Black
Students
in
Protest

A Study of the Origins of the
Black Student Movement

by

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Dedication
FOR AMY

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INTRODUCTION

All Americans owe them a debt for—if nothing else—releasing the idealism locked so long inside a nation that has not recently tasted the drama of social upheaval. And for making us look on the young people of the country with a new respect. Theirs was the silent generation until they spoke, the complacent generation until they marched and sang, the money-seeking generation until they renounced comfort and security to fight for justice in the dank and dangerous hamlets of the Black Belt (Zinn, 1965:2).

February 1, 1960, signalled the beginning of a long series of political demonstrations by black high school and college students throughout the United States. The demonstrations were unexpected for in the preceding decade people rarely expressed political opinions, much less political dissent. According to some observers, the 1950s was the end of ideology, and nowhere was the fact more evident than on college campuses all across the nation.\(^1\) The typical student of the period, in fact, seemed to have been fashioned after the model of the young corporate executive. “He kept his mouth shut and his eye on the main chance; he aspired only to perhaps a better place in the manner to which his father had so recently and with much sweat ascended” (Abrams, 1965:386).

\(^1\) The most frequently cited analysis of this phenomenon is found in Bell (1962), especially the epilogue to the book.

In this period of political and social apathy, the movement begun in February, 1960, by a few black students in Greensboro, North Carolina, was an historic moment in the struggles of Negroes for civil rights in America, and in American politics, as a whole. Although the bus boycotts in Montgomery and the school demonstrations in Little Rock had created stirrings among the black and white communities, the student protests provided a new impetus to the civil rights movement. Representatives from traditional civil rights groups such as the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) quickly came to the aid of the students. The sit-in demonstrations helped to initiate a new kind of civil rights campaign as well on the part of whites and blacks, one characterized by widespread nonviolent resistance ranging from sit-ins to jail-ins and wade-ins.

The black students’ first actions also had profound impact on the political and moral concerns of white students. In the North, soon after the sit-ins started, sympathetic demonstrations sprang up among white students at schools as diverse as Antioch College and Princeton University. Vassar College girls picketed for the first time in twenty years. White students at Southern schools participated in demonstrations and, out of sympathy with the problems of black Americans, organized themselves into the Southern Student Organizing Committee (SSOC). Four years after the first demonstrations in Greensboro, white students by the hundreds joined the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964. One white student, who decided to remain in Mississippi after the summer, wrote home to her parents:

There is a certainty, when you are working in Mississippi, that it is important for you to be alive doing just what you are doing. And whatever small bit we did for Mississippi this summer, Mississippi did ten times as much for us. Working there has given me clarity about what I want to be learning in college that three years in Widener Library could not give. . . . Now that I have helped people understand what it means to be a citizen in a democracy, I know things that I still have to understand . . . (Sutherland, 1965: 225-226).

White students, like their black counterparts, finally found themselves face-to-face with human beings and human miseries instead of dry textbook presentations of humanity.

In this book, we shall examine in detail the origins of the black student protest of the early 1960s. In this first chapter we discuss some of the different ways of interpreting its origins and provide a framework for analysis.

The Movement: Beginning and Development\(^2\)

On Sunday evening, January 31, 1960, four youths who attended the predominantly black North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in

\(^2\) The discussion in this section, unless otherwise specified is based upon the following: Newfield (1965), Zinn (1965), Lomax (1962), Politi (1960), and Sobel (1967). The Newfield and Zinn accounts, in particular, were most helpful sources of information and insight into the black students’ initial involvement.
Greensboro, North Carolina, were in their dormitory talking over some of their experiences of discrimination. For reasons of which no one will ever be certain, David Richmond, Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, and Ezell Blair, Jr., suddenly became "fed up." One of the youths said, "We've talked about it long enough; let's do something" (Pollitt, 1960:317). The next day, February 1st, about 4:30 in the afternoon, the four students went to the F. W. Woolworth store in downtown Greensboro, sat down at the lunch counter where only whites could be served, and requested four cups of coffee. Newfield reports the following conversation among the youths and the white waitress and manager:

"I'm sorry but we don't serve colored here," she informed them politely.

Franklin McCain responded, "I beg your pardon, but you just served me at a counter two feet away. Why is it that you serve me at that counter, and deny me at another? Why not stop serving me at all the counters?"

A few minutes later the manager of the store told the youths, "I'm sorry but we can't serve you because it is not the local custom" (1966:53).

The youths were not served coffee and remained in the store until it closed.

The next day, Tuesday, the four students were joined at the counter by about twenty other students from North Carolina A. & T. All were polite and well-dressed, but went unserved. Again on Wednesday and Thursday the sit-ins continued. By this time, students from another predominantly black school in the area, Bennett College, and the predominantly white women's college of the University of North Carolina joined the demonstrations. On Saturday, February 6th, the lunch counters at Woolworth and Kress stores in Greensboro became the first of many to be closed by reason of the presence of student demonstrators.

Although there had been sit-in demonstrations in the late 1950s, none had achieved so much publicity and captured the hearts and minds of students so quickly. Within two weeks, demonstrations spontaneously occurred in other North Carolina towns: in Durham on February 8th, Winston-Salem, Charlotte and Fayetteville on February 9th, in Raleigh on February 10th, in Elizabeth City and High Point on February 11th, and in Concord on February 12th, and all followed the pattern of the Greensboro demonstrations. In Raleigh, for example, students from the predominantly black schools, Shaw University and St. Augustine College, sat-in at the local dime stores. In High Point, high school students took up the banner at the local Woolworth's stores and were advised by several Negro ministers.

The sit-in demonstrations quickly spread to other states in the North and South. Black students initiated sit-ins and picketing in Hampton, Norfolk, Newport News, Portsmouth and Suffolk, Virginia; in Tallahassee and Deland, Florida; and in Nashville, Tennessee. In Nashville the students were instructed: "Do show yourself friendly on the counter at all times. Do sit straight and always face the counter. Don't strike back if attacked. Don't laugh out. Don't hold conversations. Don't block entrances" (Zinn, 1965:19-20). One of the students remembers:

That first sit-in was easy. . . . It was a Thursday afternoon and it was snowing. There were not many people downtown. Store personnel ran around nervously. . . . My friends were determined to be courteous and well-behaved. . . . Most of them read or studied while they sat at the counters, for three or four hours. I heard them remind each other not to leave cigarette ashes on the counter, to take off their hats. . . . (Zinn, 1965:19-20).

The first demonstration in the heart of Dixie happened in Montgomery, Alabama, three weeks after the Greensboro sit-in, when roughly thirty-five students from the all-black Alabama State College sat-in at the Montgomery County Courthouse.

Demonstrations among white students and faculty also were staged at several Northern colleges and universities. In New Haven, Connecticut, about 300 Yale Divinity School students marched in support of the Southern demonstrations. In Boston on March 26th almost 400 people, most of them white students from Harvard, Boston University, Brandeis University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, picketed Woolworth stores. And elsewhere in the North, at Princeton and Brown Universities, the City College of New York, and Oberlin and Antioch Colleges, other students similarly expressed their convictions.

Indeed, on all fronts the response of people to the student-inspired protests was overwhelming. Many white clergymen, politicians and labor representatives offered their support and urged the students to persevere with their demonstrations. Some went so far as to endorse the moral validity of the student protests. The liberal governor of Florida, LeRoy Collins, remarked, "I don't mind saying that if a man has a department store and trade, I think then it is unfair and morally wrong for him to single out one department, though, and say that he does not want or will not allow Negroes to patronize that one department" (Pollitt, 1960:321). Even those at the other end of the political spectrum were impressed with the conduct of the students. In an historic editorial, the pro-segregationist Richmond New Leader commented on February 22nd:

Many a Virginian must have felt a tinge of wry regret at the state of things as they are, in reading of Saturday's "sitdowns" by Negro students in Richmond stores. Here were the colored students, in coats, white shirts, ties and one of them was reading Goethe and one was taking notes from a biology text. And here, on the sidewalk, was a gang of white boys come to heckle, a ragtail rabble fit to kill, and some of them, God save the mark, were waving the proud and honored flag of the Southern states in the last war fought by gentlemen. Eheu! It gives one pause (1960).

The student demonstrations also had the effect of arousing the civil rights groups. Officials of CORE, contacted immediately after the first Greensboro demonstrations, sent staff members under the direction of Len Holt, to
Greensboro to train students in non-violent techniques of resistance. The leader of the recently formed Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Martin Luther King, Jr., came to Greensboro shortly after Holt's arrival and offered advice based upon his Montgomery experiences. King already had begun to establish himself as the spiritual inspiration of the students. "King was the patron saint of the students; they could read about Gandhi and Thoreau, but they could touch the hem of King's garment. More, Martin Luther King was a Negro" (Lomax, 1962:123). The NAACP, the most conservative of the civil rights organizations, provided legal and financial aid and its youth secretary came South to establish training schools for the students.

Even these first protests were not without their grim aspects. Violence broke out almost immediately, and arrests followed quickly. In High Point, North Carolina, on February 15th, several black students became involved in a fight with a group of whites. On February 16th in Portsmouth, Virginia, about 250 white and black high school youths fought in a department store after three of the black youths had unsuccessfully asked to be served at a lunch counter. Three of the Negroes were arrested. On February 23rd a riot almost occurred in Chattanooga, Tennessee, when Negroes and whites, most of whom were students, began to fight during a sit-in; eleven blacks and one white were arrested and another twenty persons were incarcerated the next day. In Houston on March 7th, Felton Turner, a black man, was abducted at gunpoint by four white youths who drove him to an empty field, beat him with a tire chain, and carved the letters “KKK”—for Ku Klux Klan—on his chest and stomach. Turner reported to police later that one of the youths claimed, "We were just hired to do a job because of the publicity Texas Southern University Negro students received over sit-ins at a lunch counter in Houston in the past few days" (Sobel, 1967:11).

Within a year and a half of the February 1st sit-in, the protest movement had involved tens of thousands of people. More than twenty states and almost 100 cities, most of which were in the South, had witnessed sit-ins, picketing or boycotts on the part of students and their sympathizers. According to the Southern Regional Council, at least 70,000 blacks and whites actively engaged in demonstrations and rallies. And more than 3500 people, for the most part black students, had been arrested (Southern Regional Conference, 1961).

The movement eventually produced tangible, positive results. The first desegregation of lunch counters in a major Southern city took place on March 16th in San Antonio, Texas, when four Negroes and a group of whites ate together. In Nashville, one month after the demonstrations began, a bus station cafe served coffee to two black students from Fisk University. In June a national chain restaurant and local variety and department store in Arlington, Virginia, became the first in the area to serve Negroes at their lunch counters. On July 25th lunch counters were finally desegregated at the site of the movement's origin—Greensboro. By the end of the year, the officers of four national chain stores, including those from F. W. Woolworth and S. H. Kress, were able to report that lunch counters in 150 of their stores located in 112 cities throughout the South had been opened to blacks and whites alike for the first time in history (Sobel, 1967:17).

The impact of the protests, however, was just beginning to be felt. In April, 1960, Ella Baker, executive secretary of the SCLC, arranged a conference on the campus of Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, for the purpose of coordinating the efforts of student participants in the protests. The meeting attracted almost 300 students from about forty different communities in which demonstrations had taken place. Among the participants were Julian Bond and John Lewis. Although the students had been called together under the auspices of the SCLC, many of them felt that the new movement was a product of their own making, which should be guided by an organization of their own design. Thus on the last day of the conference it was decided to create a temporary organization which would unite activities and facilitate communication. The organization, called the Temporary Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, consisted of students from each of the fifteen states represented by persons at the conference. At an October meeting in Atlanta, the organization was officially founded and named the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The students accepted a statement drafted by the Reverend James Lawson, a former student at Vanderbilt University who was expelled for his involvement in the civil rights efforts, which read:

We affirm the philosophical or religious ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the presupposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from Judeo-Christian traditions seeks a social order of justice permeated by love. Integration of human endeavor represents the crucial first step towards such a society.

Through nonviolence, courage displaces fear; love tranforms hate. Acceptance dissipates prejudice; hope ends despair. Peace dominates war; faith reconciles doubt. Mutual regard cancels enmity. Justice for all overthrows injustice. The redemptive community supersedes systems of gross social immorality.

Love is the central motif of nonviolence. Love is the force by which God binds man to himself and man to man. Such love goes to the extreme; it remains loving and forgiving even in the midst of hostility. It matches the capacity of evil to inflict suffering with an even more enduring capacity to absorb evil, all the while persisting in love.

By appealing to conscience and standing on the moral nature of human existence, nonviolence nurtures the atmosphere in which reconciliation and justice become actual possibilities (1960).

In the next few years, other actions helped establish the permanent role of the black student in the civil rights movement. On May 4, 1961, the first Freedom Rides took place. Under the inspiration and guidance of James Farmer, a newly-named director of CORE, an interracial non-student group left Washington, D.C., to ride by chartered bus to New
Orleans. The goal of the new tactic was to confront segregation in a direct and immediate fashion in the public facilities of bus stations. During the first trip the riders encountered various kinds of abuse. In Winboro, South Carolina, all were arrested and held several hours. Outside of Anniston, Alabama, several carloads of whites attempted to board the bus, and frustrated in the effort, one of the whites set fire to the bus, and twelve of the passengers had to be admitted to a nearby hospital for smoke inhalation. In Birmingham, Alabama, the riders were met by a large mob at the bus station, and three of them were severely beaten.

When the first Freedom Ride ended, on May 17th, four organizations decided to undertake similar ventures: CORE, the Nashville Student Movement, SNCC and SCLC. Both white and black students now began to join the rides. When the new riders reached Montgomery on May 20th, they experienced their most serious resistance: they were beaten, three of them critically. Ruby Joe Smith, a black student in the group recalled:

The mob turned from Zwerg to us. Someone yelled: “They’re about to get away.” Then they started beating everyone. I saw John Lewis beaten. blood coming out of his mouth. People were running from all over. Every one of the fellows was hit. Some of them tried to take refuge in the post office, but they were turned out... We saw some of the fellows on the ground, John Lewis lying there, blood streaming from his head...” (Zinn, 1965:48).

The Rides, however, eventually brought results. On November 1st, at the request of Attorney-General Robert F. Kennedy, the Interstate Commerce Commission issued rules prohibiting bussing and terminals from practicing discrimination and required them to display signs, stating that seating was to proceed “without regard to race, color, creed, or national origin” (Sobel, 1967:72).

Another major episode in the history of black students’ efforts in the civil rights movement began almost simultaneously with the establishment by Robert Parris Moses of the first grass-roots campaign to register black voters.

Moses, raised in Harlem and recipient of a Master’s degree in philosophy from Harvard, was attracted to the movement shortly after the Greensboro demonstrations. Of his efforts, Newfield writes: “It was probably the most creative and heroic single act anyone in the New Left has attempted” (1966:73). On August 7, 1961, Moses and two other members of the SNCC staff opened the doors of the first voter registration school in McComb, Mississippi. Within a short time, six of about twenty black volunteers managed to pass the test for voter registration. Soon afterward, Negroes in Amite County heard of these events and urged Moses to establish a school there. Meanwhile, several students had begun sit-in demonstrations in McComb and attracted more SNCC personnel to the area. The growing intensity of the campaigns quickly met with corresponding resistance from whites. In early September, Travis Britt, a volunteer SNCC worker from New York City, was beaten by a crowd of whites as he and Moses tried to get several Negroes registered. A few days later, John Hardy, a student from Nashville, was beaten as he helped two black men to register in Wallall County where he and another student had been conducting a registration school. The major blow in these days of fledgling efforts was the murder of a Negro farmer, Herbert Lee, who had participated in the registrations in Amite County.

In spite of such bitter experiences, the students spread out to other areas of Mississippi to set up more schools and encourage voters to register. In the summer of 1962, many of the students who had been together in McComb moved into the more remote sections of Mississippi. The registration campaign began in Greenwood and continued during the next year was the most intensive of all the efforts. Relatively few Negroes were registered during that time—the registrar claimed only six—but the principal result was the first mass effort to bring in aid from outside the state. When, in the fall, the county officials had stopped the distribution of surplus food, preventing many Negro residents from obtaining any food, Moses together with several others initiated a drive for relief from outside the state which eventually brought in all kinds of relief, including medical supplies, and led to an acceleration of the drive to register voters.

During 1963 the registration of Negro voters continued. In August of that year, many of the staff members of SNCC and black residents of Mississippi, with almost a quarter of a million other persons—black and white, rich and poor—went to Washington, D.C., to dramatize the demands of black people throughout the country. In possibly the most massive and diverse single gathering of demonstrators in Washington’s history, people assembled on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to hear speakers like Martin Luther King, Jr., articulate their dreams for a better America. The March on Washington, as it was called, captured national and international headlines, and the mood it created seemed to signal a comparatively quick end to the racial turmoil in the United States.

By the summer of 1964, many of the efforts in Mississippi reached a climax. The groundwork already had been laid by the black students. In addition, a number of grass-roots heroes, among them Fannie Lou Hamer, had emerged to aid the campaign to register voters. The Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 brought in hundreds of students, mostly white, from throughout the North. These young people traveled to various locations in the state and established Freedom Schools where they taught black children black history and American government and showed adults how to register to vote. They were joined by other volunteers—doctors, nurses, lawyers and others—who came during their vacations to offer whatever help they could.

The Mississippi summer had its high and low points. The most tragic event took place on June 21, 1964 when three young civil rights workers were reported missing. The three included James Chaney, an eighteen-year-old Negro from Meridian, Michael Schwerner, a twenty-five-year-old white CORE worker, and Andrew Goodman, a twenty-year-old white youth from New York, a recent arrival from a summer orientation session in Ohio. In early August their bodies were discovered in a grave near Philadelphia,
Mississippi. Schwerner and Goodman thereby became the first of several white Americans to lose their lives as a result of the modern civil rights movement.

The high point of the summer was the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, the first avowedly political grass-roots organization of blacks. Throughout the summer, the white students joined with the regular staff members of SNCC, CORE, and SCLC in registering people for the Freedom Convention. By the time of the statewide convention in August, almost 60,000 Negroes had been registered. Those who were elected as representatives went to Atlantic City where they confronted the Democratic Party with a clear choice: to accept either the members of the regular Democratic Party of Mississippi, which excluded the participation and representation of Negroes, or the slate of black and white representatives who were chosen by a careful democratic process. The Democratic Party offered a small concession—two seats—that eventually was rejected by the majority of the Freedom Democratic Party representatives. But the participants had made their point. Blacks could organize themselves as a viable political force. And they could, if necessary, become an effective group for independent political action.

In 1965, only one year after the Mississippi Summer Project, the Congress passed a Voting Rights Act designed to remove obstacles to the registration of the black residents of Mississippi and elsewhere in the South.

In the years since Greensboro, the civil rights movement and its youthful adherents experienced many triumphs and tragedies. The triumphs were several: the passage in 1964 of the most comprehensive civil rights legislation in United States history; the 1965 Voting Rights Act; and the treatment of the Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi delegates who challenged the 1968 Democratic Convention. Yet the tragedies were equal, if not greater in number: the murder of Medgar Evers in Mississippi in 1963; the murders of Jimmy Lee Jackson, Viola Liuzzo, Lemuel Penn and the Reverend James J. Reeb in Alabama in 1965; the slaying of Malcolm X in 1966; and the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968.

