

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN  
LATIN AMERICA:  
Levels, Structure, Context,  
Concentration and Rationality\*

*John A. Booth*

*University of Texas at San Antonio*

Despite calls to improve and systematize research on political participation in Latin America more than a decade ago (Kling 1964, Flores Olea 1967), the burgeoning literature on the subject has yet to achieve full recognition. Thus certain contradictory and incomplete traditional images still linger in the scholarly literature (Booth and Seligson 1978a). These treatments vary dramatically and almost bewilderingly: while one suggests that Latin Americans are becoming increasingly politically mobilized, two others hold that mass participation is very low and that most political activity is restricted to socioeconomic elites. Other images portray mass political participation as irrational and dwell upon political violence.<sup>1</sup> Such familiar notions have often intertwined. For example, a common picture depicts most Latin Americans, and especially peasants, as politically passive and quiescent until provoked, when they may burst violently into the political arena (for example, see Forman 1971, Singelmann 1975, Handelman 1975b, Moreno 1970). Similarly Wiarda (1974, pp. 4–5) discusses how the image of mobilization often combines with that of violence, producing the notion that the rising political awareness and participation of Latin Americans leads inexorably to ever greater levels of conflict (e.g., Schmitt and Burks 1963, Hadley 1958, Petras and Zeitlin 1968, Petras 1968).

Because these images have been explicated elsewhere (Booth and Seligson 1978a) they do not require lengthy consideration here. The persistence of such inadequate and confusing visions of participation despite substantial new findings calls for a compilation and summary of recent research, the objective of this review. The discussion is organized around five key empirical questions about citizen participation in Latin American politics:

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1. How much political participation takes place, and what is its nature? What are the levels of participation?

2. What is the structure of political participation? Since the presence of political violence in the region is well documented (Feierabend and Feierabend 1966, Feierabend et al. 1969, Huntington 1968, Bwy 1968), the focus here will be mainly on nonviolent activity. To what degree does the structure of nonviolent political participation in Latin America resemble that of other areas of the world?

3. How do differences in the nature of the sociopolitical context or environment affect the structure of participation?

4. How concentrated is political participation? To what extent is participation monopolized by persons of higher socioeconomic status or by political activists?

5. Is mass political participation in Latin America rational? To what extent do individuals act politically on the basis of goal-orientations and images of effective channels?

While these are by no means all the important questions about political participation in Latin America,<sup>2</sup> the tentative answers now available have critical implications for our understanding of politics in the region and for the directions for future research.

#### POLITICAL PARTICIPATION DEFINED

Traditionally, little agreement has existed among students of political participation about exactly to what the term should refer. Milbrath (1965, p. 1) argues that the definition must not be so broad that it loses focus or analytical utility. But others (Verba and Nie 1972, p. 2; Pateman 1970; Euben 1970) caution that the definition must not be too narrow—and especially that it must include more than just behavior connected with political parties and elections. In search of a definition of political participation that would include a satisfactorily broad range of political action, with Mitchell Seligson I have elsewhere (Booth and Seligson, 1978a) employed the concept of public goods as a central theme. Deriving from political economy studies of electoral behavior (e.g., Downs 1957, Tullock 1968, Czudnowski 1976), this approach is novel only as applied to the broader analysis of political participation in general and to the area of Latin American politics (Chaffee 1976).

*Collective goods* consist of goods that when supplied to one member of a collectivity cannot easily be denied to others of the same group. Collective goods therefore differ from private goods by how much control over their use rests in the hands of their supplier. While access to private goods may be easily controlled by the supplier, access to collective goods may not (Olson 1968, pp. 14–15). *Public goods*, the basis of the definition of political participation, consist of a special kind of collective goods supplied by governments or by communities through their collective expenditure. National security and monetary systems provide classical examples of public goods; governments supply them, and once they exist for any citizen they effectively exist for all. But communities too (for

example, neighborhoods, villages) supply public goods, even though they lack formal governments. Towns and villages often provide themselves with a variety of public goods such as roads, community centers, and schools through collective expenditure of such resources as money, labor, and materials contributed by community members. An excellent example of this type of communal supply of public goods comes from Adams's (1959, p. 177) description of the Peruvian village of Muquiyauyo: "Major communal work projects . . . are carried on every few years. As is the case with the other towns in the region, Muquiyauyo has a long history of communal works . . . of two major types: first there are the upkeep activities, such as fixing streets and bridges . . . which go on year in and year out. The second kind of work involves the large special projects in which some new addition or alteration is made to the community's material equipment."

Based on these concepts, *political participation* is defined as *behavior influencing or attempting to influence the distribution of public goods*. Thus, when a citizen or a community member tries to affect the distribution of a public good, he/she has participated politically. Political participation does not include attempts to influence the distribution of state-controlled private goods (such as licenses or patents), which are controlled by their sale. Some examples of the application of this definition in the Latin American context will illustrate both its implications and utility. A road provides an excellent example of a public good: normally a road is built through either governmental or community expenditure, and once there it is difficult to restrict its use. In a rural region inadequately linked to supply centers and markets by road, attempts by residents either to build a road themselves or to persuade the government to do so constitute political participation. Similarly, actions by citizens intended either to bolster or to undermine the stability of a particular regime would constitute political participation. Regime stability is a public good ("good" taken in the economic, not ethico-moral sense) because stable governments can ensure particular economic, social, or political arrangements beneficial to certain sectors of a society. Thus, actively supporting or opposing a regime involves attempting to influence the distribution of a public good, and hence is political participation.<sup>3</sup>

Several issues that often arise in discussions of the nature of political participation should be mentioned briefly in order to clarify this definition and its application. First, participation requires *action*—overt behavior—and not attitudes or beliefs. Since regime stability may be regarded as a public good, active *support* for a government does constitute participation. Some (e.g., Weiner 1971, Woy 1978) have suggested that political action does not constitute participation unless it is efficacious—that is, actually influences something. Requiring such policy influence as a *sine qua non* of participation would result in the logically flawed position of arguing that one who voted or campaigned for a losing candidate in an election has not participated at all. Thus, this definition does not require effective influence, merely the attempt to influence the distribution of public goods. Nor does the definition require *intentionality*, a conscious awareness of taking political action. In Latin America, where the involvement of the state in labor relations is commonly extensive, the strike—basically an economic

act—often has extensive implications for the distribution of public goods, regardless of the workers' intent. Political participation need not occur only within *formal government* arenas, since many public goods exist and are distributed outside formal government. Finally, political participation need not be *conventional*, that is, either legal or acceptable to a regime; action of any kind—violent or not, legal or illegal—aimed at influencing the distribution of public goods entails political participation.

One advantage of this definition is the breadth of the political behaviors it encompasses. This breadth facilitates an approach to citizen political activity of much greater scope than the traditional focus upon elections and parties that dominated participation research on Latin America prior to 1970 and that continues as a major trend today.<sup>4</sup> A second advantage of this approach lies in its theoretical implications. By examining individual behavior as it relates to the distribution of public goods within social systems, one must necessarily consider the political actor within the context of larger social, political, and economic structures and processes. The analyst must therefore go beyond the individual to examine "the reciprocal effects of the interaction between the state and the political participant" (Booth and Seligson 1978a).

#### LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

The first query asks how much nonviolent citizen participation takes place in Latin American societies. The answer will likely surprise those who still believe that political inactivity characterizes mass publics in the region. Breakdowns of the levels of several types of activity among Costa Rican family heads reveal participation at rates rather higher than one might have expected (Booth 1976). Well over half of the population belonged to at least one voluntary association, was moderately active in both leadership and attendance in such organizations, and had taken part in at least one community improvement project of some sort. In fact, 84 percent reported voting in the 1970 national election, a figure that closely matches the officially reported turnout of 83.3 percent (Tribunal Supremo de Elecciones 1970). Over 30 percent of the Costa Rican respondents discussed national politics occasionally<sup>5</sup> and had contacted at least one public official. Over 20 percent discussed local politics at least occasionally and had been members of a political party, while 10 percent or more had contacted a legislative assembly delegate, a municipal councilman, or a municipal executive. Overall, the average respondent had participated in 3.6 of the seventeen types of activity examined (median = 2.8), and only one in seven had never engaged in any of them.

One might reasonably argue that Costa Ricans could drastically exceed the Latin American norm for participation due to that nation's liberal constitutional tradition and active party system, but data from other nations quickly dispel this hypothesis. Looking first at voting we find that Latin Americans are active voters, wherever regimes permit elections. In the decade 1961–70, Costa Rica was slightly above average (38 percent) in Latin America in the number of registered voters expressed as a percent of the total population, which ranged from a low of 19 percent in Guatemala to a high of 58 percent in Uruguay. Costa

Ricans were among the most active voters in Latin America, with over 80 percent of the registered voters casting ballots compared to a range from 53 percent in Colombia in 1970 to 95 percent in Peru in 1963 (Willems 1975, pp. 288–91). In the 1973 presidential election, more than 90 percent of Venezuelans voted (Martz and Baloyra 1976). For further comparative reference, national election turnout in the U.S. is about 55–60 percent (Campbell et al. 1964, p. 49), about 95 percent in Austria, and near 60 percent in India (Verba et al. 1971, p. 36). One cautionary note must be added. Voting statistics from Latin America must be compared with extreme care for two reasons. First, the accuracy of the figures themselves is suspect due to electoral fraud in certain settings. Second, voting is mandatory in several countries, such as Mexico, Costa Rica, and Venezuela, a fact that clearly boosts turnout (see, for example, Booth 1975a, p. 91, for data on the Costa Rica turnout increase when voting became mandatory). However, even when voting is required, it does not become universal, leaving some 10 to 15 percent variance in turnout in the Costa Rican and Venezuelan democracies.

Campaigning and partisan activism comprise a second mode of political activity (see below for a discussion of the modal structure of participation). For comparison, Verba et al. (1971, p. 36) present data that permit an estimate that roughly one fifth of the voting age population of Austria, Japan, India, and the U.S. engage in some sort of campaigning. Biles (1978) reports that in 1970 some 6 percent of urban Uruguayans belonged to a political club or party, and that some 13 percent had campaigned or contributed money to a candidate. Baloyra and Martz (1978) report much greater activity in Venezuela in 1973: nearly three-fourths of the electorate exposed themselves to campaign stimuli, and nearly half took an active campaigning role (volunteer work, electioneering, attending meetings, etc.).

The levels of contacting public officials reported among Costa Ricans fall within the range reported by Cornelius (1974, p. 1135) for several other Latin American nations. Contacting among residents of several lower-class communities in Mexico, Peru, Brazil, and Chile varied from 6 to 42 percent. Some 11 percent of the residents of Montevideo, Uruguay, admitted having received some favor from a contact with a public official (Biles 1978). For nations outside Latin America, Verba et al. (1971) report ranges of different types of contacting of from 1 to 10 percent in Nigeria (the lowest level) to between 3 and 16 percent in Austria (the highest level).

For communal activism—collective problem solving—there are few analyses that provide quantitative data from Latin America. However, numerous studies (for example, Adams 1959, Roberts 1973, Fagen and Tuohy 1972, Fishel forthcoming, Castillo 1964, Doughty 1968, Dobyns 1964) report in detail on the existence of communal activism in a wide variety of community settings, both urban and rural. Dietz and Moore (1977, p. 27) report that 73 percent of the residents of six of Lima's squatter settlements had cooperated with other residents in some community improvement effort. Booth and Seligson (1979), employing two independent data sets, confirm that around two-thirds of Costa Rican peasants had done some communal problem solving.

One final overall comparison will place Latin America in a cross-regional

and cross-cultural perspective. Elsewhere I have shown that Costa Ricans' mean level of activity in voting, party membership, attendance at political meetings, community improvement activism, and contacting public officials (Booth 1975a, pp. 109–10; 1976, p. 629) ranks them as slightly more active than Indians and Nigerians, but only slightly less active than Austrians, Americans, and Japanese (Kim et al. 1974). Since these levels for Costa Rica are roughly similar to those for the rest of Latin America, we must therefore conclude that levels of mass participation in Latin America differ rather little from those elsewhere.

#### THE STRUCTURE OF PARTICIPATION

What is the structure of political participation in Latin America, and how does it compare with other regions of the world? Referring primarily to the U.S. and Western Europe, Berelson et al. (1954), Lane (1959), and Milbrath (1965) once depicted political participation as a unidimensional phenomenon consisting primarily of electoral activities. However, recent research in seven societies including the United States, three European nations, Japan, India, and Nigeria (Verba et al. 1971, Verba et al. 1973), has revealed that nonviolent participation in each of these societies usually consists of several independent factors or modes; these include voting, campaigning, contacting public officials, and cooperative activity in the community. But what of Latin America? Do such clearly distinct nonviolent modes of political behavior appear in societies in this cultural region?

My (1975a, 1976) factor analysis of seventeen participation variables isolated six factors of political participation among Costa Rican family heads: voting, political party activity (like Verba and company's campaigning), contacting public officials, political communication, interest group activity (like Verba et al.'s community activity), and community improvement activism. Thus, four of the dimensions of mass political activity among a national probability sample of Costa Ricans resemble those found in other regions of the world. Other Latin American studies report several nonviolent dimensions of political participation, and confirm Verba et al.'s (1973) contention that the modal structure may alter according to the particular environment (see below). Biles's (1978) survey of a broad range of political activities among urban Uruguayans revealed four modes of participation in 1970: voting, political communication, communal activity, and campaigning—particularized contacting. Baloyra and Martz (1978) demonstrate that in Venezuela in 1973, campaign activism, elsewhere thought to be a single dimension, actually consisted of two separate subdimensions—exposure to the campaign and involvement in the campaign. Studies conducted in Ecuador (Moore 1977, forthcoming) and Peru (Dietz 1977, Dietz and Moore 1977) have also found several dimensions of political participation in these authoritarian contexts. Despite the absence of voting, Dietz and Moore's detailed look at participation among Lima's urban squatters reveals a communal problem solving mode, an organizational activity—contacting local officials mode, and a contacting national officials mode. Seligson and Booth, (forthcoming-c) show that the modal structure of political participation among a cross-section of Costa Rican urban dwellers (not just the poor) differs from that of peasants in ways

linked to demographic and organizational contrasts between city and countryside.

