A Review on Political Participation

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Authors’ contributions

This is a collaborative work between both authors. Author DPH has made this review paper publishable with much modification of the contents and contexts. This manuscript was a part of a design of a research work that the father of the author DPH, quitted at his young age. Author SCP has revised the manuscript and made it submitted to the journal for publication.

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper tends to abridge all the theories on political participation in voting system as well as contributing to the government. Political participation is a mandatory choice needs to be analyzed as it is a choice that the state had imposed on its citizens though it centres round very significant factors. Political participation is a necessary ingredient of every political system. By involving many in the matters of the state, political participation fosters stability and order by reinforcing the legitimacy of political authority. This review article defines the political participation, participants, the necessity of participation, the social, political, economic as well as psychological state of affairs that influence citizens to participate. It also highlights the apathy behind not participating and the types and causes of political participation. Thus the paper tries to present a thorough picture of the issues behind the process of political participation.

Keywords: Politics; participation; citizen; State; voting; apathy; political will.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Man is by nature a political animal [1] and the state is a political organization. According to this concept every individual member of a state is a political being. And in the modern liberal democratic state, every citizen has certain political rights. So, he can use these rights through political activities. But what are these political activities? Woodward and Roper explained it as (1) voting at the polls; (2) supporting possible pressure groups by being a member of them; (3) personally communicating directly with the legislators; (4) participating in political activity and thus acquiring a claim on legislators and (5) engaging in habitual dissemination of political opinions through face to face communications with other citizens [2]. Agger and others remark that political activities constitute diverse forms of behaviour like voting, discussing public opinions, attending meeting concerned with community affairs, belonging to organizations and associations, taking an active part on some public issues or problems [3]. Lerner defines political participation as exposition, awareness, expression of opinion, participating in voting and other decision-making process [4]. With this thought in mind, political participation is that necessity for the state to make it functional as people participate through voting, or vote for participation. And the ultimate goal is to make a peaceful state by sharing all’s opinion.

2. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND ITS SCOPE

Usually people participate in politics through a political organization. Here organization serves as a vehicle for citizen’s participation. Once the individuals are entitled to be organized and to exercise the franchise, the door was open for him for political participation of all kinds. The most universal and perhaps the most important single type of citizen participation in government and politics is voting [5]. Lipset says that participation in politics includes leadership in national affairs, local leadership, acting as an organization member and informal "opinion leadership" among one's associates [6]. Political scientists use the term political participation for political awareness. Lerner defines political participation as exposition, awareness and expression of opinion; participation in voting and another decision-making process. According to the International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, political participation refers to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly in the formation of public policy. These activities typically include voting, seeking information, discussing public issues, attending meetings, contributing financially and communicating with representatives. The more "active" forms of participation include formal enrollment in a party, canvassing and registering voters, speech writing and speech-making, working in campaigns, and competing for public and party office [7].

Political participation is also a process through which political decisions are made. Participation influences policymakers. Some times it determines governmental policies Kousoulas spelled out that participation as an essential and indispensable element of democratic politics, which actually combines participation with representation. Through representation and citizen’s participation in the political process, the diverse views of the political community can and do become inputs into the decision making machinery. The key to realistic participation is the diffusion of power [8].

In earlier studies of political participation, the focus was on psephology, or the study of electoral behaviour. However, since 1960 the emergence and rise of political sociology have contributed not only to the study of conventional politics but to an unconventional form of political participation as well, such as protests, movements, revolutions, power and the like [9]. Similarly, Miller explained the unconventional participation as 'elite challenging' or 'protest' modes of participation such as demonstrations, strikes, damage of property and violence against people. He further, argued, perhaps surprisingly, that citizen tends to see at least some of these options as supplements rather than alternatives to voting, campaigning and lobbying. It has been described as 'democratic direct action', because it is in fact as much as part of conventional democratic activity. The author commented that there was a moderately sized positive correlation between supports for such participation (such as voting, electoral campaign and non-partisan lobbying) [10].

Usually, political participation is defined as the extent to which citizens avail themselves of these ordinary democratic rights of political activity to which they are constitutionally entitled and the measure was held by political sociologist to
indicate the nature of the country's political culture [11].

Now, we can define political participation as the political rights like other fundamental rights observed by the citizen as being a member of a democratic state. It includes any voluntary activity concerning a party or public issues like voting, campaigning, grouping, lobbying, influencing party or government officials in decision-making process directly or indirectly, holding party office, contributing or soliciting party fund, attending in political movements like protests, demonstrations, picketing and discussing public issues.

