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Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. 13, No. 4. (Nov., 1969), pp. 515-544.

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MIDWEST JOURNAL

VOLUME XIII

NUMBER 4

OF *Political Science*

NOVEMBER 1969

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Black Attitudes toward the Political System in the Aftermath of the Watts Insurrection

The main goal of this paper is to explore the feelings of the black community toward the political system immediately after the Watts riot of 1965. The main findings were these: (1) considerable political disaffection and lack of trust of elected officials existed, particularly with respect to local government; (2) blacks remained highly partisan Democrats, and strongly supported local black politicians and national civil rights leaders, but felt considerably more ambivalent about black nationalists; (3) the "new generation," that is, the young and better educated, were more disaffected from white leadership, more racially partisan, and more politicized, than the old; (4) racial partisanship and increased political mobilization, rather than estrangement from the political system, appeared to be the dominant response in the black community to the riot.

UNTIL RECENTLY NEGROES have been a "silent minority" in the American political system. Their direct political impact has been relatively slight, except for their rather special influence on Southern politics, which has not generally involved much overt political action on their part. This low level of political activity has, of course, coexisted with chronic discrimination and mistreatment by most American institutions and by many individual whites.

This paper is addressed to the contemporary black man's political

response to this situation.¹ Unequal and hostile treatment might be expected to produce antagonistic attitudes toward the American political system. It would be understandable if Negroes felt the system was not working in their behalf, and sought radical changes in it. Indeed widespread revolutionary sentiment would not be surprising. On the other hand, many observers have felt that Negroes were, in Myrdal's phrase, "exaggerated Americans who believed in the American creed more passionately than whites."²

The purpose of this paper is to determine which of these more closely characterized the feelings of the black community under a unique political circumstance: as it looked back and attempted to interpret the gigantic upheaval that was the Watts insurrection. Three different dimensions of black citizens' relationship to politics will be dealt with: (1) attachment to the American political system and to its institutions; (2) satisfaction with its current operation; and (3) the ability to contribute to changes in the system and its operation, in terms of mobilization for effective political action. This last may, in turn, be considered in terms of several dimensions, especially commitment to racial and partisan loyalties that would facilitate collective action, confidence in one's own political effectiveness, and current level of political activity.

There is particular reason today to be concerned about blacks' attachment to the American system, and to its institutions. For one thing, it has been coming under increasing attack from black militants. "I do not want to be a part of the American pride," said Stokely Carmichael, "I don't want to be part of that system." The militant critique varies between recommending greater black participation in political decisions and greater black control over the destiny of the black community, on the one hand, and on the other, pressing for the destruction of existing institutions and their replacement with new forms. Indeed, the black movement is seen as a "revolution" by many militants. Historically, blacks have generally been thought to be as

¹ This research was conducted under a contract between the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Institute of Government and Public Affairs at UCLA as part of the *Los Angeles Riot Study*, Nathan E. Cohen, Coordinator. Thanks are due to the many people who worked on this study, particularly to Paula Johnson, John B. McConahay, Diana TenHouten, T. M. Tomlinson, and Richard E. Whitney.

² D. Marvick, "The Political Socialization of the American Negro," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1965, 361, p. 122.

loyal to America as any other minority group, but today the wisdom of this attachment is being called into question.³

At the same time, recent race riots have been, at least *prima facie*, small revolutions. Constituted authority has repeatedly been completely overthrown, even if only for short periods of time. Whether organized or anarchistic, the riots obviously present the appearance of insurrection. And the black community has generally interpreted the riots as being revolutionary in nature. For example, 38% of our representative sample of blacks in Los Angeles described the Watts disturbance as a "revolt," "revolution," or "insurrection," and only 46% used the term applied universally by the media and the authorities, "riot." Most blacks described the rioting as a purposeful protest. Similarly, most blacks attributed the riots to specific grievances such as discrimination, unfair treatment, or to pent-up hostility.⁴

This might imply no more than the existence of a few rebels in the ghetto who get a riot going, rather than widespread disaffection from the system, except for two things. First, the size of the riots and the extent of participation indicate a broad community base for them. Second, the black communities in riot-torn cities have generally been sympathetic to the rioting. Though blacks, as well as whites, have deplored the killing and destruction, they have not generally joined in condemnations of the rioters, nor in viewing the riots as counter-productive. In both cases blacks have actually been rather sympathetic to the rioting, while whites have been strongly antagonistic. This sympathy with insurrection gives some reason for thinking that widespread revolutionary sentiment, rather than mere dissatisfaction with current incumbents and policies, may exist in America's black ghettos.⁵

³ See S. Carmichael, "Black Power," in J. Grant (Ed.), *Black Protest*, New York: Fawcett, 1968, p. 464; S. Carmichael and V. Hamilton, *Black Power*, New York: Vintage, 1967; E. Cleaver, *Soul on Ice*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

⁴ In contrast, only 13% of our sample of whites in Los Angeles used revolutionary terminology in describing the riot. Black attitudes toward the riots are described by W. Brink and L. Harris, *Black and White*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966; A. Campbell and H. Schuman, "Racial Attitudes in Fifteen American Cities," in *Supplemental Studies for the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1968, pp. 1-67; Hazel Erskine, "The Polls: Demonstrations and Race Riots," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1967, 31, pp. 655-677; and D. O. Sears and T. M. Tomlinson, "Riot Ideology in Los Angeles: A Study of Negro Attitudes," *Social Science Quarterly*, 1968, 49, pp. 485-503.

⁵ For the data on riot participation, see the *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, New York: Bantam, 1968; R. M. Fogelson and

Many observers now believe that this matter of attachment to the political system is settled in childhood by early political socialization. In this view, the individual's orientations toward the political system have become quite firmly entrenched by early adolescence, and do not change very much thereafter. However, little is known about the early political socialization of black children. Most published studies have dealt mainly with white, middle class children, who express quite normative views about American institutions and rules. The extreme alienation that has been found in one sample of poor white children in Appalachia gives reason to think that Negro children may also be socialized rather differently, however, and with considerable cynicism about politics.⁶ Hence it is quite possible that their attachment to the American system is rather flimsy, and leaves them susceptible to later militant appeals.

Alternatively, this positive response to the riots may not reflect lack of attachment to the American system so much as dissatisfaction with its current operation. Black children may be socialized into as firm acceptance of American norms as white children. But as they mature they may become more conscious and expressive of their dissatisfaction with their particular status in society. There certainly is ample evidence that Negroes are currently more dissatisfied with government actions than are comparable whites.⁷ The question is whether or not more serious disaffection is common in the ghetto.

Given considerable dissatisfaction with current government policies, a further question concerns the degree of potential mobilization for political change within the black community. This raises two rather separate issues. First, collective action is required. The power of any relatively deprived minority group is partly dependent on its ability

R. B. Hill, "Who Riots? A Study of Participation in the 1967 Riots," in *Supplemental Studies*, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-248; D. O. Sears and J. B. McConahay, "Participation in the Los Angeles Riot," *Social Problems*, 1969, in press.

