

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND VOTING TURNOUT: A MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS *

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As an explanation of voting turnout, the social participation theory argues that involvement by individuals in nonpolitical social organizations such as voluntary associations, community affairs, and churches will in turn mobilize them to become politically active. Survey data from Indianapolis show marked correlations between all the above forms of social participation and voting turnout in three recent elections. The partial correlations for each of these measures, controlling the others, remain significant, indicating that each form of participation has independent effects on voting. This is not true with informal interaction among friends and neighbors, however. Evidence for inferring a causal linkage from social participation to voting turnout is found in the fact that most respondents belonged to voluntary associations prior to these elections. Finally, the relationship between social participation and voting remains moderately strong after the compounding variables of age, education, political contacts through the mass media and political parties, and political orientations such as political interest and party identification are all held constant. The mean multiple R with all predictor variables is .58.

POLITICAL democracy assumes that citizens will exercise their franchise on election day. Yet millions in the United States regularly fail to vote. Presidential elections typically attract only about 60 percent of the voting-age population (the estimated figure for the 1968 Presidential election was 62 percent); off-year Congressional elections generally draw less than 50 percent (the estimated figure for 1966 was 46 percent); and separate state and local elections usually have even lower turnouts. Why so many people fail to vote is a critical problem for democratic political theory and for understanding political behavior.

A host of empirical studies, beginning with Merriam and Gosnell's (1924) examination of the 1923 Chicago mayoral election, have investigated relationships between voting turnout and various social and political variables, to discover what kinds of people fail to vote. This research has established that voting turnout in the United States is commonly related to such factors as sex, age, race, marital status, religious preference, education, occupational status, income, membership and participation in

voluntary associations, exposure to the mass media, political involvement of one's parents, contacts by political parties, political discussions with friends, interest in politics, strength of party preference, and feelings of political efficacy.¹

In recent years such writers as Lane (1959), Lipset (1954, 1960), and Milbrath (1965) have offered numerous theoretical explanations of the relationships between these factors and voting turnout, but none of them have subsequently been adequately tested. This paper focuses on just one of these competing theoretical explanations, which I term the "social participation" theory, but subjects it to rigorous empirical analysis. This analysis proceeds in three stages: (a) determining relationships between voting turnout and various measures of social participation, both separately and in combination; (b) exploring the theory's relevance as a causal argument; and (c)

¹ All of these relationships have been substantiated by two or more of the following studies: Alford and Lee 1968; Buchanan 1956; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Campbell, Gurin, and Miller 1954; Connelly and Field 1944; Dahl 1961; Glaser 1958, 1960, and 1965; Glen and Grimes 1968; Hastings 1956; Janowitz and Marvick 1956; Karlsson 1958; Key 1958; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944; Lipset 1960; Miller 1952; Olsen 1970; Orum 1966; and Ranney and Epstein 1966. For an extensive bibliography of studies dealing with all forms of political participation published through 1964, see Milbrath 1965.

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examining the relationship between social participation and voting turnout while holding constant the effects of other known voting correlates, using multivariate analysis.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION THEORY

The theory of social participation is derived from the broader idea of social pluralism developed by such theorists as Tocqueville (1961), Truman (1951), Dahl (1956), Lipset, *et al.* (1956), Kornhauser (1959), and Nisbet (1962). As used here, however, social participation theory involves both a restriction and an extension of the traditional conception.

The restriction rests on the distinction between the "mobilization" and "mediation" versions of pluralistic theory. The mobilization version—which underlies the social participation thesis—maintains that involvement in voluntary, special-interest, *nonpolitical* associations will in time activate individuals politically. Deutsch (1961) describes mobilization as "the process in which major clusters of old social, economic, and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior." He uses this concept in the context of modernizing societies, to refer to activities which move people from traditional to "modern" ways of life, and argues that this process is required for national political development. The idea of social mobilization applies equally to the effects of voluntary association activities on political participation in "developed" societies, however, if we assume that many patterns of social activities are inimical to political participation, or at least fail to reinforce it. People caught in these traditional patterns must therefore be mobilized through involvement in new social contexts—like voluntary associations—if they are to become politically active.²

There are many possible reasons why such participation can increase individual political activity: (1) It broadens one's sphere of interests and concerns, so that public

affairs and political issues become more salient for him. (2) It brings an individual in contact with many new and diverse people, and the resulting relationships draw him into public affairs and political activity. (3) It increases one's information, trains him in social interaction and leadership skills, and provides other resources needed for effective political action.

In contrast, the mediation form of pluralistic theory—which does not underlie the social participation thesis—argues that voluntary associations must at least on occasion participate directly in the political system, influencing political leaders and decision making, as well as giving political elites a channel for contacting constituents. In this view, many associations that are normally nonpolitical can temporarily become "parapolitical" actors. This version of pluralistic theory thus sees voluntary associations as mediating between individuals and the political system, focusing on the associations' actions rather than their effects on members.

The mobilization and mediation versions of pluralistic theory are not incompatible, and both could be performed by the same association. But they are separate processes that must be kept analytically distinct. This study will focus mainly on mobilization processes, but will also examine some data relevant to the mediation thesis.

Our extension of traditional pluralistic thinking, meanwhile, includes other organizations besides voluntary associations within the process of social participation. If active involvement in voluntary associations can mobilize individuals politically, why can't participation in other organizations such as churches or communities have the same effect? The organization's nature is unimportant from this perspective, since presumably the above three mobilization processes could occur in any social organization. The crucial factor here, according to the theory, is participation in any organized social activity.

To test this argument, we shall investigate relationships between voting turnout and participation in church and community activities, as well as involvement in voluntary associations. Then, to find whether such participation must occur in relatively formal settings, we shall look at interpersonal friendships in relation to voting turnout.

² Pinard (1968) has argued that the associations and organizations comprising the "intermediate" structure of a pluralistic society can mobilize members to participate in mass social movements, but he did not apply this argument to voting turnout.

Stated as research hypotheses, the social participation thesis predicts that:

Hypothesis 1: Participation rates in voluntary associations will be positively related to voting turnout, whatever the nature of the association.