In sum, then, political participation in Latin American nations, as elsewhere, exhibits a multidimensional structure. While too few surveys of whole Latin American societies have been conducted to permit full blown comparison of the region with the participatory structures found by Verba, Nie, and their associates (1971, 1972, 1973), the studies done to date have produced no really surprising deviations from the expectation of multiple modes. The modes of citizen action are not always the same, however. As the following section shows, the political, economic, and social contexts may alter participatory structure from one society to another, or within a society from one sector to another.

#### CONTEXTUAL DETERMINANTS OF PARTICIPATION

To what extent and in what ways does context, or the socioeconomic and political environment, influence political participation? Studies by Verba, Nie, and Kim (1971) and Verba et al. (1973) compare modes of citizen activity in seven nations and conclude that constitution and regime type account for structural differences discovered between Nigeria and Yugoslavia and five other nations. Leeds and Leeds (1976, p. 193) go so far as to claim that virtually all the differences in the political behavior of the urban poor in three Latin American nations stem from contextual factors. Are contextual phenomena so important? The following discussion divides evidence of the environmental effects upon political activity into studies *comparing* political regimes and studies *within* particular regimes.<sup>6</sup>

Turning first to comparisons of regimes' impacts upon participation, we find that data take two basic forms: comparisons of different national political systems, and analyses of regime changes within particular societies. First, as indicated in the previous sections, both structures and levels of political participation vary with national context. Most notably, of course, certain authoritarian regimes sharply curtail or completely suppress voting and much political party activity. Biles's (1978) Uruguayan study observes another type of contextual effect; campaigning and personalized contacting modes (separate elsewhere) combine into a single mode. Biles speculates that this derives from Uruguay's intense and long-lived pattern of patronage politics (Weinstein 1975), which has transformed political clubs and parties into almost ubiquitous brokers between citizens with demands and the state.

Leeds and Leeds (1976) carefully analyze the impact of regime type upon the political activity of the urban poor of Brazil, Peru, and Chile. They find that differences in the number of political parties with a mass base within each society dramatically alter the tactics, strategies, and success of the urban poor in their pursuit of the public goods. In Brazil, where party elites have avoided mass-based organizing, *favela* dwellers have resorted to "interest exchanges" (*trocas de interesses*), informal and temporary but sophisticated arrangements to bargain potential support for competing candidates in exchange for specific improvements and services. In Peru, where only the APRA has had a mass base, other

parties have attempted to counteract this advantage through tactics of mass co-optation. The frequent changes in ruling elites have produced massive bureaucratic proliferation as successive governments create new agencies and programs for the urban poor. The typical *barriada* response in Peru has been: (1) to direct demands to bureaucracies, which last longer than governments and are more dependable than parties; and (2) to manipulate the multiple (even competing) national and international assistance programs to maximum advantage. In Chile, where prior to 1973 several political parties had broad mass bases, party competition for electoral support among the urban poor has been intense. In the *callampas* (formed informally by gradual accretion of residents) and the *poblaciones* (government planned settlements) the residents have cautiously manipulated competing party agencies for help. But in the *campamentos* (typically formed by party-organized invasion) residents have sought public goods primarily through the bureaucratic linkages provided by the party that organized the invasion.

Walton's (1976, pp. 134–35) comparison of two Mexican and two Colombian cities details how political and economic characteristics of urban elites affect the nature and success of demand making by lower-level groups. He finds similarities between Cali and Monterrey, where elites provide fewer public goods to lower-sector groups than in Medellín and Guadalajara. Greater policy concessions, in response to greater lower-sector demand making in the latter pair, occur because Medellín's economic elite depends upon lower-sector cooperation for a steady labor force and because Guadalajara's bureaucratic leaders need successful development projects to promote career advancement within the national PRI. Elite "vulnerability" (Portes and Walton 1976, pp. 172–75), which the urban poor may exploit in Medellín and Guadalajara, is at lower levels in Monterrey, where the elite is less pressed by the PRI due to political diversity, and in Cali, where business leaders find an ample and steady labor supply. The findings by Walton and by Leeds and Leeds suggest that one critical contextual variable involves the nature of the elite. A combination of intra-elite competition and dependency upon lower-sector groups seems to promote alternative channels for mass demand making and to encourage such demands.

Recent studies of social security systems in Latin America (Mesa-Lago forthcoming, Malloy 1977, Rosenberg and Malloy 1978) detail how increasing participation by successive waves of newly emerging interest sectors have created unworkable and inequitable systems that have severely overtaxed national economic and political resources. Successful efforts to reform such programs have so far succeeded only where authoritarian regimes have seized power and repressed interest-group participation in social security policymaking. Thus, where vulnerable civilian regimes have depended upon lower-sector support, pressure politics has been encouraged. Regrettably, it has been military institutions that have manifested the internal solidarity and power to reform successfully the resultant deformed public policies, but this at the cost of severely repressing participation (Rosenberg and Malloy 1978).

Studies of regime changes within nations provide other examples of contextual effects upon participation. For instance, Collier describes in detail how

policy changes by successive Peruvian regimes since the 1950s have altered the government's treatment of the urban poor, and how the poor's political behavior has shifted in response: "Squatter settlements and public policy toward settlements have been used as a means of linking the urban poor to the state in a way that is viewed as constructive, rather than disruptive, by those in power" (1975, p. 37). Thus, as successive elites have tried to control participation, policy has variously promoted mobilization of squatters to support Odria (1948–56), self-help activity under Prado (1956–60), massive electoral involvement—followed by frustration—in the party government period (1961–68), and self-help and extraparty mobilization under military rule (1968–75). (See also Woy 1978, Dietz and Palmer 1978, Palmer 1973, Palmer and Middlebrook 1976, and Palmer and Rodriguez 1972.)

Shepard Forman argues that "the nature of [the Brazilian elite's] power struggle at any given time has defined the nature of peasant political participation as well" (1975, pp. 143–44). He traces how these struggles have transformed peasant political participation: as local elites have gradually been suppressed by centralizing national elites, peasants' political activity has not become independent, but has shifted from "patron-dependency" upon a single local landlord to "patron-clientship" with plural national institutions. Since 1964, of course, military rule has dramatically restricted such activity. Brian Loveman's (1976, forthcoming) analysis of labor organization among Chilean peasants since 1919 shows that opportunistic manipulation by urban based parties of the left in pursuit of their own goals has provoked repeated waves of rural strikes, encouraged by the opposition to weaken a government in power. Once a regime change occurred, however, the parties have typically supported renewed repression of the peasant unions. Loveman also notes how the Unidad Popular coalition's rise to power in 1970 brought about a dramatic growth in peasant activism as the left was finally free to compete more openly for mass support and eschewed its previous vacillation. Adams (1970) traces the evolution of political power structures in Guatemala from 1944 to 1966, highlighting the initial expansion (1944–54) and subsequent contraction (1954–66) of political participation among various social sectors as regimes and their ideologies have shifted from revolution to counterrevolution, with a corresponding increase in ruling elite solidarity (see also Booth forthcoming).