As the civil rights movement and the public's response to it has been transformed since that time, the nature and style of black students' participation also has changed. The most dramatic shift took place in the spring of 1966 when John Lewis was replaced as chairman of SNCC by Stokely Carmichael. Under Carmichael's leadership SNCC became much more militant as he and his aides began to preach black autonomy, black consciousness and black pride. The slogans themselves changed from "equal opportunities" to "black power." White liberals, previously a major source of support, were no longer encouraged—or inclined—to aid the blacks; rather, they were admonished by Carmichael to work in their own communities to eliminate racism. As early as 1962, Loren Miller had warned white liberals:

It would not be accurate to say that the direct actionists speak for all Negroes under all circumstances. It is fair to say that their philosophy is ascendent, that their influence is becoming pervasive and that their voices are heard with increasing respect and diminishing dissent in Negro communities. Those voices are harsh and stringent, and jarring to the liberal ear. Their message is plain: To liberals a fond farewell, with thanks for services rendered, until you are ready to reenlist as foot soldiers and subordinates in a Negro-led, Negro-officered army under the banner of Freedom Now (1962:238).

The new militancy not only led to the withdrawal of the white liberals, but it brought about the departure of many blacks active in SNCC and in other civil rights groups as well. Two of the most energetic and charismatic leaders in SNCC, Julian Bond and John Lewis, resigned soon after Carmichael's election. The field staff itself shrank from 200 in 1964 to 120 in 1966 (Newfield, 1966:104).

Other events also undercut the strength of the civil rights movement and with it, the involvement of black students. Since the passage in 1965 of the Voting Rights Act, Congress has been unable to pass additional comprehensive civil rights measures. White liberal politicians, accompanied by many white student activists, turned their attention from black civil rights to the wars abroad and poverty at home, problems neither of which show signs of yielding quickly to their efforts. With the election of a Republican president, Richard Nixon, in 1968 and the emergence of a strong right-wing American Independent Party under the command of George Wallace, the country as a whole also appeared to desire a postponement if not total abandonment of attempts to remedy the injustices perpetrated upon black Americans.

The romanticism and religious fervor of black students in the early days of the movement has since yielded place in many quarters to cynicism. Whether the ideals of justice and racial harmony will, or can, ever be recaptured by Negro youths to inspire the civil rights effort is difficult to predict. In this book, however, we shall try to revive some impression of these early moments of the movement as we examine the characteristics and motivation of the black student activists.

**The Origins of Student Protest: A Framework for Analysis**

The present study is a sociological rather than an historical treatment of the role of black college students in the civil rights movement. Accordingly, there are at least two distinctive characteristics of the procedures and methods of our research. First, we will not examine in detail the ebb and flow of events in the movement or biographical materials pertaining to prominent student leaders. Instead, we will determine the characteristic motivation of the typical black student protestor as well as the social and economic conditions that provoked him to protest. Second, the data for our analysis will consist principally of hundreds of black students' replies to survey questionnaires rather than, as in the case of historical analysis, newspaper documents and other primary sources. In the long run, a combination of both this and historical analysis probably will furnish us with the truest picture of the black students' participation in the civil rights movement.
Most sociologists and other social scientists who have studied contemporary student protests including the black student movement generally believe the protests emerge in response to several diverse sets of circumstances. The most comprehensive and balanced view is presented by the psychologist, Kenneth Keniston (1967), who argues that four sets of factors may act as predisposing conditions: personal background and values; educational and social setting; special cultural climate; and certain historical exigencies. In our study, we have been able to examine only three such principal sets of predisposing circumstances, these three being, in some sense, an elaboration of Keniston’s first two.

Review of Past Research

Most of the findings reported in this section refer to white student activists because there is very little research on black activists. We believe that the general framework we describe here is as applicable to black students as to white because, racial differences aside, they all are students, and as such, share many of the same experiences and outlooks. Recognizing, however, that racial differences are clearly important in understanding participation in protest, in subsequent chapters we will discuss hypotheses specifically designed to account for activism among black students.

The first important set of predisposing conditions is personal background and values. Investigators have examined the impact of such dimensions as social class, parental political belief, child-rearing techniques, and religious background and have found: first, that activists tend to come from middle-class rather than from lower-class environments (Block, et al., 1968; Braungart, 1966; Flacks, 1967; Lynons, 1965; Peterson, 1968; Selvin and Hagstrom, 1960; Watts and Whittaker, 1966; Westby and Braungart, 1966). This association of class with activism holds true of white and black students alike (Matthews and Prothro, 1966:419; Orbell, 1967:448; Sears and Williams, 1962:219). In particular, the parents of activists are better educated, have higher annual incomes, and hold jobs of higher prestige than parents of the non-activists. Moreover, the parents of white student activists are more often found to be politically liberal, e.g., liberal Democrats or Socialists, than are the parents of non-activists (Block, et al., 1968:215; Braungart, 1966:9; Flacks, 1967:66; Lynons, 1965:521; and Peterson, 1968:304). Nevertheless, although the students and their parents seem to agree on basic political principles, they disagree with respect to action: in effect, the students are willing to put into practice what their parents have only preached, as Solomon and Fishman (1964b), for instance, report of the students who participated in a peace demonstration in Washington, D.C., in 1962. One student, they report, said of his parents, “they agree with me in principle but not in method” (1964b:62).

In child-rearing, the parents of white student activists are apt to be permissive, egalitarian and child-oriented (Block, et al., 1968:218; Flacks, 1967:70-71; and Peterson, 1968:304). By and large, student activists also have been raised in stable and warm family environments, not in unstable, or so-called broken families (Aiken, et al., 1966:12; Block, et al., 1968:218; and Pinkney, 1968:54-59). Activists, too, are more likely to have been brought up in homes in which no particular religion is espoused or practiced (Flacks, 1967:65; Lipset and Altbach, 1967:221; Lynons, 1965:521; and Peterson, 1968:304); however, such religious affiliation as they do report is more often Jewish than Catholic or Protestant (Flacks, 1967:65; and Lipset and Altbach, 1967:221). And finally, the activists seem to possess a unique configuration of values including a sensitivity to aesthetic and emotional matters, a commitment to humanistic ideals, and a rejection of conventional morality (Flacks, 1967:69-70).

The second set of variables which may predispose students to play a part in protest activity is comprised of experiences and attitudes closely associated with attendance at college. Studies have been made of the influence of such things as year in college, membership in particular college subcultures, participation in extracurricular affairs at college, academic performance and career choice. These reveal, first of all, that a student’s year in college is directly related to his predisposition for and participation in protests (Matthews and Prothro, 1966:430; Newcomb, 1943; 1958:256; and Selvin and Hagstrom, 1960:70-72). Matthews and Prothro (1966), for example, found that among black students the juniors and seniors are more apt than freshmen and sophomores to favor and be active in the civil rights struggle. Student activists also are more likely than non-activists to be engaged in extracurricular events and affairs (Searles and Williams, 1962:219). As a corollary, some investigators have found that students who are leaders in campus groups are more likely than the others to hold liberal political views (Searles and Williams, 1962:220).

Student activists, furthermore, are more apt than non-activists to be involved in the intellectual subcultures on their campuses (Block, et al., 1968:215-216; Clark and Trow, 1966; Flacks, 1967:70; Heist, 1965:17; and Peterson, 1968:303-304). Flacks (1967), for instance, contrasting activists and non-activists, discovered that the former tend to place a great deal more emphasis on intellectual matters. Likewise, their academic records are characteristically superior (Bay, 1967:77; Block, et al., 1968:215; Heist, 1965:17; and Selvin and Hagstrom, 1960:65-66). And, in addition, an association between choice of career and activism has been uncovered by several studies: the student activists are the more apt to major in the social sciences or humanities (Matthews and Prothro, 1966:430; Peterson, 1968:303; Selvin and Hagstrom, 1960:66-67; and Solomon and Fishman, 1964b:57). Yet, as Lipset and Altbach (1967:222) caution, in the case of dimensions such as career choice, one must be particularly careful to distinguish the effect of the choice, itself, from the confounding influences of other variables, notably

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3 The literature discussed here includes studies of actual participation in protest groups like SDS or SNCC as well as studies which deal only with liberal or leftist attitudes. Since the attitudes or sympathies and participation are so closely related, we treat both under the topic of protest.
class background, which could determine choice as well as participation in protest.

The third and final set of conditions which we consider to be important influences on student protest are variations in college campus settings. Under this rubric we include such things as their size, quality, source of control and general community setting. Protests are more likely to occur in large schools, especially in the very largest institutions (Lazarsfeld and Thielens, 1958:128; Peterson, 1968:311; and Williamson and Cowan, 1966:262). Peterson (1968), for example, discovered that they are most likely to occur at the fifty largest educational institutions in the United States. Schools operated by private agencies also seem more prone to protest demonstrations than those operated by public bodies (Lazarsfeld and Thielens, 1958:181-184; Matthews and Prothro, 1966:426; Pace, 1966:89-90; Peterson, 1968:309, and Williamson and Cowan, 1966:262). And the quality of the school, as measured in terms of such indices as the faculty-student ratio and the size of the library seems to be positively correlated with the chances and severity of student activity (Lazarsfeld and Thielens, 1958:162-173; Matthews and Prothro, 1966:426; Orbell, 1967:448-450). Matthews and Prothro (1966), for instance, found that 54 percent of the black college students participate in the civil rights movement at schools of high quality as compared with only 21 percent at institutions of the lowest quality. Finally, protests may be more likely to take place at secular than at parochial institutions (Lazarsfeld and Thielens, 1958:128; Pace, 1966:89-90; and Williamson and Cowan, 1966:262).

In spite of the relative scarcity of empirical research about the relationship between student protest and the social setting of the college or university, two generalizations tentatively can be set forth regarding the efforts of black students. First, their demonstrations tend to be concentrated in urban rather than in rural settings (Matthews and Prothro, 1966:426; Oppenheimer, 1963; and Orbell, 1967:450). And secondly, protest among the black students is more extensive in counties with small percentages of black residents (Matthews and Prothro, 1966:426; Oppenheimer, 1963; and Orbell, 1967:450).

Organization of the Present Study

In the present study, we shall analyze several manifestations of each of the three sets of predisposing conditions to assess their influence on black students' protest.

In the first set, personal background and values, we shall examine dimensions similar to those already investigated, among them social class, birthplace, and choice of career. Chapters Three and Four, in particular, treat these various dimensions, adding more substantive detail to the statement of possible ways in which they may be associated with manifestations of student protest.

The second set, college experiences, examined in Chapter Five, is operationalized to include such things as the extent and kind of the students' involvement in extracurricular activities as well as their attitudes towards the college. And the third set, variations in college settings, which includes some variables like size of school, quality and source of control that have been studied by previous investigators, is analyzed in Chapter Six.

For the most part, the kind of hypotheses we shall examine is suggested by past results. For instance, in Chapter Six, we hypothesize that the black students' protest demonstrations, consistent with theoretical expectations and previous findings, would be more extensive in private than in public schools. In some instances, however, the impact of certain variables on student protest is not quite as clear cut as past research has claimed, so we have had to entertain alternative hypotheses. This circumstance arises, for example, in Chapter Four, in which we examine three competing hypotheses about the economic basis of the black students' demonstrations.

Finally, at the conclusion of this study, we shall be in a position to evaluate the cumulative as well as separate influence of each of the three principal sets of predisposing conditions on the likelihood of black students' protest. This will be a substantial gain over previous investigations of student protest, white and black alike, and will provide us with an opportunity to assess the applicability of this particular framework of analysis to future research.
THE STUDENTS AND THE SCHOOLS

The materials which form the basis of this book were collected as part of a study of the plans for graduate study of black and white college seniors, designed and executed by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in 1964. In April and May of that year, the NORC sent questionnaires to a representative sample of college seniors throughout the United States, including students of predominantly black senior colleges and universities. The latter sample provided us with the information for our analyses. In this chapter, we discuss the methods of selecting the sample, background characteristics of respondents, distinctive features of the predominantly black colleges and universities in the United States, and the measures of the blacks' participation in protest.

Selection of the Sample

The sample of students from the predominantly black institutions of higher education was chosen so as to represent the universe of those who received their bachelor's degrees in the spring of 1964. Two features of this definition bear brief elaboration. First of all, these schools enrolled white as well as black students, and investigators from the NORC anticipated that the former would account for a minor fraction of the student body. As it turned out, only about two percent of the respondents to the study were not black (inasmuch as we are interested only in black students, we have excluded the white respondents from our analyses). Secondly, the universe was defined as only those seniors who expected to receive their degrees in the spring convocation, ignoring those who graduated in the winter, a definition both practical and reasonable since over eighty percent of the seniors attending predominantly black schools received their degrees at the spring convocation.

In selecting the sample, the staff members of the NORC, aided by personnel from the Department of Labor, identified seventy-seven senior colleges and universities primarily attended by black students and, to determine the comprehensiveness of this universe, compared this list with one prepared independently by McGrath (1965). The McGrath list proved to include two schools not found in the NORC universe; however, since very few baccalaureate degrees were awarded by these institutions, investigators concluded that the NORC list of seventy-seven schools encompassed, for all intents and purposes, the universe of predominantly black colleges and universities in the United States.

The NORC staff employed a two-stage probability design to select a representative group of students from the predominantly black schools. They initially established a goal of fifty schools, with approximately 7,000 seniors. Schools then were selected using a modification of the method of probabilities proportionate to size (PPs) (Hansen, et al., 1953:341-345). In this case, size was stated in terms of the school's total number of graduates in spring, 1963. The fifteen largest predominantly black institutions were included in the sample with certainty. The thirty-five remaining schools were then selected by means of the general formula MA/A, where M = number of schools, A_i = size of the i-th school, and A = size of the aggregate population.

Once investigators had chosen the schools for the sample, they determined the sampling rate for students within each school by calculating the ratio of the overall sampling rate, .718, to the probability that the school was in the sample. Among institutions included with certainty, for instance, this meant that 71.8 percent of the graduating seniors were chosen randomly to be included in the sample. One hundred and seventeen seniors next were selected from each of the thirty-five remaining institutions. If, however, fewer than 117 seniors had graduated from one of these institutions in the preceding spring, then all seniors from that school were included in the sample and weighted so as to represent 117 cases. Eighteen of the fifty colleges and universities required weighting, the weights ranging from 1.1 to 3.2. Yet the ratio of the weighted to the unweighted was a fairly insignificant 1.11, indicating that the two groups were of roughly similar size.

Characteristics of Respondents

Although respondents to the NORC study constituted about one-third of all predominantly black college seniors who graduated in the spring of 1964, or roughly 3,500 students, the response rate was only 49 percent. In contrast,
the response rate to the nationwide study of 1964 was 74 percent. No conclusive evidence has been found to explain the lower rate among black seniors, but an investigation by Schultz (Fichter, 1966:Appendix I) suggests that a reason might have been the lengthier questionnaire administered to them. The low response rate probably accounts for certain biases in the characteristics of respondents. They were more apt to be women, to have higher grade-point averages, and to be majoring in areas such as the physical sciences and humanities. Nevertheless, the biases were similar to those in the nationwide study and, what is more important, there is no special reason to expect them to affect our study.

We have assembled two sets of comparisons (Tables II-1 and II-2), one of respondents with the black population as a whole, the other with participants in the NORC's 1964 nationwide survey of college seniors, the majority of whom were white, to provide the reader with some perspective on the distinctive features of our respondents.

| Table II-1 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Selected background characteristics of the 1964 Negro College sample, the Negro population, and the 1964 college senior sample |
| Characteristics | 1964 Negro College Sample Number Percent | Negro Population Number Percent | 1964 College Senior Sample Number Percent |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sex:** | | | | |
| Male | 1,208 35 | 642 a 46 b | 16,236 55 |
| Female | 2,215 65 | 743 54 | 13,143 45 |
| **Totals** | 3,423 e 100 | 1,385 100 | 29,379 100 |
| **Age:** | | | | |
| 21 | 1,258 38 | 14,272 49 |
| 22 | 926 28 | 8,286 28 |
| 23-24 | 662 20 | 3,353 12 |
| 25 or older | 493 15 | 3,206 11 |
| NA | 84 | 261 |
| **Totals** | 3,423 101 | 29,378 100 |
| **Marital Status:** | | | | |
| Single | 2,671 78 | 22,693 78 |
| Married | 732 22 | 6,262 22 |
| NA | 21 | 423 | |
| **Totals** | 3,424 100 | 29,378 100 |

**Size of Place:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Place</th>
<th>1964 College Sample</th>
<th>1964 College Senior Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>623 19</td>
<td>5,064 27 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town (non-suburban city)</td>
<td>1,199 37</td>
<td>2,550 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>464 14</td>
<td>1,555 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central City</td>
<td>985 30</td>
<td>9,702 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>3,423 100</td>
<td>18,871 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Region:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1964 College Sample</th>
<th>1964 College Senior Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>2,986 90</td>
<td>617 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-South</td>
<td>315 10</td>
<td>28,101 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>3,423 100</td>
<td>29,379 99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

* Census figures are given in hundreds of thousands.
* Weighted samples of Negro seniors and all college seniors are rounded off to the nearest whole number in every cell in both tables in this chapter. Variations in the number of cases are due to rounding in both tables in this chapter.
* Source: United States Bureau of the Census, _Current Population Reports, Table A, p. 1._

**Sex, Age and Residence**

Among the black seniors there were almost twice as many women as men. Even the most casual knowledge would lead one to suspect a disproportionate number of women in this group. Indeed, as compared with the entire Negro population in the age group, 20 to 24, females were over-represented at the predominantly black institutions: approximately 54 percent of the blacks who were 20 to 24 years old in 1964 were women, in comparison with 65 percent of the sample of black college seniors, and in a similar comparison with the 1964 nationwide sample of all college seniors the over-representation of females was confirmed. One possible explanation is the fact that many of the predominantly black colleges and universities were centered in the training of elementary and secondary-school teachers, fields in which women are generally over-represented. Another reason for the difference, of course, is that black women responded to the study in greater numbers than black men, although this would account for only a small portion of the disparity.

A fairly large proportion of the black college seniors were 22 years old or younger. However, on the average, they were somewhat older than other college seniors of 1964. Of the former, 35 percent were 23 years of age or older, compared with only 23 percent of the latter. Identical proportions, 22 percent, of both populations were married.
The residential background of the Negro college seniors differs in some interesting respects from that of the two groups with which we are comparing them. At the time of their high school graduation, circa 1959, many of the black college seniors lived in mainly rural or, more precisely, non-urban localities. At that time, 19 percent of the students resided in farm communities, and an additional 37 percent were living in towns not large enough to qualify as urban. Their mainly rural upbringing becomes evident in certain contrasts: in 1959, for example, 51 percent of the Negro population resided in central cities compared with only 30 percent of the black college seniors. Moreover, the black college seniors were much more likely than other seniors to have been raised in the South, as is evident in the last row of Table II-1. To some degree, these differences in residential patterns between the black college seniors and the other two groups reflect the fact that the predominantly black schools are found in places which are for the most part rural and Southern.