⁶ See especially D. Easton and R. D. Hess, "The Child's Political World," *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 1962, 6, pp. 229-249; F. I. Greenstein, *Children and Politics*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965; R. D. Hess and Judith V. Torney, *The Development of Political Attitudes in Children*, Chicago: Aldine, 1967. Data from children in Appalachia are given by D. Jaros, H. Hirsch, and F. J. Fleron, Jr., "The Malevolent Leader: Political Socialization in an American Subculture," *American Political Science Review*, 1968, 62, pp. 564-575. For a recent summary of these findings, see D. O. Sears, "Political Behavior," in G. Lindzey and E. Aronson (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology* (Revised Edition), Volume 5, Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1969.

⁷ Brink and Harris, *op. cit.*; Campbell and Schuman, *op. cit.*; Marvick, *op. cit.*

to act in concert. So the question is whether or not blacks can be mobilized along racial lines.

Here the most conventional model is that of ethnic politics. Members of ethnic groups have traditionally exercised political influence by producing leaders from their ranks, and forming coalitions with other groups sharing similar interests.⁸ For ethnic politics to be effective, group members must be prepared to support their own leaders. So here we wish to determine the extent to which "racial partisanship" characterizes the political attitudes of the black community.

Second, to what extent are blacks psychologically mobilized for confident political action? Several steps are involved here. Trust of public officials may be a prerequisite to feeling they can be influenced by normal means. The citizen must feel that public officials are accessible, that he knows where to go to solve a problem, and that he can have a hearing. Further, he must feel that he can influence official behavior, that he will be listened to and his case judged fairly. Perhaps the best guarantee of competence in these areas is past experience; if he has done it before, he is more likely to feel he can do it in the future.

Previous studies have suggested that blacks have not, in the past, been especially effectively mobilized for political action. They clearly have been more discouraged about the reception they can expect: they have been lower than whites in the sense of political efficacy, more reluctant than whites to approach public officials, and they have not expected equal treatment from government officials or the police. Consequently their rate of political participation has been considerably below that of whites, even in the absence of legal barriers to it.⁹

The Watts riot may have marked a real watershed in black political orientations. It, and the riots that have followed, have approximated as closely as anything else in this century mass revolutionary uprisings against constituted authority. The major question we wish to pose

⁸ P. E. Converse and A. Campbell, "Political Standards in Secondary Groups," in D. Cartwright and A. Zander (Eds.), *Group Dynamics* (Second Edition), Evanston: Row, Peterson, 1960, pp. 300-318; N. Glazer and D. P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1963; R. E. Wolfinger, "The Development and Persistence of Ethnic Voting," *American Political Science Review*, 1965, 59, pp. 896-908.

⁹ For examples, see A. Campbell, G. Gurin, and W. E. Miller, *The Voter Decides*, Evanston: Row, Peterson, 1954; United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Political Participation*, 1968, Washington, D. C.; Marvick, *op. cit.*; D. R. Matthews and J. W. Prothro, *Negroes and the New Southern Politics*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1966; and L. W. Milbrath, *Political Participation*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965.

in this paper is whether or not the dissatisfaction that Negroes have typically felt with government has, in the aftermath of insurrection, been converted into estrangement from the American political system. Second, what has been the riot's effect upon the degree of political mobilization in the black community? Is there evidence of increased racial partisanship and political effectiveness? We wish to determine whether estrangement or politically effective partisanship is now more common.

Of course much has happened since the Watts riot in the black and white communities alike. The black community has apparently moved increasingly toward the militants, though the degree of change is a matter of controversy. If we cannot be entirely clear about where matters stand at the present time, at least we can gain clarity about where it began, in the community just then recovering from the most massive Negro rebellion the country had ever known. The picture that emerges from the Watts of late 1965 is one, we think, that renders explicable much of what has happened subsequently throughout the nation. The nature of racial partisanship that became clear then makes the subsequent "racism" more comprehensible.

THE DATA

The data on which this paper is based were obtained from interviews conducted with two samples of respondents in Los Angeles County in late 1965 and early 1966. The most important was a representative sample ($n = 586$) of Negroes living in the large area (46.5 square miles) of South-Central Los Angeles sealed off by a curfew imposed during the rioting. The curfew zone contains about three-fourths of the more than 450,000 Negroes living in Los Angeles County, and is over 80% Negro. Hence it represents the major concentration of Negroes in the Los Angeles area. Black interviewers living in the curfew zone did the interviewing. Though the interviews were long (averaging about two hours), interest was high and the refusal rate low. Checks were run on the possible biases introduced by the interviewers' own views and these do not give unusual reason for concern.

The sampling was done by randomly choosing names from the 1960 census lists, then over-sampling poverty level census tracts by a cluster sampling procedure to compensate for the underrepresentation of low income respondents due to residential transience. While sampling biases are common in surveys of black ghettos, we believe this sample is as close to being representative of the area as is normally achieved.

The other sample included 583 white respondents from six communities in Los Angeles County, half of which were racially integrated and half non-integrated, with high, medium, and low socio-economic levels. This sample is thus not wholly representative of the County, overrepresenting high SES and racially integrated areas. Some, but not all, of the items on the Negro interview schedule were also used with white respondents. Our main emphasis in this paper is upon Negro opinion, so the white sample is not referred to except when explicitly indicated.¹⁰

BLACK DISAFFECTION

Trust of Government

First let us make an overall assessment of the Negro community's attachment to conventional political mechanisms. Blacks clearly felt considerable ambivalence about the adequacy of their representation and whether or not they could trust their political representatives. Fifty percent felt that "elected officials can generally be trusted," while 45% felt they could not be. In contrast, 79% of the whites trusted elected officials, and only 17% did not. Forty-two percent of the blacks responded positively to "how do you feel about the way you are represented?" and 42% responded negatively. Whites saw the Negro's situation much more favorably: when asked "Do you think the Negro is fairly represented politically?" 55% said "yes," and 22% said "no." These measures, then, indicate substantial black disaffection.

National Partisan Politics

The "Negro vote" has in recent years become of keen interest to the national political parties and their candidates. Most Negroes today have a basic loyalty to the Democratic party, though their votes often "swing" rather easily from one side to the other, as illustrated by the fact that only about 60 percent of Negro voters supported the Democratic presidential candidate in 1956, while almost all voted for Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964 and Hubert Humphrey in 1968.

Quite aside from the importance of these votes to the two parties, vigorous electoral partisanship reflects acceptance of and participation in the traditional mechanisms of the American political system. A rabid

¹⁰ For more complete accounts of the method, see T. M. Tomlinson and Diana TenHouten, "Method: Negro Reaction Survey," and R. T. Morris and V. Jeffries, "The White Reaction Study," in Nathan E. Cohen (Ed.), *Los Angeles Riot Study: A Socio-Psychological Study*, New York: Praeger, 1969.

partisan also tends to be a loyal democratic American.¹¹ Did the use of violence in rioting lead Negroes to reject the act of commitment to one of the conventional partisan alternatives, reflecting a more general loss of faith in the American system?