Hypothesis 2: Participation rates in community and church activities will also be positively related to voting turnout, and these relationships will remain significant when voluntary association participation is held constant.

Hypothesis 3: Participation rates in interpersonal interaction will be related to voting turnout; but holding constant participation in voluntary associations, churches, and community affairs will eliminate these correlations.

Correlations between rates of social participation and voting turnout indicate covariation between these two factors, but say nothing about causation. The argument that one variable causes another is always a logical inference based on available evidence, and cannot be directly tested. We can, however, ask what evidence exists for making a causal inference, and evaluate its relevance and adequacy. This kind of inquiry thus focuses on a logical "expectation" rather than a statistical hypothesis. In this paper we shall examine evidence for the following expectation concerning the social participation thesis: One is justified in inferring a causal sequence from social participation to voting turnout.

Finally, as was noted, voting turnout is known to correlate with a wide range of other variables in addition to social participation. Hence the social participation thesis will be valid only if correlations between voting turnout and voluntary association, community, and church participation remain significant after holding constant the effects of all other compounding variables. That analysis will involve testing a large number of research hypotheses that need not be specified here. Instead, let us summarize them in a second broad expectation: The relationship between voting turnout and participation in organized social activities will remain significant after other voting correlates have been controlled.

These additional correlates of voting turnout can be placed in four categories: (a)

demographic location, including age, sex, marital status, and religion; (b) socioeconomic status, as indicated by educational, occupational, and income levels; (c) political contacts, including parents' political activities, interpersonal political discussion, mass media news exposure, and party mailings and visits; and (d) political orientations, such as party identification, political interest, and political efficacy. Each of these sets of variables influences voting turnout differently, and persuasive arguments for the importance of each set have been advanced. This research, however, is concerned with these variables primarily as compounding factors in relation to the basic relationship between social participation and voting turnout.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Every voting turnout study that has included a measure of associational participation has found these two variables to be fairly highly correlated.³ But most of this research has been straight-forward descriptive analysis, attempting neither to (a) relate the empirical correlation to any theoretical argument, or (b) perform multivariate analysis, examining the relationship while holding constant other variables. Of the few multivariate analyses of voting turnout, some have been quite narrow in scope (Lazarsfeld, 1944,⁴ and Connelly and Field, 1944⁵), others have examined only a single explanatory variable (Glen and Grimes, 1968⁶),

³ Among the better-known of these works are the following: Berelson, *et al.* (1954:336-7; Campbell, *et al.* 1952:29 and 1954:70-73; Hastings 1956; Lane 1959:45-62; Lipset 1960:179-219; Lazarsfeld *et al.* 1944:40-51; and Zimmer and Hawley 1959.

⁴ Lazarsfeld found that controlling for level of political interest eliminated the relationship between voting turnout and education, income, age, and religion (but not for sex), thus suggesting that interest in politics is an intervening factor between these independent variables and voting.

⁵ In this study, with level of income controlled, the voting rate became the same for all educational levels except college graduates for whom it remained higher.

⁶ Whereas most previous studies had found that voting rates declined after age sixty, they demonstrated that this decline is due largely to lower education levels and a preponderance of females among the old. With these two variables controlled, the voting turnout rate in their sample did not begin to decline until age eighty.

and still others (Erbe, 1964,⁷ Alford, 1968, and Alford and Scoble, 1968⁸) have used voting turnout as only one among many variables in composite indexes of overall political participation, so that their results do not apply directly to the act of voting. The present research, in contrast, treats voting turnout as a single dependent variable within a complex, multivariate theoretical framework.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Data for this research were taken from the 1968 Indianapolis Area Project of the Institute of Social Research at Indiana University. The sample for the study, consisting of 750 adults, was drawn from the Indianapolis "urbanized area" (central city and surrounding suburbs) using probability sampling with quotas.⁹ Trained graduate students and professional interviewers conducted the survey during January–March 1968.

As dependent variables, rates of voting turnout in three different national elections were examined: (a) the 1966 Congressional election, which was the last national election prior to this study, (b) the 1964 Presidential election, and (c) the 1960 Presidential elec-

⁷ He found organizational participation more highly correlated than either socioeconomic status or political efficacy with overall political participation; but in multiple correlations SES evidenced a slightly stronger partial relationship than did participation, while efficacy became nonsignificant.

⁸ This research, which examined relationships between some twenty independent variables and a combined index of political participation, showed that education, voluntary association activity, and home ownership were the most basic and strongest predictors of overall participation. (These predictor effects were approximately equal.)

⁹ This procedure, developed by the National Opinion Research Center, uses probability sampling down through the selection of blocks (or block clusters), but chooses individual respondents by quotas within five categories defined by age for men and employment status for women. (These factors have been found to affect availability for interviewing most directly.) Quotas for each category in each block are determined by the population composition in that census tract. In addition, strict controls are imposed on interviewers to insure that no dwelling units with potential respondents are skipped. Though this procedure increases sampling error slightly (less than 10 percent in most cases), it saves considerable time and cost. For added details of this technique, see Sudman (1966).

tion.¹⁰ Whereas many earlier voting studies computed the proportion of the total sample voting in an election, this research expresses the voting rate for each election as a percentage of the number of persons eligible to vote in that election, and omits those made ineligible by residency requirements and/or age. Thus, the category of "nonvoters" includes only eligible but unregistered persons, and registered persons who did not vote. Hence the population base differs for each election: for 1966 it is 651 of the sample of 750; for 1964 it is 649; and for 1960 it is 592. Data from the three elections are analyzed separately, rather than being combined into a single index, for two reasons: (a) to insure that the results are not affected either by the nature (Presidential versus Congressional) or time of the election; and (b) because the pool of eligible voters (and hence the N) differs for each election.