3. WHO PARTICIPATES

The right to participate in democratic politics is not exercised by all who possess it. The number of participants varies with time, place and circumstances. More people discuss politics than vote and many more vote than join parties or work in campaigns. The attentive public is distinctly a minority. As Bryce observed, only a small group gives constant attention to politics, a larger group is interested but comparatively passive while the masses are largely indifferent [12]. The recent ideal of peoples’ participation in government is best expressed in pure democracy in (the Swiss Landsgemeinden) Switzerland where every individual vote and otherwise shares directly in decision making. Switzerland had long been known as a country of genuine democratic participation. At present some of the Swiss Cantons elect their officials and pass laws in annual meetings (Landsgemeinden) instead of elected representatives. Meetings are held in the public square or in open fields near to capital city. No better evidence of complete citizen participation in government and politics can be found [13]. It refers to peoples' participation. By achieving universal suffrage in the twentieth century, the door is open to all participating politics. However, another example of peoples’ participation in government and politics in the United State has been the town meeting in New England [14].

The role of an average citizen is that they participate in the choice of decision-makers and they simply ask to be heard on an issue comes along that greatly concerns him or on which he can make some special contribution. Many citizens do not even vote or speak up on issues [15]. Verba, Nie and Kim have argued that there is a universal tendency for citizens with higher levels of ‘socio-economic’ resources to be more willing to participate in politics [16].

Theoretically, every citizen can participate and influence the political process, but in reality, there is an unequal degree of political participation and influence. Participation without power is more a characteristic of the poor and working classes, while power with or without participation is characteristic of the rich and upper classes [17].

4. WHY PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS

Political participation is a necessary ingredient of every political system. By involving many in the matters of the state, political participation fosters stability and order by reinforcing the legitimacy of political authority. A society in which a substantial part of the population is denied any participation whatsoever is likely to be highly explosive. This is why even in modern non-democratic political systems the idea of political participation seems to be well nurtured. The idea of participation, naturally, assumes greater importance in a democratic system, which indeed, demands it. The expansion of participation is stimulated by the desire to give meaning and force to the principles of consent, accountability and political opposition. Participation is the principal means by which consent is granted or withdrawn in a democracy and rulers are made accountable to the ruled. Since men can be equal and free only if they share in the determination of their affairs. It is a fundamental right of the people in the democratic process. People observe this right for many reasons. Graham Walls pointed out that men in politics are self-interested, which impulses men to be interested in the desire for property to excel [18]. Values also pursue men through political instruments. Lasswell explained these values as power, wealth, well-being, skill, enlightenment, affection, rectitude and respect. Men seek these values in politics [19].

Participation in policy-making at the local level tends to be specialized for most people in terms of the types of policies with which they concern themselves and in terms of the policy-making in which they act [20]. Lipset explains it as a general hypothesis for the greater changes in the structure of the society or organization, the governing group attempts to introduce, the more likely the leaders desire and even require a high level of participation by its citizens or members. High participation by members has a higher potential for democracy. Conversely, a society in
Future political acts and attitudes; and symbolizes policies; socializes the participant, influencing injecting demands into it; helps implement makers, either by controlling functions. It influences decisions or decision making processes. Participation may perform many forms of individual privacy and autonomy preserve in one of the few ways possible some mechanism. A defence mechanism it seeks to understand responsibilities, and broadens political participation be responsive to the interests of political groups.

Participation is an ingredient of every polity, large or small. Those who fail to participate, cannot exercise or share power. The right to participate is an essential element of democratic government, inseparable from each other attributes of democracy as consent, accountability, majority rule, equality, and majority sovereignty. Indeed, the growth of democratic government is in part measured by the extension of suffrage and the correlative rights to hold office and to associate for political purposes. Participation has been viewed as a means for realizing these democratic objectives as well.

From Aristotle to John Dewey, political philosophers have extolled popular participation as a source of validity and creative energy, as a defence against tyranny, and as a means of enacting the collective wisdom. By involving many in the affairs of the state, participation should promote stability and order; and by allowing everyone to express his own interests, it should secure the greatest good of the greatest number. The community should gain, furthermore, by drawing upon the talents and skills of the largest possible number of people. Some philosophers have claimed, also, that participation benefits the participants as well as the larger community. It empowers men by giving them a sense of their own dignity and value, alert both rulers and ruled to their duties and responsibilities, and broadens political understanding. It works as a defence mechanism. A defence mechanism it seeks to preserve in one of the few ways possible some form of individual privacy and autonomy.

Political participation may perform many functions. It influences decisions or decision-makers, either by controlling the processor injecting demands into it; helps implement policies; socializes the participant, influencing future political acts and attitudes; and symbolizes support for or identification with the community. The most fundamental character of any democratic system, truly its defining characteristic, is the idea that citizens should participate in some ways in the making of political decisions, either directly or through representatives of them.

The basic assumption behind people’s involvement is that a person should be able to have some knowledge about policy, about things that are done in the name of the public. Also in the representative system, people participation should help ensure that public officials are responsive to the changing needs and demands among the citizenry. Even, participation is expected to be good for people. If people participate in making decisions, their horizon may broaden, they may gain a feeling of social responsibility. They may become well-rounded, more complete individuals. Without public participation, the changes in social, political and economic fields are almost impossible and meaningless.