Los Angeles Negroes did not withdraw from the arena of national partisan politics after the riot. Almost all regarded themselves as

TABLE 1
EVALUATIONS OF LEADERS AND GROUPS IN NATIONAL PARTISAN POLITICS

Leaders and Groups	Evaluations			
	Favorable (1)	Unfavorable (2)	Net Affect (1-2)	No Opinion
Democratic				
Lyndon B. Johnson, President	95%	3%	+ 92%	1%
Democratic Party	89	4	+ 85	7
Edmund G. ("Pat") Brown, Governor	81	12	+ 69	6
AFL-CIO	58	16	+ 42	26
Mean:	81%	9%	+ 72%	
Republican				
George Murphy, U. S. Senator	15	33	- 18	52
Republican Party	30	56	- 26	15
Mean:	22%	44%	- 22%	

Note.—The items used were of a standard evaluation type: "How good a job is President Johnson doing? Is he doing well, doing fairly well (both favorable), doing nothing, or doing harm (both unfavorable)?" The proportions "doing well" were 63%, 64%, 34%, and 35% respectively, for the pro-Democratic set. The "no opinion" column includes those who "never heard of him," "don't know how he does," and those who failed to answer.

Democrats, and held far more favorable attitudes toward the Democratic party and its leaders than toward the Republicans. When asked the standard Survey Research Center item on party identification, 84% of the Negroes sampled indicated they were Democrats, 6%

¹¹ See Hess and Torney, *op. cit.*; H. McClosky, "Consensus and Ideology in American Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 1964, 58, pp. 361-382.

Republicans, and 5% Independents. Their presidential votes in 1964 had been equally strongly pro-Democratic; 71% had voted for Johnson, 2% for Goldwater, and many of the remainder failed to vote only because they were not eligible to do so. In both cases their level of partisanship compared favorably with that of whites, 84% of whom claimed identification with one party or the other, and 73% of whom voted for president in 1964.

This preference for the Democrats was not simply a preference for the "lesser of two evils." As shown in Table 1, attitudes toward the Democratic party and toward its two most visible leaders, President Johnson and then-Governor Brown, were highly favorable. The Republican party and conservative Senator George Murphy both were regarded highly unfavorably. Thus, Democratic party identification meant positive regard for the Democrats and active rejection of the Republicans. Most Los Angeles blacks seem to have maintained their pro-Democratic partisan commitments, even in the wake of the riot, and had not rejected their traditional white liberal allies.

Local Government

An important consequence of the migration and urbanization of Negroes has been to throw much of the responsibility for meeting their needs upon local government in large Northern cities. Some local public agencies, most notably the police force and welfare agencies, devote a disproportionate amount of their resources to the problems of the urban Negro population. How satisfied was the black community with the efforts of local government in the aftermath of the riot?

White-dominated politics. Most local political figures in Los Angeles, as elsewhere are white. Evaluations of them were extremely mixed, as is shown in Table 2. Pointed hostility was directed at two: Mayor Sam Yorty, and the late William Parker, then chief of the Los Angeles Police Department. Both were widely disliked and distrusted. Chief Parker's intransigence on the race issue was both long-standing and quite public, and Yorty had firmly supported him before, during, and after the riot. In other respects, as well, Yorty was thought to be unresponsive to the black community, though he had run moderately well there in the mayoralty campaign a few months earlier. Finally, there was relatively little antagonism toward the two local white politicians whose districts included part of the riot area, City Councilman Gibson and County Supervisor Hahn. Their visibility was quite low, however.

Administrative agencies. Some local administrative agencies received a great deal of criticism, while others did not. The Los Angeles Police Department was extremely negatively regarded. There was much antagonism toward the police chief, as noted above. Many expressed the feeling that the rioting represented a retaliation against the police force. Most obviously, blacks were vastly more concerned about the frequency of police misconduct than were whites. Ninety-two percent of the whites, and only 41% of the blacks felt "you generally can trust the police," while 54% of the blacks, and only 6% of the whites,

TABLE 2
EVALUATIONS OF LOCAL WHITE POLITICIANS

	Evaluations			No Opinion
	Favorable (1)	Unfavorable (2)	Net Affect (1-2)	
Sam Yorty, L. A. Mayor	25%	66%	- 41%	9%
William Parker, Chief of L. A. P. D.	10	76	- 66	14
John Gibson, L. A. City Council	27	5	+ 22	67
Kenneth Hahn, L. A. County Supervisor	58	3	+ 55	39
Mean:	40%	38%	+ 2%	

Note.—Standard evaluation question used. (See Note to Table 1.)

felt you could not. Both groups were asked whether the police lack respect or use insulting language in their dealings with Negroes, and 71% of the blacks, against 59% of the whites, felt they did. Similarly, 72% of the blacks, and 64% of the whites, felt Negroes were roused, frisked, and searched without good reason. Indeed, the races polarized more over the issue of the police than over any other single question.¹²

¹² See W. J. Raine, "The Perception of Police Brutality in South Central Los Angeles Following the Riot of 1965," *Los Angeles Riot Study, op. cit.*; Sears and Tomlinson, *op. cit.*; Campbell and Schuman, *op. cit.*; National Advisory Commission, *op. cit.* By 1969 there was no evidence that this racial polarization over the police had diminished; if anything it had become worse. See R. T. Riley, D. O. Sears, and T. Pettigrew, "Race, Unrest, and the Old Angeleno: The Bradley Defeat in Los Angeles," (Unpublished manuscript, Harvard University, 1969).

The evaluations of other service agencies are less unfavorable, but expressed considerable dissatisfaction, as shown in Table 3. Negative evaluations of the State Employment Agency, or even of the Bureau of Public Assistance and the Aid to Dependent Children program, were not uncommon. In no case was a majority unfavorable to an agency, but substantial minorities were.

TABLE 3
EVALUATIONS OF LOCAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Agency	EVALUATION OF AGENCY PERFORMANCE			
	Favorable (1)	Unfavorable (2)	Net Affect (1-2)	No Opinion
State Employment Agency	50%	29%	+ 21%	21%
L. A. Human Relations Commission	32	10	+ 22	58
Bureau of Public Assistance	56	19	+ 37	24
Aid to Dependent Children	54	15	+ 39	31
Mean:	48%	18%	+ 30%	

Agency	PERCEPTION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN AGENCIES				
	None (1)	Experi- enced it (2)	Heard of it (3)	Net Affect (1-2, 3)	No Opinion
Schools	26%	16%	57%	- 47%	1%
Fire Department	52	5	41	+ 6	3
Welfare Agencies	56	8	32	+ 16	4
Park Department	67	6	24	+ 37	3
Garbage Collection	67	10	19	+ 38	3
Mean:	54%	9%	35%	+ 10%	

Note.—The item used for evaluation was “Do you think it does a good job (favorable), does nothing, or does harm (both unfavorable)?” The discrimination items read, “Have you heard of or experienced discrimination against Negroes in (e. g.) the schools?”

Other evidence of discontent is provided by perceptions of racial discrimination in various public agencies. The most obvious case is the school system, a classic example of de facto segregation. Seventy-three percent of the sample indicated they had heard of, or personally experienced, discrimination by the schools. Perceptions of discrimina-

tion were also widespread with regard to the fire department and welfare agencies.

Anti-poverty program. Another set of local service agencies with a particular interest in the black community were those in the anti-poverty program. At the time of our survey, most Negroes were optimistic about the "War on Poverty." Forty-two percent thought it would "help a lot," 45% thought it would "help a little," and only 7% thought it would "have no effect." Evaluations of a number of specific anti-poverty agencies showed the same pattern of generally favorable attitudes. The local omnibus agency, the Economic and Youth Opportunities Agency, was positively regarded by 48% and negatively by 11%; Head Start, by 41% and 8%, respectively. The mean net affect over six agencies was +31%, which compares favorably with the net affects toward local white politicians and toward agencies of local government shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Many of the area's residents were unfamiliar with the newly created agencies, each of which was unknown to at least 40% of our black respondents. However, those who had heard of them tended to be quite favorable. This was also true of the white sample, though there the level of ignorance was even higher: 71% for EYOA and 64% for Head Start, compared with 40% and 47%, respectively, in the black sample.