**Socio-Economic Status**

By comparison with the typical black family, the average black student's family was financially well off. The median income, for instance, of all

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>1964 Negro College Sample</th>
<th>1964 Negro Population</th>
<th>1964 College Senior Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Income (per year):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $3,000</td>
<td>1,054 32</td>
<td>43 a</td>
<td>1,050 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$3,000-$4,999</td>
<td>1,075 32</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,845 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5,000-$7,499</td>
<td>718 22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6,714 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$7,500 or more</td>
<td>451 14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17,460 62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>3,422 100</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>29,378 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Approx. median) (4,119)</td>
<td>(4,119)</td>
<td>(4,119)</td>
<td>(8,400)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Father's Education:      |                           |                       |                           |
| 8th grade or less        | 1,378 43                  | 62 b                  | 4,853 17                  |
| Some high school         | 700 22                    | 20                    | 4,038 14                  |
| High school grad.        | 551 17                    | 10                    | 6,848 24                  |
| College or more          | 608 19                    | 8                     | 13,290 46                 |
| NA                       | 35                        |                       | 349                       |
| DK                       | 152                       |                       |                           |
| Totals                   | 3,424 101                 | 100                   | 29,378 101                |


b Source: United States Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, No. 142. These data refer only to Negroes in the age group 45-54. Since there are good grounds for assuming that the parents of the students were between the ages of 45 and 54, inclusive, in 1964, the figures are limited to just this segment of the Negro population.

c Source: United States Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of the Population: 1960* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1964), Vol. I. This information refers only to Negro male heads of household, since the tabulations were only available for 1959, at which time the fathers of the Negro students would have been between the ages of 35 and 54, inclusive, at that time. For this reason, data from the two age groupings, 35-44 and 45-54, are shown.

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The educational background of the students' families follows similar patterns. First of all, although the fathers of the black seniors were better educated, on the average, than a somewhat comparable cohort of the black population, they compared less favorably with the fathers of other college
seniors. While 36 percent of the black college students were from families in which the father possessed at least a high school diploma, the corresponding figure for their counterparts was 70 percent.

In addition, the education of the mother of the average black student was distinctly superior to that of a similar group in the black population as a whole. Whereas about half of the students had mothers who were at least high school graduates, only one-fifth of Negro women in general, aged 45-54, were as well educated. Nonetheless, the parents of the black students do not make as good a showing as those of other college seniors: almost four of every ten of the largely white seniors were children of mothers who possessed some college education, while only slightly more than two of every ten among the black college students' mothers attained a comparable level of education.

The last clue to the socio-economic status of the black seniors comes from occupational data. Of the black seniors, 58 percent were raised in homes in which the chief wage earner was a skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled worker, 13 percent were from families in which the breadwinner was employed in a professional occupation, and 11 percent were the children of farmers or farm workers. In order to make the appropriate comparison with the black population, we made two assumptions, based in part on other information provided by the students. First, we assumed that most of the chief wage earners in the families of the black seniors were male, and second, that they were between the ages of 35 and 54. As shown in Table II-2, members of the younger of the two age cohorts in the black population as a whole, namely the cohort aged 35 to 44, were more likely to hold jobs with high levels of skill and prestige than those in the older cohort, aged 45 to 54. Yet even if we compare the occupations of this younger cohort with those of the black seniors' fathers, we find that the latter tended to hold still better jobs. For example, 40 percent of the black students were from homes in which the chief wage earner was employed as a professional, manager, sales clerk or skilled worker, compared with a corresponding figure of only 30 percent of black males in the group aged 35 to 44. In line with previous results, however, the breadwinner of the typical senior's family at other colleges held a better job than his counterpart among the black college students. In particular, three times as many of the other college seniors as black college seniors were from families in which the chief wage earner held a professional, managerial, sales or clerical position.

In sum: using three indices of socio-economic status—income, education, and occupation—we find the same portrait of the typical black college student: a relatively privileged individual in comparison with blacks in general, but a relatively poor one in comparison with his counterpart on other college campuses.

Characteristics of Predominantly Black Colleges and Universities

A monograph of the Institute of Higher Education (McGrath, 1965) reports that in 1965 there were eighty-five colleges and universities in the United States attended primarily by black students. Varying in enrollment in the academic year, 1963-64, from twelve to 6,288 students, they would not have been important had they not included a majority of the black college students. A rough estimate obtained from census figures shows that in 1960 approximately 100,000 students, most of whom were black, attended them—a figure which amounts to about 70 percent of the total number of Negro students in college or graduate school at the time (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1963). Other, more recent, estimates put the figure for the academic year, 1963-64, at 110,000, or almost 60 percent of the total number of black students (McGrath, 1965).1 In terms of mere enrollment, then, the predominantly black institutions were a major force shaping and moulding the lives of many young blacks in the 1960s.

An obvious feature of the predominantly black colleges and universities is their concentration in the South. In 1964 in only two states outside the South were there institutions of higher learning attended primarily by black students: Wilberforce University and Central State College in Ohio, Cheyney State College and Lincoln University in Pennsylvania. For a variety of reasons, but particularly since the Southern-born black students historically have been unable to afford to go elsewhere, they largely constitute the student bodies of these schools.

Quality of Education and Instruction

Black schools have had less to spend, on the average, for educational and general purposes than have other schools. For example, in the academic year 1959-60 Negro institutions spent about $888 per student in contrast to $1,334 spent in all other institutions of higher learning (McGrath, 1965: 26). Consequently, Negro students, by and large, have been denied certain educational and extracurricular advantages enjoyed by other students.

In the first place, the typical black institution has been limited in the education it offers, its degrees, and its curriculum. For instance, in the academic year, 1963-64, 18 percent of the primarily Negro schools offered Master of Arts or Doctor of Philosophy degrees, compared with 32 percent of all other institutions (McGrath, 1965:17; Bryant, 1960; and Brown, 1958). Moreover, the courses offered at Negro schools generally neglected the natural sciences in favor of the humanities, especially English (Bryant, 1960). Thus, 31 percent gave instruction in the natural sciences compared to 42 percent of all other colleges and universities, while 47 percent of the former and 26 percent of the latter provided courses in the humanities. The choice of major areas of interest presents a slightly different picture. Fichter (1966) found that among the Negro college seniors in the class of 1964, 46 percent majored in education, including elementary, secondary and other types, 6 percent in one of the social sciences, 8 percent in business, and 8 percent in the humanities. Education as a career, it should be remarked, has not only been the choice of many black students, but it has also been stressed at a number of black institutions, including teachers colleges, and other colleges and universities as well (Brazziel, 1960).

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1 The variation in the two proportions is probably a better indication of the difficulty of obtaining accurate figures on the Negro student enrollment than it is of trends toward integration of these student bodies, loss of students, or decline in the number of predominantly Negro schools.
In addition, there have been limitations upon the quality of instruction at primarily black institutions. In 1964, many of them found it necessary, for example, to provide remedial training for freshman and sophomore students. As a result, faculty members were required to teach additional hours, outside as well as inside the classroom. Salaries at the black institutions also have been lower, on the average, than those at other schools. McGrath (1965:113) indicates that the disparity between the salary of a full professor at a Negro senior institution and that of a full professor at some other senior institution was about $2,300 in 1964. For truly dedicated teachers this would be no problem. For most teachers, though, pressures of time and finances are so urgent that professional advancement and advancement may suffer. Consequently, faculty men and women who have taught at black schools have been generally less competent than their counterparts at many other institutions, a reflection of which being the fact that 30 percent of the faculty members at Negro institutions in 1964 held doctoral degrees as compared with 50 percent at other schools.

These and other inadequacies of the predominantly black schools have reduced the opportunities of the few blacks who have attained the so-called pinnacle of education in this country. In consequence, to have been a student in a black college or university has been to suffer many serious impediments to the advancement of one’s career, aside from those associated with simply being black.

**Public and Private Control**

Among the predominantly Negro institutions studied by McGrath in 1965, 72 were controlled by private foundations, such as churches, and 51 were under the jurisdiction of city, county, or state governments. The private schools are more numerous but the public colleges and universities have had larger enrollments. In the academic year, 1963-64, for instance, the private schools enrolled only 41,000 students compared to about 69,000 at public institutions (McGrath, 1965:21).

For a long time control at Negro schools, especially as revealed in the actions of the president, has been a constant source of controversy and derogation. The disparaging image of the private Negro college president, for instance, has been captured in this much-quoted passage in Ralph Ellison’s *The Invisible Man*:

> Negroes don’t control this school or much of anything else—haven’t you learned even that? No, sir, they don’t control this school, nor white folk either. True they support it, but I control it. It’s big and black and I say “yes, suh” as loudly as any hurr-head down here, I don’t care how much it appears otherwise. . . . The only ones I even pretend to please are the big white folk, and even those I control more than they control me. This is a power set-up, son, and I’m at the controls. . . . If there weren’t men like me running schools like this, there’d be no South. Nor North either. . . . The white folk tell everybody what to think—except men like me. I tell them; that’s my life, telling white folk how to think about the things I know about (1952:128-129).

Probably, there are sound reasons for such strongly authoritarian governance. For one thing, the person in the president’s chair must play the role of middle-man. Confronting issues like the civil rights of Negroes, the Negro college president naturally must decide whether to accede to demands for suppression from his superiors, or to encourage the protest of his fellow blacks. The problems he faced during the early phase of the civil rights movement were particularly urgent at the public schools. One writer reported at the time that:

> The sit-in demonstration usually involved a large segment of the student body. They were supported in sympathy by the faculty and community. These, and other factors, have brought the Negro presidents of the public institutions out into the open. . . . Throughout this period, students, faculty, and the Negro community were observing his every action and judging it in terms of which side he is supporting. It is unfortunate that in a few instances the students concluded that they were not only fighting the white power structure, but the college administration as well (Journal of Negro Education, 1961).

As we shall see in Chapter Six, salient dimensions of predominantly black institutions like this and others played an important role in the development of the black students’ demonstrations of protest.

**Measures of Civil Rights Participation and Activism**

In most of this analysis we use two indices of the involvement of students in the civil rights struggle. One index distinguishes between participation and non-participation, while the other separates leaders and activists from followers. We had hoped to analyze the correlates of involvement in various civil rights activities, but were unable to do so because of the limitations of the questionnaire. However, we were able to acquire a rough idea of the extent of student involvement in the diverse forms of activity.

Students were asked the following question: “What were the main activities of the (civil rights) movement on your campus?” (Since the question did not refer to the student’s own type of involvement, this information should be cautiously interpreted.) Table II-3 shows that most students claimed that boycotts and sit-ins were the major events on their campuses, corroborating other evidence (Broom and Glenn, 1965:65-80). Directly after inquiring into types of activity, we asked students to report their own role. With this information we developed our two measures of civil rights involvement (Table II-4). Approximately seven of every ten students claimed to be participants of one sort or another in the campus activities. The measure of their participation, as shown, uses all students as a base. The measure of activism, however, is based just on those students who claimed to be participants. These, because of the frequency distribution, were separated into two groups: (1) the 68 percent of participants who were inactive, and (2) the 32 percent who either were active or were leaders in the movement.

Naturally it is important to know if these percentage figures are reliable estimates of the proportions of students who participated and were active in
TABLE II-3

Answers to Question: "What were the main activities on your campus?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holding rallies</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public addresses by civil rights leader</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Freedom Rides</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in boycotts of segregated businesses</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>2,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit-ins in segregated public places</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund-raising for civil rights movement</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter registration campaigns</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marches on city hall</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in March on Washington movement</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total responses .......................................... 13,040

*NA: 125; total weighted N, 3,423. Variation in total sample size is due to rounding to nearest whole number in this and all other tables.

TABLE II-4

Answers to Question: "What was your personal role in these activities?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Responses:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very active participant</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not a very active participant</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-participant</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals                                             | 100     | 3,424  |

| Participation:                                    |         |        |
| Participant                                      | 69      | 2,197  |
| Non-participant                                  | 31      | 987    |

Totals                                             | 100     | 3,184  |

| Activism:                                         |         |        |
| Activist (leader or very active participant)      | 32      | 701    |
| Non-activist (less active participant)            | 68      | 1,496  |
| Not applicable (non-participant)                  |         | 987    |

Totals                                             | 100     | 3,184  |

The protests. Unfortunately, there is only one comparable empirical study of participation among black college students—that conducted by Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro (1966: Chapters 14 and 15), who drew a sample of 264 students from thirty different institutions in 1962, about two years before the present investigation. They discovered that 25 percent of the students had played an active role in the protests, another 14 percent belonged to a protest group without having played an active part, and 61 percent, the large majority, had done neither. Assuming a certain degree of comparability between questions, the major discrepancy in the results of the two studies is in the percentage of non-participants: 61 percent in the Matthews and Prothro study, and 31 percent in the NORC survey. The most likely reason for the disparity is that in the two years between the two studies about one-third more of the black students were caught up in the protest movement. Of course, it also is possible that our much larger sample of students and schools provided us with more reliable estimates of the percentages of participation and activism. Yet, although our research had the advantage in the larger sample, their investigation was more representative of the black college population, for it included students from freshmen to seniors. Thus, aside from the difference in date, the two studies may be equally representative of Negro students in the early 1960s.

These issues notwithstanding, one still must wonder whether figures of 39 percent in 1962 and almost 70 percent in 1964 can be regarded as accurate estimates of the percentages of black students who actually took part in the civil rights movement during the early 1960s. Unfortunately, no one will ever be able to settle this matter. Certainly, both proportions are a tremendous increase over the small number who actually were involved in the first sit-ins in 1960 as reported by newspaper accounts. But because of the large number of demonstrations from 1960 to the end of 1964—which increased the likelihood that any single individual might have participated in at least one demonstration—we probably are safe in assuming that the Matthews and Prothro estimate of 1962 as well as the NORC's estimate of overall student participation, activism, and non-participation in 1964 are roughly accurate. If they are in error, like the survey estimates of voting, it is probably in slightly inflating the number of participants or activists.
In this chapter, we shall direct our attention to certain pre-college environments and experiences that may motivate black students to participate in demonstrations of protest.

The Family

Of the several primary groups to which the student belongs before entering college, the one exercising the most permanent influence on his behavior is the family. Almond and Verba (1965:284-286), for example, conclude that individuals who enjoyed the opportunity to participate in family decisions as children are more apt than others to feel politically competent as adults. Studies of voting in the United States have found a striking effect of the family on political behavior. Thus Hyman (1959:74) reports that the party preference of parents explains about 80 percent of the variation in the party preference of young adults. In presenting one example of this correlation in the 1944 election in Elmira, New York, the authors of Voting argue that, "To the extent that parents bring up children in a 'one-party' climate of opinion . . . that environment provides strong pressures toward the perpetuation of political uniformities from one generation to the next" (Berelson, et al., 1954:93).

Socio-Economic Status

Although the precise links between a family's socio-economic status (SES) and the politics of its offspring are as yet unknown, the divergence in child-rearing techniques among families of various classes seems to hold the most promising clues. As a rule, families vary by social class in the extent to which they allow their children social as well as psychological independence, which, presumably, is subsequently transferred to behavior in the political arena. Maas observes that:

in the lower class, (there is) a psychologically closed, hierarchical and quite rigid parental relationship with children; in the core (middle-class) culture a more open, ostensibly equalitarian and flexible relationship. Lower-class parents are repeatedly seen as closed or inaccessible to the child's communications . . . In the (middle-class) culture . . . parents appear to be open to the child's gaining say over parental requests. . . Socially, (parents) invite (the child) to share their activities. . . Psychologically, he seems free to express more positive and negative feelings toward his more . . adaptable parents (1951:147).

Maas' portrait is confirmed by Psathas (1957) who finds that adolescent males from middle-class families are probably more encouraged to be independent in family discussions than their counterparts from lower-class families. Likewise, Almond and Verba (1965) discover a positive association between SES and children's participation in family discussions.

Somewhat related to these results is the observation that child-rearing techniques of middle-class parents will be more likely than those of lower-class parents to foster self-direction and high motivation to achieve. Kohn suggests:
Much of what the working class values, (the middle class) takes for granted. (The middle class) can—and must—instill in their children a degree of self-direction that would be less appropriate to the conditions of life of the working class ... relative to the working class, middle-class conditions of life require a substantial degree of independence of action (1963:477).

And Rosen (1959) presents evidence that the achievement syndrome, comprised of achievement motivation, values, and levels of aspiration, is more characteristic of children raised in middle-class environments than of those from lower-class settings.

Middle-class children, in addition, are more likely to acquire the habits and interests necessary for political activity than are lower-class children. A study by Macdonald, McGuire, and Havigurst (1949) shows that middle-class children have more varied and active daily routines than do lower-class children. Moreover, children brought up in middle-class homes are the more likely to participate in community activities, such as the Y.M.C.A. and the Boy Scouts. Middle-class children's reading interests are likely to differ markedly from those of lower-class children as to their emphasis on community and civic events (Harris, et al., 1932:320-326). And Greenstein's innovative study of school children in New Haven (1965: 85-106), uncovers substantially greater political alertness among children raised in middle-class homes.

Generally speaking, then, the environment of the middle-class family is more likely to produce children who are self-directed, democratically oriented and politically aware than is the setting of the lower- or working-class family. It is not at all surprising to find that some empirical studies show the activist white students as more likely to be middle-class rather than lower-class (Flacks, 1967; Block, et al., 1968; Westby and Braungart, 1966).

In order to discover the consequences upon black student protest of socioeconomic differences, we used two separate measures of the SES of black seniors: father's education and annual family income. Table III-1 presents these data, cross-tabulated by participation in protest and activism. In contrast to previous research, we find almost no difference at all between the chances that middle-class and lower-class black youth would participate in demonstrations. Examination of the impact of father's education on activism is even more revealing. Students from middle- and lower-class families were equally likely to be active on the campus in the civil rights struggle.

The data assembled in Table III-2 likewise show very slight effects of socio-economic status on the students' participation and activism: 74 per-

---

**Table III-1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Education</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate or Higher</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,922)</td>
<td>(1,340)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School or Lower</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,098)</td>
<td>(785)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Table III-2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Income</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$5,000 or more</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,116)</td>
<td>(830)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $5,000</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,966)</td>
<td>(1,358)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Weighted N, 3,082; NA Income, 107; NA Participation, 213; NA Both, 21; Total weighted N, 3,423.

*Weighted N, 2,188; NA Income, 107; NA Activism, 213; Activism not applicable, 894; NA Both, 21; Total weighted N, 3,423.

---

cent of the students from fairly prosperous homes were participants, compared with an almost equal proportion, 69 percent, of the students from less prosperous families. Similarly, the impact of family income on student activism was insignificant.

---

**Family Stability**

Investigations into political attitudes in early socialization deal, in part, with the nature of authority in the family. The child's image of authority, in particular, of political authority, seems to be implanted by early experiences with male and female authority figures. Among young children, Easton and Hess write:

In the first place, children display a strong tendency to generalize attitudes developed in connection with authority beyond their knowledge and direct contact... The child not only learns to respect and admire political authorities, but with regard to many characteristics sees them as parents writ large (1962:242).