The social participation independent variables were operationalized as follows: *Voluntary Association Participation Index*: For each voluntary association (including labor unions but excluding churches) to which a person belonged, he received one point for membership, two points if he attended at least half the meetings, and three points if he had ever held office or served on a committee.¹¹ *Church Participation Index*:

¹⁰ Survey questions on voting always evoke bias—in this case toward over-reporting voting rates, especially in earlier elections—but there is no simple technique for eliminating this bias. Rather elaborate statistical adjustments can reduce the bias if one wishes to provide accurate descriptive figures, but our concern is to analyze relationships between variables rather than describe the total population. The following three questions were used to elicit voting turnout: "Did you vote in the 1966 Congressional elections, when we elected members of the U. S. House of Representatives?" (Indiana did not elect a U. S. Senator in 1966), "Did you vote in the 1964 Presidential election, when Johnson ran against Goldwater?" and "Did you vote in the 1960 Presidential election, when Kennedy ran against Nixon?" If the respondent said "no," he was asked if he were registered to vote in that election, and if not was he eligible to register at that time.

¹¹ Questionnaire copies, with the exact wordings of these questions, as well as more detailed descriptions of the procedures used in index construction, are available from the author on request if they are needed to replicate any portion of this research.

Points were awarded similarly for church membership, frequency of attendance at services, and membership and participation in church-sponsored groups. *Community Participation Index*: Points were given for frequency of participation in public community events and community-wide service projects. *Friends Interaction Index*: Based on the number of one's close personal friends in the Indianapolis area, frequency of joining them for informal activities, and membership and activities in informal friendship groups. *Neighbors Interaction Index*: Based on the number of people in the immediate neighborhood addressed on a first-name basis, and frequency of talking with them. The remaining independent variables will be described as they appear in the analyses.

All the analyses reported here were performed with the Multiple Classification Analysis computer program, which provides zero-order (η), partial (β), and multiple (R) correlation coefficients with nominal and ordinal data. These coefficients are roughly analogous to Pearsonian r 's, and η and R can be interpreted, when squared, as the proportion of total variation explained by the predictor variable(s). And although squared betas cannot be interpreted in terms of variation explained, they do indicate what the strength of an observed relationship between two variables would be if the compounding effects of all other variables in that analysis were eliminated; it is therefore legitimate to compare the relative sizes of various beta coefficients. The program uses an additive model and assumes that none of the predictor variables are highly intercorrelated, but it does not assume a linear model or designate the direction of relationships.¹² In this paper, only coefficients of .10

They will eventually be given in a monograph based on these data, titled *The Social Contexts of Political Participation*.

¹² Because the MCA program is based on an additive model, it does not measure any interaction effects that may occur between pairs of predictor variables. Thus the program's multiple R coefficient represents solely the sum of the separate effects of individual predictor variables, and does not include any interaction effects on the dependent variable. As a result, the R may sometimes be smaller than it would if we also measured and included whatever interaction effects that might occur. But failure to include such effects does not invalidate the program's R 's; it merely reduces

or larger will be viewed as substantively as well as statistically significant.¹³

FINDINGS FOR SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

To test Hypothesis 1, we first correlate the Voluntary Association Participation Index with voting turnout in the 1966, 1964, and 1960 elections. The resulting zero-order (η) coefficients are .30, .30, and .32, respectively—all of which might be described as moderately strong. These coefficients, as well as the percent of respondents in each category who voted in each election, are reported in the three left-hand columns of Table 1's top panel. (These percentages must be examined to see if the relationship is monotonic, since the coefficients do not assume a linear model.)

The hypothesis also states that the above relationship should occur among all types of voluntary associations. Consequently, all the organizations to which respondents belonged were coded into one of twelve categories, as follows: labor union, fraternal association, veterans or patriotic association, business or civic association, educational association, youth-serving association, cultural association, nationality or ethnic association, sports or hobby group, professional or scientific association, social or recreational association, and charitable or welfare association.

our total ability to explain variation in the dependent variable. That is, the MCA program does not assume that no interaction is occurring; it simply fails to take this into account. A more thorough data analysis might have looked for possible interaction effects, but our theoretical argument does not suggest that interaction should be relevant. Our aim here is to evaluate that theory, not search randomly for all possible sources of variation. The MCA program does assume, however, that none of the predictor variables are highly interrelated. Only the indexes of Political Contacts and Political Orientations, for which the η coefficient is .51, approach high relatedness—and this figure is within the program's usual tolerance limits. Moreover, as we shall note later, when these indexes are simultaneously related to voting turnout, both retain significant separate effects on the dependent variable.

¹³ Statistical significance at the .05 level with these data requires a coefficient of between .08 and .10, depending on the N . Substantively, however, a coefficient of less than .10 is not meaningful, even if it is barely significant statistically

Table 1. Zero-Order, Partial, and Multiple Relationships Between Social Participation Variables and Voting Turnout in the 1966, 1964, and 1960 Elections.

	Zero-Order Relationships: Actual Voting Rates and Correlations			Partial Relationships: Adjusted Voting Rates and Correlations		
	1966	1964	1960	1966	1964	1960
Voluntary Association Participation Index*						
None	56%	69%	72%	61%	74%	76%
Low	64	77	81	67	79	82
Moderate	79	94	96	74	89	91
High	93	95	98	84	87	91
Eta/Beta	.30	.30	.32	.18	.16	.18
Community Participation Index*						
None	52%	66%	69%	61%	72%	76%
Low	64	78	79	67	78	83
Moderate	76	84	93	77	89	91
High	86	96	95	79	89	87
Eta/Beta	.28	.30	.30	.14	.17	.13
Church Participation Index*						
None	46%	61%	71%	53%	68%	75%
Low	63	74	76	65	76	77
Moderate	75	89	90	74	87	89
High	85	92	93	78	84	89
Eta/Beta	.28	.30	.29	.18	.17	.17
Friends Interaction Index*						
None	52%	62%	66%	63%	70%	74%
Low	72	79	84	75	81	85
Moderate	67	83	87	70	83	86
High	79	90	91	68	83	83
Eta/Beta	.18	.24	.23	NS	.11	NS
Neighbors Interaction Index*						
None	53%	64%	67%	64%	76%	78%
Low	67	82	84	69	85	86
Moderate	74	83	87	70	79	84
High	74	86	90	69	79	84
Eta/Beta	.16	.18	.20	NS	NS	NS
Multiple Correlation R (Voluntary Association, Community, and Church Participation only)				.36	.38	.38
Social Participation Combined Index*						
Low	45%	59%	61%			
Moderately low	68	79	84			
Moderately high	77	87	91			
High	80	93	94			
Eta	.40	.40	.41			

*All of these indexes contain six categories (eight for the Combined Index), and the eta and beta coefficients are based on the full range of these categories, but for ease of presentation in this table each index has been collapsed to four categories.