The numerous studies that treat contextual effects upon political participation *within* regimes subdivide into two groups: those comparing the activity of different social sectors, and those that examine differences within a single social stratum. In the first group, Fagen and Tuohy (1972) compare the activity of upper-, middle-, and lower-class residents of the Mexican provincial capital of Jalapa. They report that contacting public officials, political group membership, party membership, attempts to influence public decisions, and campaigning are highest among upper-sector groups, intermediate for the middle-class sample, and lowest among the poor. They further find this inequality accentuated by educational attainment, ultimately reporting "surprise" at the "disproportionate extent to which the upper class . . . enjoys certain political advantages in an institutional setting that is ostensibly geared to the representation of middle-

and lower-class interests" (1972, p. 87). Clearly, the structure of the Mexican political system provides significant barriers to participation among lower status individuals.

Several Costa Rican studies also report substantial participation differences across social strata. Seligson and Booth (forthcoming-c) compare political activism among Costa Rican urbanites and peasants. They report only slight structural differences in modes of activity, but they find that urban dwellers exceed peasants in political participation within the national arena (voting, contacting officials), while peasants engage more in communal improvement and group activity. Other Costa Rican studies that examine the impact of region (Booth et al. 1973, Booth 1974) and community size (Booth et al. 1973; Booth 1975a, 1975b) report greater national arena activity and less communal participation among those in large and centrally located communities, with the reverse true in small or isolated towns and villages.

The common thread running through these reports is a striking differential in public services isolated by controlling for region, community size, and urban-rural conditions. Each study concludes that a major cause for rural, peripheral area, and village residents' intense communal problem solving is the lack of basic services which they confront. Urban, central region, and larger-town residents enjoy many basic services provided by government, thus reducing the impetus for communalism. Another contextual effect stems from the costs and benefits of participation in a highly centralized political system. The institutions of government and the services they distribute lie within easy reach of residents of Costa Rica's metropolitan center, but remain remote and costly for those isolated from the center. These differential costs of access and unequal distributions of payoffs of national arena participation account for much of the observed variation in voting, contacting public officials, and interest-group activity among different community sizes, between rural and urban strata, and between central and peripheral regions of Costa Rica.

A final group of studies delves into contextual effects upon citizen action within a particular social stratum. For example, Seligson (1978) scrutinizes the effect of economic development levels upon four forms of citizen activity among peasants. He discovers that *low* levels of rural economic development *increase* levels of group activism, contact with local government, community project activity, and voting. He concludes: "In areas where infra-structure is poorly developed and government services are minimal, individuals are compelled to participate politically if they hope to see some improvement" (1978, pp. 151–52).

Bourque and Warren (forthcoming) examine the differences in participation between the women of two Peruvian rural communities and report a significant contextual effect. They note that the women of the traditional highland village, where the males control key economic processes, take less part politically than the women of the nearby new commercial town. Bourque and Warren attribute the difference to the commercial town women's greater economic power—many operate businesses independently of males. Handelman (forthcoming) notes that workers in Mexico's PRI affiliated labor unions exhibit de-

pressed political activity, but that members of radical electrical workers unions take part at a notably higher rate. He traces this within-class variation to the ideological differences between the two types of unions.

Cornelius (1973; 1975, pp. 110–34) examines the impact of socioeconomic context upon the political activity of the poor of Mexico City. He demonstrates that different neighborhoods have distinct political cultures as measured with aggregated scores on indices of “civic mindedness,” disposition to conform to community norms, perception of external threat, and strength of self-help orientation. These community attributes produce significant variations from *barrio* to *barrio* in an overall participation index, even with controls for socioeconomic status (SES), length of residence, and psychological involvement (1975, p. 114). Cornelius also itemizes (1975, pp. 124–32—with many useful references to other research) ten other aspects of the social and material context that influence participation among the urban poor. While internal cleavage, low population density, and large size *reduce* participation within a *barrio*, several things *increase* activity: SES homogeneity, stability of residence, boundedness, establishment by invasion, external threats, repression, success with previous petitions to authority, locally oriented leadership and voluntary associations, and such “developmental needs” as lack of land titles and basic public services. (For other studies that cite similar contextual effects upon participation by the urban poor, see Goldrich et al. 1967; Perlman 1975, 1976; Portes 1969; Roberts 1973; Dietz 1974; Moore 1977, forthcoming; as well as the bibliography in Cornelius 1973.)

To sum up, political participation in Latin America manifests diverse contextual influences. The (evolving) structure of sociopolitical institutions provides the framework within which citizens attempt to influence the distribution of public goods. Constitutional structures, regime types, elite interactions, and institutional configurations determine the opportunity, channels for, and costs of participation, thereby influencing the levels, structure, strategy, tactics, and policy influence of political activity. Shifts in such structural phenomena may produce dramatic alterations in patterns of citizens’ efforts to influence the distribution of national public goods. At lower levels within social systems, phenomena as varied as the availability of public services, local political culture, community size, and residence patterns provide similar frameworks that determine the motives, tactics, modes, and intensity of political activity. What Portes has said of Latin America’s urban poor seems appropriate for extension to include most other social sectors—political behavior is “rational adaptation to what structural circumstances permit and encourage” (1976, p. 108).

#### THE CONCENTRATION OF PARTICIPATION

To what extent is political participation in Latin America concentrated, that is, monopolized by militant political activists or by persons high in socioeconomic status? In the United States political participation tends to be somewhat concentrated; individuals who perform the most difficult and time-consuming acts also often perform most of the easier ones. Furthermore, participation is unevenly

distributed, with many people taking part at fairly low levels, and far fewer engaging in large numbers of activities (Verba and Nie 1972, pp. 25–35; Milbrath 1965, pp. 16–21; Matthews and Prothro 1966, pp. 52–58; Lane 1959, pp. 93–94).

My research on a national probability sample of 1,442 Costa Rican family heads has revealed that levels of activity vary substantially (Booth 1975a). While but 14 percent had engaged in none of the measured acts, only 21 percent had taken part in six or more, with a median score for the sample of 2.8. Going further, the study focused on the least common activities (those done by 30 percent or less of the sample), which the previously cited authority would suggest to be highly concentrated among political activists. Only half of all Costa Rican family heads had done any of these rarer acts, and only about 15 percent had engaged in three or more. Thus, there is, indeed, some concentration of political participation in Costa Rica, as observed in other societies. A small minority of participants is disproportionately active. However, the evidence revealed another side of the coin—extreme inactivity is also rare, and almost half of the respondents had engaged in between one and five of even the rarer forms of participation.