---

Social-psychological literature suggests that there may be divergent psychological consequences for children who lack either one or both parental authority figures. On the one hand, such children are more apt than others to be acquiescent, immature and little motivated to achieve. In particular, boys who grow up in fatherless homes are likely to be unable to identify themselves with the masculine role-model (Mischel, 1961a and 1961b). On the other hand, there are signs that boys raised in broken families may develop a strong need for dominance and power during their adolescence and thus may turn to political activity (Pettigrew, 1964:19-20).
Despite these indications, however, the available data present the student activists as coming from stable family settings. In his study at the University of Chicago, Flacks (1967:70-71) reports that the activists were reared by parents who encouraged communication and warm, personal relations. A study of students who engaged in the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in 1964 reveals a somewhat similar situation (Block et al., 1968:218). And, in a review of some of the research on activism among students, Block, Haan, and Smith observe: “Perhaps because they were reared in child-centered homes where communication and understanding were important, (the student activists) value dialogue and expect that social institutions, like their parents, will listen and be responsive to their concerns” (1968:219; and also see Pinkney, 1968; Chapter 3).

In order to determine the effect of family stability on civil rights activity among the black seniors, let us first look at the association between respondents’ reports of parental desertion during their childhood and their involvement in protest (Table III-3). Here again the data run counter to the trend of the prevailing findings of research, for we find only a five percentage-point difference between the rates of participation of children who reported deserting parents and those who did not. Likewise, the difference in terms of activism rates is small.

Two other items of information enable us to assess in greater depth the part played by family stability. One is the sex of the head of the household. On the basis of the earlier research, we would anticipate that students, especially boys, brought up in the families in which the chief wage earners were women, would exhibit rates of participation differing from those of students raised in homes headed by males. The other variable is the divorce or separation of parents before the students reach the age of sixteen, for we would also expect that if they were reared in broken families they would exhibit rates of participation which differ from the rates of students from intact families.

### Table III-3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Desertion</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(325)</td>
<td>(216)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2,469)</td>
<td>(1,762)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* a Weighted N, 2,794; NA Participation, 173; NA Parental Desertion, 394; NA Both, 62; Total weighted N, 3,424.

b Weighted N, 1,978; NA Activism, 173; Not Applicable, Activism, 816; NA Parental Desertion, 256; NA Both, 62; NA Parental Desertion, Not Applicable, Activism, 138; Total weighted N, 3,423.

In Table III-4, we present data to test these hypotheses. Contrary to expectation, both male and female students raised in families headed by women were less likely to participate in protest than their counterparts reared in male-headed families. But the percentage differences are not large: among the male students, for instance, a six percentage-point difference in favor of greater participation by students raised in homes with male heads. Likewise, students from intact families were more apt to be protesters than those from families characterized by divorce or separation.

In the association of activism and family stability there is one interesting albeit small reversal of the above patterns: students who were brought up in female-headed families were more likely to be activists than those raised where the heads are male (Table III-5). Students reared in intact homes, however, were more apt to be activists than those brought up in broken homes.

In contrast to our expectations, the stability of the black family has only a minor effect on the black students’ participation in protest. And even if we had chosen a more lenient yardstick when interpreting the percentage difference, our findings would still run counter to certain theories since they show that the students from intact families were the more apt to be both participants and activists in the demonstrations.

### Political Participation: Sex-Roles

Empirical studies reveal that men are for the most part more active, interested and liberal in politics than women. Among adults, the difference between the two sexes is very clear. The authors of *The People's Choice* found in 1948 that women were less likely than men to vote, partly because...
TABLE III-5
Sex of student, sex of head of household, type of household and civil rights participation (Percent participating)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of household</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(718)</td>
<td>(1,107)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(156)</td>
<td>(254)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents separated or divorced</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(156)</td>
<td>(688)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(207)</td>
<td>(1,118)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Weighted N, 2,235; NA Activism, 234; Activism not applicable, 954; Total weighted N, 3,423.

b Weighted N, 1,216; NA Activism, 213; NA Parents, 64; Activism not applicable, 931; NA Both, 22; NA Parents and Activism not applicable, 25; Total weighted N, 3,424.

they were less concerned over political matters (Lazarsfeld, et al., 1948). The same conclusion was reached again in 1960 by Campbell and his co-investigators, who comment that the difference between men and women in voting turnout is due to a difference in what they term "belief in personal efficacy":

Its weakness among women returns us directly to the question of sex roles. . . . The man is expected to be dominant in action directed toward the world outside the family: the woman is to accept his leadership passively (1960:490).

The six-nation study by Almond and Verba (1965:387-397), moreover, demonstrates that the differences in political behavior between men and women range far beyond simple variation in turning out to vote. They found that women in the United States rank lower than men in terms of subjective political competence, political awareness and political knowledge, are more competent only in matters pertaining to the local community, and are usually more reluctant than men to accept social change or innovation.

Although it might seem that these sex differences are the product of the differing demands of adult roles, substantial evidence shows that the variation appears very early in life. Greenstein (1965), for example, found that as early as the fourth grade boys are likely to exhibit greater awareness and interest in political issues than girls. He also discovered that boys are more likely than girls to know about political leaders, to propose hypothetical changes in the world that are "political," and to cite items with political reference from the newspaper (Greenstein, 1965:117). Comparable results had been uncovered in a study conducted in 1932 of differences in children's reading interests (Johnson, 1932). And, in addition, studies in the 1920s and early 1930s present boys as more likely to identify themselves as liberal than girls (Harris, et al., 1932:334).

Accordingly, we anticipated discovering that the black male students would be disproportionately represented among the participants and activists in campus protest. Consistent with our expectations, we found the male students are more likely to be participants than the females, the percentage difference being of the magnitude of ten percentage points (Table III-6). The difference in activism between the two sexes parallels that in participation, but is not as pronounced.

TABLE III-6
Civil rights participation and activism, by sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,142)</td>
<td>(868)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2,047)</td>
<td>(1,371)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Weighted N, 3,189; NA Participation, 234; Total weighted N, 3,423.
b Weighted N, 2,239; NA Activism, 234; Activism not applicable, 950; Total weighted N, 3,424.

Political Socialization: Region and Community

Throughout most of American history, blacks have had a larger share in the social, economic and political affairs of the North than of the South. Until twenty or thirty years ago, Negroes in the South were unable to penetrate the barriers to occupational advancement in large numbers and were far less able, for instance, to develop their own business enterprises than their counterparts in other parts of the country (Broom and Glenn, 1965). In the 1950s Southern Negroes faced profound legal and extra-legal obstacles to participation in elections, but during the same period their Northern counterparts turned out in great numbers to vote (Glanitz, 1960). And there was greater resistance to the integrating of schools and public facilities in the South.

These institutional handicaps, of course, have brought about substantial differences between the political orientation of blacks who live in the South and of those who reside elsewhere. In the examination of survey data collected for the Almond and Verba study, Marvick (1967: 42-45) found that Negroes in the South were far less likely than those elsewhere to expect legal authorities to treat them fairly and government to respond to their appeals for aid.

Held back by his situation in the social structure and perhaps influenced by the political orientation of his elders, we would expect that the black student from the South would exhibit lower rates of participation and activism in protest than would his Northern colleagues. But, instead, we discovered the rates to be almost identical (Table III-7).
Table III-7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Participation *</th>
<th>Activism b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North (including Northeast, Midwest, West)</td>
<td>73% (306)</td>
<td>31% (220)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>70% (2,786)</td>
<td>31% (1,950)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Weighted N, 3,092; NA Participation, 210; All other regions, 97; NA Participation and other regions, 25; Total weighted N, 3,424.

b Weighted N, 2,170; NA Activism, 210; All other regions, 97; NA Activism and other regions, 25; Activism not applicable, 922; Total weighted N, 3,424.

The nature of the community setting, like that of the region, would seem to influence students' propensities to participate in protest. As James Farmer (1966), one of the founders of the Congress of Racial Equality, suggests, the black revolution of the 1960s was an integral part of the urban revolution of that era. Beside the more plentiful opportunities which they offer blacks, urban conditions like high density and widespread communication may enable blacks easily to become aware of their discontent. In addition, organization for political goals seems to be more effective among urban than among rural Negroes (Glantz, 1960:1005-1006). Yet, however unlike the lives of Negroes in urban and rural conditions may be, the differences do not influence the participation and activism of the black students: seventy-two percent of those who grew up in farm areas, for example, were participants, compared with 70 percent of those brought up in the core cities (Table III-8).

Table III-8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Place</th>
<th>Participation *</th>
<th>Activism b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>72% (556)</td>
<td>32% (400)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-suburban city</td>
<td>69% (1,117)</td>
<td>33% (771)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>71% (438)</td>
<td>27% (311)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central city</td>
<td>70% (951)</td>
<td>30% (666)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Weighted N, 3,062; NA Size, 127; NA Participation, 208; NA Both, 25; Total weighted N, 3,423.

b Weighted N, 2,148; NA Size, 127; NA Activism, 209; Activism not applicable, 914; NA Both, 25; Total weighted N, 3,423.

Summary

Contrary to some observers, we found that certain pre-college dimensions of political socialization, and particularly, some attributes of the family contradict the thrust of much previous research on their impact on the black student protest.

First of all, the family's socio-economic status bears virtually no relationship to participation or activism; family stability is only slightly associated with participation; and, in contrast to the findings of certain research workers, students from stable homes were more prone to be participants than those from broken families. Moreover, as a parallel to the usual differences found between men and women, black male students were more likely than the black females to be participants and activists. Finally, neither the region nor the type of community in which students grew up had any appreciable influence on the likelihood of their participation and activism.
THE ECONOMIC ROOTS OF PROTEST

Most contemporary analysts of social and political movements subscribe to the view that such movements originate in a variety of circumstances. Smelser (1963: Chapters 10 & 11), for instance, argues that social movements may emerge in response to conditions as diverse as economic depressions, wars and actions of agencies like the police force. Others assign to economic and status-related deprivation the major impetus to social movements (Hofstadter, 1963a, 1963b; Lipset, 1963a, 1963b). Threats to the maintenance or improvement of status and economic resources, they argue, eventually can produce sufficient discontent to foster social movements.

Observers frequently trace the roots of the civil rights movement among blacks to barriers to their economic and status-related achievement (Soskin, 1967:209). With few exceptions, however, the theory connecting protest with economic or status-related deprivation among Negroes has been based on insufficient evidence. To shed some light on this matter we ask: To what extent is the participation of Negro college students in the Negro protest movement a response to economic or status-related deprivation?

Three Economic Theories

The literature about economic or status-related conditions and the civil rights movement can best be viewed in terms of three explanations outlined by Geschwender. The first, the "vulgar Marxist" interpretation, is that fundamental economic impoverishment creates the dissatisfaction required to give rise to a social movement (Broom and Glenn, 1965: Chapters 5 & 6; Fein, 1966; Hiestand, 1964; Hill, 1965; Pettigrew, 1964:189; U.S. Department of Labor, 1966). Meier (1967) and other social scientists as well as Negro political leaders emphasize the importance of basic economic motivation in the present Negro protest efforts. For instance, in 1963, Whitney Young, Jr., a moderate Negro spokesman, dramatized the economic plight of Negroes by calling for a domestic Marshall Plan to help offset unemployment and poverty among them (Young, 1963). Miller argues that:

Usually the long-term economically depressed are unlikely candidates for a dynamic political movement, but the race-ethnic dimension, as well as the economic factor, is propelling the poor, whether Negro, Mexican-American or Puerto Rican (1964:297).

In addition, organizations engaged in the black protest movement, like the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), focus their campaigns on basic economic issues and problems. Such organizations often have demanded increased job opportunities for Negroes, sometimes before voting rights or benefits in housing; they frequently have employed economic boycotts to secure fair treatment of black Americans by white-owned or operated businesses, and most recently they have urged the full-scale development of business enterprise in the ghettos (Broom and Glenn, 1965:69-72; Walker, 1963).

The second explanation, the "rising expectations" view, depends upon the argument that if the victims of prolonged poverty begin to aspire higher because of certain partially achieved goals, they may then become dissatisfied with gradual improvement of their situation and begin to mobilize in a social movement. A number of writers accept this point of view as an interpretation of Negro protest (Broom and Glenn, 1965:69-72; Pettigrew, 1964:170-191; and Ladd, 1966:24). Kristol (1967:70), for instance, remarks that "... American Negroes ... feel ... that they have a special

---


2 Studies of participation in the Negro protest movement mainly deal with the participation of students and only briefly consider the relationship between economic and status-related factors and participation. See: Fishman and Solomon (1963:872-882); Matthews and Prothro (1966); Orbell (1967:446-456); Searles and Williams (1962:215-220); Solomon and Fishman (1964a); and Zinn (1965). The only reported research on this topic among adults is in Marx (1967); Pinard, et al., (1969); and von Eschen, et al., (1969).

3 Geschwender provides a very interesting explication of five hypotheses of the relation between certain social and economic conditions and the rise of the Negro protest movement (1964).

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BLACK STUDENTS IN PROTEST

37

THE ECONOMIC ROOTS OF PROTEST

38
claim upon American society: they have had some centuries of resignation and now would like to see tangible benefits, quickly.” The evidence of public opinion polls conducted in the 1950s and 1960s is that Negroes at that time had comparatively high expectations: a 1954 nationwide study revealed that 64 percent of the Negroes felt “life would be better,” as compared with only 53 percent of a matched group of whites (Pettingrew, 1964:184-185). And approximately ten years later, Harris and Brink (1964:238) found somewhat larger proportions of Negro respondents giving positive answers to similar questions. However, high aspirations may quickly be transformed into anger and frustration in the face of insurmountable barriers to their fulfillment. Along these lines, the discovery that the Negro-white gap in income increases with additional education prompted Siegel to comment that, “We might speak of the motivation provided the civil rights movement by the discovery on the part of thousands of young Negroes that their coveted education wasn’t worth much on the open market” (1965:57). 4

The third theory, that of “relative deprivation,” is that discontent and, subsequently, social rebellion may occur among people who judge their own achievement by the standards and accomplishments of similarly situated persons who differ only in having different or more numerous advantages. Karl Marx stated the essence of this notion:

A house may be large or small; as long as the surrounding houses are equally small it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But let a palace arise beside the little house and it shrinks from a little house to a hut (1958:93).

In the same way, the reports of many observers that certain segments of the Negro community, especially the middle class, grow dissatisfied on comparing their achievements with those of their white counterparts are certainly convincing (Broom and Glenn, 1965:196; Gusfield, 1963:22; Killian and Grigg, 1964:178-179; Thompson, 1965:19-20). While unemployment among blacks, for example, seems to have declined since 1950, it has increased relative to that of the whites (U.S. Department of Labor, 1966:121). In addition, the few studies of the Negroes' participation in protest indicate that the more advantaged are over-represented in them. A recent study by Gary Marx (1967), for instance, demonstrates that the Negroes who have educational, occupational and social advantages are the more apt to be militant about equal rights. Moreover, after finding that middle-class Negro college students are over-represented among student participants, Searles and Williams (1962) hypothesize that the latter have adopted their white middle-class counterparts as their reference group. Similar evidence on the background of black student protesters also is presented by Matthews and Prothro (1966) and Orbell (1967).

Each of the three interpretations attempts in its own way to account for the current momentum of Negro protest in terms of economic or status-related deprivation. In the analysis which follows, we shall try to determine whether the phenomenon of poverty, of deprivation, or of expectation is more characteristic of the black participants in protest than of the non-participants. To avoid excessive repetition, we focus our attention for the most part upon participants; however, the findings reported in this chapter also hold true of activists.

**Socio-Economic Status and Participation**

Most evidence of the link between economic or status factors and involvement in the civil rights movement is found in the background characteristics of participants and non-participants. Without exception, it indicates that Negroes from middle-class, or, in general, more privileged backgrounds are the more apt to be participants. But the data on factors of socio-economic status (SES) in Chapter Three provide virtually no support for this earlier conclusion. As we have already reported, the education of students’ fathers shows no association with participation, but the income of students’ families has a slight positive relationship with it (Table IV-1). Students from high

<p>| Table IV-1 |
| Father’s education, family income and civil rights participation (Percent participating) * |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Education</th>
<th>Less than $5,000</th>
<th>$5,000 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school or less</td>
<td>69% (1,389)</td>
<td>74% (471)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate or more</td>
<td>69% (456)</td>
<td>74% (617)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Weighted N, 2,933; NA Family income, 59; NA Participation, 201; NA Father's education, 28; DK Father's education, 128; NA Participation, NA Income, 15; NA Participation, NA Education, 5; NA Participation, DK Education, 7; NA Income, NA Education, 35; NA Income, DK Education, 13; Total weighted N, 3,424.

SES backgrounds are slightly more apt to participate. The relatively deprived students, those from families with more education, but less income, are no more likely to be participants than are their economic peers.

A somewhat similar relationship is to be observed among education, income and activism in the civil rights campaigns (Table IV-2). The students most likely to be activists are those from families who score high on both education and income; still, the percentage differences are too small to allow the claim that any form of deprivation or prosperity characterizes the backgrounds of activists in contrast to that of non-activists.

The hypothesis that the Negro protest movement is generated by the Negroes’ sense of deprivation relative to their white counterparts cannot be systematically explored by our data; however, we can examine the sense of relative deprivation among black students in their college setting. Table IV-3 presents data on the SES composition of the school population, the
TABLE IV-2
Father's education, family income and civil rights activism
(Percent active) *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Education</th>
<th>Annual Family Income</th>
<th>Less than $5,000</th>
<th>$5,000 or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some high school or less</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(958)</td>
<td>(349)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate or more</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(316)</td>
<td>(459)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Weighted N, 2,082; NA Family income, 43; NA Father's education, 20; NA Activism, 201; Activism not applicable, 851; DK Father's education, 128; NA Activism, NA Income, 13; NA Activism, NA Education, 5; NA Activism, DK Education, 7; NA Income, NA Education, 35; NA Income, DK Education, 13; Activism not applicable, NA Income, 16; Activism not applicable, NA Education, 8; Total weighted N, 3,424.

TABLE IV-3
SES composition of schools and of students, and civil rights participation
(Percent participating) *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES of School (Proportion of students from high SES families)</th>
<th>Student's SES</th>
<th>Total Percent Participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(850)</td>
<td>(99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(677)</td>
<td>(175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(634)</td>
<td>(498)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1,132)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Weighted N, 2,933; NA and DK Socio-economic status, 256; NA Participation, 201; NA Both, 35; Total weighted N, 3,423.

SES of students and participation. If the argument of relative deprivation is valid, then we would anticipate more extensive participation among students whose socio-economic status is lower than that of their fellow students.

Specifically, students from homes whose SES is low should be more likely to participate in schools in which there is a medium or high proportion of students whose SES rank is high. Data in Table IV-3, however, reveal virtually no difference in participation among students by SES in the various school settings; and the same is true of student activism.

Occupational Aspiration and Participation

Additional insight into the roles of SES factors in participation is provided by examining students' choices of occupational careers. We first looked at the relationship between students' participation and their career preferences as freshmen. Using their preferences in 1960, rather than those of four years later, controls the possibility that participation from 1960 through 1964 might have encouraged students' aspirations. Among both men and women we found students with high career aspirations as freshmen somewhat more apt to be participants among male students, 79 percent of those with high aspirations were participants as compared to 76 percent of those with low aspirations. Among females, the percentages are 72 and 66, respectively, a relationship stronger than in males, but not very strong in either case.