5. TYPES OF PARTICIPATION

The concept of people’s participation in politics can, perhaps, be traced from the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle gave a detailed account of Athenian direct democracy. In the Greek city-states, all free citizens were involved in politics. In Athens, all male citizens were given political rights and privileges. But Roman practice varied considerably from that of the small Greek city-state. Actual citizen participation in Roman government and politics was limited to the city of Rome. In the feudal period, it was difficult to trace individual participation. But the conditions of modern living have made it impractical as a method of government in most communities. In the citizen movement toward democracy conceived organization has served as a vehicle for citizen participation in politics and government. Through the Puritan revolt, French Revolution, American Revolution once the individual is entitled to franchise, the door was open to him for political participation of all kinds.

Besides the political party, there was a large number of organizations in the democratic states which enter the political arena when their interest was affected. Participation through these groups offers many citizens an opportunity to take part in government and politics. These include business group, women’s minority, labour, farm...
cooperatives, veterans, and professional groups [30].

Milbrath brings all political activities into three categories. These are: "gladiators activities", "transitional activities" and spectator activities". Gladiators represent a small number of party activists whose active association with parties keeps them engaged in a series of direct party activities like holding party offices, fighting elections as party candidates, raising party funds, attending party meetings and joining the party campaigns. In the purest sense of the word, probably only 1 or 2 per cent American could be called gladiators [31]. Transitional activities include attending party meetings as party supporters or party sympathizers or just as neutral but attentive listeners, making contributions to the party funds and coming in contact with public officials or party personnel. Spectator activities, on the other hand, include voting, influencing others to vote in a particular way, making and joining a political discussion, exposing one to political stimuli and wearing a button or showing a sticker [32].

Milbrath's classification tends to show that political participation is of two types - active and passive [33]. It may be classified in terms of its purpose as instrumental and expressive. Instrumental means it is essentially directed to the achievement of concrete goals but expressive does not aim at the realization of any concrete goal; it is concerned with some immediate satisfaction or a mere release of feeling.

Political demonstrations are considered a legitimate expression of political feelings in a democracy and are widely held. Persons who do not have ready access to decision-makers or who feel that system does not respond to their demands have quite a different perspective on protest demonstrations. The very extraordinary characters of demonstrations help get their message of dissatisfaction across the public as well as officials [34].

Seligson spelt out two types of political participation. One is individual participation and another is collective participation. As a collective, people can express their demands through either actions or threat of action [35]. Almond and Powell mentioned some other types of participation. They explained it in this way:

Nations offer different opportunities for legitimate participation for peoples and leaders. In all nations, there is an alternative form of political action, which may or may not be used. Most obvious and important is the possibility of coercion and violence, which are illegal except when used by the government, but which can be used by the citizens nonetheless. The appearance of widespread violence is usually a sign that the stability of the form of government itself is threatened.

Some forms of participation are legitimate in some nations, but not in others. A good example is the protest demonstrations. Peaceful protest demonstrations are legitimate in most democratic nations at least within certain bounds. They are usually an unconventional form of interest articulation, designed to publicize the demonstration feelings of injustice or concern and gain the attention of leaders of the public. In a study Almond and Powell show that over a thousand such demonstrations were counted in the United States between 1958 and 1967, reflecting both the relative (and increasing) legitimacy of the type of action and the great breadth of citizen discontent [36]. The number of such demonstrations increased tremendously from the previous decade. In other democracies, too, protest demonstration was common in the 1960s, to the point that they virtually became accepted as conventional rather than an unconventional form of political action. In authoritarian systems however, protest demonstrations were illegal and demonstrators severely punished.

They (authors) observed armed attacks made by individual citizens and, more usually, small terrorist groups against the government or political opponents. Such attacks were all too frequent in the United States also. Indeed in most of the industrial democracies peaceful protest was more common than violent attacks. In the late 1960s and 1970s peaceful protest became more common in France, also Nigeria, rapidly approaching the Civil War and the breakdown of civil authority, and India, torn by ethnic conflict over language and religion, all showed high levels of armed attacks.

In many nations, military groups attempted to move against the government. Coup attempts by the armed forces are usually associated with the breakdown of government. In Nigeria and Indonesia coups directly resulted in either civil war or massive retaliatory bloodshed. But in
many nations military forces have been able to take over the governmental power with relative ease and lack of opposition. In Western nations coups attempts were rather rare, because their political systems are more successful in managing conflict, keeping it with legitimate bounds. But in many poorer nations operating in problems and pressures, military coups are a frequent occurrence, often almost a last means of holding together a society collapsing society’ or a reflection of the loss of support of the more popular government. In some countries, there were repeated interventions by the armed forces [37].