Federal and local government. This optimism about the poverty program was part of the generally greater trust invested in the federal government. Each respondent was asked which government does the best "for your problems." Four percent said the City government was best, 6% said the State government, and 58% cited the Federal government. Most of the rest (25%) said they were all about the same.

Evaluations of the several legislative bodies show the same pattern, as Table 4 indicates. First, blacks are generally less satisfied with their work than whites: the Congress "represented well" 47% of the blacks and 65% of the whites; the state legislature, 30% and 49% respectively; and the County Board of Supervisors, 28% and 36%.

Second, the federal Congress is praised considerably more by blacks than are the local bodies. A comparison of Tables 1 and 2 quickly reveals the generality of the greater support for federal than for local officials; most notably, the net affect toward the President was +92%, and toward the Mayor, -41%. And negative attitudes toward the poverty program agencies were only about half as common as they were toward state and local service agencies.

This greater support for federal officials and agencies, and the serious dissatisfaction with local government, is one of the most striking findings of this study. As might be expected, it is more obvious as a general disposition, and with respect to the most visible individuals at each level of government (such as the President, Governor, Mayor, and Police Chief) than with respect to minor political officials at each level.

TABLE 4
EVALUATIONS OF LEGISLATIVE BODIES

	Evaluations			No Opinion
	Favorable (1)	Unfavorable (2)	Net Affect (1-2)	
U. S. Congress	82%	10%	+ 72%	8%
California state legislature	70	13	+ 57	17
L. A. County Board of Supervisors	70	16	+ 54	14
Los Angeles City Council	73	15	+ 58	12
Mean:	74%	14%	+ 60%	

Note.—The item read, “Do you feel that the U.S. Congress speaks for you or represents you well, a little (both favorable), or doesn’t represent you (unfavorable)?” The evaluation item cited in previous tables was very highly correlated with this item when both referred to the same attitude object. Thus “net affect” scores can be meaningfully compared across tables.

Local communications media. Other potential mechanisms for the expression and satisfaction of the black community’s needs are the local communications media. Publicity is one way of getting grievances redressed. Did Negroes generally feel their problems were fairly communicated by the local press, television, and radio, or did they feel communication was blocked?

Again there was marked ambivalence, as shown in Table 5. Television, radio and the Hearst evening newspaper (the *Herald Examiner*) were evaluated positively. However, the dominant view was that the *Los Angeles Times* did not treat Negro problems fairly. The *Times* has traditionally expressed the viewpoint of upper middle-class conservatism, almost invariably supporting Republican candidates (such as Nixon, Goldwater, and Reagan) and conservative policies (such as the anti-fair housing referendum of 1964, Proposition 14). Its edi-

torial policies have become more moderate in recent years, and it opposed Mayor Yorty vigorously over several of the issues raised by the Watts riot. However, Negroes continue to regard it with suspicion, based no doubt on its long history of political and economic conservatism.

TABLE 5
EVALUATIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

	Evaluations			No Opinion
	Favorable (1)	Unfavorable (2)	Net Affect (1-2)	
Community-wide				
<i>Los Angeles Times</i>	38%	44%	- 6%	19%
<i>Los Angeles Herald-Examiner</i>	54	31	+ 23	14
TV in general	63	29	+ 34	8
Radio in general	64	26	+ 38	11
Mean:	55%	32%	+ 23%	
Negro-originated				
<i>Muhammed Speaks</i>	24%	30%	- 6%	47%
<i>Los Angeles Herald Dispatch</i>	35	17	+ 18	48
<i>Los Angeles Sentinel</i>	48	6	+ 42	46
KGfJ	76	7	+ 69	17
Louis Lomax	69	16	+ 53	16
James Baldwin	56	4	+ 52	40
Mean:	51%	13%	+ 38%	

Note.—The question used for the first eight rows reads, "How fairly or unfairly do the following cover the problems of the Negro community?" For Lomax and Baldwin, the standard evaluation question was used (see Note to Table 1).

Black Leadership

Much of the black community's political disaffection seems to be due to the preponderance of white faces in political office. Black leaders were preferred: 62% felt that "Negro elected officials" could be trusted, as opposed to the 50% who felt elected officials in general could be. This preference for black leadership also emerged in responses to the question "who do you think really represents the Negro?" Fifty-eight percent cited some Negro or Negro group (the most common, Martin Luther King, was cited by 24%), while 24% said "no one" or did not know. Only 9% cited white people or white leaders, and 3% some political office. Perhaps, then, the generalized

disaffection cited earlier refers primarily to white leadership. It may reflect dissatisfaction with current incumbents (who are mostly white) more than estrangement from the system.

Yet a common hypothesis has been that Negro leaders receive no real respect from rank-and-file Negroes. Many Negroes supposedly distrust "Negro leaders" and are constantly in fear of a "sellout." In the aftermath of the riot, many Negro leaders reported feeling that they had no control over the rioters, and very little following even

TABLE 6
EVALUATIONS OF LOCAL BLACK POLITICIANS

	Evaluations			No Opinion
	Favorable (1)	Unfavorable (2)	Net Affect (1-2)	
Augustus H. Hawkins, U. S. Congress	67%	3%	+ 64%	30%
Billy Mills, L. A. City Council	59	5	+ 54	35
Thomas Bradley, L. A. City Council	54	3	+ 51	44
Gilbert Lindsay, L. A. City Council	54	6	+ 48	40
James E. Jones, L. A. Board of Education	45	1	+ 44	54
Mervyn Dymally, California State Assembly	44	2	+ 42	55
F. Douglass Farrell, California State Assembly	35	21	+ 14	44
Mean:	60%	7%	+ 53%	

Note.—Standard evaluation question (see Note to Table 1) was used in all cases. Proportion "doing well" was 43%, 32%, 30%, 21%, 23%, 22%, and 14%, respectively.

among non-participants.¹⁸ The community's feelings about black leaders must therefore be considered in more detail.

Local black politicians. At the time of the rioting, a number of blacks had attained elective office in Los Angeles: a congressman, two

¹⁸ See J. Q. Wilson, *Negro Politics: The Search for Leadership*, New York: The Free Press, 1960; H. M. Scoble, "Negro Politics in Los Angeles: The Quest for Power," *Los Angeles Riot Study*, *op. cit.*

state assemblymen, three city councilmen, and a member of the city board of education. As shown in Table 6, they were all regarded very favorably, with the exception of Assemblyman Farrell (who soon retired from politics). The black community's preference for black representation is vividly seen by comparing Tables 2 and 6; the mean net affect for local black politicians was +53%, and for local white politicians, +2%. A substantial number of respondents had no opinion about each of these black officials, ranging from 35% in the case of Councilman Mills to 55% in the case of Assemblyman Dymally. Yet the proportion who expressed unfavorable attitudes was very small except toward Assemblyman Farrell. In these data, then, there is little evidence of the cynicism, distrust, and derogation often thought to be characteristic of Negro evaluations of Negro politicians.