The question of how much concentration or overlapping actually exists may be examined still further. Early speculation (Milbrath 1965, Lane 1959) suggested that participation is so concentrated that almost every person who performs a rare act engages in the more common ones as well. However, Kim et al. (1974) and Verba and Nie (1972) have shown that this assumption breaks down for the seven Verba-Nie study societies, with participation more widespread and much less concentrated than expected. They further suggest that the concentration of participation increases as the level of economic development of the society increases. The Costa Rican data (Booth 1975a, pp. 107–14) paralleled the Kim et al. findings. A comparison of the overlapping of participation among behaviors representative of the six modes revealed that the concentration is only about half as great as its theoretically possible maximum. Many more people take part in the more difficult and time-consuming less common acts than one would expect if but a few political activists dominated all arenas of activity. Unfortunately, no similar analyses of the concentration of participation have yet come to light for other Latin American nations.

Another way to explore the degree of concentration is to examine the extent to which SES affects participation. The correlation between high status and more intense political activity has been widely observed (Salisbury 1975, p. 326; Milbrath and Goel 1977, pp. 86–106). Is it true that those of higher SES dominate or monopolize political activity? Such a participation monopoly could be said to exist if either (1) no activity occurred at all among poorer citizens, (2) the rich were greatly more politically active than lower status groups, or (3) nonelites had virtually no influence over the distribution of public goods.

Data from throughout Latin America have completely undermined the proposition that the poor are politically inactive. The size of the group of completely inactive Costa Rican citizens (14 percent) is tiny in comparison to the ranks of the nation's low SES groups (Booth 1975a). Furthermore, research on Costa Rican peasants, most quite impoverished by any standards (Booth and

Seligson 1979; Seligson 1978, forthcoming) reveals substantial levels of participation. Additionally, studies from elsewhere in Latin America report important amounts of political activity among peasants in Mexico (Landsberger and Gierisch forthcoming), Chile (Loveman 1976, forthcoming), and Brazil (Forman 1976), and among the urban poor in several countries (Ray 1969; Cornelius 1974, 1975; Dietz 1974, 1977; Portes 1969, 1971, 1972; Moore 1977; Peattie 1968; Perlman 1975, 1976; Roberts 1973). Thus, lower-status groups take an active role in politics in many Latin American nations. This role involves not only communal and organizational activity, but party participation and contacting public officials as well. Thus, the upper-status sectors do not dominate participation in this sense.

The second condition mentioned above concerns disproportionate political participation by wealthier citizens. Is the political activism of the upper strata extraordinarily great in comparison to the lower strata? If so, to what extent and in which arenas of activity? The answer to the first question is a qualified yes—individuals high on the status hierarchy are more active in certain political arenas. For example, Fagen and Tuohy (1972, pp. 81–106) report that both social class and educational attainment have a strong positive relationship, as noted above. Elsewhere, Costa Ricans at large exhibit low-to-moderate positive correlations between SES and five of six modes of political participation—voting, partisan activism, political communication, organizational activism, and contacting public officials (Booth 1975a, 1978). Among Costa Rican peasants, landownership, an important index of social and economic standing in the countryside, contributes to a significant increase in participation in organizations, community betterment efforts, and contacting local public officials (Booth and Seligson 1979). Cornelius (1975, p. 94) reports a weak but significant positive SES correlation with voting and campaigning among his Mexico City migrant poor.

Data on other Latin American nations also reveal positive correlations between participation indicators and socioeconomic status. Biles (1978) reports a weak positive correlation between SES and organizational membership in urban Uruguay. McClintock's (1976a, 1976b) data on the Peruvian countryside in 1969 and 1974 reveal weak-to-moderate positive associations between SES and political participation levels in a variety of occupational contexts, despite the relative homogeneity of her population samples. Bourque and Warren (forthcoming) show that among women in two rural Peruvian villages, exceptionally high political activity occurs among those with the greater than normal status derived from economic independence from men. Fishel (1976) reports that in another Peruvian district the socioeconomic elite takes a greater political role (especially in contacting public officials) than the majority of citizens. It seems safe to conclude, therefore, that higher SES individuals, in both the national arena and a variety of local contexts, tend to engage more in politics than lower SES citizens.

However, not all evidence reveals such positive relationships. Several of the studies just cited report very different findings for certain types of activity. For example, Cornelius's Mexico City urban poor are significantly more likely to take part in communal problem solving if they are *low* in socioeconomic status (1975, p. 94). Similarly, among Costa Ricans, communal activism occurs most

frequently among persons low on the SES hierarchy, regardless of whether the population is considered as a whole (Booth 1975a), or rural residents are singled out (Booth and Seligson 1975, Seligson and Booth forthcoming-c, Seligson 1978). Likewise, Biles (1978) encountered no correlation between SES and voting or political communication among his urban Uruguayans, and found a negative association for campaigning/contacting. Baloyra and Martz's (1978) study of participation in the 1973 Venezuelan election reports no association between voting and SES. They attribute this phenomenon to the mandatory nature of voting and to the intensive mobilization of the Venezuelan campaign. Landsberger and Gierisch (forthcoming) report no statistically significant degree of association between objective status indices such as the amount of land owned, education, and income and the voting and partisan activism of their Mexican peasant sample. And finally, Dietz and Moore (1977, pp. 37–41) detected no significant correlations between SES and community improvement efforts by Lima's poor squatters and migrants; they also report that activists are systematically slightly poorer than inactive residents.

These findings reveal patterns in political participation that hold considerable interest. Persons of higher SES evidently predominate in participation within the national government arena. This is likely so first because the greater one's wealth and standing, the more likely one is to have interests for the defense of which national politics has importance; second, those of higher status are more likely to have the educational and economic resources that facilitate participation within the complex, centralized national political systems of Latin America. On the other hand, persons of lower SES commonly take more active political roles than elites in communal improvement activism. As noted in the previous section, the great centralization of most public services within the region's metropoli militates in favor of communal improvement efforts among those marginalized from such services by living in poor urban barrios or in the countryside: "Where national policies distribute public goods unevenly and offer scant prospect for local improvement, neighbors often turn to each other for the creation of public goods through communal effort" (Booth and Seligson 1978a; see also the studies in Seligson and Booth forthcoming-b).

The final issue under the rubric of upper-SES domination of political participation concerns the question of the relative degree of influence upon public policy. While the definition of political participation chosen explicitly rejects the notion that policy influence is required for participation to occur, the substantive significance of the whole issue depends to an important degree upon the public's policy impact. That is, if nonelites do take part in politics but have no influence on policy, then the participation is irrelevant and unworthy of anything more than passing note. How much policy influence do lower- and middle-sector groups exercise in Latin America? There is evidence that certain segments of mass publics sometimes influence national public policy in both democratic and authoritarian contexts. But since particular policies seldom affect all social strata simultaneously, we must isolate specific groups in order to examine this influence. One such social sector consists of the urban poor. The now almost Brobdingnagian literature on Latin America's urban migrants and squat-

ters defies comprehensive treatment here due to the broader scope of this review. The citations that follow, therefore, are illustrative; for further analysis and citations, the reader should consult Cornelius's (1973, 1974, 1975) works on Mexico City, which also cite much of the relevant cross-national material, as well as Handelman's (1975a) review of research on the urban poor in Santiago, Chile, and the bibliography in Portes and Walton (1976).