5.1 Middle-range Participation

Middle range participants in local and national politics link the public to the top policymakers, mostly through the media and formal organizations. They constitute a good part of the well-informed and attentive political public. Such individuals may be leaders or members of radical student groups who want to change the political system; they may belong to civic action groups, which has recently proliferated or be functionaries in the political parties. But most are only intermittently recruited into active political roles on specific issues through their occupation or organizational affiliations. The middle range participants are mostly recruited from the extensively organized occupational groups, businessmen, farmer, skilled workers, and professional such as doctors, lawyers and teachers. These political actors exert little direct influence on policy making; on occasion, leaders to lend numerical support to the group on policy demands mobilize them. A few upper-middle range participant plays more active and sometimes more influential roles. These sub-elites usually hold one or more governmental or non-governmental positions that involve them in the articulation or aggregation of policy demands or in the recruitment of decision-makers. They may be party officials or civil servants whose task includes such activities but they may also be interest group functionaries, members of journalists who devote themselves primarily to nonpolitical matters. Essentially they play intervening roles linking leaders to followers and balancing demands from below with control from above [38].

5.2 Leading Participants

A few elected and appointed, co-opted and anointed leaders from the top layer in hierarchy of political influence and participation. As national and local decision makers they have more specific knowledge about the operation of the political system than another citizen.

The members of this top stratum can be divided into two types. They are manifest political leaders and latent political leaders. First, there are manifest political leaders occupying influential positions that involve continuous participation in policy processes. Secondly, there are latent political leaders holding positions calling for only intermittent participation, but involving considerable political influence.

Manifest leaders belong to the policy-making stratum of holding key positions of authority. They also include top civil servants; most decrees and laws promulgated by appointed rather than elected officials. Latent leaders include the top functionaries of the major parties. The latent leaders are less obviously and less constantly involved in public affairs. They include industrialists and bankers, employers and labor leaders, interest group leaders, mass media personalities and intellectuals. Mass support, financial resources, professional expertise, or a generally recognized status of moral or intellectual authority provide them with access to and varying amounts of influence over the manifest leaders [39].

5.3 Interest Groups’ Participation

On the other hand interest groups are more inclusive, more tightly organized, and occupy a more privileged position in policy processes. Some associations constitute elements of socio-economic and cultural continuity in a country marked by sharp political discontinuities. Law to represent certain common interests establishes some West German’s interest groups. Prime example are the occupational "chambers" unlike the American Chambers of commerce, these are semi-governmental organizations of public law that have jurisdiction over their member, and are supposed to be key sectors of the economy to the state. Most private producers engaged in agriculture, commerce and manufacturing as well as members of the so called free positions such as self employed physicians and lawyers must belong to appropriate local chambers, which determine and enforce occupational standards and conduct. The leading functionaries of these chambers not only represent their members in politics but also exercise a semipublic authority over them.
Other groups of political relevance may be more freely organized. These include traditional institutional groups explicitly endorsed and supported by the state as a host of voluntary associations formed to promote symbolic causes and material interest.

The greatest and most extensive political influence rests with the official and unofficial. The spokesmen of the large national organizations formal and informal inter-elite channels permit them to exert direct pressure on the leading party and government functionaries; at the same time, the major interest group elite can apply indirect pressure through influential opinion leaders and mass support [40].

6. VARIABLES OF PARTICIPATION

There is no such a thing as a free choice in politics. People’s preference are influenced and conditioned by the social and political context in which they live. Moreover, their political actions are distinct from their preferences. Political behavior depends upon the interaction between personal preferences and political context, since institutional incentives and constraints affect the translation of preferences into action.

Social scientists aim to develop general theories of human behavior that will account for as many relevant facts as possible with the smallest numbers of assumptions and explanatory variables. So far no general theory of participation even approaches this ideal. Participation appears to be a complex phenomenon that depends on a great many variables of different relative weights. This does not mean that no conceptual model can be employed to explain it. However, we discuss, in brief, the variables for political participation. For one can at least group the relevant independent variables into those influences which are essentially internal (psychological and cognitive) and those, which derive from the individual’s external environment, social and political [41].

6.1 Social Variables

The elements that compose the social environment include residence, family, sex, age, education, occupation, income, marriage, religion and mobility. Research in the United States shows that most of these variables correlate to some degree with participation. In general, participation tends to be higher among the better-educated, members of the higher occupational and income groups, the middle-aged, the dominant ethnic and religious groups, men (as opposed to women), settled residents, urban dwellers, and members of voluntary associations [42]. Social structure affects political behavior in two ways: it influences motivation (and the attitudes, goals and needs which are associated with it) and it influences the availability of means to pursue political ends. Social structure affects political behavior in two ways: it influences motivation (and the attitudes, goals and needs which are associated with it) and it influences the availability of means to pursue political ends [43]. Verba, Nie and Kim have argued that there is a universal tendency for citizens with higher levels of ‘socio-economic resources’ to be more willing to participate in politics [44]. By socio-economic resources they mean, primarily education and income. These resources provide the skills the stimulation and the capability to participate in many kinds of political activity.