Let us suppose, however, that a shift in students' career aspirations between their freshman and their senior year follows differential involvement in the protest movement. Some students, for example, who aspired high at first might aspire low as seniors because, as they see it, their prospects are discouraging; consequently they might be more likely to participate in the protest movement than other students. The data in Table IV-4, however, prove the argument unwarranted.

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6 The class composition of the school is related to the rate of participation. Specifically, the greater the proportion of students of high SES, the greater the rate of participation. This association can be explained by other variables that are related to the proportion of high SES students: for instance, schools of high quality generally have a larger proportion of students of high SES and also have higher rates of participation. See: Matthews and Prothro (1966:424-429) and Orbell (1967:448-450) and Chapter 6 of this book. The measure of school quality is based upon such indexes as the proportion of Ph.D.'s on the faculty, student-faculty ratio, ratio of library books per student, and number of books in the library.

7 Pettigrew, for instance, claims that involvement in protest might encourage the self-respect and self-esteem of Negroes: "The remedial powers of the movements themselves alter their followers in the process. ... Negro Americans are learning how to be first-class citizens at the same time they are winning first-class citizenship" (1964:167).

8 In order to measure the level of students' career aspirations, we employed an index developed by James Davis (1964) that is based upon the number of years of postgraduate education required for a particular occupation. In other words, the careers tend to be ranked by skill level or, loosely speaking, occupational status. Sex was used as a control variable for two reasons: first, the anticipated associations between economic or status-related factors and participation might have been stronger in men since Negro males seem to face greater inequality of opportunity than Negro females, particularly in the white-collar occupations; second, Negro college men were more likely to participate in protest than Negro women, a difference which might have confounded other differences in the association between economic or status-related factors and participation.
Table IV-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Career Preference</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Senior Low</th>
<th>Senior High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>(392)</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>(167)</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>(1,123)</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>(272)</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Weighted N, 2,813; Senior preference not applicable, 68; Freshman preference not applicable, 161; NA Senior preference, 18; NA Freshman preference, 80; NA Participation, 141; Both preferences not applicable, 18; Senior preference not applicable, NA Participation, 27; Freshman preference not applicable, NA Participation, 35; NA Senior preference, NA Participation, 5; NA Freshman preference, NA Participation, 4; Freshman preference not applicable, NA Senior preference, 8; Senior preference not applicable, NA Freshman preference, 14; Total weighted N, 3,423.

Perception of Opportunities and Participation

The theory of rising expectations and, to a lesser degree, that of relative deprivation each suggest that protest activity may arise among Negroes faced with unanticipated barriers to opportunity. Black students tend to be one of the more upwardly mobile segments of the black community. Yet their earnings are not commensurate with their education (Siegel, 1965). Nor may their opportunities for employment in the professions and business match their education (Hill, 1965). Consequently, those among them who realize their handicaps may turn to the Negro protest movement to give expression to their discontent.

To test such arguments we asked students: “In your view, when will Negroes have equal job opportunities as compared with whites of the same educational level?” Their replies show that among both male and female students perception of nation-wide opportunities for employment bears no relationship to their participation (Table IV-5). A similar absence of association is found between participation and the perception of employment opportunities in the North and in the South.

We were assuming that many students thought that the expansion of employment opportunities for Negroes was an important goal of the Negro protest movement, and that they therefore would join the movement when their own mobility was blocked. Undoubtedly, some dissatisfied students who do not regard the protest movement as a vehicle for such purposes do not participate in protest. But as we discovered from the data shown in Table IV-6, even among the students who believe expanded job opportuni-

Table IV-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Perception of Opportunities</th>
<th>Equal now/in 10 years</th>
<th>Equal in 20 years or later</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>(510)</td>
<td>(501)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>(1,032)</td>
<td>(780)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Weighted N, 2,823; NA Opportunities, 365; NA Participation, 165; NA Both, 69; Total weighted N, 3,432.

Table IV-6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Opportunity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment Opportunities in the nation</td>
<td>+.06</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Opportunities in the South</td>
<td>+.08</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Opportunities in the North</td>
<td>+.05</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>+.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In each case, participation is counted as positive, (+), and non-participation as negative, (−). Thus, a gamma coefficient with a plus sign, (+), means that students who thought equal employment opportunities for Negroes would be obtained in twenty years or even later were more likely to be participants than students who thought they would be achieved sooner.

Ties are the most significant aim of the Negro protest movement, the perception of employment opportunities has neither a consistent nor a strong association with participation.

Occupational Aspiration, Perception of Opportunities and Participation

This analysis has provided less than convincing evidence of the connection between economic or status-related factors and participation in protest, but we shall examine one additional hypothesis. It is plausible to argue that the occupational aspirations of students would, in Kendall’s and Lazarsfeld’s (1950) terms, specify the relationship between perception and opportunities and participation. Put more precisely, we might anticipate that only among the Negro students with high aspirations will the perception of limited employment opportunities lead to participation in protest. However, while
fresman career preference continues to be slightly related to participation, the students' perception of employment opportunities bears no relation to participation, even among students with high aspirations (Table IV-7).

### Table IV-7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Freshman Career Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male:</td>
<td>Equal now/in 10 years</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(250)</td>
<td>(208)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In 20 years or later</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(199)</td>
<td>(263)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female:</td>
<td>Equal now/in 10 years</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(672)</td>
<td>(271)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In 20 years or later</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(474)</td>
<td>(235)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Weighted N, 2,572; NA Participation, 142; NA Freshman preference, 84; Freshman preference not applicable, 183; NA Opportunities, 307; NA Participation, NA Freshman preference, 27; NA Participation, Freshman preference not applicable, 9; NA Participation, NA Opportunities, 57; NA Freshman preference, NA Opportunities, 22; Freshman preference not applicable, NA Opportunities, 21; Total weighted N, 3,424.

### Summary

The "vulgar Marxist" explanation, which is one interpretation of the growth of the civil rights movement in terms of economic and status-related deprivation, received no confirmation from our evidence drawn from the facts of the participation of the black college students. Likewise, a second theory, that of rising expectations, received no support in our data. Finally, the third interpretation, that the civil rights movement arose largely as a means of expressing the discontent of middle-class Negroes, who feel relatively deprived, was not confirmed.

We shall now turn to see whether the college experiences of black seniors had any impact whatsoever on their participation and activism in the protest demonstrations.

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#### Chapter V

**The Campus as a Basis of Protest**

The social structure of a college community, like all other social settings, is comprised of a variety of statuses and groups. Any student can occupy rather diverse positions and play various roles in this community: he may simultaneously belong to the college newspaper staff, a fraternity on campus, and the dramatics club. His active involvement in the college community also can have an important influence on his political attitudes, if only because he is exposed to the opinions of his fellow students and the faculty. As Newcomb (1943) discovered at Bennington, for instance, girls who were among the most active students also were among the most liberal politically. Therefore we inquired into whether the black students' involvement and commitment prompted them to participate in the civil rights movement.

**Community Involvement and Participation**

There are two fairly common interpretations of the links between community involvement and participation in movements for change. The first, which we shall refer to as the elitist point of view, is that political movements are likely to engage disproportionate numbers of the politically sophisticated and highly active who, in addition, may occupy positions of authority in their
communities (Bottomore, 1964:Chapter 4; and Milbraith, 1965). Such persons, it is argued, possess the necessary skills and understanding to engage in political activity, in general, and political movements, in particular. Further, the motives underlying their participation are interpreted as, partly, the desire to improve the community as well as society at large and, partly, the wish for personal power.

This theory is supported by studies of political movements and other phenomena, as well. For example, research has established the fact that those who enjoy higher status and are the more active members of the community are among the earliest to adopt new ideas (Rogers, 1962:Chapter 6). This prompted Pinard (1968), in particular, to argue that they are likely to be over-represented in the ranks of political movements, especially in the early stages. In addition, investigations in the United States reveal that people actively involved in their communities and in particular the leaders, are more willing than others to tolerate and perhaps accept controversial political ideas (Stouffer, 1966:49-54). Specifically, the likeliest prospects for participation in student protest are discovered to be concentrated among the sophisticated and the most active politically (Block, et al., 1968:215-216).

In complete opposition to this point of view is the marginal thesis: that the *sine qua non* of participation in movements is social isolation, whether defined in terms of number of friends or of memberships and involvement in organizations. Most systematically explored by Kornhauser (1959) in his *Politics of Mass Society*, the argument is that individuals who are not strongly integrated into their communities lack commitment and an understanding of the mechanics of the social order and thus are the likeliest to participate in social movements.

Support for this interpretation comes from a variety of sources. Studies of Poujades in France, of Nazism in Germany and McCarthyism in the United States show that the segments of the population most estranged from their communities provide movements with some of their greatest following (Kornhauser, 1959:Chapters 9-12). There are signs, in addition, that the apparent affinity of working-class members for extremist movements may be partly due to their social isolation, as defined in terms of a small number of memberships and little activity in organizations (Lipset, 1960:Chapter 4). Smelser (1963:325-326) makes similar observations, arguing that recent migrants are especially likely to join movements because they lack established social relationships. An investigation along parallel lines shows that many of the student activists in the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in 1964 were recent transfers from other colleges (Lipset and Altbach, 1969:220).

We shall attempt now to determine which interpretation of participation in social movements, the elitist or the marginal, provides the better explanation of black student protest. In order to do so, we have analyzed the two perspectives in terms of three variables: membership in campus organizations, attitude toward change on the campus and academic success.

**Membership**

According to the elitist theory, we would expect that participants and activists in the civil rights struggle would number among the students most active and involved in campus organizations. The marginal perspective, on the contrary, would lead us to expect that the least involved would be the most likely to join the protest movement.

The percentage differences in membership and participation show that students who belong to three or more organizations are more likely to be participants than are the members of two, one, or none: seventy-eight percent of the former are participants, as compared with sixty-eight percent of the latter.

Likewise, the relationship between membership in campus organizations and activism is positive and relatively strong. We found that forty percent of the students who belong to a large number of campus groups are either active participants or leaders in the campus civil rights campaigns. By comparison, twenty-six percent of those who belong to few campus associations are activists.

**Type of Organization**

The marginal argument almost disregards the impact of membership in various organizations on participation but the elitist point of view would have us believe that those who become active in movements possess special political skills and knowledge and that, inasmuch as participation and activism require some degree of expertise in politics, being already in command of it they predominate among participants. Thus we anticipated that members of political organizations on campus would participate in disproportionate numbers in the civil rights struggle.

In order to examine the link between students’ community attachment and their involvement with civil rights, we distinguished among several kinds of college organization: student government, the editorial staff of a campus publication, the business staff of a campus association, a fraternity or sorority, inter-collegiate athletics, an organization concerned with world or national issues, an association with a special interest, e.g., the psychology club or the music or drama club. The majority of students, fifty-seven percent, belong to a fraternity or sorority, the smallest percentage, about one in ten, is on the business staff of a campus association.

Table V-1 presents data on the association between membership and civil rights activity which support the elitist point of view. First, members of any type of group more probably join and are active in the civil rights movement than non-members. Second, members of groups that most closely resemble political organizations in the adult world, namely, associations of those interested in world or national issues, or student government, are more likely to be participants and activists than are members of any other kind of group.

To probe more deeply into the connection between type of campus organization and civil rights activism, we looked for a cluster of organizations, membership in which would be the best summary predictor of activity. And
we found that the involved students are likely to have multiple attachments precisely in the organizations which we classified as most oriented to community or political concerns—student government, world or national issue grupos, the student newspaper’s editorial staff, and the business staff of a campus organization (Table V-2). In other words, if a student belongs to one of these—for instance, student government—he is also likely to belong to at least one of the other three organizations of the same category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World or national issues (Yes or No)</td>
<td>+.33</td>
<td>+.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student government</td>
<td>+.23</td>
<td>+.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial staff</td>
<td>+.20</td>
<td>+.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business staff</td>
<td>+.18</td>
<td>+.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraternity or sorority</td>
<td>+.14</td>
<td>+.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>+.09</td>
<td>+.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special interest</td>
<td>+.06</td>
<td>+.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music or drama</td>
<td>+.05</td>
<td>+.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, we find a strong link between membership in specific types of campus groups and involvement in the civil rights protests. In particular, students who belong to at least one parapolitical organization on campus are more likely to be participants and activists than are the members of none.

Attitude Toward Change: Constructive Criticism

The elitist and the marginal theory each suggest an orientation to social change. On the one hand, the elitist argument implies that the highly involved and committed who engage in movements do so partly because of their desire to change things in their respective communities: the protest movement appears to them as a vehicle for implementing improvement. The marginal hypothesis, on the other hand, implies that the isolated, who are predisposed to involve themselves in movements, do so, as Kornhauser (1959:167) writes, as a means “of overcoming feelings of anxiety and futility.” For them, protest is a refuge from the world, rather than a means of improving it.

Seeking to determine the relationship between attitudes toward change and involvement in the protest movement, we asked the students to assess three highly salient changes that could be instituted at their schools: a larger number of white students, more social events, and improvements in the quality of the faculty and the student body. Our question was: “If (your) school
made this change, would (you) like it a lot more, a little more, a little less, a lot less, or would it make no difference?" Sixty-one percent of the students, for example, claim they would not like their college as much as they do if the professors were less demanding; in contrast, 64 percent claim they would like their school more, if there were more social life on campus.

Responses to these hypothetical questions were combined into an index, with scores ranging from 0 through 4, which we shall refer to, hereafter, as the index of constructive criticism.1 Students who scored high are in favor of three or more constructive changes on their campuses, such as increasing social life or hiring more demanding professors.2 In contrast, low Scorers are those in favor of not more than two such changes.3

1 The frequency distribution of this index is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>968</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1,088</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>444</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>406</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3,423</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 The two academic items were used in the index, despite their negative construction, because the distribution of responses to them was better than it was for the parallel questions which were positively stated. The two positively worded questions dealt with smarter students and better teachers, and each of them was strongly correlated with its corresponding negatively worded inquiry. Second, the skewed distributions of responses to the questions made it necessary to make separate groups of the responses of "no difference" and "more"—and, in the case of the two academic items, of "no difference" and "less." Responses of "more" to the questions about social life and white students were given scores of +1, while responses of "no difference" and "less" were grouped and given scores of 0. Responses to the two academic groups were grouped and scored in just the opposite manner, i.e., "no difference" and "more" were given scores of 0, and "less" was given a score of 1. Finally, although the items were not strongly intercorrelated, we chose to use the four items in combination because they gave us a convenient expression in talking about the students' attitudes toward change. This method of combination is the only suitable one, given the low intercorrelations between the two sub sets of items, those pertaining to community life—social life and white students—on the one hand, and those pertaining to academic life—serious students and demanding professors—on the other hand.

Q Inter correlations for Change Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change Items</th>
<th>White Students</th>
<th>Social Life</th>
<th>Serious Students</th>
<th>Demanding Professors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More white students</td>
<td>+.17</td>
<td>+.19</td>
<td>+.02</td>
<td>+.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More social life</td>
<td>+.02</td>
<td>+.08</td>
<td>+.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less serious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less demanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 There probably is general agreement that increase in the number of social events and improvement in the quality of the student body and faculty are constructive changes at predominantly Negro institutions. At present, most people would perhaps not agree that increases in the number of white students would be a constructive change. Still, at the time of our study, it seemed that most people were in favor of whatever measures would help to bring whites and blacks together, including in this case, the integration of predominantly black schools.

Table V-4 presents the cross tabulation of scores on the constructive criticism index and participation and activism in the civil rights movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructive Criticism</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High (3 or 4)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0 to 2)</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table V-4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil rights participation and activism, by constructive criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score on Index of Constructive Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (3 or 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0 to 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Weighted N, 2,833; NA Constructive Criticism, 356; NA Participation, 184; NA Both, 50; Total weighted N, 3,423.

b Weighted N, 2,601; NA Activism, 184; Activism not applicable, 833; NA Constructive Criticism, 234; NA Both, 51; Activism not applicable, NA Constructive Criticism, 122; Total weighted N, 3,425.

It shows that students who favor three or more improvements on their campuses are substantially more prone to be participants than their classmates who favor fewer. Seventy-six percent of those who scored high on the index of constructive criticism were participants compared with only 65 percent of the others. A similar relationship but one of somewhat less magnitude is found between constructive criticism and civil rights activism. In sum, the data about participation and activism, alike, support the elitist point of view, while casting further doubt on the viability of the marginal interpretation.

Constructive Criticism, Membership in Political and Other Organizations: Individual Variation

In the light of what we discovered about the impact of membership in organizations and constructive criticism, it seems reasonable to inquire whether the two variables operate independently of one another in promoting protest among black students. Table V-5 shows that students who score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table V-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constructive criticism, membership in campus organizations and civil rights participation (Percent participating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score on Index of Constructive Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (3 or 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0 to 2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Weighted N, 2,554; NA Campus Groups, 363; NA Constructive Criticism, 310; NA Participation, 158; NA Constructive Criticism and NA Participation, 39; Total weighted N, 3,424.

BLACK STUDENTS IN PROTEST 51

THE CAMPUS AS A BASIS OF PROTEST 52
high on both dimensions are the most likely to be participants—81 percent, as against 63 percent of those who score low on both. Although the effect seems to be additive, each variable predicting participation independently of one another, there is a slight interaction. Membership in campus organizations has a greater impact upon students who rate low on constructive criticism than upon those who score high. Nevertheless, the interaction is so small that we may conclude that both variables, organizational affiliation and attitude toward change on the campus, are prerequisites of student participation in the protests.

We find an almost exactly parallel result when we look at the joint effect of constructive criticism and membership in political groups. Students who are very active in campus parapolitical groups and in favor of at least three kinds of improvement in campus life are most apt to be participants. Again, there is interaction among the two variables but it is fairly minor.

The effect of organizational membership, or political membership, and constructive criticism on the likelihood that a student would be very active in the civil rights movement is similar to their impact on participation. For example, 42 percent of those who rate high on organizational membership and constructive criticism are activists, compared with only 23 percent of those who score low.

**Constructive Criticism, Membership in Political and Other Organizations: Institutional Variation**

Another means of examining the impact of constructive criticism and membership in campus groups on civil rights involvement is to ascertain the amount of variation which they explain in participation at various colleges. This strategy enables us to determine somewhat more precisely the strength of each independent variable as well as the total amount of variation which the variables explain. For this purpose we used a sample of 34 schools which will appear again in Chapter VI.

When we inspect the variation between one institution and another, we find that each of the variables, constructive criticism, organizational membership, and political membership, again have a strong influence on participation. Schools, for instance, where a relatively large number of students favor changes in three or more sectors are more likely also to have a higher rate of participation than schools with few students who score high on the index of constructive criticism ($r = +.5089$). Similarly, in schools with a relatively large number of students who are quite active in political organizations on campus the rates of participation in protest are higher than in schools with relatively few politically active students ($r = +.2956$).