With one exception, voting was significantly related to participation in each kind of organization, with coefficients ranging between .12 and .18. The exception was labor unions, in which participation was uncorrelated with voting turnout. This finding is easily interpreted, however, since for many workers

union membership is not voluntary, but is required for employment. Apparently the political mobilization process occurs only in truly voluntary organizations. We could speculate that the process doesn't occur in other semi- or nonvoluntary organizations such as prisons, mental hospitals, or the

military; but our data do not permit a test of this possibility.¹⁴

From these findings, we conclude that Hypothesis 1 is confirmed: participation in truly voluntary associations is positively and somewhat strongly related to voting turnout, regardless of the nature of the organization. Notice, moreover, that the coefficients for the combined Voluntary Association Participation Index are much stronger than the figures for any specific kind of association (and this remains true even if the Index is reduced to a dichotomy). This suggests that social participation effects on voting are cumulative. The greater the number of one's organizations, the more likely will he vote. Indeed, a simple count of the number of organizations to which respondents belonged correlates with the three elections at .27, .26, and .26, respectively.

Hypothesis 2 states that participation in community and church activities will also be related to voting turnout, even with voluntary association participation controlled. Voting percentages and correlation coefficients for these variables are shown in the second and third panels of Table 1. The zero-order (η) coefficients for both factors (given in the table's three left-hand columns) are approximately the same as those for voluntary associations—around .30.

The three right-hand columns in the table report the partial (β) relationships between voting and each predictor variable, simultaneously holding constant the effects of all other predictor variables. Under these extensive controls, the coefficients for voluntary association, community, and church par-

ticipation all decline in strength, but remain statistically significant. In other words, each measure of social participation effects voting turnout separately, and no observed zero-order relationship is spurious. Hypothesis 2 is therefore verified.

Hypothesis 3, concerning interpersonal interaction, can be investigated with the data in panels four and five of Table 1. The zero-order coefficients for interaction with both friends and neighbors are significant but not strong, ranging from .16 to .24. When all the other participation measures are held constant, moreover, five of the six partial coefficients for these variables become non-significant, and the remaining one is very low. In short, neither interpersonal interaction index appears to explain significant amounts of variation in voting rates, once participation in more formal voluntary associations, community activities, and church events has been accounted for. It may be—though these data cannot test the possibility—that personal friendships occurring within more formal settings do effect political mobilization in some way. But we can at least infer that personal friendships do not, by themselves, influence voting turnout. Consequently, Hypothesis 3 can be accepted; and we shall discard the Friends Interaction Index and Neighbors Interaction Index from further analyses.

The multiple correlations in Table 1 are therefore based only on the voluntary association, community, and church participation indexes. Since these multiple R 's are all much larger than any beta coefficient for their components, it is clearly preferable to use all three factors together to predict voting turnout, rather than any one alone.¹⁵

¹⁴ Despite these negative findings for labor unions, unions were kept in the overall Voluntary Association Participation Index on the theoretical grounds that all discussions of pluralistic theory have included them. Thus an adequate test of this thesis must take them into account. Leaving unions in the index had the effect of reducing the observed correlations, since participating in these organizations does not contribute to the tendency for voting turnout to increase with association participation. Conversely, were we to exclude unions from the index, the observed correlations with voting turnout would be even higher. Further research might explore this distinction between union and non-union associations—or more generally, between economically and non-economically oriented associations.

¹⁵ As an alternative measure of community participation, we examined length of residency in Indianapolis—a variable that most studies have found to correlate with voting. Length of residency is moderately related to voting turnout, as follows: 1966 = .23, 1964 = .18, and 1960 = .15. However, these coefficients are not as high as those obtained with the Community Participation Index; and when the two measures are simultaneously related to voting, the resulting partial correlations for residency are much lower than those for the participation index. In fact, the observed relationship between community residency and voting turnout appears to be largely a spurious consequence of the fact that older people (who tend to vote reg-

Finally, for convenience, these three variables were combined into a single Social Participation Combined Index, as shown in the last panel of Table 1.¹⁶ Comparison of the eta coefficients for this index with the corresponding multiple R's based on its component variables reveals that the Combined Index predicts voting turnout slightly more strongly, and hence does reflect the overall dimension of social participation.

Thus far we have been examining the effects of social participation on the voting turnout of individuals, as a test of the mobilization thesis. But this has ignored the possibility that voluntary associations may become involved in political activities as organizations, enacting a mediating role in politics. Though this topic takes us outside the social participation theory, it will be interesting to see whether our data provide any support for the mediation version of pluralistic theory. Three pieces of data are relevant to this question: (1) Most voluntary associations remain totally nonpolitical most of the time. Only 18 percent of the respondents' organizations had ever (in their memories) been politically active in any way, and only 7 percent of the respondents had personally participated in any of these actions. (2) For these 7 percent a Voluntary Association Political Activities Index was constructed, which included the number of politically active organizations to which a respondent belonged, plus the number of times he had participated in their political activities. This index correlated with voting turnout in the 1966, 1964, and 1960 elections at only .21, .20, and .22, respectively. (3) Holding constant respondent scores on the overall Voluntary Association Participation Index reduces all of the above correlations to nonsignificance. These findings

ularly) are also more likely to have lived in the community longer. The beta correlations for community residency drop to .14, .16, and .14, respectively, with age held constant. With the three major social participation indexes added as controls, these relationships for community residency become nonsignificant.

¹⁶ The procedure used in constructing this Combined Index—as well as all the other combined indexes—was to sum a respondent's scores from the component variables, and then group these into eight categories as nearly equal in number of cases as possible. A more detailed description of this procedure is available on request

tentatively suggest that in voluntary associations the mobilization process is much more crucial than the mediation process in producing political participation.