Residence: Residence is an important factor in political participation. Those who are resident of a city or urban area they always get more scope to participate. Their higher educational level with their greater understanding of the political issues, their lesser physical costs of participation, their increased exposure to mass media, their more salient class and ethnic cleavages and their greater penchant for forming voluntary associations are likely to make politics a more significant aspect of their lives than those living in rural areas. Hence, urbanities will participate more than the rural folk [45]. Similarly a settled residence gets the social acceptance may not be possible for a new comer in society. People first coming into a community are likely to have fewer associational ties, less information on community affairs. Fewer political contacts and fewer emotional and material stakes in-group tensions that manifest themselves in politics. Hence, the longer a person resides in a given community the greater are the chances of his political participation. A newcomer is not normally allowed to hold a public office or a party office; he can have them only after he has lived for some time in an area or in a country and thus has given the evidence of settled residence [46].

Family: The family incubates political man. It endows him with the qualities necessary to operate a democratic system, which infuses him with the appropriate attitudes, and beliefs or it fails in these respects. Family makes the child feel his voice counts and people listen to him; that is, he acquires a junior version of a sense of political efficacy [47].
Sex: At every social level women vote less than men [48]. Participation is affected by the variable of sex. Extensive data from various countries like U.S.A., Great Britain, Italy, France, Germany, Mexico, Sweden, Norway and Japan confirm that men participate more than women who are more conservative, less liable to heterodoxy, less well-informed about political issues and public figures, less attentive to the diverse point of view and, therefore, have less interest in politics. Sometimes, women's major preoccupation with home and family may account for their low participation. Above all, women are more submissive to the general culture that usually emphasizes moral, dependent and politically less competent images of women, which, in effect, reduce their partisanship and sense of political efficacy and, thus fix for them a less active political role [49].

Age: The data from the U.S.A., Great Britain and France confirm, middle-aged persons tend to participate more than the too young and the too old. Lack of stability and security in the early age and also the relative inability to confront with a sustained zeal the various conflict situations naturally make the young rather evasive of participation. Similarly, the sense of political efficacy starts dropping sharply around the age of fifty when a person normally approaches retirement that, marking an end of his active life, saps his self-confidence and thereby affects the rate of his participation. On the other hand, life conditions of the middle age, including property ownership, increased family responsibilities, acceptance of group status and more homogeneous social environment tend to promote greater political participation [50]. Specially, the younger are much more inclined than the old to support demonstrations [51].

Education: The relevance of education to participation is obvious. Education gives greater information and expands the horizon of one's interest. The higher education expands political competence, self-confidence and artfulness. It also broadens one's sense of civic duty, interest and responsibility. Regular participation in the corporate life of educational institutions, further, enables one to develop a skill for political participation. Again, the more educated are likely to be quite capable of transmitting their political interest and knowledge to the next generation. Thus education received by one generation is not only relevant to its own participation; it as well may influence the extent of political participation by the next generation. Education has been found to be a persistent correlate of political participation in countries like the United States, Finland, Mexico, Britain, France and Italy [52]. G. M. Connelly and H.M. Field have found that similar levels of educational attainment may lead to different degrees of political participation because of difference of income [53]. J.M. Foskett, on the other hand, has found that participation differs more in case of persons with the same income but different levels of educational attainment than in case of those with different income but the same educational attainment. In other words, education no doubt, is an important explanatory variable of political participation, but the magnitude of its influence is liable to be limited by the working of other variables [54].

Occupation: People holding higher occupation usually reveal a greater willingness for participation. Occupation provides them with some distinct socio-economic milieu resulting in class identification. The very psychology of belonging to a particular social class affects a person's political participation [55].

Income: Higher socio-economic status (SES) is positively associated with increased likelihood of participation in many different political acts; higher SES persons are more likely to vote, attend meeting; join a party, campaign and so forth [56]. Political participation is equally influenced by the financial status. Higher income brings greater prosperity, more leisure, less anxiety and wider opportunities naturally makes people more active in politics. Thus the higher income groups are found to vote proportionately more frequently than those with lesser income [57].

Some critics think that low income persons are less well organized in groups than upper income persons; the bias of the stronger organized groups toward the status quo; the lack of competition among much of the news and opinion media, combined with the domination of television and the press by a few corporations; and the virtual monopoly of party politics by major parties, which do not always offer the voters meaningful alternatives. These changes may be exaggerated but they cannot be denied [58].