Peattie's case study of the poor Caracas barrio of La Laja describes the development of a demand-making process that eventually secured water lines, a baseball field, and a nutrition center. While observing that such communities may often fail in policy influence due to lack of government resources or official recalcitrance, Peattie notes that success in these cases resulted from mobilizing "enough group pressure to establish new channels of connection with the centers of power outside the community" (1968, p. 69). Similarly, Cornelius reports that "conventional" (nonprotest) demand making had been partially effective in all six of his low income Mexico City communities: "Most of the benefits cited by community leaders would not have been provided in the absence of overt demand making efforts" (1974, p. 1140). He attributes governmental failure to meet other needs as sometimes due to interrupted or inept demand making, and at other times to lack of official responsiveness.

Studies that document similar impact upon public policy abound (for example, see Ray 1969, Fagen and Tuohy 1972, Roberts 1973, Dietz 1974, Leeds and Leeds 1976, Portes and Walton 1976, Moore 1977), but one should not conclude that the policy impact of the urban poor is extensive, or that the poor often force governments to reorder their budget allocation priorities. Moore (forthcoming) affirms that "the capacity to . . . extract small-scale (but real) benefits from the system by manipulating it, does not belie the fact that this participation will not alter the basic structural conditions [of] systemic inequality." The generally co-optative nature of concessions to urban squatters and migrants has been demonstrated by Eckstein (1977) for Mexico, Perlman (1976) for Brazil, and Collier (1975) for Peru, among others.

Governments often make policy concessions not on a broad basis that affects large segments of the urban poor, but rather *distributively*, as in the case of conceding lots and titles to squatters, greatly disaggregating benefits by dispensing them on an individual basis (Collier 1975, pp. 46–47). Thus, rather than pursue costly redistributive policies such as government housing, the state acquires land relatively cheaply and doles it out piecemeal, maximizing control while minimizing the likelihood of serious challenges to the overall allocation of public resources.

The rural poor also can influence national government policy to a limited degree. Even small and isolated rural communities in several nations obtain pork-barrel appropriations from their national governments. Doughty and Negrón's (1964, pp. 56–59) study of the Peruvian Andean village of Pararín reports that on several occasions the government has reacted to community requests with assistance. In response to delegations to Lima, the government has helped pave some streets, provided materials for one of the schools, donated technical aid for the installation of a generator, and supplied earthquake relief. Similarly,

the Costa Rican government had provided assistance in some form or another to two-thirds of the communal improvement projects surveyed in 109 towns and villages. This aid took several forms: direct cash appropriations by the National Assembly, material and machinery donations by the Public Works Ministry, technical assistance from the National Water and Sewer Service, provision of teachers and books for community-built schools, and so forth (Booth et al. 1973). Further examples of such government response to peasant demand making may be found in Dobyns (1964), Whyte (1969), Castillo (1964), González and Hammock (1973), and Fishel (forthcoming).

One phenomenon that clearly facilitates policy influence by peasants is organization. The peasant leagues of Bolivia (McEwen 1975, Malloy 1970) have proven instrumental in securing assistance to rural communities, resulting in organized villages receiving far greater attention from the central government. Powell's (1971) study of the Venezuelan peasant movement reveals how campesino syndicate leaders function as brokers with the government in seeking land reform and service development. He concludes that governmental agrarian policies are "responsive to the inputs generated by the peasant Federation," even though rational planning considerations have usually modified the state's outputs (p. 171).

Despite such evidence, one should not assume that Latin American states' responsiveness to demands from the rural poor have been far-reaching. As with the urban poor, co-optation and the use of highly distributive policies minimize the cost of necessary concessions to campesinos. Even in Mexico, where the rural poor have violently stated their demands for reform, policies of the revolutionary governments have continued to favor urban/industrial developmental strategies. Land redistribution has been relatively low cost (especially since it has undermined portions of a hostile former oligarchy), and has followed a very disaggregated or "distributive" pattern somewhat analogous to that Collier (1975) described for Peruvian urban squatters. Land has been seized at declared tax value and parcelled out to ejidos in fits and starts coinciding with unrest in the countryside. The government and the PRI leadership have also co-opted peasant leaders in order to manipulate their advocacy of peasant interests (Hansen 1971, pp. 87–107). Although Costa Rican peasants have so far largely eschewed violence, demand for land there has been satisfied in a similarly disaggregated fashion, first through permitting individual colonization of public land; when public land was exhausted, the government turned to compensating private largeholders for losses to invaders (Seligson 1977, Booth and Seligson 1979).

Turning to middle-sector groups, Malloy (1977), Rosenberg and Malloy (1978), and Mesa-Lago (forthcoming) present an overview for the whole region of the success of pressure groups (especially middle-sector elements) in gaining concessions and special treatment in the development of social security systems. Special interest groups have, in fact, been so successful that efforts at social security reform have failed in all but a few military regimes with sufficient coercive power to repress interest group protests against the loss of special privilege. Within a few years after Peru's 1968 military coup, the governmentally established and manipulated organizations of SINAMOS managed to attain an

independent interest representation role (sometimes representing the proscribed parties). This phenomenon led the military reform government to reevaluate its commitment to mass participation in defense of its own policymaking (Woy 1978, Dietz and Palmer 1978).

Overall, then, the evidence indicates that various social sectors do, indeed, influence public policy, though elites seek to manipulate the political activity of other groups to their advantage (Adams forthcoming, Baylis 1978). Thus, throughout most of Latin America, as Eckstein (1977) so graphically documents for Mexico, policy concessions to the poor tend to be manipulative and co-optative. Government responses to middle- and especially to upper-sector pressures are more extensive, belying greater influence for these groups than that of the poor. In sum, the concentration of political participation in Latin America appears no more pronounced than in other cultural regions. However, although nonelites engage in significant amounts of political activity in a variety of contexts, their policy influence, while undeniable, remains slight within the context of national government institutions.

#### PARTICIPANT RATIONALITY

The final research question explores the issue of the political rationality of mass publics in Latin America. A test of citizen rationality must evaluate primarily whether mass political behavior exhibits goal-oriented characteristics. One testable model of goal-oriented political behavior builds on the premise that to behave rationally one must be sufficiently oriented toward the future to have goals, must perceive some political institution as salient (relevant) for realizing those goals, and then must act in congruence with those goals and perceptions (Lane 1959, pp. 103–362; Czudnowski 1968; Touraine and Pécaut 1970; Portes 1972, pp. 271–72; Almond and Verba 1965, p. 219). Thus, rational mass political behavior would consist of a pattern of activity in political institutions in proportion to the intensity of relevant goals and to the perception of those institutions as useful for pursuing these goals. Nonrational participation would be either random, intense in the absence of goals and institutional saliency, or low in the presence of high goal orientation and saliency.