CAUSAL INFERENCE ARGUMENT

We have now determined that three measures of social participation—in voluntary associations, community affairs, and church events—correlate independently with voting turnout. But which causes which? How relevant is the social participation theory as a causal explanation of voting turnout? Though causation cannot be directly tested, it can be inferred with some confidence if, in addition to covariation and a reasonable theoretical causal explanation, we can demonstrate temporal sequence between the presumed cause and effect. In this case, what evidence have we that social participation precedes voting?

Though we didn't solicit their life histories, we did ask respondents for the year when they joined their current voluntary associations. Regrettably, we did not gather comparable data for community and church participation, which will limit this analysis. Nevertheless, if we can show that people do belong to voluntary organizations prior to voting, we will have some additional evidence for inferring causation from social participation to voting turnout.

Since the 1960 election is so remote from the 1968 data on voluntary associations, we shall here examine only the 1966 and 1964 elections, in three analyses.¹⁷ The first pertains to each respondent's "most important" association. (If he belonged to only one, this automatically became his most important organization; if two or more, he was asked to identify the one most important to him.) Of the 310 respondents voting in 1966 who had a "most important" organizational membership in 1968, 94 percent belonged to the

¹⁷ We omitted the 1960 election because all data on voluntary associations pertain to organizations to which respondents currently belonged. Those who had been members of an association in 1960 but had either changed organizations or dropped out before 1968 would have been counted as nonmembers in the 1960 election and that would clearly have distorted the findings. This distortion could also occur with the 1964 and 1966 elections, but the shorter time spans involved for them should prevent its frequent occurrence

association at least one year prior to that election. Of the 354 respondents voting in 1964 who had a "most important" organizational membership in 1968, 91 percent belonged before the election.

The second analysis includes only respondents belonging to two or more organizations, and pertains to their "second most important" association. A total of 173 persons voted in 1966 and named a second organization, while 198 did so for the 1964 election. In both cases, 88 percent belonged to their second organization prior to the election in question.

The third analysis pertains to the "third most important" organization among persons with three or more memberships. Of the 101 people with a third association who voted in 1966, 92 percent had joined prior to that election. Of the 111 people with a third association who voted in 1964, 90 percent were members before the election.

These findings support the causal argument that social participation tends to influence voting turnout in a temporal sequence, though two possible biases (in addition to the omission of data for community and church participation) should be noted: First, the data for both organizational participation and voting pertain only to the past few years, and many respondents may have begun voting long before joining any voluntary associations. Even so, we can argue that voluntary association participation may continually reinforce the habit of voting and hence influence current voting turnout, whatever the initial causes. Second, these analyses are limited to persons belonging to at least one voluntary association; and since organizational participation tends to increase with age and SES, we may have introduced bias by looking disproportionately at older and higher status persons, who also tend to vote more regularly. However, as the next section shows, controlling for age and SES does not eliminate the relationship between voluntary association participation and voting, so that the effects of any such bias cannot be great.

Additional support for this causal argument is provided by Maccoby (1958). He examined the effects of membership in one voluntary association (concerned with de-

veloping a publicly sponsored community recreation program) on voting turnout in two primary elections—one held before the organization was formed and the other two years after. The organization took no part in the second campaign, and its objectives had no ties with election issues. Nevertheless, among nonvoters in the first election, participants in this association were much more likely than nonparticipants to vote in the second election: 66 percent to 39 percent, respectively. Moreover, the voting rate rose to 80 percent among those who had become highly involved in association activities. These findings are fairly compelling, since the research design approximated a controlled experiment.

Based on both our and Maccoby's data, we conclude that it is tenable to infer a causal sequence from social participation to voting turnout, in accordance with our initial expectation.

FINDINGS FOR COMPOUNDING VARIABLES

As we noted earlier, previous studies of voting turnout have found that it correlates with a host of other social, economic, and political variables. And since many of these factors are also related to social participation, their effects must be held constant before we can claim that social participation has independent effects on voting turnout. This section therefore examines these compounding variables, both separately and in combination with social participation, to investigate our general expectation that the basic relationship between social participation and voting turnout will remain significant under extensively controlled conditions. To keep the discussion manageable, many of the findings will be briefly summarized without reporting the supporting data, but all these tables are available on request.

Demographic Variables. Past research has established that men tend to vote more often than women, whites more often than blacks, middle-aged and older people more than the young, married persons more than unmarried ones, Jews more often than gentiles, and Catholics more than Protestants. These demographic variables of sex, race, age, marital

status, and religion were therefore related to voting turnout in the three elections.

As expected, men in this sample vote slightly more often than women, but the differences are statistically nonsignificant. With respect to race, blacks appear to have voted slightly more often than whites, but again the differences are nonsignificant.¹⁸ Age is moderately correlated with voting turnout (mean eta for the three elections = .22), with the relationship remaining monotonic up to age seventy and declining only slightly up to age eighty. Married persons vote more extensively than single people, but the rates for the divorced and widowed are as high as those for married people. All three of these latter correlations are quite weak, and become nonsignificant with age controlled. Religious preference (coded conservative Protestant, liberal Protestant, Catholic, and no preference¹⁹) correlates moderately with voting (mean eta = .22). The interesting finding here, however, is that liberal Protestants tend to be as active as Catholics, while both conservative Protestants and persons with no religious preference vote much less often.

Since the correlations between voting turnout and sex, race, and marital status were all weak or nonsignificant, and since further analyses showed these variables to have no effects on any other relationship in this study, we shall discard them here. Age, how-

¹⁸ In a separate paper (Olsen, 1970), I examined voting turnout and other kinds of participation among blacks, with socioeconomic status and age held constant. Under these controlled conditions, voting rates among blacks are considerably higher than among whites of comparable statuses, and the differences are significant in the 1964 and 1960 Presidential elections.