Civil rights and racial nationalism. The other major sources of black leadership stems from more national individuals and groups, most originally centered around civil rights organizations. Two contradictory assertions were especially common in the aftermath of the riot about support for this leadership. Some said that the black community had become too militant for the moderates in the civil rights movement, and thus had rejected their leadership in favor of violence and anarchy. On the other hand, the Mayor and the Police Chief, and many other white people, alleged that the violence was inspired by the preaching of civil rights' spokesmen and demonstrators.

The data suggest that both views were incorrect; that, in fact, racial partisanship, rather than militant radicalization or particular attraction to civil rights leadership, was the dominant pattern. In the first place, there is no evidence of broad public rejection of the civil rights movement as a whole, or even of any specific groups of leaders. All civil rights groups and leaders were evaluated positively, whether "assimilationist" or "protest" in orientation. These data are shown in Table 7.

Second, the main exceptions to this were the radical Muslims, the most visible black nationalists of the day. The sample as a whole consistently evaluated the Muslims negatively. The proportion of those who are positive is fairly stable across questions, ranging from 22% to 29%. The percent negative varies considerably across questions, as shown in Table 7, but it is consistently higher than the percent positive. The stability of positive ratings and the variability of negative ratings across items suggests that Muslim support was fairly well informed and constant, whereas opposition was more common but less informed.

Aside from the Muslims, however, preferences among these several leaders and organizations seem to have been based more upon their relative visibility than their militancy. As Table 7 reveals, the proportion receiving negative evaluations is very small in every instance. Insofar as they were known at all, they were positively evaluated. The

TABLE 7
EVALUATION OF BLACK LEADERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

	Evaluations			No Opinion
	Favorable (1)	Unfavorable (2)	Net Affect (1-2)	
Assimilationists				
NAACP	91%	2%	+ 89%	7%
Urban League	83	4	+ 79	13
Ralph Bunche	70	5	+ 65	26
United Civil Rights Council	60	6	+ 54	34
Thurgood Marshall	50	3	+ 47	47
Reverend H. H. Brookins	42	9	+ 33	49
Mean:	66%	5%	+ 61%	
Protest				
Martin Luther King	92%	4%	+ 88%	4%
SCLC	83	2	+ 81	15
CORE	77	4	+ 73	18
SNCC	60	8	+ 52	32
Mean:	78%	4%	+ 74%	
Nationalism				
John Shabazz	22%	23%	- 1%	55%
Elijah Muhammed	22	46	- 24	32
Black Muslims	29	54	- 25	17
Mean:	24%	41%	- 17%	

Note.—For the Urban League, SCLC, and SNCC, the standard representation item was used (see Note to Table 4). In all other cases, the standard evaluation question was used (see Note to Table 1).

same point may be made by comparing the relative militancy of the most popular (e. g., Martin Luther King and the NAACP) and the least popular (Thurgood Marshall and the Reverend Brookins, the central individual in the local unified moderate civil rights effort). They scarcely represented polar opposites on a militancy dimension.

If anything, the most popular national groups and leaders were those

that represented a position of open collective protest rather than more passive or individualistic strategies. Racial partisanship, rather than individual assimilation or racial nationalism, was the most popular stance.¹⁴

Negro media. Finally, Negro-originated communications media were thought to treat Negro problems more fairly than city-wide media. This is shown in Table 5. The two local black newspapers are evaluated more favorably than the two white papers, a predominantly Negro radio station more favorably than radio in general, and two black entertainment figures evaluated extremely favorably. The sole exception is again nationalistic: the Muslim newspaper, *Muhammed Speaks*, is not so favorably regarded. Still, the dominant view here again is that blacks are the only ones who are in a position to deal fairly with problems in the black community.

Political Effectiveness

Given the racial partisanship of the black community, what about the other necessary ingredient for political effectiveness, the level of political mobilization? Do blacks have political contacts, do they vote regularly, do they participate politically in other ways, and do they have confidence in their own ability to influence political decisions?

Negroes in Los Angeles were almost as likely as whites to know someone politically influential. Eighteen percent of the Negroes did, as did 22% of the whites. Similarly, blacks were about as politically

¹⁴ This general pattern, of consistent and strong support for moderate black leadership, and only minority support for militancy, has been obtained repeatedly in other surveys. See Campbell and Schuman, *op. cit.*; Brink and Harris, *op. cit.*; G. T. Marx, *Protest and Prejudice*, New York: Harper Torchbook, 1969. However, the power of militant organizations and leaders may not be indexed at all well by their general popularity throughout the black community. For example, since the rioting, all black leaders have moved toward more militant positions because of pressures from within the black community. For analyses of subgroups which were considerably more favorable to the militants than was the black community as a whole, see D. O. Sears and J. B. McConahay, "The Politics of Discontent: Blocked Mechanisms of Grievance Redress and the Psychology of the New Urban Black Man," and T. M. Tomlinson, "Ideological foundations for Negro Action: A Comparative Analysis of Militant and Non-militant views of the Los Angeles Riot," *Los Angeles Riot Study*, *op. cit.*

This overwhelming support for local black politicians was again demonstrated in the 1969 mayoralty race in Los Angeles, in which the moderate liberal black councilman, Thomas Bradley, received almost unanimous support from an unprecedentedly high turnout in black precincts. (See Riley, *et al.*, 1969, *op. cit.*)

active as whites. In 1964, 73% of our black sample voted for a presidential candidate, while 78% of the white sample did so. In 1964, 53% of the blacks reported they had voted on Proposition 14, a referendum repealing fair housing legislation, whereas 63% of the whites reported having voted. When asked, "Did you do anything besides voting in the 1964 election?" 24% of the blacks, and 22% of the whites, said they had. These several measures indicate that racial differences in participation were small, though whites were generally somewhat more active.

However, blacks had a great deal less confidence in their own political effectiveness, as measured by two items from the Survey Research Center's scale of "political efficacy." Sixty percent of the blacks and 27% of the whites agreed that "public officials don't care what people like me think." And 78% of the blacks and only 47% of the whites agreed that "voting is the only way people like me can have any say about how the government runs things." Thus, despite approximate equality in political contacts, in voting rates, and in other forms of political participation, blacks felt much less able to influence public policy.

RACIAL PARTISANSHIP VS. ESTRANGEMENT

The central question of this paper is whether or not the black community in a riot-torn city has become estranged from government and from conventional societal institutions. Indeed, blacks trusted elected officials considerably less than did whites, and felt quite unhappy about the way they were represented politically. However, the most likely interpretation is that this discontent reflects dissatisfaction with current political incumbents and their policies, rather than a more general loss of attachment to the American political system. There are several reasons for reaching this conclusion.

