement was so clearly a middle-class movement. The recruitment process just described meant that the bulk of the Negro population did not form the recruiting base of the movement, at least in its early stages. Hence, the movement had to rely on the relatively small Negro middle class and on that part of the white middle class which, as we shall see, was largely marginal.

POLITICAL TRANSLATION OF GRIEVANCES

But what is it that prevents those affected by permanent deprivations from being the early participants of a new movement? As suggested before, it may be that they do not possess the ability to translate their grievances in political terms; there are presumably many facets to this factor, but we will examine only two.¹⁷

Ideology. First, to engage in any social movement, one must develop, as suggested before, a “generalized belief” that not only identifies the sources of one’s strains but envisages an effective cure through some sort of specific program.¹⁸ A particularly sophisticated generalized belief is necessary to compensate for the inherent weakness of a new movement.¹⁹ The inability of those under permanent strains to develop such a sophisticated belief would be one of the reasons for their slow recruitment in the early phases of a movement.

A radical ideology, as a set of articulated beliefs together with moral commitment to a cause and a deep conviction that historical forces are on one’s side, represents such a sophisticated belief. An indication of how important this element was in the early phases of the movement we are studying is afforded by the marginals of the data: only 7 per cent of the participants said they would vote Republican in a presidential election, and while 56 per cent mentioned the Democrats, no less than 37 per cent answered Socialist or Independent (18 and 19

¹⁷ For other aspects of this factor, see Pinard, “Poverty and Political Movements,” pp. 256-262.

¹⁸ Smelser, *op. cit.*, ch. 5.

¹⁹ Moreover, the more complex the forms of participation—demonstrating is more complex than voting—the stronger and the more sophisticated the belief must be. This certainly accounts in part for the fact that the early voters of new political movements often have a lower status than the early supporters of this movement, though in both cases the most deprived are not the early joiners; compare with the data presented in Pinard, “Poverty and Political Movements.”

per cent respectively; $N = 322$).²⁰ More strikingly, about 4 out of every 10 participants (42 per cent) had political preferences to the *left* of their mother's political preferences ($N = 286$).²¹ This hardly compares with the general population.²²

The crucial role of ideology is particularly revealed by the strength of the relationship it bears to activity within the movement. While 26 per cent of the Republicans and 47 per cent of the Democrats had been among the more active participants, 62 per cent of the Independents and 76 per cent of the Socialists had been so ($N = 23, 180, 60, \text{ and } 59$ respectively). Moreover, the data indicate that in the early phases of the movement at least, ideology was not just an intervening psychological process between deprivations and participation, since it exerted a strong effect of its own, as shown in Table 3. Indeed, ideology is almost as strong a predictor of activity as deprivation.²³

²⁰ The question asked was: "If you were to register in the presidential election, how would you vote?" (This was followed by "How would your parents [father, mother] vote," the data from which are used below.) The independent subgroup (61) includes 18 "others." In the present data, Independent empirically fits best not between Democrat and Republican, but between Socialist and Democrat, since people placing themselves in this category considered both major parties too conservative. It may be necessary to point out that when we refer to Socialists as ideologues, we do not mean totalitarian revolutionary socialists. Those who called themselves "socialists" were libertarian in their beliefs.

²¹ Among the 42 per cent classified as "left of mother," about half (20 per cent) were Socialists (including five cases of Socialist sons of Socialist mothers); the others were either Independents (13 per cent) or Democrats (9 per cent) ($N = 286$). We assume here that any adopted preference to the left of one's parents' party preference is indicative of at least a moderately radical ideology, and that the Socialist sons of Socialist mothers similarly fit our nominal concept of "ideologue." And indeed we find that among those classified as left of mother, 39 per cent of the Socialists and 34 per cent of the others were early joiners, while the comparable proportion is 28 per cent among those who were not to the left of their mother ($N = 56, 65, \text{ and } 165$ respectively).

²² The party identification of most people resembles that of their parents and, it seems, primarily that of their mother; see, for instance, Robert E. Lane and David O. Sears, *Public Opinion*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1964, pp. 20-21; Eleanor E. Maccoby, Richard E. Matthews, and Alton S. Morton, "Youth and Political Change," in Heinz Eulau, *et. al.*, *Political Behavior*, New York, Free Press, 1956, p. 301. In general, the proportion of young voters shifting their party preference seems to be about one out of four, and the proportion of them shifting left, less than 15 per cent. This is suggested on the basis of data recomputed from Bernard R. Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954, pp. 88-89; also Herbert H. Hyman, *Political Socialization*, New York, Free Press, 1959, pp. 74 ff., and the other two sources cited above.