¹⁹ The sample was not large enough to permit analysis of each separate Protestant denomination, but preliminary examination of the data indicated that voting rates among the denominations varied too greatly to justify combining them into a single "Protestant" category. Hence the compromise decision was reached to dichotomize Protestant churches into the categories of "conservative"—including the pentecostal churches, Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Nazarene Church, and all Baptists—and the more "liberal" churches of Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and community churches. Because only six Jews fell into the sample, they could not be analyzed separately and were discarded from all analyses involving religion.

ever, remains significantly related to voting with all other compounding variables controlled, as we shall see later. The same is not true of religion. Though controlling for age has no effect here, holding constant the variables of education, occupation, and income reduces all three relationships for religion almost to nonsignificance. And when the three social participation indicators are also added as controls, the three relationships become statistically nonsignificant. (Controlling religion does not affect the correlations for the social participation measures at all.) Hence the observed differences in voting rates among the religious preference categories are apparently spurious, and the religion variable can be discarded. Of the original five indicators of demographic location, only age remains as a significant independent predictor of voting participation.

Socioeconomic Status. All previous voting research has found that the higher a person's socioeconomic status—as shown by educational level, occupational status, and annual income—the more likely is he to vote. Our data support these generalizations for all three elections (mean eta for education = .26, occupation = .21, and income = .19).²⁰ When each of these variables was examined while holding constant the other two, education and occupation remained significantly related to voting turnout (though the coefficients for occupation were quite low), but income became nonsignificant. Moreover, the occupation correlations also became nonsignificant when the three social participation measures, as well as education, were held constant. (The relationships for the social participation measures were not substantially affected when either income or occupation, or both in combination, were used as controls.) Hence

²⁰ The respondent's education was measured by total number of years of schooling completed, including technical and vocational training. Occupation of the head of the household was classified as "low manual" (all semiskilled, domestic service, and unskilled jobs), "high manual" (skilled workers, public service workers, and foremen), "high nonmanual" (clerical and sales workers, and managers and owners of small businesses with less than five employees), and "high nonmanual" (owners and managers of larger businesses, technicians, and all professionals). Family income was the total gross income in 1967 before taxes.

we shall retain only education as an indicator of socioeconomic status.

Political Contacts. This variable set is composed of four indexes measuring the respondent's exposure to the political system: Parents' Political Activities Index,²¹ Political Discussion Index,²² Mass Media News Exposure Index,²³ and Party Contacts Index.²⁴ All four indexes were found to have moderate to relatively strong correlations with voting turnout (mean eta for parents' participation = .20, political discussion = .27, political news exposure = .33, and party contacts = .37). However, the coefficients for parents' participation became nonsignificant when the other measures were simultaneously controlled. This finding does not necessarily mean that the degree of parents' political activity does not influence their children's later voting participation, but that these effects apparently operate indirectly, through more immediate factors such as exposure to the mass media or reading party literature. Nevertheless, this variable is not relevant here, since controlling it does not affect the relationships between social participation and voting turnout. Hence we discard it.

The correlations for political discussion also decline markedly when the other political contacts measures are controlled, but they remain barely significant because per-

sons who never discuss politics score lower than all other respondents. (There are no major voting rate differences among any of the other categories of political discussion.) While we cannot drop this variable, its importance is minimal.

Political contacts via the mass media and political parties are much more relevant for voting turnout, with the latter correlating more strongly than the former under simultaneous control (mean beta for party contacts = .24, mass media = .18). These findings suggest that house-to-house canvassing and other political leg-work are still greatly important in getting out the vote.

As a summary measure of this political contacts dimension, a Political Contacts Combined Index was constructed from the variables of political discussion (dichotomized), political news exposure, and party contacts, using the same procedure as with the Social Participation Combined Index.²⁵ This index correlated with voting turnout in the three elections as follows: 1966 = .41, 1964 = .41, 1960 = .37. This combined index, rather than its separate components, will be used in subsequent analyses.

Political Orientations. The three indexes in this set—Political Interest,²⁶ Party Identification,²⁷ and Political Efficacy²⁸—measure a person's various cognitive and evaluative orientations toward the political system. Political interest and party identification were found to exert approximately equal, and rather strong, effects on voting turnout (mean eta for political interest = .43, party

²¹ Constructed from questions on whether or not his father and mother had political party preferences, the frequency with which his parents discussed politics while he was growing up, whether they usually voted, whether they belonged to any political organizations, and whether they ever did volunteer work for a party or candidate.

²² Based on frequency of talking about political topics with personal friends, neighbors, relatives, and coworkers.

²³ Points were given for frequency of watching national network news broadcasts on television, listening to local news broadcasts on television and radio, reading national and international news in newspapers, reading editorials and columnists in newspapers, and reading political articles in magazines.

²⁴ Based on the frequency with which the respondent received mail from a political party and whether or not he read this mail, the number of times a party worker had called at his house and how long he usually talked with this worker, and other personal contacts with people active in politics.

²⁵ Since the only significant difference on the Political Discussion Index lies in the distinction between those who do and don't discuss politics with others, this index was reduced to a dichotomy. Because the maximum score on this index becomes 1, it contributes much less to the Political Contacts Combined Index than the other two indexes.

²⁶ Constructed from a series of questions on how interested the respondent was in political issues and activities in Indianapolis, in Indiana, at the national level, and in foreign affairs.

²⁷ Points were given for having a party preference in national politics, having a preference in local politics, and for being able either to describe some difference between the two major parties or tell why he thought they did not differ.

²⁸ Measured with the political efficacy scale devised by Campbell, *et al.* (1954), but focused on national politics.

identification = .41), but the political efficacy correlations were much lower (mean η = .16). With all three indexes simultaneously related to voting, the partial coefficients for the first two remain fairly high and roughly equivalent (mean beta for political interest = .32, party identification = .28). Those for political efficacy become nonsignificant, however, so that this index was discarded.

Multivariate Analyses. We can at last gather the remaining control variables in a series of multivariate analyses, to evaluate our expectation that the relationship between voting turnout and social participation will remain significant under extensively controlled conditions. We will also be able to determine the independent effects of each compounding variable on voting turnout, holding all other variables constant.

The control variables to be included in this analysis are age, education, the Political Contacts Combined Index (based on the separate indexes for political news exposure, party contacts, and political discussion), and the Political Orientations Combined Index (based on the indexes for political interest and party identification). To measure participation in organized social activities, we shall use the Social Participation Combined Index, which is based on the separate indexes for voluntary association, community, and church participation.