As a means of identifying the net and cumulative influence of these three variables, participation in civil rights efforts was regressed on them (Table V-6). Constructive criticism contributes somewhat more to explaining the variance in participation across campuses than does organizational membership. Political membership turns out to have a minor and insignificant effect. Most important, we find that the two variables, constructive criticism and organizational membership, explain 37 percent of the local variations in participation.

In summary, our analysis of the combined effect of constructive criticism and organizational membership among individual students and at different schools indicates that both are important predisposing conditions of the students' participation and their activism as well. Furthermore, these findings provide additional support to the elitist point of view.

**Academic Success**

Only the loosest interpretation of the elitist and marginal arguments would make them directly relevant to the links between academic success and involvement in the protest movement. Nevertheless, it is often true that the academically successful rank among the more socially and politically active students. By virtue of this fact, and in line with our above results, we would expect a disproportionate representation of the academically successful in the ranks of the protesters. Indeed, several studies of student activism report that the academically successful participate in protest demonstrations to a greater extent than do their less successful classmates (Block, et al., 1968).

Investigating the impact of academic success, we found that 51 percent of the students with high over-all grade point averages are members in three or more associations, compared with 32 percent of those with low over-all averages, confirming the general propensity of the successful to be also "joiners." In a similar fashion, academic success is also related to participation in campus political groups: fifty-six percent of the more successful score high on membership compared with 41 percent of the others.

Inasmuch as the black students who are successful academically do rank among the members of organizations on their campuses, we would anticipate that they also are disproportionately represented among the civil rights participants. This is not the case. Virtually equal percentages of students with high grade point averages (71) and those with low grade point averages (70) are participants.

This finding is quite puzzling, especially because of the links already uncovered between membership and academic success, on the one hand, and membership and participation in protest on the other. Perhaps a statistical interaction effect masks the true impact of academic success on participation. In Table V-7 we examine the relationship between academic...
success and participation, with membership in organizations controlled; and
we still find that academic success bears no appreciable relationship to participation. We must conclude, therefore, that despite the general propensity
of the academically successful to belong to social and political associations, they were not especially likely to be involved in the civil rights activities.

We failed to find any relationship between grade point average and participation in protest even after statistical exploration into additional
variables that might have masked possible relationships between them. Examination of the association between these two variables among male
and female students separately, revealed the same lack of relationship. In
the case of male students, the rates of participation of those with high and
low grade point averages are 76 and 77 percent, respectively; the correspond-
ing percentages for the female students are 68 and 65 percent.

Summary

In this chapter, we tested two theories of the link between the black
student's involvement in his college community and his engagement in
the protest movement. Of the two, the elitist point of view is supported
by the bulk of our evidence: students highly active in campus organizations are
more likely to be participants or activists than their less involved classmates;
members of certain parapoltical organizations on campus are more likely
to be involved in the civil rights events than are students who do not belong
to such groups; students who are strongly committed to changing the
academic, social and racial nature of their colleges are more prone to be
involved in protest than those who are not so committed.

Moreover, attitudes to campus innovations and organizational affiliation
have an independent influence on participation and activism, that is, both
dimensions are important predisposing conditions of engagement in protest.
And finally, contrary to expectation, members of the academic elite on campus
are no more likely than the others to participate or be active in the protest
movement.

Chapter VI

STRUCTURAL FACTORS:
CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY

Our inquiry into the involvement of the black seniors in the civil rights
movement during the early 1960s obviously would be incomplete if it did
not consider the impact of structural variation in the black colleges and
universities. Like other institutions of higher education, they possess certain
characteristics that hypothetically might reduce or heighten the level and
intensity of the students' political activism. The reaction of a predominantly
black school controlled by a public body, like a state legislature, to students'
political demonstrations, especially those directed against public institutions,
would probably be unlike that of a comparable school controlled by a
private board of trustees. Likewise, a school located in a rural area with few
facilities of transportation and communication would be likely to provide a
different set of contingencies for political action than would a college situated
in the heart of a city.

The potential influence of these and other such conditions on student
protest takes on a special significance because of the negligible effect of
background factors which we and others discovered. Matthews and Prothro
(1966:429), for example, found that the socio-economic status of black
students was a poorer predictor of participation than either the quality of
the college or the concentration of blacks in the community setting of the col-
Measures of Participation

Two indices of the Negro students' protest are employed in this analysis. One is our measure of student participation, used here to estimate the extent of their participation in the protests between 1960 and 1964; the other is a measure of the time of outbreak of the protests in 1960, derived from information from The New York Times Index, 1960-61. Additional data were obtained from pamphlets and reports published by the Southern Regional Council in Atlanta, Georgia (1960; 1961). Since none of these materials, nor any other public documents, for that matter, contained information about the time of outbreak at sixteen of the fifty schools in the NORC sample, these sixteen could not be included in the present inquiry. Naturally, we supposed that they might have differed in important respects from the other schools for which we had information. However, a systematic comparison of the two groups in terms of all the independent structural variables used in the analysis uncovered no statistically significant differences between them, and led us to conclude that the sample of the thirty-four schools used here was representative of the predominantly Negro institutions.1

The thirty-four schools used in this analysis were:

NAME
Alabama State College
Miles College
Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical and Normal College
Howard University
Morehouse College
Morris Brown College
Spelman College
Dillard University
Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College
Morgan State College
Jackson State College
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College
Barber-Scotia College
Bennett College
Elizabeth City State Teachers College
Fayetteville State College
Johnson C. Smith University
Livingston College
North Carolina College at Durham
St. Augustine's College
Winston-Salem State College
Allen University
Morris College
South Carolina State College
Fisk University

LOCATION
Montgomery, Alabama
Birmingham, Alabama
Pine Bluff, Arkansas
Washington, D.C.
Atlanta, Georgia
Atlanta, Georgia
New Orleans, Louisiana
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Baltimore, Maryland
Jackson, Mississippi
Greensboro, North Carolina
Concord, North Carolina
Greensboro, North Carolina
Elizabeth City, North Carolina
Fayetteville, North Carolina
Charlotte, North Carolina
Salisbury, North Carolina
Durham, North Carolina
Raleigh, North Carolina
Winston-Salem, North Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina
Sumter, South Carolina
Orangeburg, South Carolina
Nashville, Tennessee

Nonetheless, the absence of information about the time of outbreak at these sixteen colleges and universities suggests that it might have been far later than it was at the thirty-four schools. If this were indeed the case it would simply mean that the magnitude of the correlation coefficients obtained from our investigation would be inflated, since the presence of the sixteen schools would increase the random scatter about the regression line of the relationship between some independent structural variable such as school size, and the dependent variable, for example, time of outbreak. For this reason, caution is necessary in interpreting the precise magnitude of the correlations reported in this chapter.

Structure of the Community

Several features of communities which are thought to be associated with the development of protest will now be considered separately.

Economic Conditions. We examined some attitudinal and background information on the black students in order to test three separate hypotheses about the possible economic sources of the protest movement and found no support for any of the three (Chapter Four). In this chapter, we reconsider two of them, the "vulgar Marxist" theory and the theory of relative deprivation, using data on conditions in the community setting of the college.

The vulgar Marxist point of view, as the reader will recall, argues that the protest efforts of the blacks received their chief impetus from the absolute economic impoverishment of black people in the United States. Under such conditions, it is claimed, people will become unhappy enough to undertake a full-scale rebellion against their oppressors, in this case, white Americans. The relative deprivation argument, in contrast, contends that rebellion will occur among people who evaluate their achievements by reference to the standards of a group basically similar to them but differing only in possessing somewhat greater advantages. This often is invoked to explain why the black middle class in the United States might be more predisposed to protest involvement than the black lower class, the assumption being that the middle

(Continued)

NAME
Knoxville College
Le Moyne College
Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial State University
Texas Southern University
Wiley College
Hampton Institute
Virginia State College
Virginia Union University
Bluefield State College

LOCATION
Knoxville, Tennessee
Memphis, Tennessee
Nashville, Tennessee
Houston, Texas
Marshall, Texas
Hampton, Virginia
Peterburg, Virginia
Richmond, Virginia
Bluefield, West Virginia

Two schools for which information on the time of outbreak was available, Central State College in Wilberforce, Ohio and Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, could not be included because of insufficient information on characteristics of the two communities. With the exception of only a handful of schools including Central State College in Ohio and Cheyney State College in Pennsylvania, the predominantly black institutions are located in the Deep South or peripheral areas of the South.
class does not compare its accomplishments with those of other black people, but rather with those of white middle-class Americans.\(^2\)

To test both hypotheses in terms of conditions among people living in the community setting of the college or university, we employed separate indices of income and occupational distributions for whites and Negroes.\(^3\) If the vulgar Marxist point of view is right, we would expect to find that student protests would occur earlier and be most extensive in communities where the black population, as a whole, tended to be poor. On the other hand, if the claims of the theory of relative deprivation are correct, we would anticipate protests to occur earlier and to be most extensive in communities where the blacks are economically well-off, both in absolute terms, that is, as compared with black people in other communities, and in relative terms, as compared with the local white population.\(^4\)

\(^2\) Further support for this view is offered by the argument that in situations of relative economic equality with blacks, whites tend to feel economically insecure, which helps to increase the likelihood of hostility between the races. Thus Lieberman and Silverman (1965:894) state that “we might well expect that where Negroes fare relatively well in their efforts to break through job restrictions, whites’ hostility might be greater and hence riots more likely to ensue.”

\(^3\) The source of these data is the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1960). Although the Census does not divide the nonwhite classification into separate groups for these data, it can be assumed that in most, if not all, these communities, non-white is equivalent to Negro. For that reason, we will use the terms, non-white and Negro, or black, interchangeably.

\(^4\) Spilberman (1976b) uses two measures which would appear to provide a more reasonable test of the relative deprivation hypothesis, at least that which claims blacks protest because they feel deprived as compared with whites in their own communities. The two measures are:

- Nonwhite Median Income/White Median Income
- Nonwhite Unskilled Percentage/White Unskilled Percentage

Both ratios seem to measure the degree of economic equality between blacks and whites living in the same community. Unfortunately, it is an ambiguous measure: for example, the ratio, 1/2, will be produced by any of the following combinations of median income figures:

\[
\frac{500}{1,000} = \frac{1,000}{2,000} = \frac{5,000}{10,000}
\]

In the first case, the difference between the median income figures is $500, in the second, $1,000 and in the third, $5,000. Yet, while the size of these differences is the principal empirical outcome we should measure according to the relative deprivation thesis, Spilberman’s measures obscure this difference completely.

Nevertheless, because of the problem of identification, it is impossible to measure this difference directly (Blalock, 1966). This can be demonstrated as follows:

Let \(X_1 = \text{Nonwhite median income}; X_2 = \text{White median income}; \) and \(Y = \text{Participation}.\)

Then, in standardized form:

\[
Y = bX_1 + cX_2 + d(X_1 - X_2)
\]

\[
= bX_1 + cX_2 + dX_1 - dX_2
\]

\[
= (b - d)X_1 + (c + d)X_2
\]

The last equation permits of no solution inasmuch as it contains too many unknowns.

However, we can make predictions concerning the relative deprivation hypothesis if we enter the two variables, nonwhite median income—or its equivalent in terms of workers in unskilled occupations—and white median income, separately, into a regression equation. Assuming that greater differences produce more protest activity and that protest increases with increasing black median income—as has been found by most investigators to be the case—then the joint distribution of the black and white median incomes should produce a regression surface in which the slope of the white median income will be negative, and the slope of the black median income, positive. This kind of surface, then, means that protest activity will increase as the difference between black and white median income increases.

\(^5\) There are signs that since the enactment of the Voting Rights Bill of 1965, political mobilization of blacks has been on the rise in areas of the South where they constitute a large segment of the population.

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**Political Conditions.** While economic factors seem to play a significant role in the origins of protest, political circumstances are thought to be almost equally critical. In particular, it is argued that social or political movements will be less likely to occur when the channels of communication and influence to political leaders are accessible and open (Smelser, 1963:324-337). In such circumstances, the grievances of an individual or a group of individuals can be expressed and presumably handled satisfactorily by the political authorities. When, however, these lines are inaccessible or closed to aggrieved persons, frustrations tend to accumulate, and eventually produce protest or some other form of spontaneous political activity. Our measure of the flexibility of the political system in the various communities was the percentage of non-whites in the local population. In line with past research, we assumed that where Negroes make up a fairly substantial segment of the local population, their political participation would be most severely curtailed and, hence, they would tend to protest quickly and to mobilize large numbers of supporters. (A more direct indicator of actual political conditions would have been preferable but such data were not readily available for many of the communities examined here. Nonetheless, this particular measure, percentage of non-whites in the population, has proved a reliable and sensitive barometer of the responsiveness of Southern political systems to blacks’ demands (Campbell et al., 1960:Chapter 11; Daniel, 1969; and Key, 1949)).

**Demographic Conditions.** In the view of some analysts, three demographic variables may be associated with protest. The first of these is the size of the total population. The effects of size of population are by no means unambiguous. On the one hand, larger communities may be more likely to facilitate protest movements because they may be more densely populated and may possess more extensive networks of communication. Research on riots in the United States showing that riots are most likely to occur in large urban centers and in densely populated communities, supports this thesis (Downes, 1968). On the other hand, Kerr and Siegel’s studies (1954) of labor strikes suggest that the isolation of groups or communities is particularly conducive to mass political action because it enables the aggrieved to become socially cohesive and politically unified. If this notion is correct, one would expect that student protests would have occurred sooner and been more extensive in smaller communities. Together, the two theories suggest the possibility of a curvilinear relationship between size of population and protest by black students.

The two other demographic conditions thought to play a role in precipitating protest movements are changes in the size of the total population and in the percentage of Negroes. Either may disrupt the stability of a community, thereby increasing the tendency to political conflict. Insofar as they reflect migration patterns, changes in the percentage of black residents are particu-
ularly important. Increases in the proportion of Negroes, among other things, are seen by the white working class as a threat to their job security, whereas declines, like those which took place in the South over the past few decades, are likely to threaten the economic security of the large employers, especially landowners, who have come to rely on Negroes for cheap labor (Rose, 1965). Evidence to support the hypothesis of the influence of changes in size of population and racial composition is found in some of the literature on riots in the United States (Downes, 1968; and Lieberson and Silverman, 1965). Accordingly, we anticipated that changes in the size of the total population and in the proportion of Negroes would be linked to the early occurrence and high rate of participation in protest by black students.

All three demographic conditions were measured, using the 1950 and 1960 census materials (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1950 and 1960). The two indices of change were standardized on the base of the 1950 population's size, following the suggestion of Spilerman (1970a). The change variable for the nonwhite population, for example, was defined as: Size of nonwhite population, 1960—Size of nonwhite population, 1950/Size of nonwhite population, 1950. An analogous measure was used to assess change in the size of the total population for these years.

Distance from Point of Outbreak. The importance of the final community variable, distance from the original point of outbreak, is suggested by the very rapid spread of the student demonstrations in the early months of 1960. Although this measure is not typically used in studies of political protest, its relevance to the initial emergence of demonstrations can hardly be questioned. For one thing, cities and towns which are in close proximity to one another are likely to exhibit somewhat similar political and economic conditions. Thus a protest occurring in one community is likely to occur soon in the surrounding communities. Above and beyond that, however, proximity facilitates the rapid transmission of news. In particular, interpersonal communication, which some claim is the most effective means of assuring the transmission and acceptance of news, as of new things, in all likelihood occurs much more readily between individuals living near one another than between those living far apart (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955; Menzel and Katz, 1958; and Rogers, 1962). On the basis of such reasoning, we expected that the protest demonstrations of the black students would have taken place earlier in communities located nearer to the original point of outbreak, Greensboro, North Carolina. Distances from Greensboro were measured in miles.

Structure of the College

The second group of factors with which we are concerned are those pertaining to the Negro colleges and universities themselves.

Source of Control. A factor that can most seriously affect the political atmosphere of a college campus is the extent to which forces outside the school can penetrate the school's internal affairs. When extramural forces play a relatively major role in the internal conduct of the institution, the political climate is characteristically oppressive; in the absence of them, however, the school is usually able to permit greater freedom in the political undertakings of the students.

An empirical indicator of the control dimension is the control of the institution: is it in the hands of private or public bodies? In the case of a publicly controlled school, since public officials are required to act as guardians of the public interest, they may if they see that interest threatened by the students' actions insist that the administration expel the students. Private agencies typically are less vulnerable to the demands of the public and can allow the school administration more freedom to act. We expected the black students' demonstrations to occur more readily and to mobilize more support at privately-run schools.

Size of School. The size of any organization frequently has an effect upon its political atmosphere; however, the nature of its influence is uncertain. It seems likely that very strong support for a political activity, like the black student protests, would develop more easily among the students of a small institution since its smallness may facilitate intimate relations among students and faculty and provide a strong base for social cohesion. This seems to have been the case at Bennington College in the thirties, and more recently, at schools like Antioch College (Newcomb, 1943).

Smallness, however, also creates certain barriers to the expression of political opinions. Lipset, Trow and Coleman (1962), for instance, found that smaller union shops were unable to sustain political dissent without simultaneously jeopardizing the stability of social relations. It is unlikely, too, that administrators would be more successful in discouraging political protest on the part of students in smaller institutions. In this regard, comparatively few students could mean that conformity might be more easily secured, dissent more readily purged.

In contrast, in larger colleges and universities the inducements to political activity seem to outweigh the impediments. Largeness usually permits greater diversification of social relations and activities. Conformity to specific norms is less crucial precisely because there are more standards from which to choose (Blau and Scott, 1962:Chapter 9). In view, then, of their relative advantage, we expected that larger schools would show a greater likelihood of early and extensive student protests.

Quality of Institution. A third feature of colleges and universities which we examined is the quality of the school. An institution's quality is difficult to identify empirically. Our measure of the quality of an institution was intended to reflect the academic excellence of students and faculty alike. The measure of quality employed here is almost identical to one used by Matthews and Prothro (1966) in their study of Negro student protest and is created from four commonly acknowledged indices of quality: proportion of Ph.D.'s on the faculty; number of volumes in the library; number of books per student; and faculty-student ratio. The coefficient of reproducibility for the scale was .905.

---

6 The information about the source of control and all other measures of the college came from: Cass and Birnbaum (1964); American Council on Education (1964); and College Blue Book (1962).
Although this indicator is not intrinsically meaningful, it is associated with a certain kind of political and intellectual environment. Using a measure similar to our's, Lazarsfeld and Thielens demonstrated that institutions of high quality tend to possess a larger proportion of “permissive” faculty members who have “...analytical minds which do not automatically accept current beliefs, minds willing to entertain unorthodox ideas as to how a modern society can best function” (1958:168). We hypothesized that the Negro student demonstrations would probably occur more quickly and engage more support at schools of high quality. For, if the intellectual caliber of a school is associated with intellectual unorthodoxy in faculty and student, then, by the same token, one would anticipate finding there greater tolerance of innovative political action.

**Commuter and Residential Schools.** The last characteristic of colleges to be dealt with here is whether they are primarily commuter or residential institutions. Like the other dimensions of the college, this appears to have major consequences upon the school’s political climate. Writing of commuter institutions, Clark and Trow claim that: “Neither the campus nor the classroom has much chance to engage the student’s personality, other than in special cases in which institutional purpose is unusually strong” (1966:60). Residential colleges, by comparison, promote more commitment and involvement among students, including greater student participation in campus activities. Moreover, students in residential schools generally have the financial means to pursue interests that are not strictly vocational.