²³ The average effect of socioeconomic status (i.e. the average percentage difference) is .36, while the average effect of party preferences (ideology) is .27. (This follows James A. Coleman, *Introduction to Mathematical Sociology*, New York, Free Press, 1964, ch. 6.) These findings contrast with those reported by Surace and Seeman, who found ideology, as measured by a version of McClosky's liberal-conservative scale, to be "a weak interpreter of personal engagement in the civil rights

TABLE 3
 IDEOLOGY AND DEPRIVATIONS ARE INDEPENDENTLY RELATED TO ACTIVITY

<i>Socioeconomic Status</i>	<i>Per cent More Active^a</i>					
	<i>Democratic or Republican</i>		<i>Independent</i>		<i>Socialist</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>
High	42	(55)	33	(12)	69	(16)
Medium	45	(91)	67	(33)	80	(25)
Low	67	(27)	86	(7)	100	(5)

^a As in Table 1. *N*'s are reduced because of nonresponse.

That the lack of a sophisticated generalized belief was one of the factors preventing the most deprived from being early joiners is indicated in Table 4. When ideology is introduced as a control variable in the relationship between socioeconomic status and length of participation, the data suggest that, when *low-status participants were also ideologues*, far from being late joiners, they tended to be the earliest joiners.

TABLE 4
 IDEOLOGY PERMITS A LOWER-STATUS PERSON TO JOIN EARLY

<i>Socioeconomic Status</i>	<i>Per cent Early Joiners^a</i>			
	<i>Left of Mother^b (Ideologues)</i>		<i>Not Left of Mother (Non-Ideologues)</i>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>
High	29	(28)	29	(49)
Medium	38	(61)	34	(71)
Low	43	(14)	18	(22)

^a As in Table 2A. *N*'s are reduced because of nonresponse.

^b Based on a comparison of respondent's and his mother's party preference; see footnote 21.

Political alienation. Apart from a radical ideology, which represents the positive side of a strong generalized belief, there is a closely related cluster of factors, such as resignation, withdrawal, hopelessness, and retreatist alienation, which belongs to the negative side of the belief—the loss of faith in present arrangements and the potentialities of

movement." See Samuel J. Surace and M. Seeman, "Some Correlates of Civil Rights Activism," *Social Forces*, vol. 46, 1967, p. 204.

action. These could also help to account for the early resistance of the most deprived to the appeals of a new movement; such attitudes would grow out of long-endured deprivations and would lead to a wait-and-see attitude until the new movement has proved itself. One measure of such feelings of hopelessness is political alienation, the belief that routine political action can yield no results. That political alienation is more common among low-status people is revealed both by our data and by many other studies.

Alienation did not seem to bear any clear-cut set of relationships to participation as measured by either of our two indicators.²⁴ But this is partly because strains are not the only source of alienation. A radical ideology, as a fully developed generalized belief, can itself be an important factor leading one to lose faith in present political arrangements. Indeed, ideology and deprivation seem to be alternative sources of political alienation (Table 5). But while alienation rooted in deprivation leads to retreatism,²⁵ one might expect that alienation rooted in ideology will produce rebellious tendencies,²⁶ for in this case it is associated with a belief that radical political action can yield results.

TABLE 5
THE TWO SOURCES OF POLITICAL ALIENATION

Socioeconomic Status	Per cent Politically Alienated ^a			
	Left of Mother (Ideologues)		Not Left of Mother (Non-Ideologues)	
	%	N	%	N
High	78	(25)	45	(47)
Medium	56	(59)	52	(66)
Low	64	(14)	77	(17)

^a Per cent agreeing with the statement: "Most politicians are corrupt." N's are reduced because of nonresponse.

That these two variants of alienation can be identified and that they lead to opposite responses is suggested by the results presented in Table 6. Though we use only a one-item indicator of political alienation,

²⁴ Surace and Seeman also report no zero-order relationship between generalized powerlessness and civil rights activism; see *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205.

²⁵ See, for instance, the literature cited in William Erbe, "Social Involvement and Political Activity: A Replication and Elaboration," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 29, 1964, pp. 198-215. Erbe reports, however, that there is doubt whether alienation exerts any effect independently of socioeconomic status and organizational involvement.

²⁶ Erbe has called attention to these two variants of alienation, without, however, indicating their respective sources. See *ibid.*, p. 206.

tion and though the number of cases is very small in some cells, it seems that among non-ideologues, alienation *prevents* one from being an early joiner, while, on the contrary, among ideologues, alienation *increases* one's probability of being an early joiner.²⁷

TABLE 6
THE OPPOSITE RESPONSES PRODUCED BY TWO VARIANTS OF ALIENATION

Socioeconomic Status	Per cent Early Joiners ^a							
	Ideologues				Non-Ideologues			
	Alienated %	N	Not Alienated %	N	Alienated %	N	Not Alienated %	N
Total Sample	39	(71)	30	(43)	28	(79)	30	(70)
High	28	(18)	29	(7)	20	(20)	31	(26)
Medium	39	(33)	32	(25)	31	(32)	36	(31)
Low	44	(9)	40	(5)	15	(13)	33	(6)

^a As in Table 2A. *N*'s are reduced because of nonresponse.