Before combining all these variables in a single analysis, let us briefly examine three subsets that yield interesting findings. First, when just age and education are simultaneously related to voting, the partial (beta) coefficients for both are slightly higher than their original zero-order (η) coefficients, as follows: for age, mean η = .22, mean beta = .27; for education, mean η = .26, mean beta = .33. This occurs because both age and education are positively related to voting, but negatively related to each other (η = -.25). Hence controlling for one enhances the other's positive correlation with voting turnout. (These effects do not occur when education is replaced by occupation or income, since both correlate positively with age.) This interactive effect of age and education can be viewed as meaning that young and poorly educated persons are

quite unlikely to vote, while older and highly educated persons are very likely to go to the polls—but that neither type exists in great numbers in the total population. For the majority, age and education pull in opposite directions, partly cancelling out each other's effects on voting turnout.

Second, when education (as an indicator of socioeconomic status) and the Social Participation Combined Index are simultaneously related to voting, we can answer the oft-debated question: What are the relative effects of socioeconomic status versus social participation on voting turnout? Some previous studies have favored socioeconomic status, others social participation, and still others have found their effects on political participation to be approximately equal.²⁹ Our data clearly favor social participation: for the three elections, the mean beta for social participation with education controlled = .35, while that for education with social participation controlled = .14. (The results are almost identical when a Socioeconomic Status Combined Index, based on education, occupation, and income is used in this analysis.) This finding should not be interpreted to mean that education (or socioeconomic status) is unimportant as an influence on voting, but that many of the effects of this dimension on voting are conveyed indirectly through participation in voluntary associations, community events, and church activities—all of which relate directly and strongly to education.

Third, since the political dimensions of contacts and orientations are highly interrelated (η = .51), we must ask whether each affects voting turnout independently. When these variables are joined in a multiple correlation, the resulting mean beta coefficient for political contacts with orientations controlled = .24, while the mean beta for political orientations with contacts con-

²⁹ Erbe (1964) found socioeconomic status to have a slightly higher partial correlation with political participation than voluntary association participation. Nie, *et al.* (1969) reported a somewhat higher zero-order correlation for organizational participation than for socioeconomic status with political participation, based on data from five nations. Alford and Scoble (1968) believed the effects of these two factors to be roughly equal.

trolled = .40. Thus both dimensions exert separate effects on the decision to vote, though political orientations is a noticeably better predictor.

We can now bring all of these voting correlates together in a single analysis. We note first that all four remaining control variables are at least moderately correlated with social participation: age = .20, education = .41, political contacts = .45, and political orientations = .37. Consequently, holding constant the effects of these variables will doubtless reduce the relationships between social participation and voting turnout. But by how much? Conversely, when simultaneously controlled, will all the compounding variables remain significantly related to voting? For answers, let us examine the data in Table 2, which joins the Social Participation Combined Index, age, education, the Political Contacts Combined Index, and the Political Orientations Combined Index in multiple correlations with voting turnout rates in the three elections.

Several conclusions can be drawn from these data:

(1) Even under these extensively controlled conditions, social participation remains relatively strongly related to voting turnout. Thus our general expectation is verified and the social participation thesis is supported. The mean beta for this index from the three elections is .22, which is surpassed in magnitude only by the figures for political orientations.

(2) Age remains moderately related to voting turnout, though the beta for the 1966 election is higher than the figures for the other two elections, which suggests that age has more impact on voting in Congressional than Presidential elections.

(3) Education is significantly but extremely weakly correlated with voting in the 1966 and 1960 elections, while the 1964 figure becomes nonsignificant. Once again, we interpret this finding to mean that education (or more broadly, socioeconomic status), does not directly affect voting turnout, but rather that its effects are transmitted indirectly through other related factors.

(4) All partial coefficients for the Political Contacts Combined Index remain significant, but not strong; the mean beta = .13.

Note that the original eta coefficients for this index (1966 = .41, 1964 = .44, 1960 = .40) were slightly higher than those for the Social Participation Combined Index (1966 = .40, 1964 = .40, 1960 = .41) in two of the elections, but that in Table 2 social participation has become a considerably stronger voting predictor than political contacts. (Three separate analyses, using just age, education, and political orientations as single control variables, showed that each reduces somewhat the relationship between political contacts and voting, and that their effects are cumulative.)

(5) Last, the Political Orientations Combined Index remains quite strongly related to voting under these controlled conditions (mean beta = .36), especially in the 1964 and 1960 Presidential elections. At this point, political orientations seem to predict voting turnout better than social participation, but presently we shall question this interpretation.

Before leaving Table 2, we should also note that the multiple coefficients obtained from these correlations are all relatively strong for social science research with ordinal data. These multiple R^2 's of .56, .59, and .58 for the three elections (the corresponding R^2 's are .31, .35, and .34) indicate that we are explaining approximately a third of the variation in voting turnout rates with all predictor variables combined.³⁰

DISCUSSION

The main empirical findings of this research are as follows: (1) Participation in voluntary associations correlates with voting turnout at mean eta = .31. This relationship occurs with all kinds of organizations except labor unions, which suggests that the political mobilization process occurs only in truly voluntary organizations. (2) Participation in community events and church activities are also both related to voting, with mean etas for both of .29. Moreover, all three of these

³⁰ This multiple correlational analysis was repeated using all the separate variables rather than the combined indexes for social participation, political contacts, and political orientations. The results were essentially equivalent to those reported in Table 2, in that all these variables remained significantly related to voting turnout.

Table 2. Partial and Multiple Relationships of Age, Education, Social Participation Combined Index, Political Contacts Combined Index, and Political Orientations Combined Index with Voting Turnout in the 1966, 1964, and 1960 Elections.