First, Negroes have in recent years consistently expressed firm support for American democracy. In a revolutionary era, historical precedent may not seem to count for much, but at least it does not indicate widespread black estrangement. A variety of indicators make the point. Wartime loyalty has appeared to be at a reasonably high level. Brink and Harris report that only 9% of the Negroes in 1966 felt the country was not worth fighting for, despite the lack of hospitality shown blacks by other Americans, and the growing opposition to the Vietnam war.¹⁵ Negroes also have been at least as staunch defenders

¹⁵ Brink and Harris, *op. cit.*

of democratic ideology as whites. There are few racial differences on issues of civil liberties such as freedom of speech; Negroes have generally been somewhat *less* anti-Semitic than whites; they consistently favor living in racially mixed areas more than do whites or do not care about the racial composition of their neighborhood; and are generally more egalitarian and more willing to mix racially on the job.¹⁶

Attachment to the American system is also suggested by the general rejection of violence and separatism as solutions to racial conflicts. A major survey of urban areas conducted in 1968 showed Negroes were only slightly more willing to engage in rioting than whites, and non-rioting Negroes typically have rejected the actions of the rioters despite expressing sympathy for the rioters and their motives. Similarly, separatist ideology has attracted very little broad-based support in the black community.¹⁷

Negroes also have consistently regarded the present conditions of their personal lives as improvements over previous years, and have expected continued improvement. When asked directly about the American system, substantial minorities do report dissatisfaction; for example, Beardwood found 43% of a 1967 Negro sample said they could not get what they want under the U. S. system, and Cantril reports a large minority of Southern Negroes felt they would be treated no worse if the Nazis or Japanese conquered the United States.¹⁸ Historically, then, Negroes have expressed discontent with their lot but have apparently supported the American democratic system as completely as have whites.

Second, the Los Angeles black community's discontent is focused upon local government and upon the white incumbents in it. It is greatest with respect to local government's most visible symbols, such as the Mayor, the school system, the Police Chief and the police

¹⁶ S. A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, New York: Doubleday, 1955; Hazel Erskine, "The Polls: Religious Prejudice, Part 2: Anti-semitism," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1965, 29, pp. 649-664; "The Polls: Negro Housing," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1967, 31, pp. 482-498; "The Polls: Negro Employment," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1968, 32, pp. 134-153. This preference for racial integration among Negroes is obviously based on more than just adherence to democratic ideology. However, the point is that insofar as democratic ideology can be operationally defined, Negroes have consistently been on the supportive side more often than the opposition side.

¹⁷ See footnote 14.

¹⁸ R. Beardwood, "The New Negro Mood," *Fortune*, 1968, 78, 146 ff; Brink and Harris, *op. cit.*; Matthews and Prothro, *op. cit.*; H. Cantril, *Gauging Public Opinion*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944, p. 116.

force, but it is discernible with respect to almost all local agencies, and even the local newspapers. However, local black politicians are most important exceptions to this. The highly favorable attitudes toward local black politicians indicate dissatisfaction not with local government per se but with *white* local government.

And the black community seems not to have rejected its liberal allies. There is little evidence of withdrawal from national partisan politics after the riot; blacks remain strong Democrats, and apparently feel that the Democratic party is an attractive partisan champion of their cause. Similarly, they are much more favorable to the federal government than to local government.¹⁹ So it would appear that the rejection of white-dominated local government is not a rejection of the political system, but a complaint about inadequate attention and inadequate service.²⁰

The pattern thus seems to be more one of *racial partisanship* and self-interest than of *estrangement* from the American political system. This resembles some elements of the notion of black power, especially (1) mistrust of whites and dissatisfaction with politics that are dominated by whites, (2) racial partisanship, and (3) active political participation.

From this one might think that "black power" ideology would attain some considerable popularity in the black community, particularly those versions of it that stress black political control over arms

¹⁹ This preference for the Federal government has been shared in recent years by most Americans (see Sears, 1969, *op. cit.*). It may in addition be a short-term consequence of the more sympathetic attention given to Negro problems by all branches of the Federal system, whether executive, legislative, or judicial, than by local or State systems in the few years preceding the study.

One does sense, though, that much of the Negro's ultimate faith in the benevolence and attentiveness of the white community rests upon the reputation of the Federal government. No doubt Negro attachment to the American political system is sturdy. One does wonder, nevertheless, about the consequences of a possible change in Federal policy to a more punitive, less generous stance. It would certainly remove one currently important prop from that basic commitment to the American system, but how much actual change would occur is unclear.

²⁰ The theme of concern about inadequate attention is a salient one in the black respondents' answers to open-ended questions throughout the interview schedule. To use just one objective index of white attention to the black community, the amount of coverage of blacks in local newspapers has consistently lagged far behind the proportion of the population that is black. See Paula B. Johnson, D. O. Sears, and J. B. McConahay, "Black Invisibility and the Los Angeles Riot," paper presented at the 1969 meetings of the Western Psychological Association, Vancouver, British Columbia.

of government that most immediately affect the black community. It is a little surprising, then, that nationalist leaders have not generally enjoyed wide popularity among blacks. However, these same leaders have tended to advocate separatism as well as increased black political power, and separatism has been much less popular. The greater approval given local black politicians may be due to their support of enhanced political power for the black community, without the implication of separatism.²¹

THE NEW GENERATION

What can be expected about black political attitudes in the future? One indicator is the degree of disaffection in the new generation. The old, Southern-born, rural semi-literates are swiftly being replaced by better-educated urban Northerners. How do the political attitudes of the young and the better-educated differ from those of older and less-educated persons? ²²

First, lack of trust in elected officials is substantially greater among the younger and better-educated. Table 8 gives the data. The same holds for feelings of adequacy of representation. Of the college educated, 54% felt badly represented, whereas only 39% did so among the grade-school educated; among those under thirty, 47% felt badly represented, as did 37% of those 45 years of age and above. On a generalized scale of disaffection, including these two items and two others on trust and adequacy of representation, the young proved to be significantly more disaffected than the old ($F = 7.80, 2/477 df, p <$

²¹ This is also unusual in that support for a charismatic leader often outstrips the support for his ideology. For examples, see the cases of Father Coughlin, Senator Joseph McCarthy, the John Birch Society, and numerous other domestic political movements (S. M. Lipset, "Three Decades of the Radical Right: Coughlinites, McCarthyites, and Birchers—1962," in D. Bell (ed.), *The Radical Right*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1963, pp. 313-378; Sears, 1969, *op. cit.*). Yet with racial nationalism the situation seems to be reversed: relatively strong support for many of the basic ideological components of black power, but generally unfavorable attitudes toward its advocates. The issue of separatism is the one that most clearly divides the thinking of the militant leaders from that of conventional black politicians.

²² See K. E. Taeuber and A. F. Taeuber, "The Negro Population in the United States," in J. P. Davis (ed.), *The American Negro Reference Book*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966, and D. O. Sears and J. B. McConahay, "Racial Socialization, Comparison Levels, and the Watts Riot," *Journal of Social Issues*, in press, for discussions of demographic changes in the black community and some of their political consequences.

.001), and greater education was also associated with greater disaffection, though not significantly so ($F = 1.10, 3/477 \text{ df}, n. s.$).²³

This greater disaffection of the young and better-educated blacks is an important, and disturbing, departure from the pattern that has been typical in America. Previous studies of whites have found almost without exception, that education is strongly and positively related to democratic beliefs and attachment to the political system, and in most cases, so is youth as well.²⁴ Table 8 also gives the data for

TABLE 8

PERCENT SAYING ELECTED OFFICIALS CAN BE TRUSTED BY AGE, EDUCATION, AND RACE

	Respondent's Race		
	White	Black	Racial Difference
Age			
15-29	76%	42%	+ 34%
30-44	79	49	+ 30
45 +	81	60	+ 21
Education			
College	85%	46%	+ 39%
High school graduate	76	47	+ 29
Some high school	71	47	+ 24
Grade school	63	64	- 1
Total	79%	50%	+ 29%

our white sample, and confirms this general expectation. Greater education substantially decreased disaffection from the political system, and age made relatively little difference. The greater black disaffection was most vivid among precisely those groups rising in political im-

²³ For details on the several scales discussed in this section, see Sears and McConahay, "Politics of Discontent," *op. cit.* The age effects in this section are tested with two degrees of freedom, since age was trichotomized, and the education effects are tested with three degrees of freedom, since four levels of education were used. For the general procedure, see B. J. Winer, *Statistical Principles in Experimental Design*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1962.