It is important to notice, moreover, that among ideologues, whether alienated or not, the previous curvilinear relationship between deprivation (social status) and length of participation disappears again, as in Table 5. Alienation, when rooted in ideology, is neither a restraining factor in general, nor among the low-status group in particular. On the other hand, among non-ideologues, the curvilinear relationship becomes particularly strong for the alienated subgroup, while it almost disappears for their nonalienated counterparts. Retreatist alienation, therefore, seems really part of the cluster of factors that retard the low-status group in its participation.²⁸ Obviously, the small number of cases in many cells of Table 6 prevents us from holding the findings above as firm conclusions, but we think they are suggestive enough to warrant consideration.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Our analysis revealed that various forms of strain, whether directly related to the civil rights movement or not, accounted in part for the

²⁷ Here, an almost identical set of relationships emerges when activity in the movement rather than length of participation is considered. All these factors—low status, ideology, and rebellious alienation—explain no less than 56 per cent of the variation in activity.

²⁸ This strongly challenges the claims of mass society theorists that the isolated and the alienated are the prime recruits of mass movements. For other qualifications of this theory, see Maurice Pinard, "Mass Society and Political Movements: A New Formulation," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 73, 1968, pp. 682-690; also Pinard, *The Rise of a Third Party*, chs. 10-12.

degree of activity of members already recruited into the movement. Yet we found that Negroes were not even a majority in the movement we studied, and that the most deprived segments of the population were practically absent from its ranks. The key to these paradoxes seems to be that those most deprived, though having greater motives to participate and being in fact the most active, once involved, tend to be late joiners.

A complex of factors probably accounts for this inability of the steadily deprived to translate their grievances into political terms. We have suggested that the lack of a sophisticated generalized belief, indexed here by a radical ideology, and alienation, more specifically alienation rooted in deprivations, were two of the factors involved. The possession of a radical ideology, in particular, was shown to be a crucial factor in the early phases of the movement, a factor almost as important as deprivation. Moreover, ideology wiped out the negative portion of the relationship between early joining and social status, while retreatist alienation reinforced it. The lack of a sophisticated belief and the presence of retreatist alienation therefore both contributed to the processes uncovered here.

These findings have important implications, both for understanding the failure of the civil rights movement of the early 1960's to exhibit a strong Negro working-class base, and for the strategies such movements must use to maximize their numerical strength in the long run.²⁹

Some writers have argued that civil rights leaders were tactically incorrect in attacking status rather than welfare goals; that had the movement stressed job and housing opportunities rather than public accommodations and voting, massive recruitment would have resulted. Our data suggest there are serious problems with this argument. If a sense of efficacy is important, not only would the movement have failed to recruit a larger base, it would have precluded the emergence of whatever level of mass mobilization (in the form of riots) now exists. By stressing welfare goals, it would have directed itself to a population which is very difficult to recruit, while failing at the same time to attract middle-class elements, thus missing *both* the moderately and the severely deprived. Furthermore, because welfare goals are harder to obtain—whites resist more in this area and the locus of power is more diffuse—the efforts of the movement would probably have resulted in failure, creating an image of weakness and thus further inhibiting recruitment. The concentration on status goals may thus have

²⁹ Additional implications of our findings on recruitment are discussed in Donald von Eschen, Jerome Kirk, and Maurice Pinard, "The Conditions of Direct Action in a Democratic Society," *Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 22, 1969, pp. 309-325.

been tactically sound. It permitted the movement to give an image of strength, necessary for long-run recruitment.

That the movement was having this impact is suggested, although not proved, by some of our data. Its successes clearly created a feeling of optimism about political action. The participants, interviewed after substantial gains had already been made, indicated that their assessment of the possibilities of action had changed greatly. Fully 79 per cent of the Negro participants reported that, since they had joined the movement, their expectations of desegregation had increased.³⁰ That this creation of an image of strength was important in recruiting working-class people is suggested by the successes the movement subsequently had in recruiting working-class participants in demonstrations on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

Thus, it may be functional at times for movements to select as initial targets goals that are only dimly related to the core problems faced by the deprived population, if in this way they develop faith in the movement's power to change things and thus maximize long-run recruitment.

³⁰ Only 19 per cent said their expectations had remained about the same and, more strikingly, only 1 per cent said they had decreased ($N = 139$); the changes were smaller among whites: the comparable proportions are, respectively, 57, 40, and 4 per cent ($N = 239$).