	Adjusted (Partial) Voting Rates and Correlations		
	1966	1964	1960
Social Participation Combined Index			
Low	52%	68%	69%
Moderately low	67	78	83
Moderately high	75	83	87
High	77	89	91
Beta	.22	.20	.24
Age			
21-29	48%	65%	72%
30-39	67	81	83
40-49	71	80	83
50-59	76	84	85
60 and older	82	87	89
Beta	.25	.17	.12
Education			
0-8 years	62%	79%	79%
9-11 years	67	80	87
12 years	70	79	83
13-15 years	70	82	86
16 or more years	80	82	86
Beta	.11	NS	.10
Political Contacts Combined Index			
Low	68%	75%	80%
Moderately low	65	81	84
Moderately high	67	80	84
High	74	84	85
Beta	.10	.15	.14
Political Orientations Combined Index			
Low	48%	55%	61%
Moderately low	70	86	89
Moderately high	78	89	93
High	78	89	88
Beta	.29	.40	.39
Multiple R			
	.56	.59	.58

social participation measures remain significantly related to voting with the other two factors controlled. The Social Participation Combined Index, based on all three measures, correlates with voting turnout with a mean eta of .40. (3) Measures of informal interaction with friends and neighbors correlate only weakly with voting, and both relationships become nonsignificant with the above measures of participation in more formal settings held constant. (4) Among respondents belonging to one or more voluntary associations who voted in the 1964 and 1966 elections, almost all belonged to these organizations before the election. These data provide some basis for inferring causation from association participation to voting turnout. (5) Among the other voting cor-

relates examined in this study, the factors of (a) age, (b) education, (c) political contacts via the mass media, partisan mailings, and party workers, and (d) political orientations such as party identification and interest in politics, all remain significantly related to voting turnout when simultaneously controlled. Of these four variables, political orientations has the strongest partial correlation, at mean beta = .36. (6) With the effects of these four compounding factors all held constant, the Social Participation Combined Index remains significantly and moderately correlated with voting, at mean beta = .22. (7) Taken together, all five predictor variables produce a mean multiple correlation with voting turnout of $R = .58$ ($R^2 = .33$).

From these findings, we conclude that participation in the activities of voluntary associations, one's community, and one's church does mobilize people to vote. In addition, the efforts of political parties and candidates to reach voters through the mass media, partisan mailings, and personal visits do have some further effects on getting out the vote—though these are minimal in comparison with the effects of social participation. Voting rates also rise steadily with age, at least until retirement, although rising educational levels among the young may in time erase many of these age differentials. Education does show a moderate relationship with voting, but the main causal process here appears to go from education to social participation to voting turnout. The other socioeconomic status indicators of occupation and income, finally, seem to be relatively unimportant for voting turnout.

Of all the variables examined in this study, the dimension of political orientations—having a party preference and being interested in politics—appears at first to be the most relevant for explaining voting. But this assumes that political orientations act as independent causal factors. It is equally plausible to argue, however, that this dimension of cognitive and attitudinal responses toward the political system acts as an intervening variable between the other predictor variables and voting. From this perspective, political orientations would be seen as providing a vehicle through which the other phenomena—especially one's social participation and political contacts—affect one's decision to vote. Such a view does not diminish the importance of political orientations in the total theoretical model, but argues that they should not be taken as initial causes.

By this reasoning, we might remove political orientations from the multiple correlations in Table 2. When we do so, the multiple R 's are only slightly reduced, so that mean $R = .49$ ($R^2 = .24$). This finding indicates that political orientations may in fact be operating mainly as an intervening variable, since removing it does not reduce the multiple correlations too greatly—though it does have some small independent effects on voting (or at least effects that are independent of the other predictor variables

examined here). In this multiple correlation, the mean partial beta coefficients for the remaining variables are as follows: social participation = .27, political contacts = .19, age = .21, education = .14. Thus with political orientations omitted as an independent causal variable, the dimension of social participation becomes the most important predictor of voting turnout.

To conclude, let us return to the theory of social participation as an explanation of voting turnout, which is the central concern of this study. This theoretical explanation, derived from the mobilization version of social pluralism theory, argues that active involvement in voluntary, special-interest, nonpolitical organizations—including voluntary associations, community activities, and churches—tends to bring individuals into contact with political issues, actors, and affairs, and provides them with information and skills necessary for voting and other kinds of political participation. Partially as a result of this stimulation, the individual gives greater attention to political messages from the mass media, party workers, and other sources, and also develops stronger party identification and political interest. All of these factors then combine to propel individuals to the polls. The main import of this argument is that we must look beyond the political system for many of the crucial causes of political participation. In addition to the commonly examined nonpolitical factors of age and education, we must give special attention to the individual's involvement in organized social activities which may have little or no formal connection with politics. The obvious prior question—which awaits further research—is what factors lead people to join and become involved in voluntary associations and similar activities? The social participation theory by itself provides only a partial explanation of voting turnout, but the results of this study indicate that it must be given serious attention if one wishes to understand why people go to the polls on election day.

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BLUE COLLAR ANGER: REACTIONS TO STUDENT AND BLACK PROTEST *

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The hypothesis that working class respondents are especially antagonistic toward the black and student movements is tested with a sample of white Los Angeles residents (N=477). In support of the hypothesis, working class persons and those with less than a high school education (in contrast to those higher in the occupational and educational hierarchies) are more likely to:

- (a) express punitive attitudes toward student demonstrators,
- (b) oppose granting students more power, and
- (c) feel blacks are pushing too hard for things they don't deserve.

To locate rationales that would explain these relationships, intervening and specification variables were introduced in the analysis. These variables are: respect for authority, belief in the American Dream, belief that the needs of the working man are neglected, and perceived powerlessness. Substantial support for these explanations of blue collar anger is found.

LITTLE is known about the reactions of the white majority to campus protest and black demands. It seems obvious that a great many majority group Americans are angry, even outraged, by such incidents as student takeovers of buildings or by black power demands for reparations or preferential hiring in industry. The major question

of this paper is whether this anger is randomly distributed in the socioeconomic structure, or is far more likely to be found in the working class environment. Are blue collar people uniquely antagonistic toward the goals and methods of student and black demonstrators?

A number of recent themes in the race and stratification literature suggest that working class people should be more antagonistic toward black protestors than those higher in the socioeconomic structure. Van den Berghe observes that race relations in the United States have shifted from total subordination of blacks in power, privilege, and prestige ("paternalistic" race relations) to a kind of competitive relationship found in advanced industrial societies.

In such a dynamic industrial society with its great geographical mobility and its stress on impersonal market mechanisms and universalistic and achieved criteria of occupa-

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