One study based upon a national probability sample of Costa Ricans (Booth 1977, 1978) tested the goal orientation-saliency model within three political contexts. Behavior conformed to the means-ends model of political rationality in each case. Participation within the communal, local governmental, and national arenas occurred least among those with low goals and who also failed to perceive the institution as salient, more for those with either no saliency perception and high goals or vice versa, and most among those with both the more intense goals and perceiving saliency.

Evidence from other Latin American nations also sheds light upon the question of citizen rationality. Chaffee (1975, 1976, 1977, forthcoming) theorizes that both participation and nonparticipation in politics result from individuals' calculation of the relative costs and rewards of action. He argues that a rational individual will only expend an effort to influence the distribution of public

goods if the potential rewards outweigh his/her potential losses. Chaffee cites several examples of both conventional and unconventional political action to support this hypothesis. Neuse's (1978) analysis of the voting patterns of Chilean women from 1952 to 1973 reports rational action. Neuse attributes the rise in lower-class female participation after 1970 to a response to the determined mobilization efforts of the Unidad Popular coalition. This shift apparently reflects women's decisions to pursue their personal goals through political institutions because the parties had persuaded women that politics could be of greater use to them than before.

Other studies, these from authoritarian settings, support the apparent rationality of patterns of mass political activity. Dietz (1974, 1977), Cornelius (1974), and Cornelius and Dietz (1976) have examined demand making among urban migrants and squatters in Lima and Mexico City using a model similar to the one I have tested (see Booth and Seligson 1978a, p. 15, for a discussion of the Cornelius-Dietz model). Their findings detail the complex tactics through which the urban poor seek government assistance for the provision of needed services. These rational behavior patterns significantly resemble those observed by Mathiason (1972) among the urban poor of democratic Venezuela. Finally, Portes's (1972) surveys of numerous studies of the political behavior of urban slum dwellers in several cities (including Santiago, Guatemala City, Lima, Bogotá, and Barranquilla) led him to conclude such participation is rational (see also Portes 1976).

In summary, evidence from several Latin American countries reveals rational patterns of political behavior in many types of political activity. Although these findings do not necessarily gainsay contentions from the political culture literature that Latin Americans may be emotional, dogmatic, personalistic, or paternalistic in their political behavior,<sup>7</sup> they do cast some doubt upon the common conclusion that their participation in politics is therefore necessarily irrational. A more reasonable interpretation would recognize how the complexity of human motivation, culture, and the individual's social and physical environment must affect decision making (Seligson and Booth 1976). Much further research is required to illuminate and explicate the effects of such factors on goal-oriented behavior and decision making. Further study should dwell upon improving empirical tests of these models, taking into account the multiplicity of influences in the social environment.

#### DISCUSSION

To sum up, the available evidence provides roughly the following picture: non-violent political activity among citizens is quite extensive. Though varying in type and degree both within and between societies, participation seems neither exceptionally infrequent nor widespread, given the overall level of socioeconomic development of Latin America. There are several distinct modes of nonviolent political participation, very similar to those observed in other cultural regions, including voting, partisan activism, contacting public officials, discussing politics, organizational activity, and community improvement work. Varia-

tions in the socioeconomic and political environment seem to account for major differences in styles of participation: marginal sectors such as the urban and rural poor engage more frequently in collective problem solving within the communal arena, while the urban middle and upper sectors, integrated into and served by the national political system, take a more active part in the national arena. Elites manipulate mass participation to serve elite goals. But despite the fact that some concentration of political participation in the hands of socioeconomic elites and political activists occurs, and though elites exercise disproportionate policy influence, a large proportion of Latin American citizens takes part actively in politics. And finally, Latin American mass publics participate in patterns that suggest rationality of the means-ends type, pursuing their political goals in accordance with their perceptions of the usefulness of certain political institutions for those goals.

#### *Reassessing Modernity and Political Mobilization*

Political mobilization, long portrayed as a transition from low levels of participation to higher levels, has been central to the theory of modernization (Portes 1973, 1974). The first of ten dimensions of modernity that Portes has consistently found in both theory and research is "participation: motivation and ability to take part in organizations and electoral processes in defense of self-interests and/or general beliefs" (1974, p. 249). At the systemic level, this participatory tendency amounts to mobilization, usually regarded as a shift from widespread political inactivity to ever greater citizen activism. Certain of the findings of the new participation literature from Latin America suggest, however, that the concept of political mobilization might profitably be slightly revised. Many of the studies cited above depict substantial participation *within* communities as well as interaction with national institutions even among highly traditional populations. Thus, mobilization may well involve either (or both) of two changes: (1) participation may shift from collective self-help activity and organization within the community arena into the more electoral, consumption-oriented style of activity in the national political arena as national institutions acquire the capacity to provide useful public goods; or (2) such national arena activism may develop in addition to participation within the communal arena. Thus, participants select arenas of action according to institutional capacity to provide or distribute public goods. The community arena retains primary importance to citizens who remain marginal to national institutions. Activity within the national arena is either added to or supplants communal activity as government becomes able to supply needed public goods. Communal activism may, however, remain or reappear even after national institutions become important.

Research cited above has depicted the impact of sociopolitical context upon participatory style. Numerous studies (Portes 1971, Dietz 1974, Seligson 1978, Booth et al. 1973, Booth 1975b, Cornelius 1973) link levels of community activism to service levels, pointing out that even highly modern urban groups engage in collective self-help when confronted by a service shortage that governmental agencies cannot or will not solve. Participatory style may therefore be

determined less by individual traditionalism or modernity than by the context in which the citizen lives.

Such findings have some potential import for our understanding of theories of political modernization (Deutsch 1961, Lerner 1958, Huntington 1968, Almond and Verba 1965). As noted, the political modernization literature emphasizes a transformation from nonparticipation to participation as *individuals* become subjectively modern (Portes 1973, 1974). But the reported studies stress *structural phenomena*—contextual determinants of participation—rather than individual differences in the ability or inclination of “traditional” and “modern” persons to take part. This in turn suggests that what has been taken for a *subjective* transformation of the individual—the apparent development of the “modern” attitudes of expanded participation—may be, rather, a process by which the individual simply reacts to structural changes in the environment. Thus modernization may not mean acquiring a new predisposition to participate, but simply perceiving that the national arena has potential utility. Some re-evaluation of the political implications of the process of individual modernization would thus seem useful. For instance, Almond and Verba’s contention that the “parochial” citizen “expects nothing from the political system” (1965, p. 17) may be accurate, but their affirmation that parochials are not participants does not square with evidence that even the most traditional and isolated rural communities often fairly hum with political activity. Parochial nonparticipation in national politics is probably a consequence of position in the social system, not a psychocultural attribute of certain individuals.