Marriage: Marriage, however, makes a difference. Thus, as Lipset reports, in Stavanger, a city in Norway, it was found in 1957 that, even within a low-voting working class ward, married
people voted more than the average. Married people participate more than the single person. Because marriage represents a more stable existence, ensure more homogenous ties in the community and reduces the chances of social and geographic mobility [59].

**Mobility:** Mobility affects political participation. It invariably reduces the extent to which an individual will be engaged in different forms of activities. Moreover, mobility is likely to subject an individual to ‘cross-pressures’—a phenomenon much emphasized by Lazarsfield, Beralson and Gaudet—which mean various pressures operating in opposite directions as when the various reference groups exert pressure on an individual in quite conflicting directions [60].

### 6.2 Political Variable

Much asserted but little is reliably known about the political correlates of participation. Political apathy is alleged to be affected by the size, remoteness and complexity of modern political system and, more specially by the frequency of elections, the number of offices to be filled, the length of ballot, and the necessity for observing and making decisions about two: local and national level and three branches (executive, legislature and judiciary) of government.

On the other hand, participation is highest among the very individuals who are most articulate and most capable of perceiving the ambiguities and complexities in the system [61].

The situational factors that predispose people toward political activity are not better understood than are the legal and institutional barriers to participation. The common belief is that great national or international crises awaken the impulse to participate. Turnout does not increase during the depression or the recession. In wartime, voting tends to decline rather than to rise- partly, however, because many young voters are away from home. The popularity of a candidate seems to have a weight for voter’s turnout [62].

In addition to the general variables touched on the party system, the nature of campaign, issues and ideology are three areas that shape participation in modern societies.

**The party system:** Of all political influences on participation, the party is probably the most potent. Its role is partly expressive and partly instrumental. The party resembles the nation both in its symbolic force and in its capacity for arousing affection, devotion and sacrifice on the party of its legal members. The party inspires its members feelings of belonging and, equally, of opposition to those in other parties. While membership in cognate social groups may strengthen party influence on participation, the party is a powerful reference group in its own right. Indeed, it may help to solidify attachments to other social groups. This mystic keeps large numbers of people persistently active even though they have only a slim chance of affecting the outcome of important public events.

The parties also perform a number of instrumental functions. Despite their many derelictions, the (American) parties contact and register voters, select candidates, organize the campaign, and tell supporters what to believe on issues and how to vote. Accordingly, people who affiliate with a party vote more often than those who do not; and those who are strongly attached are more active in discussions, listen to more speeches, and respond more positively to their party’s views than do those who are weakly attached. Again, these are correlates, and one cannot always be certain whether party affiliation causes participation or the reverse. Furthermore, even these co-relations are far from being perfect. Many voters have only a marginal preference for one party over the other, while many non-voters report strong party loyalties [63]. In France and some other European countries, party affiliation is less common than in the United States, but electoral turnout is higher [64].

Many students of politics believe that participation in the United States would be greater if the competition between parties were more intense that is, if they were more equally matched in the number of their adherents or more sharply divided in ideology. There is some empirical support for the belief that owing to greater incentives, turnout increases as the number of supporters of the competing parties becomes more equal [65]. But closeness of competition appears to exercise most of its effect on those with strong party identifications [66].

More debatable is the claim that greater ideological cleavage between parties increases participation. The argument rests principally on the assumption that those who see the parties as diverging are more likely to find the election important and will therefore be more strongly
motivated to work and vote for their party. The support for the hypothesis can be gleaned from several sets of findings: turnout in regular elections is almost invariably greater than turnout in primaries; votes in some countries with typically heavier turnouts than the United States (e.g., Norway) see their parties as more divergent ideologically than do Americans [67]. And within the United States, active party workers are more likely than ordinary citizens to regard the parties as differing sharply on issues [68]. But another set of observations can be adduced to support the opposite view. Many voters support their party without reference to the stand it takes on issues [69]. And only the minorities accurately perceive the degree of intellectual cleavage that already exists between the major American parties. In some countries with high turnout, such as France and Italy, voters do not see the parties so divergent ideologically. It is also possible that when party positions become polarized, some people will shrink from having to choose between extreme and unpalatable alternatives.

The campaign: The effort made by the parties to involve the electorate in the political contest is concentrated in the campaign itself. Something has been learned about the effects of campaigns on polarizing party attachments, reinforcing candidate is preferences, and switching votes [70]. But little is reliably known about the effects of different kinds of campaign techniques on participation. One can assume that even the most listless campaign will succeed in arousing some people who might not otherwise think of attending a political meeting, listening to a political speech, or carrying a banner. Such findings as we do, have suggest that the campaign chiefly reaches the faithful, crystallizing partisanship and reinforcing the intention that commit party adherents to vote and to persuade others to vote [71]. When the campaign ends, most of the participants revert to their relatively passive roles.