Since there was no way to ascertain the proportion of students who resided on each campus, we used a rough estimate, the capacity of the college residence halls. We supposed that institutions which could accommodate most of their students in residence halls tend to be residential colleges; conversely, schools which provided housing for only a small percentage of students we classified as commuter institutions and expected that the former would be more likely to facilitate student protest than the latter.

**Outbreak of Student Protest**

Most empirical studies of social and political movements deal only with the characteristics of activists or participants. While this kind of information allows one to make observations and draw conclusions about the extent of participation among particular groups, it does not answer the question, “Under what conditions will protest initially occur?” In this section we will examine the relationships of the college and community variables with the original outbreak and diffusion of the Negro student protest.

As a means of identifying the point of emergence of the black student protests on specific campuses, we employed as the variable, time of outbreak. Using the materials already cited, we determined the date of the first protest among students at each of the thirty-four colleges and universities in our sample. Protest activity was defined as including sit-ins, marches, picketing, boycotts and similar demonstrations. Identification of student involvement and college affiliation was based on the reports in *The New York Times Index* and the extensive data in the Southern Regional Council’s papers and files. The zero-point for our index was February 1, 1960, the date of the first demonstrations by the North Carolina A & T students at Greensboro. The time of outbreak at each school then was defined by the number of days after February 1, 1960. Protests broke out at about one-third of the schools within twelve days of the sit-in at Greensboro; at about one-half within one month; and at all thirty-four within about fifty-five days of the original incident.

In Table VI-1, we present the zero-order correlations between the structural variables and the time of outbreak. Looking first at the effect of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table VI-1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product-moment correlations of community and college variables with time of outbreak</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Variables</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Indices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Nonwhite Unskilled *</td>
<td>+.3388</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent White Unskilled *</td>
<td>−.1579</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite Median Family Income</td>
<td>−.0972</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Median Family Income</td>
<td>+.2079</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Index</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Nonwhite in Town, 1960</td>
<td>+.3782</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Indices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population of Town, 1960</td>
<td>+.2148</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change in Nonwhite Population, 1950-1960</td>
<td>+.0165</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change in Total Population, 1950-1960</td>
<td>−.0634</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Greensboro, N.C.</td>
<td>+.6173</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College Variables</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source of Control *</td>
<td>+.1005</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of School</td>
<td>+.0859</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of School</td>
<td>+.0046</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity of Residence Halls</td>
<td>−.2888</td>
<td>&lt;.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Workers in unskilled occupations are private household workers, service workers except private household, farm laborers and foremen, and laborers except farm and mine.

* The point biserial correlation was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the source of control and the dependent variables. Public schools were rated '0' and private schools '1'. The positive correlation here means that the protests tended to occur earlier at public institutions.

As a means of identifying the point of emergence of the black student protests on specific campuses, we employed as the variable, time of outbreak. Using the materials already cited, we determined the date of the first protest among students at each of the thirty-four colleges and universities in our sample. Protest activity was defined as including sit-ins, marches, picketing, boycotts and similar demonstrations. Identification of student involvement and college affiliation was based on the reports in *The New York Times Index* and the extensive data in the Southern Regional Council’s papers and files.
more quickly at campuses located nearer to the original point of outbreak, Greensboro, North Carolina. Support for the theory of relative deprivation is found in these results inasmuch as the protests tended to occur earlier in locations in which the black residents are relatively prosperous, namely where the proportion of Negroes in unskilled occupations is low, or where the median income of the Negro family is high. Equally consistent with the relative deprivation thesis is the fact that the protests occurred earlier in locales where the white median income tended to be low. In contrast to the view that protest occurs earlier where blacks are less able to express their grievances, i.e., where they represent a large proportion of the population, these data support just the opposite conclusion.

There were three other unexpected results: both indices of population change possess only minimal relationships with the time of outbreak, while a test for the curvilinearity of the relationship between population size and the beginning of the student protests produced negative results. Therefore, we find that protests tend to occur earlier in small communities, thus lending support only to the Kerr and Siegel "isolated mass" hypothesis.

The zero-order correlations between the college structure variable, and the time of outbreak also produce unexpected results, one of which is that, on balance, these factors are not nearly as strongly related to the time of outbreak as are the community variables. Although the student demonstrations are somewhat more likely to take place earlier on public campuses, the only college variable that is significantly associated with the time of outbreak is the estimate of the commuter-residential character of the campus. The correlation between these two variables corresponds to our expectations, the抗议s having occurred earlier on the residential campuses. A test of curvilinearity between size of school and time of outbreak, while revealing some degree of curvilinearity, does not produce statistically significant results. Instead, we find that the relationship could as easily be described by a linear function, protests having happened sooner on the small campuses.

Although these findings are interesting by themselves, our inquiry also requires that we assess the relative and overall ability of the variables to predict the time of outbreak. Therefore, we performed both a stepwise and

\[ Y_1 = \text{Time of outbreak}; \quad X_i = \text{Size of the total population} \]
\[ Y_1 = a + bX_i \]
\[ Y_1 = a + bX_i + cX_i^2 \]
\[ Y_1 = a + bX_i + cX_i^2 + dX_i^3 \]

Tests of significance of the difference in the magnitude of the correlations obtained from each of these procedures were performed, using the formula:

\[ F = \frac{R_1^2(Y_i, X_i) - R_2^2(Y_i, X_i)}{1 - R_1^2(Y_i, X_i)}(N-m-2) \]

The .10 level of significance was employed as the criterion for rejecting the null hypothesis.

8 The intercorrelation matrix of the independent variables is shown below.
multiple-regression analysis, the latter simply as a means of checking the results of the former. Three independent variables, the two income variables and the measure of change in the black population, were not included in this analysis since they tended to be both theoretically and statistically redundant with other variables and thus involved problems of multicollinearity (Gordon, 1968). Variables whose beta weights were significant at the .10 level of significance, or better, were entered into a separate regression equation, yielding the results presented in Table VI-2. As we can see, in ability to predict the outbreak of the protests, the single most important

**Table VI-2**
Prediction of the time of outbreak on the basis of community and college variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>BETA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distance from Greensboro, N.C.</td>
<td>.4742 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Nonwhite in Town, 1960</td>
<td>.3443 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Nonwhite in Unskilled Occupations</td>
<td>.2719 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=34  
R=.7167  
Amount of Variance Explained=51%

* p<.001  
** p<.01  
*** p<.025

variable is the distance of the college from Greensboro. The percentage of nonwhite residents in a community also is significantly associated with the time of outbreak, maintaining the same type of relationship as is found in the case of the zero-order correlations. The argument of relative deprivation receives support as well inasmuch as we find that the protests tended to take place sooner in communities with comparatively small percentages of blacks in unskilled occupations.

A few further comments: first of all, none of the college characteristics rank among the best predictors of the initial outbreak of student protests. Second, the three variables which prove to be the best predictors—distance from Greensboro, percentage of non-whites, and proportion of non-whites in unskilled occupations—account for a fairly large amount of the variance in the time of outbreak, 51 percent. All the remaining variables together account for only an additional 12 percent of the variance.9

**Extent of Student Participation**

We now address ourselves to the question: What conditions facilitated high rates of student participation during the years 1960 to 1964? We attempted to answer this question by developing a variable designed to measure the extent of student participation in that time. As will be remembered (Chapter Two), in the spring of 1964, four years after the outbreak of the black student protests, the NORC's survey of college seniors made the following inquiry of black students: "What role did you play (in the protest activities that took place on your campus)?" In this chapter, we interpret the proportion of participants found among the seniors at a given institution as representing the institution's overall rate of participation between the years of 1960 and 1964, the period when these particular students were in college. In interpreting the proportions in this fashion, we assume, of course, that the protest experience of this 1960-64 cohort of students represents the protest experience of the entire student body on each campus.

Table VI-3 presents the correlations between the various characteristics of the community and college structures, and the percentage of student participants. We observe, first of all, that often the same kinds of circumstance which lead to the early outbreak of the protests also promote extensive participation. The participation of students is most extensive in communities where the black population tends to be prosperous, or, conversely, where the white population tends to be poor, providing additional

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8 Matthews and Prothro (1966:425) found that their principal variable, an attitudinal one based on students' support for the protests, was able to account for only 25 percent of the variance in student participation from college to college.
support to the hypothesis of relative deprivation. Contrary to the conventional viewpoint, student participation is also more extensive in communities with small proportions of black residents rather than large. The demographic indices again produce unexpected results. Thus, although the change in the size of the nonwhite population exerts a barely discernible influence on the students’ participation, change in the total population produces opposite results from our hypotheses, participation being less extensive in communities where population is increasing. The size of the town was analyzed in the search for a possible curvilinear relationship with student participation, and, once again, the results do not support the curvilinear hypothesis, but rather the Kerr and Siegel argument.

Two of the structural characteristics of the colleges, size and residential capacity, also were related in the same fashion to student participation and the outbreak of protests, alike. Our estimate of the proportion of students living on campus, the capacity of the residence halls, is positively related to the percentage of student participants: a large proportion of on-campus residents is associated with a high rate of student participation. In contrast to our expectation of curvilinearity, small campuses are likely to have higher rates of student engagement in the protests than large campuses, suggesting that the cohesive and intimate elements in small college life outweigh the obstacles to protest. Finally, while the quality and source of control of schools exhibit the expected kind of results, their impact is about as negligible as it was in the case of the time of outbreak.

Once more we examined the several independent variables in conjunction with one another to determine which provide the best predictions of the extent of student participation, as well as their overall ability to predict the protest. Following the same procedures as earlier, we selected the variables with the most significant beta weights, and entered them into a separate regression equation. These results are presented in Table VI-4. In the case of students’ participation, the percentage of Negroes in unskilled occupations in a community clearly has the most significant influence, net of all other variables. Three other characteristics, capacity of residence halls, percentage non-white in 1960 and percent change in the population in the decade, 1950-60, all are about equally useful in predicting the extent of student participation in protest, with only the last-named behaving contrary to our hypothesis. Above and beyond these observations, perhaps the most interesting result here is that both a college factor and community conditions were the best predictors of the extent of student participation. In view of our earlier findings about the time of outbreak, the obvious conclusion is that while the emergence of student protest seems to depend principally on features of the local community, the extent of student protest activity over a long period of time depends on a conjunction of conditions both within and outside the college setting.

**Summary**

We have attempted to ascertain the bearing of certain structural features of colleges and their community settings on the rise of the black student efforts in connection with civil rights. A number of structural characteristics of both the college and the surrounding community facilitated, we found, the emergence of the student protests in 1960 and the extent of engagement in them in the subsequent four-year period. In the case of the initial outbreak of the demonstrations in 1960, three aspects of the larger community—its distance from the original point of outbreak, deprivation of its black population as compared with black populations in other communities, and the responsiveness of its political system to black demands—proved to be the most powerful predictors, accounting for one-half of the variance across college settings. Inasmuch as the demonstrations arose so quickly at this time, we would argue that much of the remaining variance in the time of outbreak can be traced to the social process of imitation, a process not totally associated with structural variables.

With regard to the extent of student participation in the protest movement from 1960 to 1964, our data show that a feature of the social structure of the college—its tendency to be a residential or commuter school—and several characteristics of the community structure were the most important predictors. We believe that certain other factors, especially attitudinal and related characteristics, might help to account for some of the unexplained variance in this activity. Indeed, when we combine the two variables from the analysis in Chapter Five, constructive criticism and campus group memberships, with the four structural variables, we are able to account for about 70 percent of the variance in the extent of student participation from campus to campus.

Although many of our findings support those of past research, we cannot rest assured that our measures completely portray, or capture, the conditions of the colleges and their community settings. Even more important, structural measures tend to be so crude and broad that they permit alternative explanations of the processes that might produce such behavior as student political protest. Ultimately, in this area of research as in other areas where such

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent Nonwhite Unskilled</td>
<td>-.6236 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Nonwhite in Town, 1960</td>
<td>-.3316 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Change in Total Population, 1950-1960</td>
<td>-.2988 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity of Residence Halls</td>
<td>+.2745 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=34

R=.7110
Amount of Variance Explained=51%

* p<.001
** p<.10
structural analyses are undertaken, we must rely heavily on the steady accumulation of evidence.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{10} Spilerman (1970b) has reported findings on the occurrence of race riots in the United States in the 1960s which correspond to many of the findings reported here. He found that riots are more likely to occur in cities characterized by a relatively deprived black population and little population change in the preceding decade. He goes on to suggest, however, that these characteristics are only incidental to the principal cause of the race riots, namely, large numbers of blacks in the local community, and that most blacks were candidates for participation in riots because of the ideology of violence which they possessed, at least in the 1960s. Thus, the more local blacks, the more likely there will be riots. As a means of proving his point, he puts a measure of size of the black population into his regression equation before all other significant variables, such as the measures of relative deprivation, and then, after all of them—thereby showing that the size of the nonwhite population does appear to be the principal predictor of race riots.

As a matter of interest, we replicated Spilerman's analyses to see whether the relative deprivation factors and other important predictors of student protest would become less important when the size of the black population is controlled. In contrast to Spilerman, however, we find that the size of the nonwhite population is less important than these other factors. For instance, in the case of student participation, we first entered the size of the black population into a regression equation, then followed it with the most significant predictor variable, the percentage of blacks in unskilled jobs, and then reversed the procedure, following Spilerman's lead. In the first case, we found that the size of the black population explained 3 percent of the variance, and the percentage of nonwhite workers, 29 percent. In the second case, we found that the percentage of black workers explained 22 percent of the variance, and the size of the black population only 10 percent. We feel safe, then, in claiming that while Spilerman's results are similar to those reported here, relative deprivation, together with the other important predictor variables discussed above, played a much more central role in promoting the student protests than they did in encouraging race riots.

CONCLUSION

At many points the research we have reported shows that popularly accepted ideas about the origins of the black student protest in the early 1960s are simply untrue, while at other points it confirms results of earlier investigations. We shall now summarize our principal findings, compare them with those of the major studies of student protest, in particular, black student protest and, in concluding, trace some of the changes that have occurred in the black student movement since its beginning.

Review of the Findings

We began this inquiry by analyzing three independent sets of conditions that hypothetically predispose students to participate in political protest. They are: (1) personal background and values; (2) experiences and attitudes related to college life; and (3) variation in college settings. Because this framework permits the analysis of a wide range of alternative explanations and variables, it is obviously very useful.

We discovered that the three sets of conditions do not predict participation or activism in student protest equally well. Specifically, the two latter sets, alone as well as in combination, are far more significant in the predicting of protest than is the first set. Inasmuch as particularities of our sample of political phenomenon might have had something to do with the comparative
weakness of the first set, we shall shortly reconsider it. First, let us review our principal findings.

Examining the first set of conditions, personal background and values, we analyzed the relationships between participation in protest and social class and family stability, region of residence, sex, and the economic aspirations and attitudes of the black college students. Social class as well as pre-college residence have only an insignificant bearing on the chances that a student will participate or be active in the civil rights movement. Indices of family stability, that is, whether the family is intact or broken, show a slight but consistent relationship with participation and activism. In particular, students from intact families are more likely than those from broken homes to be both participants and activists. Sex, in fact, is the only variable of this type with any substantial association with participation. As expected, we found that male students were more likely to be participants and activists than their female counterparts.

Having uncovered no influence of social-class variables, we inquired into the links between economic issues and protest involvement in much greater depth by raising the question whether any of three popular hypotheses about the economic origins of the civil rights movement—the "vulgar Marxist," or absolute deprivation hypothesis, the hypothesis of relative deprivation, and the hypothesis of rising expectations—offers adequate explanation. Inasmuch as we found that the protesters did not differ substantially from the other students in terms of social class, their own career plans, or their concern with employment opportunities, we concluded that none of the three hypotheses provide a valid explanation. In a later analysis we again tested two of the three, this time with data on attributes of the population in the community setting of the schools attended by the black students.

Regarding the second set of factors, college experience, we examined two countervailing perspectives, the elitist and the marginal, each of which seeks a link between the involvement of students in their college community and the likelihood of their participation in protest. The two perspectives were operationalized in terms of the students' membership in campus organizations in general and political groups in particular, their attitude toward innovation on campus, and their academic success. Our findings support the elitist argument: participants in protest are drawn disproportionately from the ranks of students highly active in campus life and committed to bringing about innovation. Our only surprise was the discovery that the academically successful are no more likely to be participants or activists than the unsuccessful.

As to the third set of conditions, variation in college setting, we examined a variety of hypotheses involving a large number of characteristics of the college and the local community environment. These included, among others, the size and quality of the school, as well as the comparative prosperity of the black population in the larger community. Two indices of student protest were used: a measure of the first date of outbreak of the demonstrations in 1960, and an index of the student participation on individual campuses from 1960 through 1964. Briefly, the outcome of this structural analysis quite dramatically revealed the potent impact of college and community conditions on both the development and extent of participation. With respect to the outbreak of the protests, we found that the demonstrations in 1960 arose earliest in the communities close to Greensboro, North Carolina, in which black residents are a fairly small and comparatively prosperous proportion of the population. These latter conditions with two additional factors—relatively small change in the size of the community's population during the 1950s and a residential as opposed to commuter type of school—characterized college towns where students gave extensive support to the protest movement during the period from 1960 to 1964.

Comparisons With Past Research and Some Reflections

As a means of enabling the reader to gain a better understanding of the results of our study, we shall briefly compare our findings with those of some similar research.

Our conclusions concerning personal background and values tend to contradict most of those reported in previous studies of activism among black and white students. Our most important finding was that of the negligible impact on participation of social class and family stability, together with personal aspirations. In their research on black student activism, Matthews and Prothro (1966), in addition to Orbell (1967), found that it is from families of higher socio-economic status that students who participate in protest are most likely to come, a finding similar to that of Searles and Williams (1962).

Comparisons of our findings with those of other investigations concerning students' college experiences and their influence on participation reveal more similarities than differences. Searles and Williams, for example, found that black students who were generally active in campus life were most likely to be civil rights participants. So, too, Solomon and Fishman (1964b) show that a large majority of the white students active in the peace movement had had prior experiences in organizations for political action. That we differed on the association between academic success and participation may be attributable to the method of measuring academic success.

Our data on variation in college setting also tend to confirm previous work. Matthews and Prothro, as well as Orbell, found that the protest movement mobilizes greater support among students who attend small private schools of high quality in localities with small percentages of black residents. In three major respects, however, our results differ from those of previous studies. First of all, we learned that other structural dimensions, in particular, the comparative prosperity of the black population, the proportion of population increase, and the residential character of the college, were all strongly connected to the black students' participation in the demonstrations over a four-year period. Secondly, after we included as an additional measure of the student protests the time of outbreak in 1960, we discovered that community forces are the major structural determinant of the outbreak of the student protests, while community and college conditions, alike, are the best predictors of the extent of student participation on individual campuses. And finally, in contrast to the equivocal results of the earlier studies, we were
able to draw some precise conclusions about the relative and absolute importance of the structural variables.