The possible discrepancies between mobilization and modernization theory and the available data call for considerable further information on both the long-term historical shifts of participation within the process of modernization and the contemporary determinants of participatory style. Thus, two major research needs stand out: the first requires the historical investigation of the various modes of participation from the colonial era of Latin America to the present, in order to provide a picture of past activity to compare with today’s; the second need is for comparative analysis for different social strata of the relative importance and determinants of the community-oriented versus the national system modes, to determine further why the differences in these behaviors occur.

#### *Reassessing Latin American Political Culture*

The substantial levels of peaceful, rational participation in Latin America point out the serious shortcomings of the traditional image of irrationality of mass political participation. This calls for two major undertakings: the first is a careful reanalysis of much of the literature on Latin American political culture. The too common assumption that such attributes as emotionalism, paternalism, parochialism, and machismo necessarily indicate political irrationality or preclude rational behavior must be reassessed considering the existing evidence of rational mass behavior patterns. “Such kinds of political behavior as patron-client relationships or withdrawal from overt political association, rather than being

indicators of underdevelopment . . . are, in fact, adaptive, rational and strategic political responses to structural conditions external to our actors in the polity at large" (Leeds and Leeds 1976, p. 201). A second need is for further investigation into the question of political rationality in complex contexts. The rationality of individual behavior should not be judged against a brittle, abstract notion of rationality, but against sophisticated models sensitive to the importance of the complex social environment.

#### *Context and the Structure of Participation*

We must also consider the ways in which the constitutional forms and practices affect how masses participate. We have seen that while authoritarian rule does indeed restrain or modify participation, it does so selectively, affecting different modes in different ways. For example, where elections are prohibited or parties proscribed, electoral modes of activity are obviously reduced, but without necessarily interfering with other forms of participation. Thus, in Peru, the military government suppresses parties and elections, but political organization, communication, contacting public officials, and community improvement activity constantly occur, often encouraged by the regime itself (Dietz 1974, Bourque and Palmer 1975, Collier 1975, Dietz and Palmer 1978, Woy 1978). For another example, in a revolutionary society such as Cuba, the *de facto* nature of the political system may modify participation so that communal and partisan activities blend and a local self-management mode emerges; such a pattern has been observed in Yugoslavia (Verba et al. 1973). Recent reports from Cuba (LeoGrande 1978, Domínguez 1976, González 1974, Fagen 1972, Zeitlin 1970) hint at just these sorts of developments with the creation of workers' councils and *Comités para la Defensa de la Revolución*. Further systematizing available data on contextual effects upon participation and additional comparative research are needed to illuminate how regime characteristics influence citizen action.

#### *Political Participation and Political Development*

One last area for which these findings imply a need for some reassessment concerns theories of political development, perhaps best exemplified in the work of Samuel Huntington (1968) and his collaboration with Joan Nelson (1976). Despite Huntington and Nelson's acknowledgement of the multidimensionality of political participation (1976, pp. 12–15), their analysis treats participation unidimensionally, as if the implications of all the varieties of action were essentially similar. As such, their discussion of models of political development implicitly assumes that all participation is essentially one of two sorts, either *redistributive*, leading governments to "redistribute income and wealth" (1976, p. 78), or *defensive*, to protect existing distributions.

However, the evidence presented here indicates clearly that efforts to influence the distribution of public goods do not always take either redistributive or defensive forms. An example may be helpful. Communal improvement activity essentially involves the expansion or creation of public goods, rather

than the reallocation or defense of a fixed amount of an existing public good. As such, efforts of communities to increase their own supply of public goods through communal expenditure adds to the economic development or capital infrastructure of a society in a manner neither defensive nor redistributive. Much such activity takes place independently of government, but many Latin American governments have recognized the utility of such participation and seek to encourage it.

These observations imply, therefore, that developmental theorists' treatment of political participation is incomplete. While they are essentially correct about the effects of the truly defensive and redistributive forms of political participation, their analysis fails to do justice to the true variety of citizen political action and its multiple implications. For such theory to become more complete, it must account more fully for the variety of arenas within which public goods are distributed, and for the differences in the nature and consequences of different modes of political action.<sup>8</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Throughout this essay, the evidence presented and the discussion of citizen action in Latin America have emphasized two basic themes. First, attention to the great variety of political participation is essential for an adequate understanding of the phenomenon itself and of the many intimately related issues such as political culture, political development, mobilization, and modernization. Analysis must not merely acknowledge this diversity but then subsequently ignore it by conceptually or statistically reaggregating dissimilar modes for further theorizing and research, as has been so common (e.g., Milbrath 1965, Huntington 1968, Verba and Nie 1972, Huntington and Nelson 1976, Milbrath and Goel 1977). And second, the sociopolitical environment has a major impact upon political participation, affecting the form, level, and significance of particular acts. Contextual variables as diverse as developmental infrastructure, regime type, constitution, and community provide the framework within which citizens weave the complex fabric of participation. Ultimately, further progress in understanding political activity and its meaning in Latin American nations will depend upon the extent to which future research remains sensitive to both the variety of participation and the complexity of its settings.

#### NOTES

1. Booth and Seligson (1978b) discuss each of these traditional images at length, presenting illustrative sources and citations.
2. See Seligson and Booth (1976, forthcoming-b) and Booth and Seligson (1978b) for other issues on political participation in Latin America.
3. For an extended discussion of the definition of political participation employed here, consult Booth and Seligson (1978a). See also Chaffee (1976, forthcoming).
4. For example, for elections see Lott (1957), Taylor (1960), Borricaud (1964), Gil and Parrish (1965), Martz (1967), Soares (1967), Parrish et al. (1967), Schmitt (1969), López Pintor (1969), McDonald (1971, 1972a, 1972b), Sinding (1972), Harkness and Pinzón

- de Lewin (1975), Isuani and Cervini (1975), Prothro and Chaparro (1975), and Valenzuela (1977). For political parties see: Taylor (1954), Fitzgibbon (1957), Alexander (1964, 1969), Martz (1964, 1972), Tugwell (1965), Horowitz (1965), Williams (1967), Ranis (1968), Burnett (1970), Petras (1970), Davies (1971), Mabry (1973), Ciria (1974), Chalmers (1974–75), North (1975), and Wellhofer (1975).
5. As noted elsewhere (Booth and Seligson 1978a, Biles 1978) discussing politics may or may not (depending on the intent of the actor and the consequences of the act) meet the criterion of attempting to influence the distribution of public goods that is central to the definition of political participation. However, since it is possible that such political communication is truly participatory, it will be included in subsequent discussion subject to this caveat.
  6. The term regime here is used broadly, connoting many factors including constitutional arrangement, leadership characteristics, party systems, systems of mass-elite linkage, etc.
  7. For citations and further items advanced by many students of Latin American political culture as evidence of irrationality, see Booth (1978, p. 99) and Booth and Seligson (1978a, p. 13).
  8. Seligson and Booth (forthcoming-a) discuss the issue of political development and political participation in more detail.

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