²⁴ For example, see J. W. Prothro and C. W. Grigg, "Fundamental Principles of Democracy; Bases of Agreement and Disagreement," *Journal of Politics*, 1960, 22, pp. 276-294; Stouffer, *op. cit.*; McClosky, *op. cit.*; J. Dennis, "Support for the Party System by the Mass Public," *American Political Science Review*, 1966, 60, pp. 600-615; and S. M. Lipset, *Political Man*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1960, among others.

portance in the black community: the young and the well-educated.

Looking at more specific instances of discontent, there is a clear tendency for the young to be especially disenchanted with white leadership, whether national and liberal, or local and not so liberal. The young were less positive on a scale of attitudes toward white liberals (listed in Table 1; $F = 7.40$, $2/494$ *df*, $p < .001$); they were more inclined to criticize the several legislative bodies ruling them (listed in Table 4; $F = 5.33$, $2/516$ *df*, $p < .005$); and they were less favorable toward the several white officeholders asked about (the President, Governor, Mayor, and local white legislators) ($F = 12.74$, $2/521$ *df*, $p < .001$). Education affected none of these significantly, though in each case the college-educated were least favorable.

Dissatisfaction with local government is particularly common in the black community, as indicated above. Perhaps for this reason, there is nothing especially unique about the discontent of the young and better educated. The young were more negative ($F = 3.33$, $2/519$ *df*, $p < .05$) on a scale of attitudes toward the local political structure; they were more inclined to believe in widespread police brutality ($F = 4.65$, $2/511$ *df*, $p < .01$); and more likely to criticize the fairness of local white media's coverage of the black community, to criticize the performance of local service agencies, and to perceive racial discrimination in their operation (though not significantly so). There was also a non-significant tendency for the better-educated to be more dissatisfied in each case.

Discontent with the local situation was sometimes more closely related to education (e. g., regarding the Los Angeles *Times*, which is read primarily by better-educated persons) and sometimes to age (e. g., with respect to the police, who are in more contact with the young than the old). But the striking thing is that on virtually every one of the dimensions tested for, the young and better-educated are more dissatisfied than are the older and less-educated.

The greater disaffection and dissatisfaction with the political system in general, and with white leadership in particular, among the young and well-educated implies some greater realism in their views. More generally, they express more skepticism about people in general than do older blacks, or whites of any age, as shown in Table 9. They seem to have a more vivid impression of the selfishness or the self-interestedness of people's behavior. This too may contribute to increasing racial partisanship and political participation; if one cannot trust others' altruistic impulses, one needs to have power over their behavior. Black power advocates emphasize this very point.

Political Mobilization

However, it is not so clear that the new generation is moving toward effective political participation, by the several criteria advanced earlier. First, the young are less likely to be strong Democrats. Of those under 30, 61% were strong Democrats, while of those over 44, 76% were. And the young tended to be less positive toward noted white liberals ($F = 7.40$, $2/494$ *df*, $p < .001$; education had no effect: $F < 1.0$). However, this does not mean they were more attracted to the Republican party. On a scale of attitudes toward the G. O. P., neither age ($F = 1.40$, $2/492$ *df*, *n. s.*) nor education ($F < 1$) had a significant

TABLE 9

PERCENT OF BLACKS TRUSTING PEOPLE BY AGE AND EDUCATION

Education	Age		
	15-29	30-44	45 +
College	47%	70%	86%
High school graduate	57	65	69
Some high school	48	63	71
Grade school	29	74	73
Total	51%	66%	72%

Note.—Over 80% of the whites in each category said they trusted people.

effect. Thus the young are simply more indifferent partisans rather than being potential converts for the Republican party.²⁵

Second, what about black leadership? The degree of positive feeling toward black leaders and black organizations actually *increased* with greater education, quite unlike the situation with white leadership. However, with respect to age the familiar pattern holds: the young tend to be the less enthusiastic about most traditional leaders. Specifically, the old and the well-educated were more enthusiastic than the young and the poorly-educated about assimilationist leaders (such as Martin Luther King, the NAACP, etc.), civil rights organizations (ranging from the Urban League and the NAACP to CORE and SNCC), and local black politicians.²⁶ Before too much is made of

²⁵ The lesser partisanship of the young has been also characteristic of whites. Whether this simply represents the immaturity of youth or genuine generational differences is not yet clear. See Sears, 1969, *op. cit.*

²⁶ For age, $F = 16.85$, $2/508$ *df*, $p < .001$; $F = 3.80$, $2/515$ *df*, $p < .025$; $F = 4.67$,

this, it should be noted that even among the young and the poorly educated negative evaluations were very rare. Thus these effects are due more to differential familiarity with the leaders than to differential antagonism toward them. Considering everything, therefore, no great disaffection from black leadership appears among the young and college-educated, quite unlike the situation with white leadership.

And in fact the reverse held with the nationalist Black Muslims, toward whom the young were actually more favorable ($F = 3.12$, $2/491$ *df*, $p < .05$). There were no significant education differences, but the college-educated tended to be the most favorable. It is apparent that while sympathy with racial nationalism is not universal in the black community, it is greatest among the young.

Third, the young and better-educated seem to be more politicized than the older generation. By every standard, greater education is related to greater political mobilization. For example, the better-educated vote more frequently, and have more political knowledge. They were higher on a general scale of familiarity with white politicians ($F = 7.60$, $3/461$ *df*, $p < .001$), and on a scale of familiarity with poverty agencies ($F = 5.18$, $3/499$ *df*, $p < .005$). Only 31% of the college-educated, as against 57% of the grade school educated, did not know of Councilman Bradley; the percentages for then-Assemblyman Dymally were 34% and 73% respectively; for CORE, 3% and 25%.

The young appear to be as politicized as the old, contrary to the pattern that normally holds for white Americans.²⁷ They voted at approximately the same rate as older blacks in 1964, and they were not universally less informed than their elders. They were less informed about white politicians ($F = 10.37$, $2/461$ *df*, $p < .001$), but the young and old alike were better informed than the middle age group (30-44) about poverty agencies ($F = 4.32$, $2/499$ *df*, $p < .025$); and with respect to black leaders, age differences varied widely depending upon the individual in question. For example, 16% of the old, and 10% of the young, were unfamiliar with the Muslims, while 38% of the old and 49% of the young were unfamiliar with Councilman Bradley.

Two disturbing signs accompany this high level of politicization in the coming generation. One is a discouraging sense of political ineffectiveness. The sense of political efficacy does not increase with educa-

$2/517$ *df*, $p < .025$, respectively, and for education, $F = 13.15$, $3/508$ *df*, $p < .001$; $F = 11.65$, $3/515$ *df*, $p < .001$; and $F = 6.39$, $3/517$ *df*, $p < .001$, respectively.