Some campaign techniques are most effective in stimulating citizen participation. All forms of persuasion and publicity probably have some effects, however minuscule. The most dramatic results, however, appear to be achieved through face-to-face communication with potential voters. This contact can be made formally, through designated party canvassers, or informally, through politically interested friends and opinion leaders [72]. The relative effectiveness of these communicators depends on their ability to command the attention of the people they seek to contact, to represent themselves as trustworthy sources of information, to enforce moral or psychological pressures, and to convey campaign messages in meaningful language [73].

The effect of the campaign on participation depends not only on campaign techniques but also on the popularity or charisma of the candidates. Intuitive or anecdotal data suggest that candidates with strong personal appeal can significantly increase the interest of typical non-participants and quicken the fervor and activity of party regulars. But in the few elections on which we have data, most voters were unable to discriminate clearly the personality attributes of the candidates [74].

Issues and ideology: A sizable body of research has shown that participation is associated with political awareness, that is, actual knowledge of political affairs. (Awareness, of course, is in turn highly correlated with interest.) As we have seen, the number of citizens who can be described as "aware" in any sophisticated sense is extremely small. As many as half or three-fourths of the electorate are unable to define terms common to ordinary political discourse-e.g., "monopoly," "plurality," "left," "right," "balanced budget" [75]. Many cannot identify the reference groups that speak for their interests, cannot classify themselves accurately as liberal or conservative, and can’t describe the differences between their party and that of the opposition. Striking as these findings are for the United States, they are even clearer for other countries where education and dissemination of public information are less widespread.

Awareness affects both the nature and the quality of participation. If the “unaware” participate at all, they tend to do so in a random, inconsistent way that may actually work against their own stated aims. Data indicate that the politically aware are usually better able to relate their social values to their political opinions; to achieve stable, internally consistent belief systems; and to comprehend and act upon the constitutional “rules of the game” [76].

Issues also play a role in participation. Although voters may lack knowledge of the array of issues being contested in a given election, some are strongly motivated by a single issue or class of issues that are for them particularly salient. For
some purposes, then, the electorate can be thought of as constituting "issue publics"—e.g., Negroes (civil rights), the elderly (Medicare), trade unionists (the closed shop), young men of draft age (the war in Vietnam), and so on. The activity generated within such publics by the surfacing of the appropriate issue may be critical both for the outcome of the election and for the adoption of government policies. But the self-testimony about the important issues can be deceptive: Although some people may actually be moved to vote by the issues they name as decisive—e.g., the Korean conflict in 1952—others may be motivated largely by their preference for a candidate and, when asked, merely name the issues stressed by him [77].

Evidence suggests that the party activists are more likely than ordinary voters to be aware of and motivated by issues. In the United States the active members of the two parties differ sharply on a wide range of issues, while their respective followers tend to agree on all but a few issues [78]. These disagreements in the issue outlook of party elites furnish motive force, help to define the parties' images, and determine whom the parties recruit and activate.

In principle, any issue can be a powerful stimulus to participation; in practice, some issues are so narrow, technical, or esoteric that they have little chance of capturing the interest of a large public. "Position" issues (the so-called bread-and-butter issues) are generally thought to have a better chance of interesting would-be voters than "style," or symbolic, issues [79]. Such position issues as social security, minimum wages, and Medicare are presumably easier to understand, even for the uneducated, and promise more tangible rewards. Style issues, such as civil liberties and many foreign policy questions, are presumably more complex and abstract and, hence, less compelling. Obviously there are important exceptions to these generalizations: for example, civil rights is for most Americans a style rather than a position issue, but during the 1960s it has probably inspired more activity than any other domestic issue.

There are severe limitations on the degree to which issues of any type can stimulate interest and participation among large segments of the population. The distance between the individual's behavior and the eventual reward (i.e., effective government action on the issue) is typically very great, and the reinforcement pattern is sporadic and uncertain. The wonder, then, is not that people do not participate, but that they do.

Political factors, thus, may cause participation rates to vary, but one must keep in mind that the over-all rate of participation for a given country in a given era tends to remain fairly stable and that changes in the rates of participation from one election to another are usually small. This suggests that the broad social and psychological predisposition earlier discussed set severe limitations on the play of political and situational elements [80].

The political variables in respect of participation are, no doubt, important; but it is apt to remember that, as far as participation is concerned, the same political variables are often found to produce different results and this so happens because the operation of the political variables is very much limited by the psychological and social variables.

6.3 Psychological Variables

Participation survives by virtue of its capacity to provide rewards for those who engage in it. Political observer throughout the ages have variously attributed man's political activity to his need for power, competition, achievement, affiliation, aggression, money, prestige, status, recognition, approval, manipulation, sympathy, responsibility, in short, to virtually every need that impels human behavior. Political participation gratifies certain needs that are not satisfied by other kinds of endeavor [81]. Similarly research shows that personality traits which are particularly influenced by social learning—such as dominance, social responsibility and self-confidence—are positively associated with political participation. It is not so much that these signs of ego strength are sufficient to inspire political participation, but the individuals who lack them more likely to avoid active involvement.