Reflection on the difference between some of our conclusions and those of previous research—especially on the matter of personal background and values—leads to several alternative explanations. One is that differences were to be expected, particularly where the hypotheses were derived from studies mainly of white youths or adults. Some empirical support exists for this explanation. The few studies of the attributes of white and black participants in protest uncovered at the same time some interesting differences in the background and motivation of the two groups (Pinard, et al., 1969; Surace and Seeman, 1967; von Eschen, et al., 1969). Thus Surace and Seeman (1967:206-207) suggest that variables which explain white involvement in the civil rights movement simply do not account as well for black involvement. This argument, however, does not explain why certain of our hypotheses derived from studies mainly of whites, for example, the hypotheses about family stability and participation, prove not to be correct, while others, also based on investigations of whites, turn out to be valid.

Another possible explanation of the differences between our findings and those of others has to do with the nature of the campus campus for civil rights. The movement might have been such a unique and powerful experience for the black students that it attracted many who normally would not have been predisposed to activism, thereby leading us to find a virtual absence of background differences between participants and non-participants. Of course, this explanation cannot easily be proved right or wrong, although it does fit the facts. Or one could claim that since our sample consisted only of college seniors, our analysis confirms what Newcomb (1943) and others have observed about the political behavior of college students: namely, that the impact of background attributes such as SES is gradually muted by the important dimensions and experiences of college life. However, there is no association between participation and the students’ own aspirations and economic attitudes, variables which, not being strictly background factors, should have shown some links to participation if any of the three economic hypotheses—the “vulgar Marxist,” relative deprivation and rising expectations—were sound.

Two remaining reasons for the differences between our findings and those of previous research also might be attributed to characteristics of our sample. First, our investigation is based on a much larger and somewhat more representative sample of black college students than other studies and may therefore provide more reliable evidence. Secondly, our study was undertaken two years after the others and reveals more than twice as much participation. In the intervening two years it is possible that many students of lower-class origin, not previously involved, actually became engaged in the movement, so that the earlier class differences between participants and non-participants might disappear. However, this explanation, like one or two of the above, cannot be easily put to the test.

Yet, no matter what explanations we offer of the major differences between our findings and those of past investigations, the differences contain one coherent and obvious theme: background attributes of students play very little part in their participation and activism in protest. Possibly the most dramatic reflection of this and, indeed, the most fascinating discovery of our research, is the impact of relative deprivation on the rise of black student protest. Our findings on the background and attitudes of the students, on the one hand, furnish no support for the argument of relative deprivation, but our analysis of the college and community structures reveals that a comparatively prosperous black population in the community where the college is situated is linked directly to high rates of black students’ participation. We therefore come to the conclusion that economic forces may be critical in fostering protest in black youth, but they take the form of tensions in the larger community rather than of insecurities associated with the students’ personal history and situation. In other words, the black students’ efforts were not prompted so much by their own frustrations as by the social and economic condition of the local black population.

The Transformation of Black Student Protest

In the years since these data were collected the character and scope of black student protest has substantially changed. We believe the changes have significant implications for its future and the future of the black protest movement in general in the United States.

During the decade of the sixties black college students first emerged as a group to be seriously reckoned with in American politics. But the mood and dynamics of the movement at the beginning of the era were fundamentally transformed by the end of it, passing from a parochial to a mass phenomenon, from the use of expressive to instrumental strategies, from integrationist to separatist goals, and from a religious to a political ideology.

From a Parochial to a Mass Movement. The protests of black youth at the beginning of the sixties were parochial in several respects. First of all, they were concentrated in a single region of the United States. The thrust of those first efforts of black students took place in the South, were directed primarily at Southern institutions, and remained in the South for nearly five years. In addition, the original sit-in movement was one solely of black students. The groups of white students in the North and South who engaged in sympathetic marches and picketing did not become an active element until about 1964.

The membership of the early demonstrations by black students was parochial in still another feature. At the beginning of the decade the movement was confined not only to black youth but to black college students. Moreover, the latter’s reference group, the group whose style of life and goals they seemed to emulate, was white middle-class students. In fact, some social scientists saw in the contrast the black college young people drew between themselves and middle-class white youth sufficient motive for the protest movement.

Moreover, the political demonstrations of black college students at the beginning of the decade were parochial to the extent that their objectives were limited and specific. Particular stores, or chains of stores, were the targets...
of their sit-in demonstrations, picketing and boycotts. And even though the selection of such businesses may have been in some instances part of a larger plan, the plan itself called solely for the establishment of equal access to public facilities. Only later in the decade did the objectives of the student protesters proliferate and become more general.

By the middle of the sixties, the politics of black young people had lost many of the parochial characteristics; in a word, the campaign turned into a mass phenomenon. The political efforts of the young blacks spread from a single region to diverse localities. Not only did they branch out into the Far West, Midwest and Northeast, but they also moved from predominantly black college campuses to white college campuses, and even where there were no campuses at all. In addition, the membership now began to include white students: beginning perhaps in 1963, but certainly by 1964, it had turned into a mixture of black and white. Indeed, so many white youths joined the movement that they eventually became a source of resentment among the young blacks and a visible reason for altering the movement’s objectives. In addition, as early as 1964, a new sort of young black American—those from lower, rather than purely middle-class backgrounds—had begun to take part. And by the end of the decade the black student movement, though now lacking the active support of the previously sympathetic white students, swelled to encompass numbers of young blacks who lived in the urban ghettos.

The politicized black youths, partly because their members were now so numerous and heterogeneous, changed their reference group, identifying themselves as the end of the decade with black people only and seeking to pattern their political aspirations and objectives in America after those of black people in other nations, particularly in Africa.

Finally, the political movement changed from a parochial to a mass phenomenon in terms of its political objectives. By the latter half of the decade the activities of black young people had come to include campaigns for voting rights and for black political candidates, demands for changes in the educational system and revisions of curriculum in American colleges to include courses such as Afro-American history and for black ownership of businesses in the black ghettos. In short, the political goals of black young people in the course of the ten years became more diverse and numerous, paralleling the increased diversity and numbers of the movement’s membership.

From Expressive to Instrumental Behavior. The style of the protest marches and other demonstrations changed in several respects. First of all, the strategy of the participants ceased to be expressive and became instrumental. In the first few years of the movement, sit-ins, wade-ins, jail-ins and related protests were undertaken as much to manifest a general dissatisfaction with the “system” as to attain specific ends. To have been jailed was as worthy of respect among black student participants in the movement as to have accomplished the desegregation of a particular place of business. In contrast, at the end of the decade and the beginning of the seventies, greater emphasis was placed on negotiation, symbolized in the shift from sidewalk to conference-room confrontations of the black students and the authorities.

From Religious to Political Ideology. The most dramatic and potentially influential change in the politics of young black Americans during the sixties was that from a religious to a political ideology. The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, founded in 1961 as a means of coordinating the political efforts of black students, was notable for the religious spirit which pervaded the organization and the lives of its members. The founding charter read, in part:

We affirm the philosophical ideal of nonviolence as the foundation of our purpose, the pre-supposition of our faith, and the manner of our action. Nonviolence as it grows from Judaic-Christian traditions seeks a social order of justice permeated by love (Lawson, 1960).

Yet by about 1966, after experiences in places like Mississippi and Alabama, individual leaders in the black student movement and the civil rights movement as a whole began to question the effectiveness of a religious faith in nonviolence to bring about enduring change between whites and blacks. Increasingly, the energies of young black Americans became directed toward acquiring power, both as an end in itself and as a way of making sure that their people got their share in the American system. Finally, by the very end of the era, SNCC was virtually moribund and the star of militant groups like the Black Panthers shone far brighter on the political horizon.

From Integrationist to Separatist Goals. The objectives of the young Afro-Americans who demonstrated in the early sixties were to attain equal benefits and privileges by integrating with whites in restaurants, bus stations and similar places, in the belief that integration meant equality, and vice-versa. And once the protests brought about eating, travelling and even voting together by blacks and whites, students then felt that they had achieved their ends. But in the latter part of the era, integrationist surrendered to separatist ideals. Black young people now cared little for integration in any form. Such joint ventures of white and black youths as the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964 convinced many black youngsters that integration inevitably means blacks taking orders from whites. Black youths came to believe that equality could only be achieved if blacks and whites worked separately, and they began to make much of the intrinsic advantages of being in a black society and having a black heritage. By 1968, many black students on white and black college campuses were urging the establishment of residence halls for blacks, and the adoption of courses on the contribution of black Americans to the national life.

These developments in the politics of black youths during the sixties were substantial and profound. What brought them about?

Precipitants of Transformation

Some seeds of black protest and its transformation in the decade were present in America long before the actual outbreak of the sit-ins, marches and picketing in 1960. Outstanding among these was the tension suffered by many blacks as a result of the discrepancy between their legal rights and their actual opportunities. The “dilemma,” as Gunnar Myrdal called it,
became especially visible to black young people when the Supreme Court in 1954 required the desegregation of schools "with all deliberate speed." By the beginning of the sixties, most American colleges and universities still had done nothing to encourage the large-scale enrollment of black students. Black youths were forced to attend the meagerly equipped and poorly staffed segregated institutions and faced the prospect of far poorer educational training than the law prescribed. The situation was ripe for protest.

Had this cause of tension appreciably lessened in the sixties, then the protest movement might have persisted in the same form and certainly would have declined in intensity. But in the eyes of many black youngsters the disparities were not reduced. Thus, black young people faced the fact that their early protests had done little to alter the system and to accommodate their desires and those of other blacks.

It was quite natural, then, that black young people would not only begin to multiply their efforts during the sixties but would also turn to new tactics. The change from religiously-inspired, nonviolent protest to politically-inspired, militant action seems an inevitable consequence of their continuing inability to achieve equality with white youths. So, too, the replacement of a religious with a political Weltanschauung seems to have required the substitution of instrumental for primarily expressive tactics. Moreover, the discovery that the discrepancy between the blacks' rights and their opportunities was to be found in the North as well as the South promoted the mutation of their movement from a parochial to a mass effort, spreading northward and inviting the participation of white students.

An additional force was the intransigent attitude of many white citizens to the demands of their fellow black citizens. Curiously enough, the earliest and some of the most vigorous demonstrations by black college youths arose in areas of the South where the resistance of whites was weakest. But as the decade unfolded and the demonstrations persisted, the charitable sentiments of white Americans toward black people declined to their lowest point in many years.

Scholars who reflect on these events will probably note specific times and places when attitudes of white Americans measurably affected the nature of the black youth movement. Among such incidents, one may count the experiences in Alabama and Mississippi in 1963 and 1964, where the great influx of white youths into the black students' movement came about because they and other blacks were virtually unable to wring from the white citizens equality in education and politics. Political—in contrast to religious—overtones were first apparent in the protests after the experiences in Mississippi during the summer of 1964; they were manifest in the establishment of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in the same year. Young black leaders such as Stokely Carmichael seemed convinced after the frustrations in Alabama and Mississippi that the success of black people could be secured only through force. Other episodes in the sixties symbolized the heightened intransigence of white Americans and proved to be turning points in the transformation of black student protest; for example, the assassinations of such political figures as Medgar Evers in 1963 and Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968.

The mass media played a vital role in altering certain aspects of the politics of black youths during the sixties. Television and the press were not sufficient by themselves to bring about modifications of the black political phenomena, but without their influence the protest would probably have remained parochial. Not only did the media's coverage help to spread the demonstrations throughout the South, but it provided national exposure and laid the groundwork for the development of similar activities throughout the nation. An enlarged and more heterogeneous following flocked to the movement as a further consequence of the news items on marches and picketing reported in newspapers and on television. Moreover, the shifts from identification with a white reference group to a black reference group, and from integrationist to separatist ideals, were in some degree inspired by the news in the media about nationalist movements among black people in Africa and the Third World.

Probably none of these changes would have been possible in the sixties, were it not for three outstanding black leaders: Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael and Eldridge Cleaver. At the opening of the decade, Martin Luther King, Jr., had furnished the inspiration for demonstrations which were nonviolent and religious in character, but by the middle of the decade his influence on young black Americans was in eclipse. In part, the emergence of these three as spokesmen for black youngsters and many other black Americans was a response to the tensions already mentioned. Yet these men were more than mere reflections of their times; they were creators, as well, and they seemed to provide a special shape and direction to the unarticulated hopes of innumerable young blacks.

The membership of the black youth movement as well as of the movement of American blacks in general was enlarged appreciably by the work of the three leaders. Malcolm X, for example, seemed to have an uncommon gift for voicing the discontent of the black ghetto-dwellers. His own lower-class upbringing in a slum and the years he spent in jails demonstrated that politics was a suitable vocation for lower-class black youths. Cleaver, as Minister of Information of the Black Panther Party, was successful in much the same way, yet he appealed equally to the idealism of young whites.

Increasing identification with blacks throughout the world and the separatist ideals of black youngsters were fostered by these three leaders, particularly by Malcolm X, who believed that black people in America would be effective in their drive for equal status and power only if they joined cause with blacks in other nations. During the early sixties, he argued:

Today, power is international. . . . Real power is not local. . . . When you see that the African nations at the international level comprise the largest representative body and the largest force of any continent, why, you and I would be out of our minds not to identify with that power bloc (Malcolm X, 1965:137-138).

The organization which he founded after he split with the Black Muslims and Elijah Muhammad in 1964, the Organization for Afro-American Unity, became a vehicle for implementing these themes. Toward the end of the
decade, Carmichael picked up these same themes and made them popular with black youths throughout the country.

Malcolm X, Carmichael and Cleaver also were partly responsible for effecting the change in the black student movement from an ideology relying upon religious motives to one relying upon political motives, and from expressive to instrumental ends. Malcolm X's departure from the Black Muslims revealed his own feeling about the futility of a movement devoted to improving the life of black Americans solely through asceticism. And at the same time he believed that the black community must turn to political action to break the grip of the white community. "A bullet," he once declared, "is like a bullet. You don't throw your ballots until you see a target, and if that target is not within your reach, keep your ballots in your pocket." (Malcolm X, 1965:138-139).

To summarize: The mutations in the style and strategy of the politics of black youths between the beginning and the end of the sixties can be traced to the continuing discrepancy between the rights and opportunities of black young people, the persisting reluctance of whites to permit blacks to share the resources of the nation, the nationwide presentation in the news media of the young blacks' demonstrations and the ideas and ideologies of certain black leaders. The question now is: Can the new form of black student political action be more effective in achieving an equitable distribution of wealth and power among all Americans than was its forerunner in the early sixties?

The Future of Protest by Black Youth

Can a mass movement succeed where a parochial movement failed? Or can separatist goals and instrumental tactics promote a fairer distribution of social, economic and political resources than integrationist ideals and expressive strategies?

To begin with, certain scholars argue that the transformation of protest by black young people into a mass phenomenon will not simply bring about the reallocation of advantages and opportunities in American society, but will at the same time destroy its foundations. We do not agree that the mass features of the new political crusades will be nearly so potent. Protest on a mass scale by black youth could radically alter the structure of American society only if guided and directed by a single organization. But there is no such organization now and its development in the future appears unlikely. Many of the concerns of black youth in the urban ghettos are literally worlds apart from those of their counterparts on college campuses. Moreover, the huge numbers of politically active young blacks and their widespread dispersion throughout the nation render a single master plan of dissent virtually unattainable.

The fact, moreover, that the following of the black youths' political movement has now become so diverse has also made it difficult to identify its audience easily. It was quite evident that the audience of the earliest black student protests in the sixties was in the main the same as its following, namely, black college students. But as the membership of the movement began to include diverse groups, such as lower-class black youths and middle-class white youths, it became more and more difficult for leaders to agree upon whom they should address. Should their appeals be directed at white liberals, for instance? Or at conservatives? Or at the black poor in places like Harlem? As the membership ceased to be identical with the audience, the movement began to lose its effectiveness.

Moreover, the protests of black youth are beginning to demonstrate that mass political manifestations in contemporary American society are as likely to be destroyed as to be produced by the news media, which have assiduously reported the activities of the young black leaders, minor as well as major. In going to great lengths to present to the public many a trivial detail about the political tactics of black young people, the media have succeeded in boring followers and detractors alike. The thrust and excitement once characteristic of the demonstrations have been mitigated by overexposure in the press.

Whether the new political movement of black young people is capable of reorganizing American society depends not only on its nature as a mass movement, but on its other features, too—that is, its political ideology, its separatist goals, and its instrumental tactics. However, even these qualities, represented as they are in the activities of such groups as the Black Panthers in urban ghettos, seem unlikely to capture for black Americans a larger share of wealth and power, at least not in the immediate future. As the protests have become more militant, they have provoked increasing hostility from white elements in the population and white organizations which could have helped. The white urban liberals who once could be counted among the strongest supporters of the campaign for equal rights have become some of its most vociferous opponents. There is a chance that the new form of politics may succeed despite white hostility, but it lies in the distant future and depends upon the very youngest of black Americans, whose political leaders are inculcating in them the spirit of black self-consciousness.

The prospects of the immediate success of the new protests appear to be greatest on the campuses of many of the predominantly white colleges and universities. Already it has been shown at certain schools, such as Cornell University, that the new instrumental tactics and separatist goals could effect a change in local living conditions and in the curricula. But success is not always guaranteed and it seems to be contingent on qualities of the college itself.

There is, first of all, the question: who runs the university? The state? Or some other public body? Or a private agency? Generally speaking, the demands of black students have been most widely accepted on campuses where the public, or the government, in effect the guardian of the public interest, is least able to intervene on the campus. Although privately-operated institutions most often fit this description, many of them now rely heavily on governmental funds and thus their internal affairs are subject to careful scrutiny by the government.

Antioch College, a privately-controlled institution, is a case in point. In 1968, Antioch officials acceded to the separatist demands of black students,
establishing a dormitory solely for them and a curriculum in Afro-American studies. Inasmuch as such segregated facilities and educational programs are against the law, the government threatened to withdraw from Antioch its substantial financial support but agreed, however, to delay until analysis could be completed of an experimental plan in which white students would be allowed to share the all-black dormitory if they wished. None, however, applied, so the dormitory remained segregated de facto, though not de jure.

In December, 1969, the black students, themselves, offered to close the dormitory, and shortly thereafter to disband the Afro-American studies curriculum, proposals agreed to by the College’s officials and faculty. Whether the government actually would have removed its support in the absence of such steps is unclear, but it is certain that the threat of withdrawal exerted a powerful influence on the actions of the entire college population.

That black students are able to affect the living conditions and curricula of colleges may give only the illusion of success. Whatever they do, the American educational system is bound to change in the seventies because so many students are realizing that it is not relevant to their needs and desires. The development of courses in Afro-American studies will be only one of many changes and it will undoubtedly come about, even without the insistence of black students. Moreover, if the programs adopted at white educational institutions at the instigation of black students were evaluated as measures to promote the redistribution of power and wealth in America, they would by no means qualify as victories—certainly not in the immediate future. The substance of educational programs is too far removed and too different from economic and political affairs to have much immediate influence on them. We may have to wait many years to see whether the new programs of Afro-American studies so arouse the consciousness of black and white youths as to produce fundamental changes in the American way of life.

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