²⁷ See Milbrath, 1965, *op. cit.*, and Sears, 1969, *op. cit.*

tion among blacks. Of the several combinations of age and education afforded by our standard cut-off points, the greatest efficacy is among the middle-aged (30-44) college-educated whites, as might be expected. Eighty-two percent disagreed that "I don't think public officials care about people like me." However, the lowest were the young black (15-29) high school graduates, of whom only 30% disagreed. This is, then, a troublesome combination among the young and better-educated blacks; relatively high levels of political activism, but little confidence that the system as it currently exists will be responsive to them.

The other is that local black political leadership appears to be out of touch with much of the black community. Among blacks it is primarily the old and well-educated who are in contact with political

TABLE 10
PERCENT KNOWING SOMEONE POLITICALLY INFLUENTIAL BY AGE AND EDUCATION

	Respondent's Race		
	White	Black	Racial Difference
Age			
15-29	21%	13%	+ 8%
30-44	24	18	+ 6
45 +	20	24	- 4
Education			
College	32	29	+ 3
High school graduates	13	14	- 1
Some high school	8	15	- 7
Grade school	10	18	- 8
Total	21%	18%	+ 3%

influentials, as shown in Table 10. To a degree the same holds for whites, but with far less serious consequences, because those in contact are more numerous. Whites are more than twice as likely to have been to college, and young whites are not as numerous, not as politically significant, and not as removed from political influentials as young blacks.²⁸

²⁸ For one thing, the rioting was mainly done by young blacks. See Sears and McConahay, "Riot Participation," *op. cit.*, National Advisory Commission, *op. cit.* Even so, one can speculate about the remoteness of the young and less educated whites from the white political Establishment; some have ascribed the popularity of Eugene McCarthy and Ronald Reagan, respectively, to their appeals to these two left-out groups.

The dangers in this situation have been clear for some time to the moderate political leadership of the black community. Their lack of contact with the young and the lower class sometimes leaves them more conservative than the black community as a whole. Clearly the potential for racial solidarity exists, as witnessed by young blacks' readiness to endorse black leadership. However, the preconditions for truly effective leadership may be difficult to achieve; for example, leaders must maintain contact throughout the black community, and factionalizing must not reach bitterly competitive heights. In this sense the future depends to a large degree on the capabilities of leadership elements within the black community; the opportunities are there.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper has been to investigate the attitudes of the black community in Los Angeles toward the political system after the devastating, though not unpopular, Watts rebellion of 1965. The most important findings are these:

(1) Considerable political disaffection and lack of trust of elected officials existed. Dissatisfaction was especially great with local government, with complaints of poor service, indifference, lack of attention, and racial discrimination. There was much more satisfaction with the federal government. There seems to have been less estrangement from the political system than dissatisfaction with the way it was currently being run, and with the people running it.

(2) Blacks remained highly partisan Democrats, and apparently enthusiastic ones. They were about as active in politics as whites. Nevertheless, they were much less likely than whites to believe that government officials would be responsive to their efforts.

(3) Racial partisanship characterized blacks' attitudes toward black leadership. Local black politicians and national civil rights leaders were strongly supported. Local Negro-originated media were praised. These positive feelings contrasted vividly with the dissatisfaction expressed with white leadership. The only exception to this praise for black leaders was the minority support accorded black nationalists.

(4) Disaffection from white leadership was particularly acute in the "new generation." The young and well-educated were more dissatisfied with white officeholders, and trusted elected officials less, than did older and less-educated blacks.

(5) The "new generation" appears to be more racially partisan,

and more politicized, than the old. The well-educated approved of black leaders more than did the poorly-educated. The young approved of nationalists more, and assimilationists less, than the old. Political participation is high in both groups. However, there is a tendency for sense of efficacy to be lower in the "new generation," and for political influentials to be in contact primarily with older and high status blacks.

The principal conclusion of the study is that racial partisanship, rather than estrangement from the political system, was dominant in the black community after the riot, and appears likely to remain so.²⁹ To put it most bluntly, in the Watts of 1965 there was already widespread support for many of the tenets of "black power." However, the riot apparently did not have the effect of amassing support in the black community for revolutionary change, though it clearly crystallized hostility against many aspects of the current social and political system. While there have been numerous subsequent disturbances in the area, none have approached its scale. A more political, and more pragmatic, approach has replaced the violence of that first explosion.

These data suggest that the future holds increasing racial polarization, with blacks increasingly placing confidence in blacks in the "ethnic politics" model, and being less willing to place their interests in the hands of the white Establishment.

Open opposition to white leadership seems likely to become increasingly vociferous. The rejection of white leadership is already apparent in these data, in the aftermath of the Watts riot. Even the most liberal whites seem unlikely to be able to sustain the support and the

²⁹ This is a striking contrast with Wilson's (*op. cit.*) description of the Los Angeles black community in the 1950's as being partisan neither politically nor racially. While his data were impressionistic, it does seem likely that the riot was a politicizing event in the black community.

Also, this is not to deny that both estrangement and partisanship may coexist in the same individual as well as in the community as a whole. It would be a gross over-simplification to ignore the ambivalence that must exist in most black citizens about the symbols of the American creed. Black attitudes toward the riot expressed this ambivalence eloquently; many took great pleasure in getting back at the white man, while equally genuinely abhorring the burning and killing (Sears and Tomlinson, *op. cit.*). Similarly ambivalent attitudes no doubt exist toward success as it is defined in conventional white middle class American terms, and about integration itself. It is doubtful that most lower class blacks take as seriously as do most middle class whites the objectives of success as defined in white middle class terms. However, the important issue is not whether or not the American creed has been completely internalized, but that there is so little commitment to the militants' ideology, along with a good deal of behavioral conformity to mainstream norms.

trust of the black community in the long run. At the same time, continued allegiance to the Democratic party suggests that alliances between Democrats and a solidary black community are not unrealistic. However, it is apparent that increased black control over government policies that most affect the black community is imperative. The white community must take account of this need, and provide the mechanisms by which blacks can exercise power over their own destinies within the normal political channels. And this appears to be particularly urgent at the local level of government, which affects the black community most directly.⁸⁰

A more pessimistic note could be struck by a close look at the young, especially their greater attraction to the nationalists, their greater disaffection from white political leadership (even from the Democratic party), their lack of contact with conventional black political leadership, and their lack of any sense that they can influence government as matters now stand, to say nothing of their considerably greater participation in and support for the riot. The data do not indicate that they yet are estranged from the system, but that appears to remain an open possibility for the future. In the "ethnic politics" model, co-optation of leadership from emerging groups is essential. And, if the Los Angeles community is typical, continued paternalism, whether white or black, endangers these young blacks' commitment to the current political system. Their active participation in governmental decision-making, whether in the school system or in partisan politics, would seem to be an obvious, and essential, defense against violence and anarchy.

⁸⁰ Districting for elective office is a good case in point. Unlike many Eastern cities, the "core city" of Los Angeles includes many of the "bedroom suburbs" that elsewhere are separate municipalities. Thus the white middle class is a considerable voting majority. The city council, the state assembly and senate, and Congress are all districted to provide seats directly representing South-Central Los Angeles, but the Board of Education is not (it has only at-large seats), nor is the County Board of Supervisors (its districts are too large to allow any control by blacks or Mexican-Americans). Reform here is a high priority item.