These psychological variables and specially the degree to which political participation is felt to be rewarding, are powerfully, mediated by the individuals reference groups. Many of the values and habits of participation are instilled by the family and sustained by peers and other primary groups [82]. Any such group for which politics is highly salient will reward its members for participation or punish them for nonparticipation by granting or withholding approval and affection. Intermediate groups as well as primary groups may help prepare their members for citizenship
by alerting them to their own interests, developing their social skill, and instructing them in the techniques of public activity. Membership in trade unions, service clubs, and other repeatedly voluntary associations has been found to correlate significantly with political participation [83]. Besides, Robert Lane argued that common political beliefs lay the groundwork for sharing equivalent emotions of anger, sympathy and distress; common interests improve the opportunities for small talk; common activities create bonds of friendship. Politics may offer to the lonely man to get new opportunities for association with others- the excuse may be politics; the need may be fear of isolation [84].

7. APATHY: ITS CAUSES

An individual is likely to be disinterested in his political participation if he strongly feels that it really makes no sense in as far as it will never be able to change the existing state of things. Robert A. Dahl explained that citizens who are pessimistic about their capacity to influence political events eschew politics on the ground that what they do won't matter anyway. Voters sometimes neglect to vote because they feel that one vote will not change the outcome; citizens often fail to press their views on public officials because they believe that public officials will not pay attention to people like themselves. In other words, the extent of a person's political participation is very much influenced by his sense of efficacy. This sense of political efficacy, on its part, is conditioned by a person's income, social standing, political experience, and also by the level of his educational attainment [85]. About one-third of the American adult population can be characterized as politically or passive; in most cases, they are unaware, literally, of the political part of the worlds around them. Another 60 per cent play largely spectator's roles in the political process; they watch, they cheer, they vote, but they do not do battle [86]. The apathetic ranks probably are even larger in strictly state and local elections; they are also larger in the American South. The five-nation study suggests that the apathetic ranks are also large in many other countries. They are especially large in Italy and Mexico. But Germany also had more apathetic than the United States and Great Britain [87].

When only a part of people participates in politics or most of the people is being apolitical, the government is likely to be directed as so to violate the interests of the people or non-participators. If apathy becomes widespread, power could easily be usurped and the quality of government seriously decline. If an issue in politics is not greatly concerns them or on which they can make no contribution they do not even vote or speak upon issues. They choose to be inactive as to fail to vote [88].

The term "apathy" refers to a state of withdrawal from, or indifference to those voluntary activities by which members of a society share in the selection of rulers and directly or indirectly formation of public policy. In other words political apathy is a political passivity.

In general two classes of apathetic individuals can be distinguished: Those who fail to participate out of political indifference, exclusion, or incapacity; and those who consciously choose not to participate. Although no precise information is available as to their frequency, the first type includes the habitual non-voter who has little knowledge of issues or candidates and mystified by political events. Rarely are they able to connect what happens "out there" with the events of their own lives. Apathy if this type abounds among the uneducated, the inarticulate, the parochial, the isolated, and those who occupy roles in which political passivity is perceived as the norm, e.g., women in political systems heavily dominated by men. As these findings signify, political participation is not "natural" but must be "learned"; and for learning to occur, one must have capacity, motivation, and opportunity. In some strata of the society, all three preconditions are missing [89].

The second class of apathetic, though small, is far more diverse. It includes those who disdain politics because it seems to them self-serving and corrupt. Some adopt this view as a projection of their own hostility or dissatisfaction with their own lives; others, out of misplace idealism and the inevitable disappointment with human imperfection; some, out of a generalized cynicism toward mankind and all his arguments; and some, merely because their prey to prevailing stereotypes. Still others are disenchanted either because the system serves them badly or because politics does not seem to them sufficiently "meaningful". Some – the "realists" – have to conclude that their chances of influencing the gigantic and remote political system are too slight to warrant the investment of time and energy. Others believe that the system offers no genuine alternatives and that all efforts to change the outcomes are idle and self-
8. CONCLUSION

A welfare, democratic as well as autocratic state- of which nature may it be- ensures participation either of the common mass or of the chosen elites. But the reality is that participation on the part of the citizen is a reality due to its mandatory nature to make the state fully operational. Various psychological, economic, sociological or social factors may pose barrier to mellifluous political participation. Along with this factors, the political actors sometimes create the environment in such a way people feel apathy and remain hibernated to participate in the affairs of state. The state is more citizen friendly that can ensure mass participation which is highlighted through the literature reviews on the papers, journals as well as the thoughts of the well reputed political thinkers.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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